



**THE TYNEWYDD COLLIERY  
TRAGEDY OF 1877**

**BY GARETH HARRIS**



# **THE TYNEWYDD COLLIERY TRAGEDY OF 1877**

**(Cover photo – Contemporary print of the Tynewydd Colliery.)**

**THE TYNEWYDD COLLIERY TRAGEDY  
OF 1877**

**BY**

**GARETH HARRIS**



**Published by Coalopolis Publishing**

9 Cefn Lane  
Glyncoch,  
Pontypridd CF37 3BP

© Coalopolis Publishing 2016

Printed by:

Printdomain  
107 High St.  
Thurnscoe  
Rotherham  
South Yorkshire  
S63 0QZ

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission in writing of the copyright holder, nor otherwise circulated in any form, binding or cover other than which is published, and without a similar condition, including this condition, being imposed upon the subsequent publisher.

## INTRODUCTION

In August 2010 a roof fall at the San Jose Mine in Chile trapped thirty-three miners 700 metres underground. After sixty-nine days and a massive rescue operational thirty-three men were rescued over a twenty-four hour period. The Chilean rescue attracted huge media interest and reminded many of a similar incident in the Rhondda Valleys over 130 years ago.

The 1887 Tynewydd Inundation is one of the iconic events of Welsh coalmining history. As mining disaster went it was relatively small – five lives were lost and nine rescued. However, the intensity of the rescue operation and the bravery of the people involved attracted huge press and public attention, even Queen Victoria enquired after the trapped men's plight.

As a Rhondda boy I well remember being told of the inundation from a young age and, as curator of Big Pit, my fascination continues. National Museum Wales has a number of objects connected with with the disaster, including the mandril that Isaac Pride used to cut through to the trapped men, a number of Albert Medals and some of the silverware awarded to the rescuers. These can be seen on display at Big Pit National Coal Museum.

Gareth's latest book will insure that the heroism of the Tynewydd rescue will remain an inspiration for future generations.

Ceri Thompson, Curator, Big Pit National Coal Museum



## PREFACE

### Porth's Industrial growth

In 1809, Walter Coffin sunk the first coal pit in the Rhondda Valley further up the valley from Porth (then known as Cymmer) at Dinas. However, the lack of transport links impacted greatly on the profitability of mining coal in the region. Coffin tackled this problem by constructing a one mile tramline which connected his mines at Dinas to a tramline built by Dr. Richard Griffiths from Trehafod to Treforest. This linked to the doctor's private canal that, in turn, joined onto the Glamorganshire Canal at Dynea.

Coffin's tramline followed the southern bank of the River Rhondda and ran through Porth. The existence of the tramline made the development of the Porth and Cymmer region far more attractive, and, by the middle of the 19th century, there was an impetus to expand coal mining in the still largely rural area. In 1841 Richard Lewis joined Coffin in trying to exploit the region with his level built at Cymmer. This resulted in the construction of around fifty miner's cottages, several of which were located in Porth. In 1844 Lewis Edwards of Newport and George Gethin of Penygraig opened a small level at Nyth-bran on the eastern borders of Porth, the village's first coal mine. This was followed in 1845 by the sinking of the Porth Colliery by David James of Merthyr, the success of which saw him build the Llwynceilyn Colliery in 1851, also in Porth. By 1850 the Taff Vale Railway had been extended to Cymmer replacing the tramline and allowing direct access between the lower Rhondda and the ports of Cardiff.

In 1850 the Troedyrhiw Colliery (later to become the Aber-Rhondda Colliery), which had been sunk five years earlier on the northern borders of Porth and the neighbouring village of Ynyshir by Leonard Hadley of Caerleon, came into the ownership of a new consortium known as the Troedyrhiw Coal Company. This company was formed by James Thomas, a former miner, Matthew Cope, a Cardiff docksman and John Lewis, a grocer from Aberdare. In 1852 the same company opened the Tynewydd Colliery at the junction of the Rhondda Fawr and Fach rivers, Porth's fourth mine. The mine quickly struck the Rhondda No. 3 seam, and coking ovens were built at the surface providing further employment.

With the increase in population, transport links began to improve in the Rhondda. However, these were hampered by mining subsidence, which resulted in the roads of Porth Square sinking by eight foot. In 1860 a two horsed omnibus service was introduced between Porth and Pontypridd and replaced by a system of horse drawn tramcars in 1888. Although the tramline and subsequently the railway had passed through Porth for two decades, servicing the collieries, it was not until 1861 that the village had its first railway station; and a passenger service did not

commence until January 1863. As the population continued to increase, businesses and infrastructure grew around the coal industry. The Rhondda Urban Council chose Porth as one of two sites to build gas works and the area around Porth Square and Hannah Street became the commercial centre of the village. One of the more notable businesses to open in Porth was Thomas & Evans, grocer, one of the first of a chain of shops owned by William Thomas and William Evans who were two entrepreneurs from Pembrokeshire. Evans became an important figure in the growth of Porth, and in the late 1890s he opened both a jam factory and the Welsh Hills Mineral Water Factory, later to become Corona Carbonated Drinks, which would remain a major manufacturer within the village up until the 1980s.

### The perils of mining

During the 1870s, people in Britain often had a very poor opinion of the Welsh miner. However, the *'Graphic'* journal of April 28<sup>th</sup> 1877 took a different view: -

“The colliers are a hardy race of simple, brave-hearted men, who daily carry their lives in their hands, for, in spite of the Davy lamp and of the scientific appliances which have of late years been adopted for the better ventilation of mines their occupation is one of continual danger. When the swarthy workmen leaves his humble cottage after kissing his wife and children, and shoulders his pick and shovel for his spell of labour in the gloomy bowels of the earth, he knows not whether he shall ever again see their loved faces and glorious golden sunshine or if his mangled and blackened corpse may not in a few hours be drawn up the shaft, and borne home to his bereaved widow and weeping babes. It is perhaps this awful sense of standing as it were in the immediate presence of death that makes the collier, especially the Welsh collier, so susceptible to the influence of religion, and so unswerving in his faith respecting the protective care of that Providence which is as powerful to save in the deep dark caverns of the earth as on the lonely waters of the ocean, the trackless sands of the desert, or amid the rugged fastnesses of the mountains.

Many of the perils which these men have to face, such as the chances of inundation, or the collapse of portions of the super-incumbent earth, or of accidents to the machinery in the shaft by which the men descend to their work, and up which they are raised when their day's labour is done, are common to all mines, but besides these are dangers peculiar to collieries. For example, frequent, and sometimes very terrible explosion of “fire-damp,” or light carburetted hydrogen, which explodes when mixed with a certain proportion of atmospheric air and there is also the occasional accumulation of “foul-damp” (Carbonic Acid), a deadly suffocating gas which is always produced in large quantities by the

explosion of 'fire-damp,' and which is fatal to many who may have survived the effects of the explosion itself. Some collieries are so free of "fire-damp" that the miners work with naked lights, generally small tallow lamps stuck in their caps, but in most cases it is necessary to use the Safety Lamp invented by Sir Humphrey Davy. One can scarcely realise the immense amount of risk which is constantly incurred by these poor hardworking men, who burrow in the earth day after day in order to win bread for themselves and their families.

Of late years scientific precautions have been adopted to prevent the recurrence of accidents, but less than twenty years ago it was calculated that about a 1,000 lives were annually sacrificed in our coalmines, mostly by preventable disasters. The average number of annual deaths by explosion was about 250, by falls of the roof, owing to the insufficiency of the supports, 370; whilst more than 200 deaths, to say nothing of minor accidents, such as broken limbs, occurred in the shaft itself in consequence of the defective nature of the machinery. Sometimes the men were smashed by masses of coal or stone falling upon them from the edge of the pit's mouth as they were going up or down. At other times the baskets in which they were hoisted were upset, and they were pitched out and dashed to pieces at the bottom of the shaft, or the rope would suddenly break, and both cage and occupants would fall to the bottom, or again, through the careless over-winding of the rope, the poor fellows being drawn up would be crushed against the beams overhead.

Some of these evils are manifestly preventable, and we are glad to know that the miner of today has less risk to run in regard to such matters than his comrade of twenty years ago. With the regard to explosions, it is not always easy to say whether they should have been prevented or not, but undoubtedly in many instances the risk of "fire-damp" would be lessened if the Davy lamps were insisted upon, for in the great majority of cases the explosion is found to have been caused either by a naked light or the use of a supposed Safety Lamp, which was defective in construction or had got out of order in some way.

A great deal has been written about the ignorance and barbarianism of the British miner, how by his obstinacy he refuses to work except for a very high wage, and how he spends his increasing earnings upon legs of mutton for his ugly dog and champagne for himself, while his wife and children have hardly the necessaries of life.

The picture, however, is grossly exaggerated, and we take it that the collier is very much like any other British working man, somewhat rough mannered and plain-spoken, perhaps, and a trifle over-bearing when, under the direction of the union leaders, he strikes, and finds that the masters are obliged to give way. Still, for all

this he is by no means destitute of the nobler instincts of humanity, and we can readily forgive much to men who, when their fellows' lives are in peril, are so eager to strain nerve and muscle, and to brave the greatest dangers to rescue them." This is the story of the Welsh miners' role during the Tynewydd inundation of 1877, one of the iconic events of Welsh mining history.

**Chapter one**  
**Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1877**

**TERRIBLE ACCIDENT IN THE RHONDDA VALLEY**

INUNDATION OF A COLLIERY AND LOSS OF LIFE - FIVE MEN RESCUED NINE MEN STILL IMPRISONED. [FROM THE *CARDIFF TIMES* SPECIAL REPORTER]

On Wednesday evening, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1877, an alarming accident occurred in the Rhondda Valley, at the Tynewydd Colliery, the property of the Troedyrhiw Colliery Company, by which the lives of 14 colliers were placed in jeopardy, and there is some reason to fear that several lives may have been sacrificed. Full particulars of the accident have not yet reached us, but it would appear, from what we can learn that in the evening a large volume of water suddenly burst into the colliery. Most of the men who were at work in the pit at the time escaped, but, unfortunately, a number of them were unable to reach the shaft, and their escape was cut off by the sudden incursion of the water. It is believed that these men are about 14 in number. As soon as the exact position of affairs was ascertained, Mr. James (known as 'Siamps') Thomas, the manager, descended the pit to see what provision could be made for the rescue of the men who were imprisoned by the flood. In a few minutes he heard knocking some distance off, and having thus assured himself that the men, or, at least, some of them, were alive, he organised staff to commence operations for their release.

This will have to be effected by cutting a way through to the place where they are confined. The work was pushed on with all possible speed, but with what success we are not yet able to ascertain. In all probability the men are without either food or light. Great anxiety is felt in the neighbourhood as to the fate which has befallen them.

**April 12<sup>th</sup> 1877**  
Porth, Thursday night

The details of the circumstances of the alarming accident which occurred on Wednesday evening at the Troedyrhiw Colliery in the Rhondda Valley are of an exceptionally distressing character. The Troedyrhiw or Tynewydd Pit, near Porth, is the property of the Troedyrhiw Colliery Company, and it is remarkable as the only "balance pit," or almost the only balance pit remaining in the Kingdom. It is almost unnecessary to explain that by the term "balance pit" the colliery is distinguished from those in which the coal is raised from the shaft by steam power, this work in a "balance pit" being accomplished by hydraulic agency. About 100 men are employed at the colliery, and hitherto its immediate locality has enjoyed immunity from colliery disasters unhappily exceptional in the mining district of

South Wales. Some of the oldest workers in the pit do not remember any disaster of a serious character in the vicinity during the whole period over which their recollection extends nearly a quarter of a century. The facts of the accident may be briefly narrated. About half-past four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, as the men were preparing to leave the mine, that being the time when the day's labours generally terminated, an alarm was raised by a man named Evan Thomas of the out-bursting of a large volume of water in the pit. Happily, most of the men underground at the time were either in the near neighbourhood of the shaft, or so far from the water as easily to be able to escape. The names of those whose retreat was cut off are as follows: -

George Jenkins, widower, 3 children, age 40 of Porth;  
Moses Powell, single, age 31, of Porth;  
David Hughes, boy about 14, of America Fach;  
John Hughes, 50, married, of America Fach;  
William Jones Hughes, boy, of America Fach;  
David Jenkins, married, 49, one child;  
John Thomas, single man, 25;  
Edward Williams, alias o'r Maindee, 35, wife and seven children;  
Robert Rogers, lad of 13,  
Thomas Morgan, 60, father, and a widower;  
William Morgan, his eldest son, 29, married, wife and one child.  
Richard Morgan, 15;  
Edward Williams, 62.  
William Casher, 26.

As soon as it was ascertained that 14 of the men were missing, Mr. James Thomas, the manager, with praiseworthy activity, descended the pit to see how matters stood, and take steps for the release of the imprisoned workmen. In a short time he was signalled to by the repeated knocking some distance off and he lost no time in organising a staff of workers to cut through to the locality in which their poor comrades were anxiously awaiting their release. There was no lack of willing, hearty workers. In addition to Mr. James Thomas, who took an active part in superintending and pushing on the work, Mr. Edmund Thomas, colliery owner, Llwynceilin; Mr. Davies, manager of the Coedcae colliery; and Mr. Jones, Ynyshir, rendered similar aid, remaining at the work all night. Though the mandrills were applied with unceasing assiduity, it was not long after four o'clock this morning that any hope was gained of the recovery of the missing miners. During those hours of darkness and bitter dread the incarcerated men, from the story given subsequently by those of them who were rescued, were working for their own release with might and main.

Destitute of food, for the day's supply had been consumed long before the warning of their terrible danger reached them, and the air every moment growing more deadly, their condition was one of utter misery. Still, buoyed up by the precious hope of being once more restored to life and liberty, they struggled hard to make themselves heard, and as the sounds of their deliverers' voices drew nearer fresh courage prevented them from resigning themselves to utter despair, and inspired them to employ every effort to break down the walls of their prison-house. Only those who, like the writer, heard the story from the lips of one of the chief actors can form an adequate idea of the tragic pathos of the situation of the imprisoned men. It has been mentioned that when the dangerous state of affairs was first realised the 14 missing men were soon reckoned up by their distressed friends and it was conjectured, and, as subsequent events proved, truly, that the poor fellows were blocked in different parts of the pit, and considerable distances intervened between what may be described without impropriety as their separate prison cells.

Five of the men—Thomas Morgan, his two sons William and Richard, Edward Williams, and William Casher, when the alarm was given were working in what is called "the Gelynog Dip," a more elevated section of the mine than that in which their missing companions were immured. This spot is about 400 or 500 yards from the mouth of the shaft, and the most determined efforts were made to hew a way through to the unfortunate colliers. All night the pit and its locality presented an unwontedly busy aspect, and the distress of the wives and relatives of the poor fellows may be imagined. The scenes around the pit-mouth were heartrending. Below, the excavations were continued with unabating vigour, every few minutes the workers being relieved by a constant succession of fresh hands from among the bystanders.

The unceasing labours of the searchers were rewarded at length, some time after four o'clock this morning, by the discovery that they were in close proximity to some of the incarcerated colliers. These were the five men whose marvellous escape has just been indicated. As soon as it was found that but a comparatively little space separated them from their rescuers, a hole was drilled through the wall of coal for the purpose of establishing a clear communication.

The aperture was but a small one, and the air rushed through it with tremendous force, at the same time blocking the hole up with a portion of the clothing of one of the men—William Morgan—who was confined on the side. The rush of air was accompanied by a tremendous sound, described as appalling and deafening in its intensity. One of the party (William Morgan) met a tragic fate just at the moment release was at hand, this poor fellow, who is described by those who knew him as has one child.

All night he had been working with his father and brother doing his utmost to secure their liberation, and just as he struck his mandrill through the vein of coal which divided them from the party who were at work on the other side, by the tremendous pressure of the released air, he was caught up, flung against the hole, and killed on the spot. The efforts of his companions, who seized his coat and tried to pull him back, were as vain as the puny struggle of a child to escape the grip of a giant, and his horrified companions, just as they saw their own way open to liberty, had their joy dashed by the terrible death of one who had been all night long with them, sharing their danger, and to his utmost aiding their escape. The release of the five men—four of the number living, one dead - was not completely effected until between nine and ten o'clock, and when the recovered colliers were brought to the surface the scene was of an intensely affecting character.

The four whose lives had been saved were utterly exhausted with the anguish of that long night and their need of food, and they appeared to possess scarcely more life than their poor companion. They were all a good deal bruised, but had sustained no injuries beyond those which food, and rest, and careful nursing will speedily be set right. Dr. Davies and his assistant were in attendance, and all that could be done was done promptly and with a ready skill which cannot be too much admired, or too highly praised.

After the excitement with which this partial recovery was hailed had in some measure subsided, there was a comparative lull in the eager interest displayed around the pit. About noon Mr. Galloway, Inspector of Mines, arrived on the scene. He descended into the mine, and was soon placed in possession of the critical state of affairs. Long before this time it had been found that the only hope of recovering the nine men still missing lay in the diligent pumping out of the mine, and the necessary apparatus was put to work as soon as possible. The men who were recovered as already intimated had the advantage of being on a higher level than their unfortunate companions, whose fate at the time of writing is yet uncertain.

But little hope was then entertained of Williams and the lad Rogers, as in boring through the spot where they were supposed to be confined there was immediately an upward rush of water, ominously indicating that part of the mine is wholly flooded. Nor can the fate of the other men be regarded with much more hope. It must be borne in mind that they have been living all the time in a compressed atmosphere, which lessens their chances of sustaining the struggle immensely, and it is improbable that they are in any way provided with food. There is still hope of their being brought out, though that hope is but small, and the workers below are sparing no effort which it is possible to direct towards their liberation. In the



morning it was at one time given out that their recovery was hopeless, as the knocking had ceased, but it was heard again subsequently, and hope revived.

Throughout the afternoon and evening the work was pursued with unabated vigour, but up to a late hour no more of the imprisoned men had been recovered. There appears to be only one theory as to the cause of the flooding of the pit, and it is a simple and probable one. The men were working in the direction of the old Cymmer Pit, about half a mile distant from the shaft of the Troedyrhiw pit, and it is supposed that the water came from the former place. This is borne out by the fact that during the day it was perceived that the depth of water in the Cymmer Pit had decreased by as much as seventy-five yards. Appended is the full list of those at present recovered, and of the men also still imprisoned in the pit: -

Recovered dead: - William Morgan, married, wife and children.

Alive: - Thomas Morgan, 60; Richard Morgan, 15; Edward Williams, 62; and William Casher, 26.

As yet unrecovered: - John Hughes, William Hughes, David Hughes, (sons) Edward Williams, Robert Rogers, George Jenkins, David Jenkins, Moses Powell, and John Thomas. The latest news from those at work in the pit is the knocking is still audible from the men are immure but slender hope is entertained of their being recovered alive.

The '*Western Mail*' newspaper was lucky enough for their 'special correspondent' and another named 'Morien' to be the only members of the press to be allowed underground, and this was to capture the imagination of the public throughout the British Isles.

### **Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 1877**

The flooded colliery in the Rhondda

The imprisoned mine, failure of the diving operations

(From our special correspondent – *Western Mail*, April 16<sup>th</sup> 1877)

It was indeed a period of panic, you heard no noisy harangue, so not the swaying of an angry multitude, witnessed any of those indications of strife, of agitation, of passion, which are the ordinary accompaniments of the usual momentous events. At Porth, on Saturday, sensation was stripped of romance; the stern silence and pale anxiety of the people who you met chilled the ardour and sullied the glow naturally linked with periods on which hinge exceptional issues. It was the same whether one surveyed the scene in the village itself, or that observable on the hill-side overlooking Tynewydd Colliery, or that presented at the pit's mouth. Hundreds sauntered along the high road which streaked the foot of the Rhondda

hills; and few worthy words they spoke – few, but terribly earnest. Hundreds sat on the hill-side, gazing, gazing immovable as statues, with pent-up hearts and speaking eyes, watching, hoping and praying. In the precincts of the colliery, along its steep ways, about its lugubrious sheds, near the yawning mouth of that melancholy depth where in the fathers, sons, and brothers of the miners lay entombed, other hundreds gathered. And it was ever the same, - white-lipped melancholy, intense, soul-strung anxiety. You could hear a reference to Powell or Hughes, or some one or more of the imprisoned miners. You could at times hear muttered, half-spoken, half-stifled words of speculation as to the depth of the water, the nature of the air; the chances of holding out, and the possibilities and impossibilities of the situation.

But the very peacefulness, the calmness in death, the universal stillness, the mysterious dumbness that seemed to prevail, overawed one. Women and men alike, even the children had apparently lost their customary vivacity; and the infants' prattle was strange, half-hushed, and unnatural. Everybody felt that miners as they past meant a struggle in which life, looking death in the face, strove by movements, hard as they were fearfully real, to get the upper hand.

The Tynewydd Colliery was water-logged, that nine humans being remained whether alive or dead, none could say – God only knows – in a cell of coal encased by water, we all knew. We knew too that ever since Wednesday last they had been having no supply of food and the sorrow of our hearts would have unnerved us, were we not buoyed up by the hope that a communication might yet be made with them, and that they might be restored to life, to freedom, to home. I cannot help thinking of the half-marine, half-mechanical side of the situation the moment I arrived at the mouth of the pit.

Anybody reflecting on the scene would think with me. We had Cyclops and Neptune together. There was the splash of the water; down it came, drip, drip, for the pit is water worked. Heavy beams crossed each other in a rude embrace; spiked iron bars squared off the dread aperture, opening up the hidden world beneath. The rusty chains move softly, almost snakelike. A bell tinkled with a note of silvery liveliness, and the progress of the carriage from below was thus denoted. With a weird, unearthly sound, three times repeated, an iron hammer played above, and those who had business underground stepped forward. In a moment our descent commenced, and the party, of which I was one, comprised one of Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, two or three colliery managers, three divers from London, and a couple of others. In a few seconds, the light overhead ceased to be visible; the apparent ball of cloud dwindled to a speck no bigger than a man's hat, and then quickly faded until above and beneath all was darkness.

Alighting at the bottom, we were met by some half-dozen miners, with the customary lamp stuck in their caps. There were no wordy congratulations, but a few sentences of whispered recognition. We at once set out for the distant spot where the pumping was being carried on. Our way lay through a cavernous hollow, damp and dew-begrown, where the roof above seemed to tremble, and the walls on the sides to lean ominously forward. The tramroad was hidden under mud and slush, and at either side dark and foul-smelling streams of water leapt lazily along. Here the rock jutted out, there the sparkling coal; bends and headings shot off suddenly; with moaning and sighing, came an up-heaving of the waters, which, in their savage and unsympathetic labourings, seemed to threaten to inundate the place.

The pumping engines had ceased, in as much as it was considered impossible for the drivers to make headway while the process of pumping continued. But the melancholy death-in-life struggle still prevailed. The rippling of waters here, the dull, heavy, monotonous thud there, the flickering light, the black perspiring faces, the mute, over-working beasts, the laden trams, the engine-gear, the underground conferences, the heated pipes, all united to form an never to be forgotten – I trust never to be repeated – scene.

Leaving the bottom of the shaft, we descend an incline of five inches to the yard. We examine, as we go on, the point at which the men already released were liberated; we continue, in a stooping posture, with our heads scraping the damp and uncertain roof. The way is treacherous. But returning gangs meet us and pass a kindly word as they slog on, dropping, too, at the same time, a hint as to the latest tidings from the scene where the fearful intense lifeline winning, life losing struggle goes on. How anxiously is every word listened to? “When did you hear the last knock?” is asked in undertones by one of our party. “At half-past-three,” is the reply of our co-begrimed friend, and on we go, treading cautiously, headed by a “comet Lamp,” that indicates only faintly the lines of our underground journey. At last, after some falls, much uncertainty, and considerable toil, we come to a rude wooden doorway bearing the words “Notice” and “Danger” in white paint. This, it would appear, is a sort of depot.

The boxes of the divers from Siebe and Gorman, Lambeth, are here. And here, too, the men begin to attire themselves in their peculiar garb – flannels first, waterproof overalls, breastplates and helmets last. We look at the huge sheet of water into which the divers have to plunge. You cannot follow it far, even with the eye; there is just a ripple on the surface, and then the waves subside, and the water is locked in darkness. Like sea-monsters, the divers – two in number – move forward. There succeeds the play of a series of bubbles. Heavy, awkward shadows seem to stumble rather than to systematically proceed. The lifeline, visible a few

yards, is lost to view, and we are rejoiced to receive signals, first from 80 feet, next when 100 feet have been traversed, and next when 500 feet have been waded through.

The gentlemen with whom I converse had no faith in this diving experiment nor, judging from my conversation with them, had the divers themselves. The idea generally entertained is that the work of pumping out was to be gone on with, and if, at the rate already reached, pumping would continue, there would be a fair hope of clearing away the water by Monday night. That was the prevalent notion, conversely stated, in the group of which, for some time, I formed one. The divers, it should be mentioned, had, prior to descending the pit, well studied the plans of the workings, with the bends and headings, the wagons, and other obstacles in the way, and the inference was that it would be very difficult indeed to avoid these, and to keep up the efficiency of the lifeline. The idea was borne out by the result, and re-appearance of the divers waddling along, helmet above water, and bubbles around, although sending a thrill of something like preternatural electricity through the hearts of the on-lookers, was not an unexpected event. They were looked for rather than hoped for.

The words of the first to arrive were, "We are sorry," sufficiently indicated the fruitlessness of their task, and the after explanations only made those who for a lifetime had been accustomed to the pit sorry that the pumping had been stopped in order to allow of the diving process being applied. Black, hideous, gloomy as our surroundings were; unsuccessful as the operations of the colliery engineers had hitherto been, it was at least satisfactory to know that knockings from that choked-up, water-tight, coal-blocked, mountain-topped crevice in which the men were imprisoned had been distinguished as late as 6 o'clock on Sunday morning.

Listening to the feeble utterances of one stretched on the bed of death, when the hale and hearty friends may look into the eyes of the dying one, feel the pulse, touch the heart, raise the head, share tear for tear with fellow mourners, it is less saddening than to watch and wait like the patient watchers in the Tynnewydd mine. They mourn the hidden; they hope in melancholy for the lives of the unseen. It is not theirs to grasp a death-bedewed hand, to look into an agonised face. All that is heard is the "knocking." At the top of a cutting, with the dread rock-hewn roof above the head, the water playing about, the almost inhuman-looking men, with lights on their sweating foreheads around you, the pipes remaining at your feet and side, the huge pumping machinery close by, all that is heard in the "knocking," 1,2,3,4,5; the last a loud, melancholy thud, and this is all that comes during the weary hours to suggest that the prisoners of the deep are alive. That they know a search is being made for them is certain; and though huge pillars of coal and walls of water divide heart from heart, man from fellow-man, we speak still, and our

message through the vast solitude of the mineral water-line clogged underworld is by the “knocking,” only the “knocking,” by the sad lifeline thud of the living hand. God aid the struggle for air and light!

### Morien with the divers at Troedyrhiw Colliery

About noon on Saturday, 14th April, I reached the top of the Tynewydd Pit, Troedyrhiw, Rhondda Valley, in which nine industrious miners are imprisoned alive as in a tomb. I deeply regret to have to record, but duty compels me to do so, that as was alleged, the dogmatism of a single irresponsible official had been the means of infusing so much of the spirit of discord amongst the practical engineers present, men acquainted with every heading and stall in the colliery, as to greatly impede the race against death, for such is the work now in progress at the Tynewydd Colliery. Speaking in Welsh to the crowd of miners who stood in groups in the neighbourhood of the fatal shaft, I discovered that their indignation was almost at fever heat, and but for the confidence they felt in the managers of this and neighbouring collieries, who were incessant night and day in devising schemes to reach the men, the colliers would take the matter into their own hands, so great was their dissatisfaction. When Mr. Wales, Her Majesty’s Inspector of Mines for South Wales, arrived on the scene about 1 o’clock, he stood in the midst of the discontented spirits, and implored all to forget for the present the questions which had produced this unfortunate feeling, and to proceed as rapidly and as united as possible in endeavouring to rescue the unfortunate men below. I am happy to be able to state that Mr. Wales’s authoritative utterances, backed by the confidence all appeared to feel in him, had the desired effect.

From an early hour two experienced divers named Frank Davies and Thomas Purvis, from the firm of Messrs. Siebe and Gorman, Mison Street, Lambeth Road, London, accompanied by Mr. F. Garnish, David Adams (Lord Bute’s diver), and his son, James Adams, had been on the ground ready to descend into the shaft, the two first-named, with heroic courage, expressing their readiness to attempt penetrating through the water, a distance of 771 feet, to rescue the poor fellows from their living tomb. But although the divers had been sent for by the suggestion of Mr. Galloway, the Assistant Inspector of Mines, he very naturally did not feel justified in instructing them to descend in the absence of Mr. Wales. Soon after the arrival of the last-named gentleman a consultation was held at the office of the works, and, as a forlorn hope, the divers were instructed to descend to make the attempt. This produced intense interest among all classes, and especially among the crowds of miners who were peering over the walls in the neighbourhood of the colliery. Many ejaculated reverently, “Bydded duw gyd a hwynt yn eu ymdrech clodwiw!” (May God be with them in their noble attempt). Between 2 and 3 o’clock p.m. the divers descended into the shaft, accompanied by

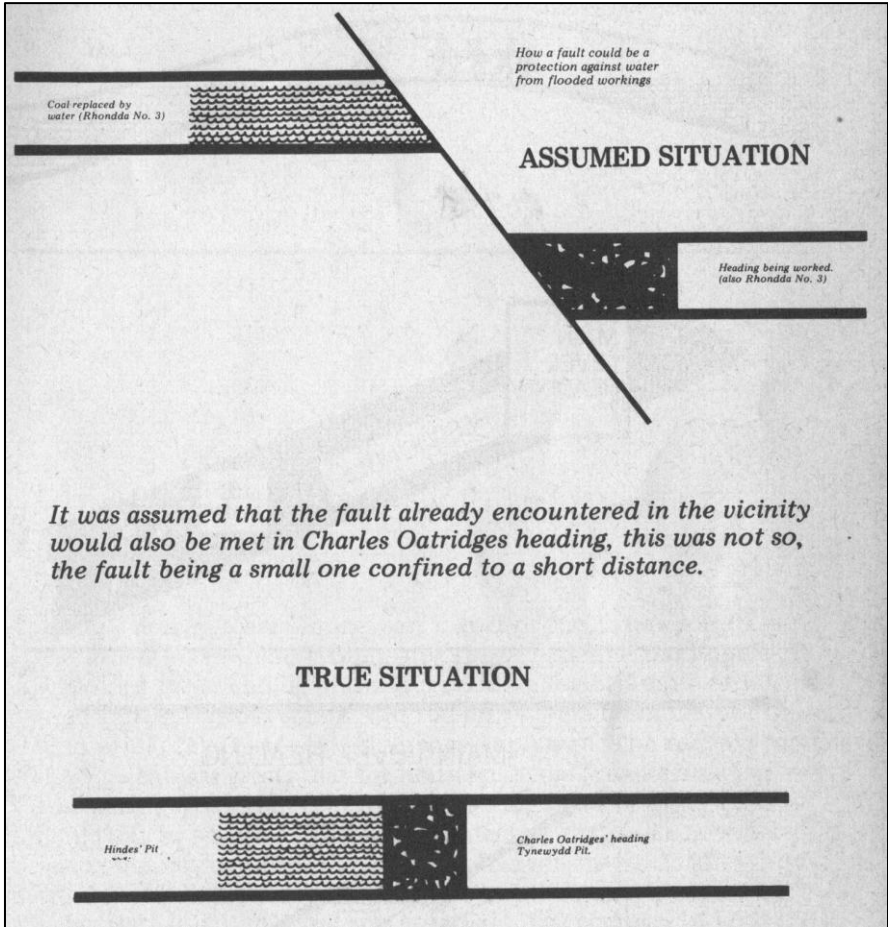
several officials, and by the kind permission of Mr. James Thomas, one of the proprietors of the colliery, I was also permitted to descend. Having equipped myself in an old coat, lent to be by Mr. Parker, Mr. Thomas's son-in-law, we commenced the descent into the dreadful abyss. We were besprinkled plentifully with water, falling and dashing from the sides of the jutting rocks in the sides of the shaft. The cistern we stood upon gently touched the bottom, and the flickering lights of the men engaged in the open space about the pit met our eyes, and the familiar cry of "whow," uttered by a Welsh haulier to a horse, reached our ears. Gradually our eyes became familiarised to the flickering light. The divers, in white woollen dresses and with red caps on their heads, were preparing for the journey into the interior of the workings.

Their diving apparatus was being placed in a tram to be conveyed to the neighbourhood of the water, 700 yards from where we then stood. At the moment Mr. M'Murrtrie, the manager of the Glamorgan Collieries, stepped forward, and with a flaming lamp known as a "comet" in his hand, invited us to follow him. We did follow, and as we walked along a narrow road, with the roof so low in some places as to render it necessary for us to travel in a stooping attitude. On each side of us was the standing seam of coal through which in years gone by the industrious delvers for the precious mineral had wormed their way. The place was as silent as the grave, except for the sound of our conversation. The atmosphere was very oppressive, and big drops of perspiration rolled down our faces.

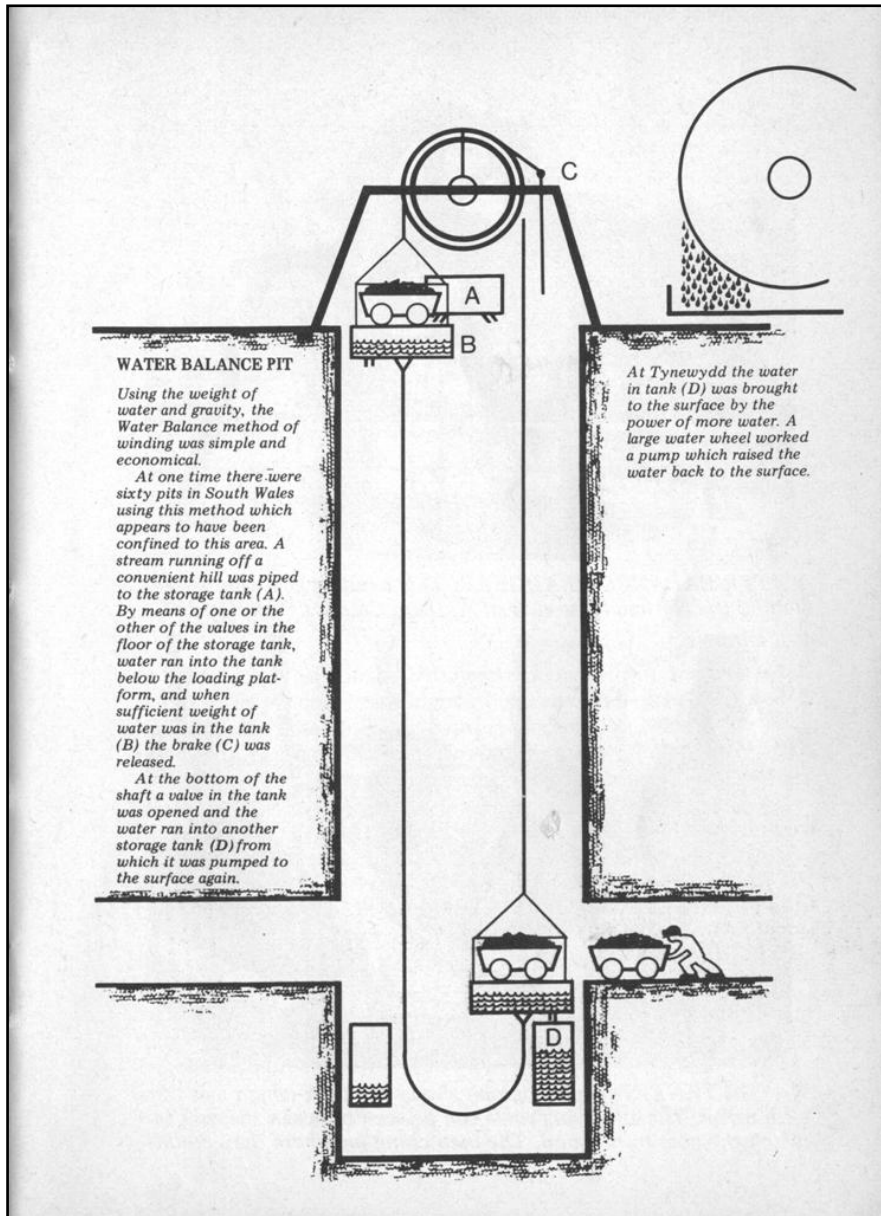
After travelling for a long way, not less than three-quarters of a mile we discovered that we had missed our way, and in the then disturbed condition of the system of ventilation we were in no little danger. At this moment the words of "Holy Writ," came familiarly into my mind: –

"I went down to the bottom of the mountains;  
The earth with bars was about me for ever.  
The waters compassed me about me even to the soul."  
Y ddaear ai throsolion oedd o'm amgylch"

We retreated our steps hastily, and we returned, fortunately, to the place from where we had started. Leaving my friends to the care of Mr. M'Murrtrie, I level heading the water pumped from the submerged works passed to the shaft, to be again pumped to the surface. After a rapid walk we came within sound of the engine in the interior pumping water from the submerged drift, the chief outlet in happier times from below, all now under water. The open space here was the scene of great animation; lights flickered; men shouted instructions to each other;



**A print showing how the fault moved and was used as the defence at the following inquest.**



**The winding operations at the Tynewydd Colliery**



sound of hammers beating against pipes being put into position, a complete network extending from the top of the drift into the water some 20 yards below. The working party was under the command of Mr. William Davies, manager of Coedcae Collieries, and he and Mr. Daniel Thomas, owner of the Brithweunydd and other collieries, were most energetic. The other proprietors and managers of collieries present were Mr. James Thomas, Tynewydd; Mr. Edmund Thomas, Llwyncelin; Mr. David Davies, Cilely; Mr. William Thomas, Resolven; Mr. Richards, Blaenclydach; Mr. Jones, Cymmer Level; Mr. M'Murrtrie, Llwynypia; and Co.

The divers were sitting on the boxes containing their diving apparatus with young Thomas, the nephew of the manager, and others, explaining the various winding they had to make when travelling through the water. Later on Mr. Wales, Dr. Henry Naunton Davies, and Mr. Neil, his assistant, arrived, accompanied by Mr. Edmund Thomas, Llwyncelin, we went some hundreds of yards along the level heading to the narrow hole in which William Morgan was killed, and through which his father, brother, and two others escaped on Thursday morning. Mr. Thomas, Mr. James Thomas, Mr. William Thomas, and Mr. David Davies had newly returned from the other side of this hole after knocking to the imprisoned men, who had vigorously replied to them in the same manner.

All felt certain that after the knockings of the imprisoned men ceased they had heard their picks at work cutting their way through. There was great danger in this, owing to the fact that there were workings all round them full of water, and that they were liable to cut in the wrong direction and open the way for the water to rush upon them, and also from the compressed air, which held the water behind them in check, being released and killing them, as it had killed William Morgan under similar circumstances. On returning from this spot we found the divers preparing to enter the water in the drift.

The pumping was stopped. I entered the drift and stationed myself in front of a post holding the roof, and close to the water. From where I stood, according to the plan, and where the men are imprisoned, was a distance 257 yards full of water to the roof, through which the gallant divers were about to enter. All, except the writer and those actively engaged in assisting the divers, were ordered to leave the drift, which was done.

The heroic Englishmen then walked into the water in their diving dresses. Frank, the diver, turning to me, said "We will do our best to reach the poor fellows, but such a task was never before attempted by any divers." I replied from my innermost soul, "May almighty God be with you!" The dangers they were about to incur were immense, owing chiefly to the disturbed state of the workings, caused by the rushing torrent of water, which had rushed with the impetuosity of an

avalanche into the workings, carrying everything before it. "You read of George Smith, the Assyrian discoverer?" asked Frank Davies, while he manipulated the sections of the diving bell. "Yes," I replied. "I dived with him," said he, "just before he left for his last expedition." He said this so solemnly that I feared he was hinting at the possibility of this being also his last expedition in the diving bell.

Tom, the other diver, was silently preparing for the same task. Above us in the drift were two boxes with wheels, coils of spiral wire tubes, enclosed in gutta percha (rubber); and, "lifelines" were lying about. These boxes were for pumping air through the tubes into the helmets, and the "lifelines" were for signalling. The hideous brass helmet was placed over Frank's head, the lower portion of which rested on his shoulders, upon which was a brass hoop fastened to the diving dress. The helmet was then screwed to this hoop while the tube was fastened to one side of the helmet and the "lifeline" to the other. Men stood at the pumping boxes ready. Within a few yards the black water was running up to the roof, reflecting the flickering candles which were fastened in clay sockets to the hanging sides of the drift.

When all was ready Frank received the signal – he could neither speak nor hear them – and he commenced the downward walk, going backward with a waddling motion which gave the figure a most hideous appearance. He got deeper and deeper in the water; now the shining shoulder hoop and helmet reflected the light; then only the helmet was in sight. Suddenly the helmet came in contact with the roof, and a cry of alarm was uttered by the attendants, which caused one's blood to run cold.

The next moment he was completely underwater followed by loud hissing sounds and the bubbling of the water, making one think of the flutter of the wings of the Angel of Death. The tube and line were following. When he had reached a distance of 60 feet Tom commenced his journey. "Why," I said to one who was guiding the line and tube of the first to enter, "this line," pointing to the lifeline, "does not move." "Frank," was his reply, "is waiting for his mate." After a while the tube and line of each commenced going together.

The hissing noise continued. Now the cry, "Down 80 feet," was uttered, then "100," and so on until "500" feet were reached. This was within 271 feet of the face of Thomas Morgan's stall, in which the men are confined, and a lively hope was entertained that they would be able to reach the poor fellows. Suddenly Garnish called out, "They are returning!" And then commenced the task of drawing up the lines and tubes. The pumping boxes were said to be getting very hot. In three-quarters of an hour after the time they started a tremendous hissing noise was heard, and the next moment one of the helmets reappeared, followed

by a cry from the attendant of "Here it is!" He came half out of the water, and stumbled and fell. A rush was made to assist him, and immediately the process of unscrewing the front of the helmet took place.

This was done, and it proved to be Tom, exceedingly hot fumes arising from the opening. His first question was, "Has my mate arrived?" "No," replied Garnish;" "Where did you leave him?" "Below there," replied Tom. Soon after the other helmet reappeared, and he also fell, and a rush was made to assist him. Then followed the same unscrewing, and, after taking off the helmet, Frank came forward, and addressing Mr. Thomas, Llwyncein, said, "We have done our best, and I am very sorry we have been unsuccessful.

We found that it was impossible to get on further, owing to pieces of wood in the water, the broken road mud, and strength of the swells. We, as you know, had to go backwards after reaching the bottom of the drift. I felt a post, and tied a piece of rope round it. We then proceeded on our hands and knees, but the swells were so powerful as to strike us frequently against the roof, and on several occasion we were afraid our helmets would break. I am very sorry." Then commenced the task of restarting the water pumping engines. On reaching the surface the roads were thronged with thousands of anxious people from all parts of the neighbouring valleys.

---

*Print page 27:*

*Lateral Section of the mines and workings*

*(A) Wheel for raising water. (B) Locomotive from the Taff Vale Railway. (C) Special pump (D) Special steam pumps. (E) Highest level of flood. (F) Colliers digging to rescue trapped men. (H) The stall in which the men were confined. (K) Group of engineers and medical men.*

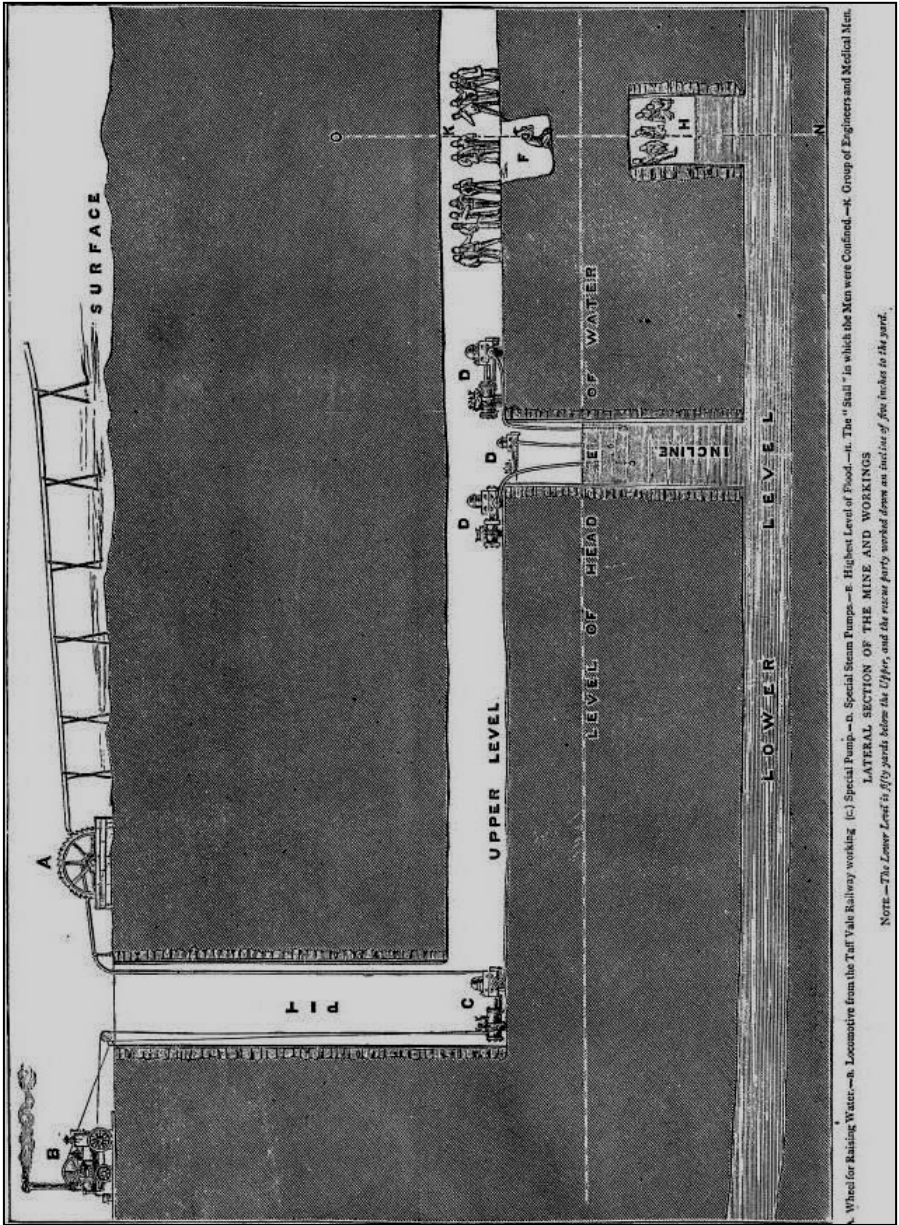
*Note: The lower level is fifty yards below the upper, and the rescue party worked down an incline of 5 inches to the yard.*

*Print page 28*

*Cross section of stalls, showing the imprisoned men, and their rescuers at work.*

*The top engraving exhibits the condition of affairs before any opening had been made, while the other shows the rise of the water in the stall consequent on upon the escape of the compressed air when the boring machine had pierced the three feet thickness of coal which is only then revealed.*

---





## Chapter two

### Porth, Sunday night, April 15<sup>TH</sup> 1877

Cutting out the men – Exciting scenes at the pit – A welcome sound

The '*Cardiff Times*' of 21<sup>st</sup> April 1877, gave the following review of the weekend from their '*special reporter*': - The terrible suspense in which the friends and relatives of the nine men still imprisoned in the Tynewydd Pit have remained since last Wednesday night has from day to day been lightened by faint gleams of hope. There has, at any rate, been no lack of effort to secure the release of the incarcerated colliers. The arrival of the divers on Saturday morning, an event which had been anxiously expected all through Friday, tended in some measure to allay the excitement prevailing near the scene of the disaster. What follows may be taken as an authentic description of how they have played in the affair.

Messrs. Siebe and Gorman, the eminent firm of submarine engineers, of Denmark Street, London, received a telegram informing them of the accident, and requesting the aid of divers from their establishment, between ten and eleven o'clock on Thursday night. Three experienced divers — Frank Davis, Thomas Purvis, and Frederick Garish — were immediately instructed to set out, and they reached Cardiff by 10.15 p.m. on Friday, and, travelling on to Porth by special train, arrived with all the necessary gear with them at Porth at about one o'clock on Saturday morning.

The pit was at once descended, and a preliminary survey of the field of operations was made. Then the three men held a consultation as to the best means of accomplishing the design, and again went down the pit, this time for the purpose of commencing work. It is only fair to the divers, who, it will be seen from the following narrative, used every effort in the power of brave men to put forth to rescue the poor imprisoned colliers, to state that their dangerous subterranean journey was entered on entirely at their own risk and on their own responsibility. A good deal of time was necessarily consumed in the adjustment of their elaborate gear and it was late on in the afternoon before a start was affected. It will be interesting to those unacquainted with the method employed by divers to know that the men were first completely encased in flannel, with which they invested themselves in a small hut near the pit mouth. When under ground they completed dressing by donning the India rubber attire used for the purpose, which is surmounted by a helmet and connected with the air pump by a long length of tubing. For the air supply during what was anticipated would prove a lengthy journey, as much as 2,000 feet of tubing was brought from London, and there was some difficulty experienced in obtaining so large a quantity in the time. Davies and Purvis entered the water, Davis leading, and Garish attending them. They had with

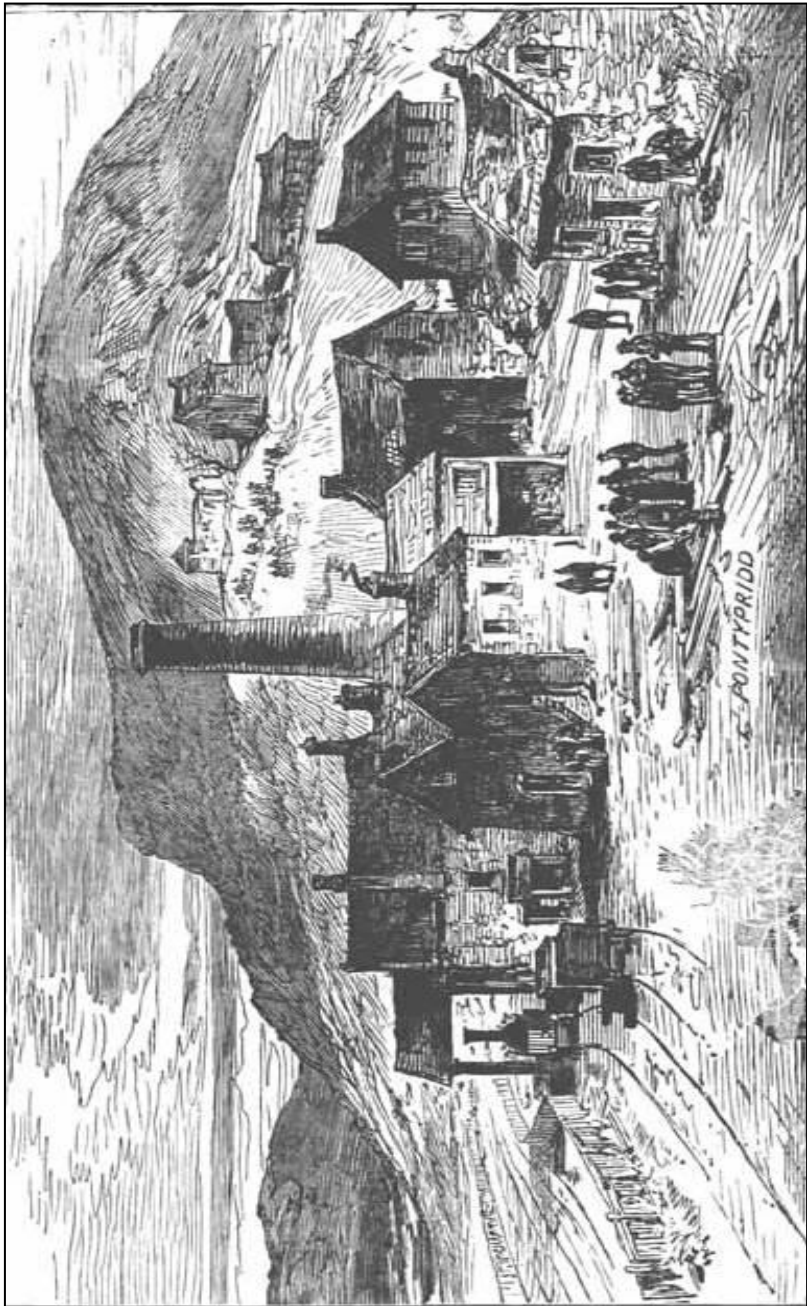
them also Adams, a well known diver from the Bute Docks, Cardiff. Some of the difficulties with which the divers had to contend were indicated in the *South Wales Daily News* on Saturday. But in addition to the fact that they had to use extreme caution in proceeding along the incline, and keeping in mind the turns of the mine which they had to avoid, it will be remembered that they had also to go guard against collision with some loaded trams which blocked the way at a certain point, and, these passed, there was another tram further on in the road which they had to avoid also.

The way, too, was through a dense volume of filthy water, and no light which they could have carried with them could have been of any service. In addition to the tubing and signal lines, Davies carried a rope for the purpose of attaching it, if possible, to the spot where the men are immured, so that guiding himself back by its assistance, he might be able to return again and supply them with food, and so, if possible, keep life in them till they could be got at by the means hitherto pursued — pumping the mine and endeavouring to cut the imprisoned men out. Thus encumbered, working their way in a stooping posture, so as to avoid the entanglement of their tubing, the wonder is not that they were unsuccessful, but that they were able to proceed with safety so far as they did. Their entrance into the water was witnessed by a small number of spectators who had found their way down into the pit. After the ungainly figures of the divers had disappeared in the darkness what took place was, in substance, as follows. With difficulty the men made their way through the water, feeling almost every moment their burden dragging on them more heavily. At length they reached, or believed they reached, the bend where they had been instructed the trams partly blocked the way. Here Purvis remained, Davis proceeding further.

This step was taken in order that Purvis might be able to assist Davis, by passing on to him his line and hose. Thus aided, Davis went on, according to his own reckoning, a considerable distance, either in the direction of the locality at which the missing colliers are incarcerated, or possibly along a turning which would have led him into a dangerous position.

The exact line of route he took cannot at present be more than guessed at. That he employed every measure he could possibly adopt to get at the poor fellows is evident, for he proceeded so far in the water that it became very difficult for him to preserve his equilibrium, and at last, finding he could only signal faintly to those above, he had nothing for it but to return. Before doing so he attached a line to one of the posts on the way to show how far he had been, and that he spared no effort he could put forth is amply evidenced by the fact of 500 feet of tubing having been played out to him. As the road was down hill his lines dragged some distance on the ground, and such an effort, attended by so many over-whelming difficulties,





Rare print of the Tynewydd Colliery inundation 1877

though unfortunately unsuccessful, can only be regarded by those in possession of the facts of the attempt as deserving respect and praise. This step was taken in order that Purvis might be able to assist Davis, by passing on to him his line and hose. Thus aided, Davis went on, according to his own reckoning, a considerable distance, either in the direction of the locality at which the missing colliers are incarcerated, or possibly along a turning which would have led him into a dangerous position.

The exact line of route he took cannot at present be more than guessed at. That he employed every measure he could possibly adopt to get at the poor fellows is evident, for he proceeded so far in the water that it became very difficult for him to preserve his equilibrium, and at last, finding he could only signal faintly to those above, he had nothing for it but to return. Before doing so he attached a line to one of the posts on the way to show how far he had been, and that he spared no effort he could put forth is amply evidenced by the fact of 500 feet of tubing having been played out to him. As the road was down hill his lines dragged some distance on the ground, and such an effort, attended by so many over-whelming difficulties, though unfortunately unsuccessful, can only be regarded by those in possession of the facts of the attempt as deserving respect and praise.

Before the divers set out on their perilous journey it was thought that their unnatural appearance might frighten those of whom they were in search, and as a precaution, Davis took with him a hammer to signal his approach, had he reached the neighbourhood of the spot at which they are imprisoned. Of course the divers could not have heard the voices of the men whom they were seeking, and thus their approach needed the most delicacy and care in its arrangement. Had they succeeded in establishing communication with the poor prisoners their speedy release would have been a much simpler matter than it is at present. A scheme had been thought of by which they could have been supplied with food, and thus their ultimate rescue alive would have been brought much nearer the bounds of possibility than it can be said now to be. But the whole scheme had to be abandoned, and now the facts are public it will be seen how hopeless an experiment it was from the first. Few divers would have undertaken work of such a character, and that the men were brought down and did their utmost proves that no efforts are being spared to procure the hoped for release of the missing miners. The divers are all men of considerable experience in their work—having been engaged in almost every quarter of the globe—but their work is not often carried on under such conditions as these.

It was about ten minutes past seven when they came out, having been in the water 1 hour and 40 minutes. The excitement at the pit mouth and in the

immediate neighbourhood may be imagined. The scene baffled description. The expectation of a speedy release of the men, hastily entertained and buoyed up by the arrival of the divers on the scene, had worked the crowd up to a pitch of intense excitement, and the disappointment consequent on their return with the end in view unaccomplished was affecting in the extreme. During the time occupied in the attempt a cessation of the pumps was necessitated, and thus there a loss of time in the process of clearing out the floods. The pumping was renewed with vigour as soon as the diving experiment had concluded, and up to the time of writing there has been no abating of the work. At Hines' Pit the water is being raised by the bucket and colliery engine, and this afternoon two pumps were being worked in the Tynwydd Pit, a large one from Llwynypia (belonging to the Glamorgan Colliery Company) - having been expressly obtained to supplement the pumping of the other engine, one of the three being kept in reserve, and later on in the afternoon additional pumping power was introduced.

Steady progress is being made in the reduction of the volume of water, and it is confidently anticipated that at the present rate of working the work of cutting into the pillar of coal, behind which the men are imprisoned, may be commenced at midnight. The rate at which the water was being reduced about mid-day averaged two inches an hour perpendicular,—two inches perpendicular being equal to a reduction of five inches on the yard on the dip. This morning part of a door and a tram came in sight, a distinct sign of the hopeful progress that is being made. A couple of hand pumps have been put to work through the hole whence Morgan and the party with him were taken out, with a fair measure of success. When the pit is sufficiently cleared of water to admit of digging the men out, it is calculated that there will be at least 30 hours' work before the searchers' labours can be rewarded with success. Whether it is possible that those of the imprisoned men who are yet alive can survive till that time it remains to be seen. Knocking has been heard at intervals all day today, and the medical men's opinion on the subject is that if the men are strong and hearty they may hold out a considerable time longer. It is almost incredible that they have any food with them beyond a few candles, and there is reason to believe that they would be likely to preserve a light as long as possible. One of the difficulties in the way of their release lies in the possibility of another explosion similar to the one by which William Morgan was killed, and unless the greatest care is exercised—and no amount of care can with certainty be reckoned on to prevent a contingency of that description—the men may share his unhappy fate.

The scene in the neighbourhood of Porth to-day has been of a character which the generally quiet town seldom witnesses within its borders. The early morning train brought a numerous influx of visitors from Cardiff, Pontypridd, Ferndale and places, who filled the streets and public-houses, and congregated thickly about the

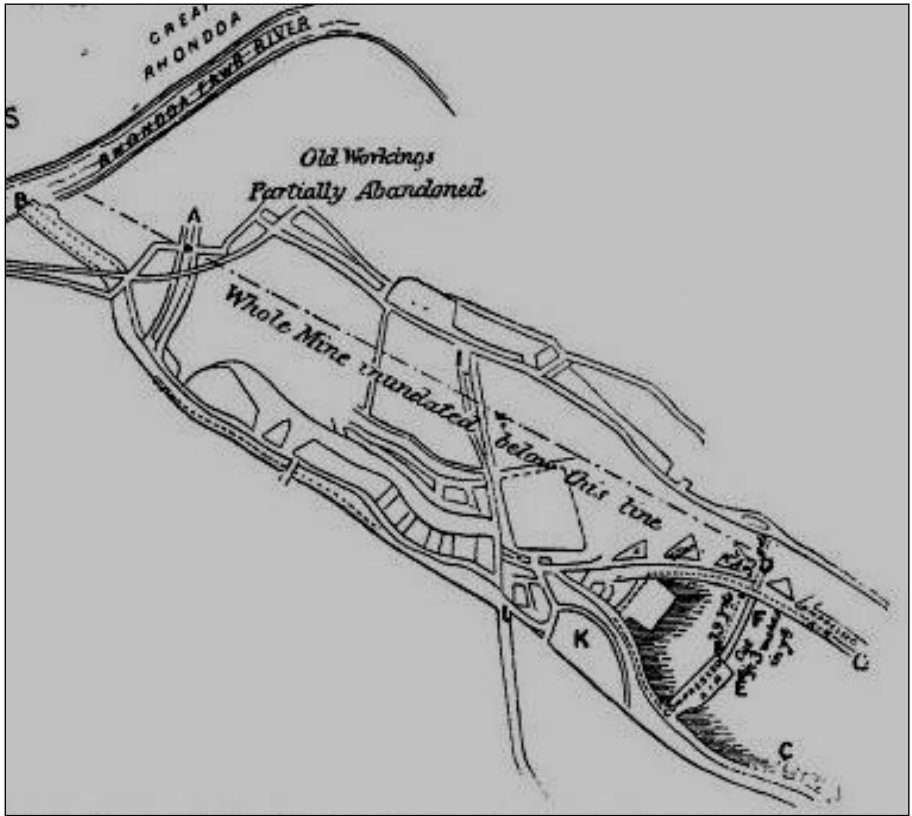
gates of the colliery. But in view of the expected rush to-day measures were taken to prevent crowding, and only those who had business were admitted to the neighbourhood of the pit mouth. A boarding had also being put up to prevent crowding. Dust and grit blew about the street in whirls all the morning, followed in the afternoon by a smart of rain. The public-houses were filled, but there was little disorder, the conversation everywhere being founded on the latest news or conjectures from the pit mouth. William Morgan, the unfortunate victim of the explosion, was buried on Saturday at the parish church at Llanwonno (*St David's Church, Gyfeillion*). A large and sympathizing crowd followed the body to the grave. It is due to the colliery owners and managers in the neighbourhood to say that they are aiding in every way the untiring efforts of the company to obtain the release of their imprisoned workmen.

### **Porth, Monday night, April 16<sup>TH</sup> 1877**

Another day in the coal tomb – Progress of the rescuing operations  
(From the '*Western Mail*' special correspondent)

The shadows of night are falling over the hills and slopes of the Rhondda, and still the heavy eye-lids of hundreds of watchers burn with expectation flooding the deep-chested valley of Porth, and those who we seek, who we delve for, whom we mourn as worse than dead, are yet undiscovered, invisible, entombed. What though the distant coke ovens light up the hedgerows, while the copper and ink in the deepening sky gave a picturesque tinge to the hilly scene? One cares not for the poetry of the spot, because the men you meet, the voices you hear, tell only of one weary, heart-crushing, soul-rendering theme, the saddening, sickening, self-same story of the imprisoned miners. One question, and only one is uppermost. Who will bring from the colliery ocean, from the black sea underworld, tidings of the starving, pent up, apparently heaven abandoned colliers? As the last trembling wave struggles vainly with the unyielding steam that plays havoc amongst the watery expanse, choking up the greedy throats of the far reaching pipes, whose shall be the hand to send home the final drift, to loosen the last coal-block, to open up the passage so long, so patiently, so heroically attempted, by which the lives and the free may communicate with the prisoners of the mineral night?

There is an interminable array of tubes, of cast-iron shoulders, disjointed pipes, and pumping gear generally, conveyed by ever ready gangs of men to the mouth of the Tynwydd Pit. Machinery, of a certainty, is at hand in plenty; men sufficient to hew out a little world are here. All that wealth can pay for, all that ingenuity can suggest, all that bravery can dare, is being put into the service of the imprisoned workmen of the deep, and still we remain like men blindfolded and hand-tied,



#### PLANS OF THE WORKINGS IN THE TYNEWYDD PIT

A = Place where the bodies of two men and a boy were taken out drowned. B = the spot where the water was struck, 95 yards below the river. C = Stall where the first five men were found on the second day. D = Cut in the coal in which William Morgan was killed. E = Stall from whence the last five men were delivered. G+H = Places at which Morgan and his mates were at work, and from which they escaped to. F = Where they were entombed for 10 days. I to J+ Incline of 14 yards length. K = Place where Hughes and his son are supposed to be. (Larger maps at pages 315 & 316).

unable to do that which we would, for the weight of the hours pressed heavily upon the most courageous hearts, and the mountains of coal yield slowly, the inky oceans slackens by inches. Up to the time of writing, some 5 feet of coal has been driven through. The work of driving and pumping is that on which all hope is now centred. As has been already stated, the operation of diving proved a failure, and the three divers from London, as well as the special man placed at the disposal of the colliery company by Mr. John M'Connochie, Lord Bute's engineer, have left here. Pumping was resumed on Sunday, and the highest expectations were formed of the efficiency of the Llwynypia steam pump, a costly affair, capable of raising over 30,000 gallons of water an hour. There was one drawback at the outset, namely, a lack of steam power, and in consequence, on the level heading near the top of the engine dip, and to the boiler previously erected, another had to be fixed. By energetic and constant work from 6 o'clock in the morning until mid-day the water had been lowered 6 inches perpendicularly.

Some would tell you that at the time the coal-dyed volume had been reduced 3 feet; but it is important, in coming to a conclusion as to the value of the information given both below and above the pit's mouth, to distinguish between the various modes of water measurement – before that, for instance, which follows the rail and that which is struck perpendicularly.

By wading through the water, it is calculated some of the exploring party have got within 15 yards of the imprisoned men; and at noon-day, and later, the customary knocks – the 1,2,3,4,5 peculiar beats of the pick – were given and were responded to. I myself did not today hear the weird soundings from the wave encircled, coal begirt cavern in which the men are, but I was told by an experienced collier, who ever since a lad has worked in the mines of the district, that when the last strange knocks came from the distant gaol, the feeling which came over him was one overpoweringly more awfully heart-sickening than any he had ever realised although his experiences of mining disasters were neither few nor unimportant.

Doubtless this arises from the fact that the present tragic event is without parallel in South Wales. It is so very melancholy to feel that you are, by reason of mechanical appliances, of personal ability, of hearty enthusiasm, of wealth, of energy, able to do so much and to see that you affect so little. "They are biting their way like mice in a hole," said the collier to me.

"Some," he continued, "supposed that the knocking from other side were only echoes. But when we varied the raps, we found that others still followed the system in use at the Tynewydd Pit. The sounds could not be echoes. They were those of our fellow workmen, and seemed to be strongly given, as if by a sledge."

## Rescuers working night and day

Difficult as it is to obtain any information on which the sure hope of the release of the imprisoned colliers may be founded, the tidings from the workers in the pit to-day is of a more hopeful character than was at first anticipated it would prove to be. And the latest news gleaned by diligent inquiry of those best able to furnish it gives us hope that the men may yet be reached, and that some, at any rate, of the imprisoned nine may be brought out alive. There is no relaxing of the arduous efforts of those in search of the poor incarcerated colliers, and while some, who, unacquainted with the perilous conditions under which the difficult work of securing the men's release is carried on, are not slow in venting the vials of their indignation on the colliery proprietors, because various impossible schemes have not been adopted, those in full possession of the facts are everywhere ready to accord high praise to the colliery owners under the trying and obstinate difficulty of the circumstances with which they have to contend. It cannot be too strongly impressed on those who are anxious to find fault with some one because the men are not yet released that the parties on whose shoulders the blame can with any degree of justice be laid are certain not the managers or owners of the pit.

Every means they could use with any hope of success they have been able to employ, and those who carefully scan the facts will readily perceive that if their labours are a failure – of those of the men yet alive succumb before they can be got out – it will not be by reason of any slackness on the part of the pit owners. Night and day the workers have carried on under conditions the difficulty of which would at once appal those unfamiliar with mining operations; and that those directing affairs underground have hitherto preserved heart and hope, and vigorously scouted despair, is a good omen that their unceasing efforts may at length be rewarded with success. The five hours unfortunately wasted by the hopeless efforts so bravely made by the divers had a material effect in delaying the men's release, but it appears to have been necessary that the effort should have been made, and all regret that such delay has been caused are now, of course, utterly futile. Few, however, would have thought that any candidates anxious to repeat the experiment would present themselves, but among the surging anxious crowd outside the confines of the works, more than one man was to-day heard to express the wish that the experiment had been carried further.

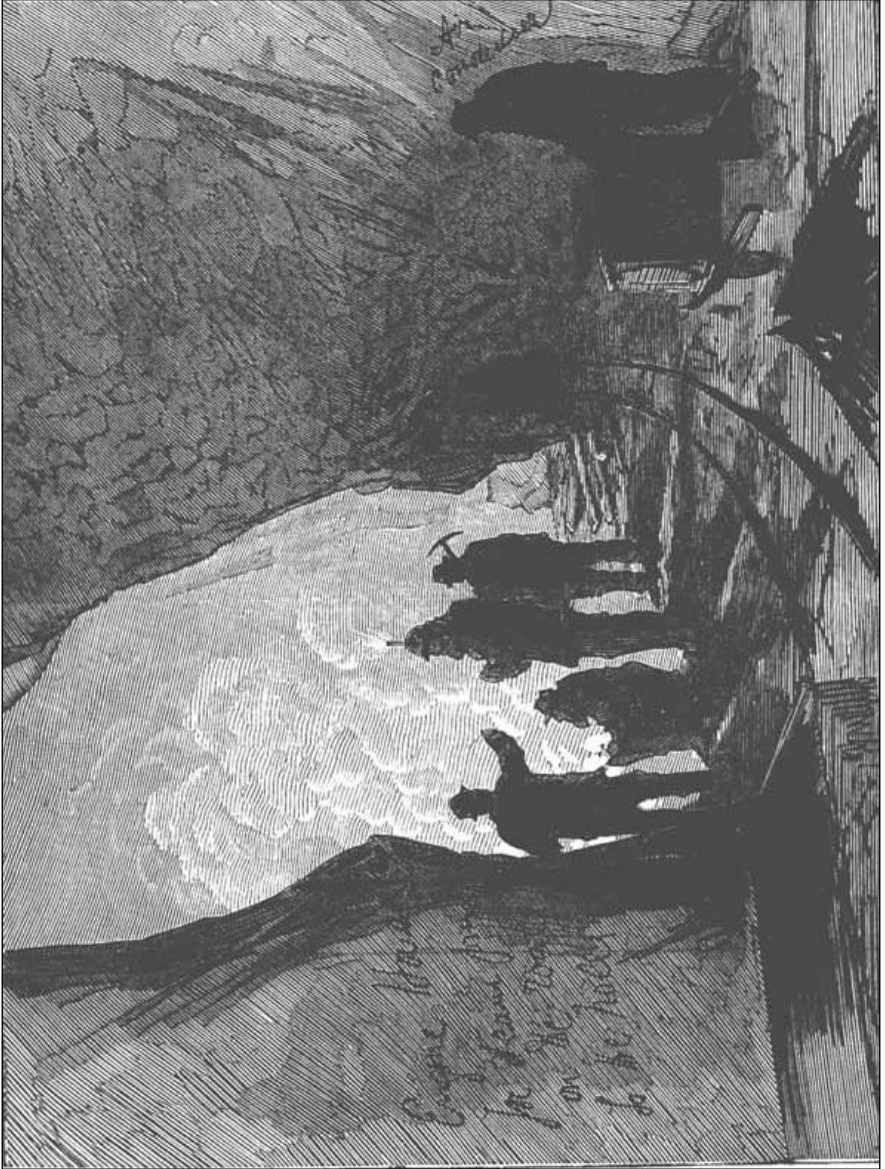
This afternoon an applicant from Abercarn came forward with a strong desire to undertake the job over again, freely expressing the opinion that what had been done had really only been half done, and that his assistance was the only factor needed to secure at once the release of the unfortunate colliers. Trying as it is to be compelled to listen to suggestions founded on hopeless ignorance of the difficulties of such a journey, the preferred services of this aspirant were

courteously treated, but naturally declined. The man said he had travelled down specially to try the task, having read of the doings of the divers in the papers, and being convinced in his own mind that they had not gone far enough, and that if they only had been used to the sinuous workings of a colliery they would have easily reached the poor fellows, to rescue whom they penetrated so far. He brought nothing with him to indicate that he had ever done work of such a character, but he appeared full of confidence that he had only to don the diving dress, and in a few minutes he should reach the spot where the men are imprisoned. He asked whether the diving dress and apparatus were at hand, and was surprised to find that they had been conveyed away on the previous day.

One of the bystanders, evidently a little sceptical as to his capabilities, put the question to him whether he was aware of the unusual method of travelling the divers had employed—going through the water backwards. His reply was a certain indication of the utter futility of his mission. "Do you think I'd try to face an enemy backwards?" he said. It was useless to point out to him that the experienced men who had made the attempt before him had found they could only proceed by adopting an abnormal posture. That he took to be a signal proof that they did not understand their business. Nor was it of much more use to tell him what difficulty they had had to cope with in the guarding against the entanglement of their tubing, and how, after proceeding as far as with any reasonable safety they could go, they had reluctantly to return. He was confident that had his services been engaged the matter would have assumed a different aspect. In the end it turned out that his chief experience had been in well-sinking, and the utter futility of such an offer at this stage of the proceedings being apparent, he went on his way, declaring, however, that he was still of opinion he might have been of great service. This incident is put on record merely to indicate the outside hindrances from insane suggestions the proprietors have to meet with.

Those "outside the ring," so to speak, are seldom able to comprehend the difficulties with which those in the thick of the conflict have to grapple. On Sunday, it will be remembered it was thought that the volume of water in the pit would be so far reduced that by midnight digging might with safety be renewed. About 12 o'clock on Sunday night the diggers were able to get to work on the "gob" which intervened between them and the thick seam of coal that has to be penetrated before those of whom they are in search can be approached. The "gob" was driven at unceasingly, but it was not until nearly three o'clock this afternoon that the pillar of coal itself could be attacked. Then the work became of a more straightforward description. But in order to carry it on, an artificial dam to keep off the water from the workers had to be constructed from the material furnished by the "gob" and clay, and the men are in fact thus digging below the level of the water. A set of three gangs, four men in each gang, was at once





**The rescuers underground at Tynewydd published in 1877**

organized, and the work went on swiftly and hopefully. This has been the case ever since. Here it should be noted that there has been no unwillingness to aid in the search work, every collier in Porth tendering and giving all the help in his power. It was arranged that each gang should work a four hours' "spell," and in the first three hours about eight feet of coal had been cut through. The rate should increase as the work proceeds. Taking this estimate as the basis of a calculation of the earliest period at which access to the imprisoned colliers can be secured, it is thought that the place of their confinement cannot be gained until early on Wednesday morning. The pillar of coal which is being cut through is over 30 yards in width, and it is hoped that some of it has been cleared away by those imprisoned behind it. How much of the long wall of coal which separates the incarcerated men from their deliverers has been broken down is a question which will materially affect the time at which they may be got out. Meanwhile, at intervals, knocking has still been heard from the poor fellows who are immured.

The blows are a little fainter than they seemed to be yesterday, but the hope is not extinguished that, although the men must be languishing in great feebleness and suffering, they may yet be reached in time.

The pumping has proceeded as vigorously as ever, the Glamorgan Company's pump, which has an ejecting power equal to that of both the other pumps put together, working admirably. Mr. Wales has expressed his opinion that the work to-day was going on in the most hopeful manner. The work of clearing Hines' pit of water has also been carried on without cessation. Were it possible to put further pumping power, it would have been done, and supplies of piping have been carried down the pit all day.

During the day a Tangye's special pump of large dimensions, supplied by Messrs. J. Williams and Sons, of Cardiff, was put down the pit, and an engine belonging to the Taff Vale Company has been on the rails near the colliery for some time past ready to supplement the pumping power if required.

This, the fifth day of suspense for the wives, relatives, and friends of the entombed men has been, like all those that have passed hitherto, illumined at times by gleams of hope renewed again and again. Every scrap of tidings from the pit mouth is eagerly caught up and pondered on. The excitement, which has all along been of a subdued and concentrated rather than of a demonstrative character, grows more intense as the hours drag by. The boisterous weather and heavy rain seem to have had little influence in thinning the crowds of spectators about the town, and though the influx was not so large to-day as yesterday, everywhere visitors from the other colliery neighbourhoods were loitering about the place, and the scene, though quiet and sad, was a busy one.

In some quarters no little surprise seems to be felt that the men have held out so long, but their chances of holding out have, it must be remembered, been greatly increased by the fact that they have had a supply of water.

Whether or not they had any food remaining with them could have had but little at the best, but the devices which men in such a strait will adopt often surprise and astound those who have never been placed in such circumstances. They would probably for their own sake, keep with them lights as long as possible, though they may have had a small store of candles, which would have afforded slight nourishment for a time. If they are reached alive great care will have to be exercised in their removal, and it is unlikely that they will be at once brought to the surface. That all these contingencies are receiving every attention there can be no doubt, and another day will probably bring forth intelligence of a decisive and reliable character. The wide-spread interest in the accident evinced among all classes of the community is shown by the frequent inquiries at Cardiff, Porth, and Pontypridd, telegraphed from all parts of the country. Those supposed to be informed on the subject are waylaid everywhere by anxious inquirers, and the scene at the Porth Station and at Pontypridd Junction, at the arrival and departure of trains, is of a description which will be long remembered by all who have witnessed it.

### **Porth, Tuesday night, April 17<sup>TH</sup> 1877**

The time at which access to the imprisoned men may be obtained still remains uncertain. The general opinion among those best informed on the subject is that the barrier of coal dividing them from the rescuing party cannot possibly be broken down before six o'clock to-morrow (Wednesday) morning. This is the anticipation of those who entertain the more sanguine view of the situation. Others, perhaps looking at facts more carefully, entertain the hope that the men may be reached between eight and nine o'clock tomorrow morning, while the more gloomy among the prognosticators say that the men cannot by any means be released or even reached before mid-day or afternoon. By those inclined to take a yet sombre view of the situation, the conjecture has been set afloat that it will be Thursday before communication with the incarcerated colliers is established.

Amid the confusion of conjecture and speculation it is not easy to penetrate to the truth of the circumstances on which anticipations of this character are founded. The fact of to-day's labours are, however, of a simple nature, and as they may be shortly narrated they will, perhaps, form the best basis on which judgment of the date of the men's release may be established. When the work of hewing through the separating seam of coal was commenced - the time of beginning operations being shortly before three was judged that there were about 35 yards of solid coal

to be cut through. This coal, however, it must be borne in mind is of an exceptionally hard description and it is unusually difficult to make a way through it. Added to this is to be remembered the fact that the workers are labouring down hill. Still, despite of all obstacles, the progress has to-day been remarkable, and the rate at which the coal has been cut has excited no little wonder and admiration from more than one of the bystanders who have witnessed the work - and most of these are persons thoroughly conversant with colliery working. It was reckoned that the men had driven through about 14 yards by four o'clock this afternoon, leaving 21 yards to be cut through (or thereabouts) before the men can be reached. It is hardly possible, though it is within the bounds of probability that the rate of progress may slightly increase. On the other hand, it is not impossible that unforeseen hindrances to the work may still further prolong the date of the release of the poor fellows who have so long been immured. But taking into account every favourable contingency, and basing the calculation on the most sanguine anticipation, if access to the men is gained tomorrow there will be every reason for rejoicing at the unexpectedly propitious turn events will have taken.

Calm consideration of the whole circumstances of the case is hardly to be expected from those in immediate connection with the perilous work of aiding the men's release. The facts speak for themselves. It is variously given out that when the work of cutting at the pillar of coal began yesterday 32, 33, 34 or 35 solid yards of hard mineral had to be hewn through. This work has to be proceeded within a tunnel hardly more than a yard high, and barely double that distance wide, with the additional disadvantage of the declivity being steep.

Three "shifts" of four hours each are worked, four men being engaged at each shift. Over the three shifts Messrs. Daniel Thomas, James Thomas, and William Davies, Coedcae, preside respectively, and only those who have witnessed the brave fellows at their exhausting work can form an adequate conception of the unwonted difficulties under which it still so hopefully proceeds. One shift to-day cut through in the four hours as much as 3 yards 10 inches - very good working, all who have mastered the situation will be ready to admit. Whether this rate will be repeated, or, as is hoped by some, increased, remains, as yet, altogether problematical. Late to-night it is thought that 18 yards have been penetrated, and this gives hope that release is nigh at hand. Meanwhile, the pumping out of the water from the pit proceeds steadily, but surely. In one sense to-day's efforts in this respect have been of an unusually trying character. There have been difficulties in the transmission of pipes down the shaft and their safe conveyance thence which have assisted to render the work of rescue in all respects more arduous.

Three special pumps are busy clearing the pit. The services of the Taff Vale Company's locomotive have been made available by laying down more piping, and it is estimated that the water has throughout the day been raised at the rate of about 400 or 500 gallons per minute. The task of release seems almost doomed to be surrounded by hindrances. All day one of the main difficulties which has had to be combated has been the accumulation of the pumped-out water in the chief body of the pit, which has made even the main portions of the colliery—generally pretty dry—resemble a mud pond. The conveying of workmen up and down the pit has in consequence demanded unusual care, lest more than the allotted number of hands should proceed down at one time.

Great caution has been exercised necessarily in the transmission of materials to and fro, and those controlling affairs have been careful to prevent the additional weight of a superfluous visitor on the carriage calling for a larger water supply to draw the carriage up and down than might otherwise have been necessary. Precautions of this description were, as has been hinted, rendered essential by the gathering volume of water at the bottom of the shaft, and the need for clearing it all as rapidly as possible. And the work has been hindered by stoppages from time to time in the arrangement of the piping and of other details. Every day it becomes more apparent that the plucky effort made by the divers ought never to have been attempted.

The pinch of the delay has been particularly felt to-day as the hour of the men's release approaches. That some of them, perhaps five (it is almost hopeless to think that more can have survived), are yet living at the time of writing is a certainty. There can be no question that some of the men have yet survived, for knocking has been distinctly audible all day, though at long intervals. The knocking, too, was as vigorous as ever. That it has not been so frequent is hardly an element entering into the case, for the incarcerated men must long before this have been aware that their deliverers are steadily making way towards them, and they will hardly care to waste their heavily taxed powers of endurance by knocking more often than seems absolutely necessary.

Mr. Riches, one of the principal engineers connected with the Taff Vale Company, had a special apparatus brought to the scene of the operations to-day, by which it was hoped that a shorter way of establishing communication than those at present in process of adoption could have been made use of. The apparatus consisted of a length of tubing provided with self-acting serrated machinery, which would have drilled a hole through the coal, and the projector entertained a hope that in this way food might have been conveyed to the poor fellows through the tubing earlier than they can be reached by the present operations.

To meet the difficulty which is expected with the compressed air from the chamber where the imprisoned miners are confined, a pair of double doors was prepared this afternoon, and these will be put up as soon as practicable. The suggestion thrown out by a correspondent had been anticipated before the date of his letter, but, of course, until to-day it would have been almost useless to prepare for the contingency. The neighbourhood of the pit's mouth and the streets of Porth have been quieter to-day than since news of the melancholy occurrence was first spread, and though the interest is unabated, it seems to be now realised that no tidings can be gathered by any amount of patient hovering on the outskirts of the scene of the disaster.

Attention is now concentrated on the chances of the men remaining alive till their rescuers can reach them. It is stated that life may be sustained under the circumstances in which they are living as long as nine days, and perhaps longer. There have been instances in which even so long a time as eleven days of similar suffering, which has not ended in death, is recorded. The men are known to have a supply of water, and though water would be repugnant to anyone placed in happier circumstances, it is not undrinkable, and not unwholesome. They are also supposed to be in possession of a small supply of candles, and if this be the case the difficulties in the way of life being preserved are not so great as have been imagined.

Possibly they are without light, but from the fact that Morgan's party preserved their lights this is hardly likely, though the supply may have given out. That they have been working hard for their own deliverance is shown by the vigour with which knocking has been kept up. On their release they cannot for some little time be brought to the surface, and great care will have to be exercised in conveying them to the centre chamber, where they will probably remain for some time to be doctored and cared for, before they can with safety be conveyed up the shaft to daylight once more. No effort is being omitted to secure their release, and though this, the 7th day of their incarceration, is perhaps a more anxious one than all the foregoing, those best able to judge are still hopeful of a successful issue to the hazardous undertaking.

Porth, Tuesday night (Later)

The latest news from the pit is that knocking is still distinctly audible, and that the pumping and the digging are going on as successfully as the most sanguine could desire. It is now stated that the men will not be reached till to-morrow night. Our Wolverhampton correspondent telegraphs: — Mining engineers of many years experience in South Staffordshire do not even tonight despair of the poor colliers at Pontypridd being reached alive. They cite the memorable inundation of the

celebrated Nine Locks Pit of Earl Dudley eight years' ago. Ten men and three boys were imprisoned, most of them 108, and one of them 140 hours, or six days and nights, yet only one died. Life has been known to endure eight days and nights under similar circumstances. Such colliers suffer most from cold, not hunger.

Porth, Wednesday evening, April 18<sup>TH</sup> 1877

The earliest news this morning was surprising in its unexpected hopefulness. At six o'clock it was found that of the variously estimated distance of coal separating the imprisoned men from their rescuers (30 or 35 yards), as much as 22 yards and 1 foot had been driven through, and the expectation of the speedy release of the immured colliers consequently increased in strained intensity every hour. The rapidity with which the work has proceeded is almost unparalleled, and has astonished even the oldest colliery workers. The distressing incidents of the last few days have now reached a crisis, and this morning and during the greater part of the afternoon even those most intimately connected with the work in progress, those actually assisting and witnessing the strenuous labours of the diggers, and the constant, steady conquest of the flood of water in the pit by the pumps, were unable to hazard more than a conjecture as to the exact hour when the poor fellows might be expected to be liberated.

It seems idle at such a critical state of affairs to compliment those who have throughout been working with might and main in superintending the operations on the masterly grasp they have gained of the difficulties of the situation; but it is impossible to forbear to remark that better work in every respect, both on the part of masters and men, has seldom been done in the face of obstacles so overwhelming. The hope conveyed by the early information this morning was, however, in no inconsiderable degree dashed by the recollection that the most crucial turn in affairs had not yet been passed. For, given that access were obtained to the chamber of compressed air in which the men were confined, the most difficult portion of the undertaking yet remained to be grappled with and overcome. More than one difficulty will readily present itself to those who have realised the whole of the facts of the situation.

As the work of hewing into the coal barrier proceeds, varied at intervals by the blasting operations, at times the mandrills of the colliers working out their own release can be heard with the utmost distinctness, and the latest tidings were that the sounds came as vigorously as ever. At the time of writing it is confidently assumed that barely more than four or five yards distance separates the imprisoned men from those outside. It does not necessarily follow, however, that their release will be consummated immediately the barrier is cut through; for the exercise of greater caution now becomes necessary every minute the work

proceeds. All day, therefore, the anxiety has below been strained to the utmost. But though this has been the case, every step is being directed with cool judgment and careful calculation. Those who, like the writer, personally inspected the whole of the various stages of the work as it proceeded below the surface this afternoon, could not fail to have been struck with the calm and business-like manner in which everything was carried on.

Since five o'clock on Saturday evening it is estimated that the Llwynypia pump has thrown out 50 feet of water from the dip. The pump is capable of even better work, but hitherto it has been impossible to attach to it additional steam power. This afternoon another boiler was got to work in the pit with great success. As the pumps are drawing the volume of water up the incline of the dip every now and then hindrances are caused by the fixing of the additional pumping, but the general opinion of the best engineering authority on the spot is that it is an utter impossibility that more could have been done in this direction, and it is a marvel that so much has been done. The boiler which has hitherto alone worked the pump is a 22-foot engine, and it has worked admirably. Steam coal has been used all along—a necessity which it will be seen was obviously engendered. About three feet an hour is the rate at which the water is being lowered.

At eleven o'clock this morning the position of affairs on this side of the pillar of the coal which is being slowly reduced in bulk was simply this. The men were digging at a depth of six feet below the water level. As they worked it was gradually becoming evident that the coal was, as they called it, becoming "rotten." The men worked with energy, almost super-human power, the power of every muscle concentrated in each stroke. Meanwhile, elsewhere, busy preparations have been made for fitting the three double doors which are to form air chambers. It has been suggested that, with a view to rendering the atmosphere on the side of the workers of the same density as that into which it is compressed in the stall in which the men are shut up, compressed air shall be pumped into the furthest of the chambers.

That there is a danger which may not at the first time appear as great as it now seems, those who have most ably studied the position all admit. The excitement of the moment when communication is established will be intense. Only those familiar with the warm-hearted character of men engaged in mining operations can form a notion of it. But the fact of the work so far having succeeded beyond expectation seems to upset the probability of any failure now.

All day men have been widening the hole through which Morgan and his companions were released, for this is the only mode of ingress and egress to the heading. Those who go through have to crawl through a distance of eleven yards.



From the mouth of the hole to the spot where the colliers are digging out their imprisoned comrades is a distance of a little over 55 yards. Just at the time of dispatching this parcel the intelligence comes in that the men have been spoken with and that they can hear one another's voices, a fact which will help on the time when the welcome succour arrives considerably, as some little doubt was this morning entertained lest as the spot where the men were supposed to be immured was neared, it should be found that the others had been working not exactly in the same direction. This would not have the effect some have imagined, and the contingency is, to say the most of it, an unlikely one. Dr. Davis and his assistant are ready as soon as their services are called into requisition. The plan which they will adopt is this: - Blankets and light food, wine, milk, and gruel will be taken down with them, and they will descend the mine.

Every precaution will be taken before the poor fellows are brought out, and it will be some little time after their release from the stall before they can be brought up to the surface. How long that period will be is a matter depending on the state of health in which they are found, and if they show signs of extreme exhaustion—which can hardly be the case, inasmuch as had they been so they would long ago have ceased knocking - their removal will occupy longer time than those around the pit's mouth anticipate. Mr. Beith, whom Mr. Riches has left in charge of the apparatus, by which it is hoped food can be drilled through to the men, has been down the pit to-day making the necessary arrangements for its use, should it be decided to put it in operation.

The first sound of the men's voices – A shout of welcome  
From a '*Cardiff Times*', correspondent, Porth, nine o'clock P. M. Wednesday

During the last few hours there has been a change in the sad scene, which has now almost become a part of life in Porth. The hundreds who are in the vicinity of the pit, and the many more who are parading the streets of this usually quiet village, have hitherto displayed an intense anxiety in their faces, but their countenances are now somewhat brightened by the cheering intelligence which was brought to the pit's mouth by every person that ascends.

The fact being that not only have the previous communications by knocking been increased and become more audible, but now voices are heard from the entombed colliers. This pleasing intelligence was communicated to the outsiders shortly before three o'clock, and, as may be imagined, increased the reigning excitement.

Pumping and digging have been continued increasingly and very satisfactorily. The water in the drift is gradually, but surely, subsiding; but still, it will be a long time ere it will be lowered to such a level as to relieve the pressure in the heading

where the poor waterlogged men have been imprisoned for the past eight days. A visit down this steep declivity, this afternoon, showed what a vast volume of water must have escaped from the old workings, for although the pumps have been kept going rapidly for days some hundreds of thousands, if not millions of gallons have yet to be discharged. As showing the satisfactory work done by the large pumping engines at the bottom of the drift, it may be mentioned that during the 11 hours before seven o'clock some 13½ feet of water had been pumped out, which is equal to a perpendicular depth of nearly two feet.

The large volume of water which is there pumped out of the drift finds its way to the roadway, making it anything but pleasant to traverse. In the drift one cannot help observing a relic of the courageous efforts made by the London divers to rescue the poor fellows. They asserted that they had descended some 500 feet, inasmuch as that amount of tubing was played out, and their statement is being hourly verified.

The rope is to be seen disappearing in the water, a convincing proof of the gallant attempt made to get at the incarcerated men. The workings throughout the pit are enlivened not only by the continual noise of the pumping engines, but anxious colliers are to be seen flitting hither and thither, as directed, doing their utmost to release their poor suffering fellow-workmen. As it has already been stated in these columns, the work of cutting through the coal is being done by relays of colliers, four working at each turn of four hours. That knocking was heard during the morning was one source of comfort to the gallant fellows, who have worked so hard to release their friends who

have been famishing in their seclusion during the past few days, but this was nothing as compared with the pleasurable excitement which spread throughout the colliery at two o'clock, when it was known that not only had the knocks been repeated, but that the voice of one, at least, of the incarcerated men had been heard, although indistinctly. This was, as just stated, at two o'clock, when a fresh relay of colliers commenced their work. Before they commenced their work they made the usual signal by knocking, and finding that the knocks from the imprisoned men were exceedingly vigorous, one of the colliers rubbed his pick against the coal, and almost instantaneously similar noises were heard from the either side of the huge wall. This was so satisfactory that the colliers shouted for joy, and were gladdened by hearing responsive and sympathetic shouts from the other side. Time, which in such an emergency is most valuable, was not wasted in parleying of this kind, but the work of cutting the coal was renewed with much vigour as those who are acquainted with Welsh colliers, strenuously labouring to release suffering fellow labourers in their hour of peril, can only form the slightest conception of.

At six o'clock, the time for those who commenced work at two o'clock to cease—and each relay persists in working to the last moment of its term—some twenty-eight and a half yards of the seam of coal had been penetrated. The thickness of this seam was anxiously estimated, some giving the thickness at 35 yards and others at 38. Be this as it may, and crediting the poor imprisoned colliers with having cut through some distance when they were strong enough to do so, several yards still remain to be penetrated.

A hole, a yard long, is drilled ahead of the face of the working, and now the end is so near elaborate arrangements are being made to get the poor fellows out in safety. Three doors, which will be air-tight, are being fitted close to the place where the men are working, so that when they have cut through, the condensed air may not escape and the water then flow on to the incarcerated men, who would, after all the efforts made for their release, only find a watery grave, if these precautions were not taken.

When the six o'clock team commenced their work they began without knocking, but at seven o'clock work was suspended for a short interval in order that communication might be again held. The writer then heard distinctly the knocks of the poor fellows, which were followed by enthusiastic shouts from the searchers. The latter, it will be heard with pleasure, were rewarded by hearing shouts from the other side, and, as showing the satisfactory character of the work done, the voice or voices were then so distinct as almost to be recognisable. Indeed, during a lull, the voice of one man was heard, and there was a general unanimity that this poor fellow was George Jenkins. He was heard to say, in Welsh, "The hole is nearly through," he no doubt being led, in his anxiety and excitement, to believe that it was much nearer than it really was. He subsequently advised his energetic liberators, still speaking in the vernacular, to "cut a little to the right." This they of course did, and after the interchange of one or two other signals the work of cutting was resumed.

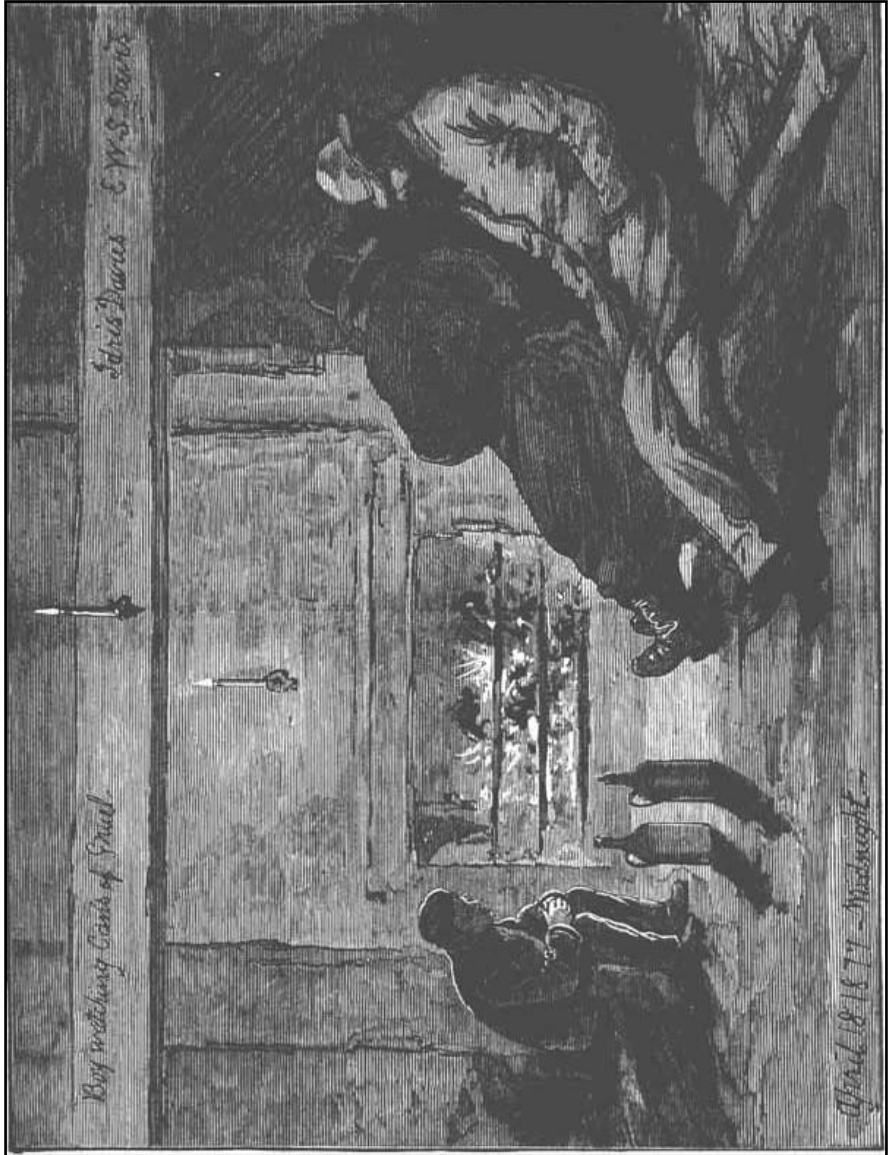
This intelligence gave the greatest satisfaction to all the earnest men, not only those engaged in working, but also those who were waiting patiently for the release of the starving men. The colliers who have been cutting the coal assert that it is very hard, and this being so the poor fellows cannot possibly be reached before midnight. This is the earliest calculation, and a general opinion is entertained that they will not be got out until between 3 and 4 in the morning. Food in the form of arrowroot and beef tea has been prepared, and is in readiness in the pit where Dr. Davies (Cymmer), and two assistants—Mr. Neale and Mr. Dulse, are in waiting to do all that surgical skill can do for the poor men. On the top of the pit are Dr. James, Pandy; Dr. Idris Davies, Rhondda Valley; and Dr. Davies, Mountain Ash wait to render their services if need be.

## **Pontypridd, midnight, Wednesday**

The latest communication as to the exact time when the release of the imprisoned colliers may be confidently anticipated is to the effect that the men cannot possibly be reached until four o'clock on Thursday morning. This is the most sanguine anticipation, and the calculation is probably founded on the best authorities possible to obtain on the subject. From careful inquiry and from various sources the conclusion framed at the time of telegraphing by your correspondent is that, so far as can be at present seen, there is little hope that the men may be got at before the time named. Various statements are current as to the period when the men may be reached. By some who have just come from the spot where the work is being carried on it is thought that satisfactory communication will not be established before six or eight o'clock.

Towards midnight the excitement, which at the pit mouth, and in the yard and its outskirts, had become intense, seemed slightly to decrease, and the anxious crowd who had gathered within the barrier, seeing that there was no prospect of reliable tidings until morning, slowly dispersed. The scheme which the doctors intend to put in operation as soon as the release of the imprisoned men can be safely consummated is thoroughly in train. That several of the poor fellows are still alive is evidenced by the voices which have been heard and distinctly recognised by the seeking party.

The work of driving this coal for the last few yards is the most difficult part of the whole undertaking, for the fixing of the double doors is a proceeding which occupies much longer time than was this morning expected. Clay is employed to hold them, and the difficulty increases as the distance between the searching party and those imprisoned decreases. The last news which could be gathered before I left Porth was that three yards of coal had yet to be cut through, and the rate of cutting, of course, becomes slower almost every minute.



Rescuers resting and awaiting their turn at the face



**William Galloway, Assistant Inspector of Mines. First government official on the scene but barely mentioned in the reports. This intelligent but abrasive official was disliked by many of the colliers. Later in life he was knighted for his work in the coal industry.**

## Chapter three

**Porth Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup> 1877**

(From an occasional 'Western Mail' correspondent)

I am standing by the old rattleways of a balance pit, one of the oldest contrivances known, which has a "rattle" and a "clang" and above the roof goes forth an occasional querulous cry as if the chains were in agony. There is a grim-faced white-haired old man, who is the janitor of the pit, who does duty every night and day, who seems never to take off his clothes, who lets down mining engineers, colliery owners, reporters, with the same placidity of face as he lets them up. He could sit for Aaron as regards to his visage, but he is faithful and kind. Rumour says that one of the entombed men is related to him, and that accounts for his earnestness; but this I do not believe. He knows personally every man and boy who works in the pit, has had for years a chat or a nod with them day and night, and like a grave elder he watches over his people.

There comes forward a gentleman with a strongly marked face. He is in a spring suit, smokes a short pipe, has a keen blue eye, and watches and listens attentively, he has a slight overcoat, that seems out of place amongst the dirt and smoke, but presently the light overcoat is throw off, the gloves are put in the pockets, and the stranger steps on to the cage, and by the light of an oil lamp we watch him turn out of sight, the eyes as keen, and the lip as firm as if going into battle. I am interested in watching that cage.

Here come four men, leading coal owners, men whose signature any day would be good for £30,000 or £40,000. As coolly as if sitting down to breakfast they too step on the cage. There is no tremor there, though the destiny of four families hangs on a chain which might snap any moment in the course of its 100 yards run. The owners are thorough gentlemen, open to suggestion, keenly alive to the trying incident of the calamity, and day and night they know no rest. I have met one shouldering a door, his face begrimed, but there is a light of human sympathy gleaming from beyond the grime and makes his face a picture. If ever man deserved to succeed in his labour of love he does.

Here another picture. A quite cottage, where in sits a solitary woman. The blinds are down, but the door is open. Every day, I am told, she lowers the blinds, and sits in the chair moaning in her dread sorrow. There is every indication of death there, but no dead. Even the bed looks prepared for the sad burden one often sees in a colliery village. The lineaments of life lie beneath the white covers as motionless as the sculptor's model. The open door is touching in its indication. There is just a gleam of hope left just yet, and – who knows? – by and by there will be a crowd in the distance, and in the midst a man spring like Lazarus from the

grave without the ceremonies of death around him, and borne on by a host of joyous friends.

**Porth, Thursday evening, April 19<sup>TH</sup> 1877**

Danger of an explosion – Excitement at the pit's mouth.

[Special telegrams from the '*Cardiff Times*']

As the hour of the expected release of the imprisoned colliers drew near the prolonged suspense in which the anxious watchers above and below the surface had remained for eight days became perceptively lightened by the strong hope and confident application that the poor fellows would soon be happily delivered from the place of their confinement, which at one time there was a reason to fear would become their last dwelling-place. How eagerly those who passed up and down the pit were interrogated as to the progress of operations, and how anxiously the lightest words were caught up and construed into favourable prospects of the rescue of the immured band of five, safe and sound, almost from the very jaws of death, may be imagined by those who have fully realised the terrible strait in which they were placed.

Shortly before three o'clock this afternoon reliable intelligence reached those waiting anxiously at the pit's mouth that only six feet of coal remained to be cut through, and inquiry of the "shift" returning from their turn at that time gave the following details. When they came from work a hole had been bored through to their imprisoned comrades, but the progress of operations was impeded by the dust and dirt which blew through in considerable quantities. This small hole in the centre of the "face" had of course to be plugged. But as the rescuing band drew nearer to the spot where their fellows were imprisoned conversation became more easy, and from time to time an animating phrase proceeded from the toilers entombed within, responded to by an occasional deep and heartfelt ejaculations of joy and thankfulness from the searching party. In reply to a query from the latter as to whether all the five immured behind the steadily decreasing wall of coal were alive and well, the answer came back in graphic terms of the vernacular to the effect that, save David Jenkins and Moses Powell, all were well, though sorely pinched with hunger. Jenkins and Powell were said to be very poorly and weak. The dangers of the rescue were not overlooked by the brave exploring party, but at the latest moment of information received during this stage of the rescuing proceedings, the peril of the attempt did not seem to be considered so great as at one time it was expected it would turn out.

Latterly the work has been hindered by many minor but trying details, and during these last moments anxiety was strained to a concentrated pitch of intensity too painful to contemplate. At this time there were, however, none of those



indications of sensational incident and excitement so painfully characteristic of such occasions. As the period of delivery approached small excited groups began to assemble near the pit's mouth, but, as the actual hour of rescue drew on, from the fact that none had been able to guess at it with any degree of accuracy, the crowd did not gather so quickly and so thickly as was anticipated—and feared. The last few hours of waiting and watching, of gathering up and weighing the latest item of intelligence from the workers in the dark depths below became a task of painful and anxious care. Regarded in whatever light an on-looker might observe it spectacularly and dramatically, there was little of a scene above ground during the morning, and even early in the afternoon, when the time of release became tantalisingly near.

But to the thoughtful observer there was no lack of the dramatic element in the quiet incidents of the scene which was being enacted. To-day the weather was beautifully fine, and at intervals only the blue sky was hidden by occasional light or dusky clouds. Above and around the country presented all the smiling aspects of a bright spring day, and to those strange to the momentous issues at stake below ground, there were few external signs that anything of an unusual character was happening. But no one came near the Tynewydd pit unaware of the life and death struggle carried on so long and so strenuously below the surface.

Ever and anon from the mouth of the pit came the heavy clanking of the massive ironwork, mingled now and then with other faint tokens of work going on still further beneath the surface; but standing in the side shed, roofed over the pit mouth, and gazing out on the sunshine of the landscape, with the little river in the centre, it was not easy to realise that far down perpendicularly from a spot not difficult for one familiar with the ground to indicate, a brave band of colliers were steadily working out the release of their imprisoned mates, and that a drama of concentrated energy and excitement was being played out to the end, with such an audience and such strange accessories of scenic effect it might be confidently held to be without a parallel in history. The players were men the nature of whose avocations necessarily at times leads them into strange situations of peril which only those who were actual witnesses, or familiar with such work, can adequately realise. Imagination need be little strained, however, by those who know anything of the staple work of this thickly populated busy district of South Wales, to form an idea of the dangers daily and hourly encountered by the busy toilers below the earth. And the minds of all who gathered round the scene were tilled with a realistic conception of the dread and horror of the position in which those whom they knew so well had now so long remained.

During the progress of these unwonted proceedings from day to day, the fine manly traits of character Welsh colliers possess have been more than once

referred to. Never perhaps within the memory of mortal man have those noble qualities been called into more vigorous play; never has there been a finer and a more difficult field presented for their operation; and never have they shone with such unwonted lustre. Above all these, controlling and directing, carrying forward the anxious work of scheming out plans of release, and putting forth the means everywhere so generously ready to hand from the proprietors of the adjacent colliery property, there has been cool and thoughtful judgment at work which has had to decide between many conflicting theories and suggestions which have been set on foot from various sources.

The final triumph was eagerly anticipated as an event which will live long in the memory of everyone to whose ears the strange story has penetrated. The hindrances which sprang up at the last moment of the final struggle, though not a little disheartening in the critical state of affairs, had not been altogether unexpected. At one critical period, when the operations of the afternoon had been advanced, the discouraging news was brought up to the surface that the food apparatus would not work; that the process of putting it through had been delayed, and had gone on so hopelessly that for the present it had been reluctantly given up, the tubes having been blocked with opposing dust, grit, &c. With those who brought this intelligence came also tidings that the air in the chamber in which the men were imprisoned was not now compressed to the density which had been feared.

The gauge indicated  $5\frac{1}{2}$  lb pressure on the square inch, a considerable decrease on the last result shown. Finding that to work the food conveying apparatus with any degree of success was thus far a matter of impracticability, the decision was agreed upon to abandon the attempt for the present. The hopeful result of the last pressure indication induced the step to be taken of simply cutting on cautiously to the chamber of confinement. Otherwise, it had been contemplated to supply coffee made with milk through to the men, whose frequent expressions to the effect that they were suffering greatly from the craving pains of empty stomachs were from time to time audible with heart-rending piteousness. Though the situation had become one of critical intensity, still excitement at the pit mouth as yet remained at a merely normal pitch. In the shed, where were the carefully arranged litters and the food ready for the men on their being brought to the surface, there was anxious consultation and careful preparation on the part of the doctors and the nurses.

In and about the yard a few groups of waiting spectators, chiefly themselves miners were scattered about. The hissing, that of the steam engine, was almost the only constant busy sound that interrupted the quiet of the scene. The groups of onlookers, though expectant, were extremely silent and thoughtful, but as the

afternoon wore on, the crowd increased outside the gates, filling the road, blocking up the vicinity of the Tynewydd Inn, and dotting the high bank in the background. Great precaution was exercised in the preservation of order, the police arrangements being made under the general direction of Superintendent Matthews, Pontypridd. About five o'clock it was considered that there remained only about five feet of coal to cut through, which one of the workmen said could be accomplished in an hour.

Of course this was a statement which was accepted with considerable reserve. Air was at that time said to be in progress of being pumped down in the space below the double doors at a good pace. Meanwhile on the surface rumours of a most conflicting character are in constant circulation. It seems hardly necessary to glance at some of these to point out the method of their fabrication. It will be easily seen how the statement of facts that two of the imprisoned men were in worse health than their companions, and were suffering a good deal, before long became magnified into the rumour that the men had at last succumbed to the privations they had so long been undergoing, and that they were now dead. Other rumours equally untrustworthy have at intervals been set afloat, and as the afternoon slowly drags on, conflicting reports as to the work underground pour in from all quarters. The most trustworthy estimate of the time when the men will be brought to the surface, from latest and authentic sources, is between eight and nine, though it is not improbable that they may be later.

#### Another report

Another local newspaper carried this interesting report of what was hoped would be the final chapter of the rescue operations: - The ninth day of the incarceration of the unfortunate colliers has been very much like its predecessors as far as regards the interest and anxiety manifested by the large groups in the vicinity of the colliery. Not for a single moment during Wednesday night was the place deserted, and as day dawned numbers could be seen wending their way to the ill-fated colliery.

The cheerful intelligence made known on the pit's bank last evening, and published in these columns this morning, had, as may be imagined, the pleasurable effect of raising the hopes of the hundreds of anxious ones who have besieged the pit since the terrible accident on Wednesday week last. The intense feeling displayed by all is almost painful to notice. The anxiety depicted on the faces of all seems to increase as the hour for the deliverance of the poor starving men draws nigh, and a striking proof of the great interest taken in, and the anxiety felt for the safety of the imprisoned ones is evinced by the sudden rush that is made towards every person who ascends the shaft.

These men, whether colliers who have been labouring for the relief of their unhappy fellow sufferers, or others who descend the pit from curiosity or business, are surrounded and closely questioned as to the progress made, the time when the incarcerated men will be liberated, the probabilities of their being got out alive, had they spoken lately, when, and what they had said, and a host of similar questions which naturally are suggested to every mind under similar circumstances. These men without exception evince the greatest desire to communicate any intelligence which they have gleaned in the far distant workings near which the unfortunate colliers are entombed. The earnest ejaculations of these men in wishing that the famishing ones may be recovered safely, and restored to their families, touches the hearts of all, and frequently brings forth an equally sincere prayer that the starving men may be got up with safety to themselves and the courageous colliers who work with might and main to obtain their speedy release, only too often uttered regardless of the danger which threatens themselves.

The solace which the hard-working searchers occasionally obtain, viz; and the hearing of the imprisoned men's voices, has been so frequent to-day as to leave but little doubt that the men are in a tolerable state. This was certainly the opinion generally entertained during the morning, but in the course of the afternoon the hard-working searchers unhappily received an intimation that they who they sought after were not so strong and healthy as it was hoped they would be.

One thing, however, is a matter for satisfaction, that when the long looked-for ones are got at they will not lack what medical aid and science can afford. With but very short intervals Drs. Davies, Cymmer; Davies, Mountain Ash; Jones, Tonypany; Hopkins, Pontypridd; and Neale, Cymmer, have been in attendance either in the subterranean passages of the Tynewydd colliery or at the pit's mouth. For the convenience of the doctors, where they may obtain a slight but rude shelter from the bleak and cold hours of the night, an old lodge has been set apart for their accommodation. This lodge has also been improvised into a hospital, where the poor starving colliers will be treated for a time. Here there is a supply of blankets, and the rugged benches are covered with a layer of clean straw on which to rest the men when brought up. A supply of necessary stimulants is also in readiness, and it may be stated that these wise steps have not been taken on top of the pit alone, for blankets, stimulants, and everything necessary have been conveyed down the pit to where the men will be got out. It may not be out of place here to mention a touching, but eminently characteristic incident which took place when the surging waters threatened to envelope those who were successfully dug out the second day after the accident. This party consisted of five persons, who, it will be remembered from the reports already published, ran away

from the avalanche of water which suddenly came upon them to a heading from where they were rescued, at all events four of them, the fifth meeting with a painful death at the very moment when his release was about to be consummated.

These poor fellows may be truly said to have had a race for their lives, for the overwhelming water was close to them, when fortunately for their own safety they succeeded in reaching the heading where they were cut from. Having arrived in this heading, the death-expectant colliers, no doubt remembering in their hour of peril the teachings of pious parents and perhaps their early training in a Sunday school, knelt down and prayed, also singing a well-known Welsh hymn, which was peculiarly appropriate to their then dangerous situation. The English version of the hymn is as follows: -

"In the deep and mighty waters,  
No one there is to hold my head;  
But my dear saviour Jesus,  
Who was doomed in my stead.  
He a friend in Jordan's rivers,  
He'll hold my head above the flood;  
In his hand I'll go rejoicing,  
Through the regions of the dead."

"Yn y dyfroedd mawr a'r tonnau  
Ni does neb a ddeil fy mhen,  
Ond fy annwyl briod Iesu,  
A fu far war a pren:  
Cyfaill yw yn afon angen,  
Ddeil fy mhen yn unch na'r don,  
Golwg arno wna I mi ganu,  
Yn yr afon ddofn hon."

Punctually every four hours the hewers of coal in the small airway by which the men are to be released ceased working, and after a short delay, during which the immured men are communicated with, the fresh relay of four sturdy colliers continue their labour of love, for such they unquestionably regard the duty which calls upon them to use their utmost exertions to liberate famishing fellow-workers. The mode adopted to affect the deliverance of the imprisoned men is by penetrating through the vast wall of coal, which has now been ascertained to be about 38 yards in thickness. Near to the end of the coal three air-tight doors have been fitted, and near the doors air pumps have been fixed, so as to pump air into the intervening space between the last door and the face of the coal which is being cut in order to get at the men. By securing the air confined between the door and

the wall is of equal density with that which the imprisoned men breathe, no danger is apprehended when the coal is ultimately cut away, and the searchers and immured men are together.

On Wednesday one small air pump was in the workings and when it was found inadequate, Mr. Riches, of the Taff Vale Railway, sent to Cardiff early this morning for two stronger pumps. These it is stated are now in use, and they work satisfactorily. In order that the men might receive sustenance some time before they would be delivered by means of penetrating the coal, a three-inch hole was bored, through which it was proposed to insert a pipe. It should be stated that a large number of small tin tubes have been constructed, one end of which tapers off and has no opening. At the other end there is a little cover which fits tightly, thus preventing anything which is placed within the tube from escaping. Affixed to the tubes are a couple of small wheels, and it was conjectured that the iron pipe having been placed in the bored hole, and the tin tube placed in the iron pipe, it could be driven, and the famishing men would receive some nourishment.

The hole was bored through the coal at about twenty minutes to one, and during the afternoon an attempt was made by means described above to feed the exhausted colliers. By an arrangement of tabs at both ends of the iron piping, the compressed air is prevented from escaping. When the hole was bored through, the colliers who were trapped were greatly alarmed. The first intimation they received of the hole being through was a cloud of small coal being blown from the hole. This frightened three of the four men and they ran a short distance in the rear, whilst the fourth fell down on the ground. The three who had run away soon saw that there was no apparent reason for their alarm, and they instantly returned and placed a plug in the hole. So far, matters were progressing satisfactorily, and for a time no danger was to be apprehended. The poor fellows were then communicated with, and George Jenkins again replied, and in Welsh asked them to hurry on with their work and get them out. Being interrogated as to how many there were together, he replied five, and being again asked if all were well, he stated that two of his fellow prisoners, Moses Powell and David Jenkins, were in a low state.

This information, as may be imagined, had a desponding effect on those in and around the pit, who, knowing that the five men were alive, looked forward to their safe deliverance. Interrogating the colliers who held the communication with the imprisoned men, we learn that they asked their fellow-sufferers if they had a light, and they replied in the negative. They next asked them if they had had a fall of coal on the other side, and George Jenkins, still answering in Welsh, said that, though they had cut the bottom of the coal for half a yard, they could not fall it.

Jenkins concluded the conversation by cheerfully saying, "Work away, boys." In consequence of the difficulties to be got over, and the danger to be avoided, the work has proceeded at a much slower rate than was expected early in the morning. At seven o'clock in the evening it was still a matter of conjecture when the poor fellows would be got out, calculations varying from 10 o'clock until midnight.

**Porth, Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup> 11 P.M.**

The entombed reached!

At half-past six o'clock this evening, the shift coming up from work at the face stated that they had about a yard of coal to cut through. This it was confidently anticipated would be speedily demolished, but affairs took an unexpected turn, and a few minutes after this cheering report had been given forth anxious inquirers at the pit's mouth were dismayed to learn that, instead of a speedy release, there was yet the possibility, not to say extreme danger, that a disastrous accident might utterly upset the whole of the rescuing arrangements, and perhaps end in loss of life to both the explorers and the objects of their search. It had been feared that as the stall in which the men were immured was neared there would be a gradual influx of carburetted hydrogen, and this, of course, would place not only the shift at work this side, but those behind the gradually diminishing barrier of coal, in an unexpectedly perilous strait.

The gas, as the pitmen term it, had collected in masses in the chamber where the explorers were at work. The danger was at once perceived by the men, and for a brief period it almost seemed as though they would lose heart. The situation was indeed a perilous and critical one, and at last the gas so strongly impregnated the atmosphere that a hasty retreat was necessitated. This was safely accomplished, but a rush had to be made for it.

The fact of the men working behind closed doors rendered it a difficult and hazardous undertaking, and they were not slow to realise the extreme risk they were running. It was a sight never to be forgotten to witness their agitated countenances when they had the difficulties of the task so forcibly thrust upon their notice. The chamber in which they were working was cleared like lightning, and a hasty consultation was held as to the best means to be now adopted. Finally, the gas slowly clearing, it became safe to enter and complete the work, but not before an anxious and critical period had been passed through.

Mr. Wales, who was some distance from the spot, had his attention immediately drawn to it, and when he directed the men again to proceed with their work, the men earnestly appealed to him to go and see the spot and judge the difficulty for

himself. Without a word, and instantly, the Government Inspector made his way to the spot, and this action on his part, and the fact of the danger having been lessened by this time, rendered the resumption of the work possible. The news that just at the moment when the hope of the release of the men was about to become an accomplished fact it was likely to become delayed, if not altogether rendered impossible, by a serious accident, spread like wildfire through Porth, and the consternation and alarm occasioned by the giving forth of this disheartening intelligence caused a sensation of deep and profound melancholy throughout the neighbourhood of the scene.

Speedily, however, the distressing news was followed by more cheerful tidings that the difficulty had been overcome; not, however, before it had caused serious hindrance to the progress of the rescuing operations. Before this latter item of news was authoritatively given out, a gang of volunteer colliers from a neighbouring pit, but accustomed to working in the steam coal, made their appearance, and were sent down the shaft. The idea was that these men being more used to working in proximity to gas would not feel the difficulty of the situation to the extent of those engaged at present on the scene, but these latter took the change to heart, and would carry the work through.

They were ready, they said, to do it, or even as they expressed it, to work through to the poor imprisoned fellows in the dark. In the interval following this incident, the time at which it was announced the men's safe release would be a certainty seemed a long while in reality, but only a short space of time actually intervened. At quarter-past eight o'clock the welcome news was brought up the shaft that the men had been reached and that they were all well, but that their conveyance to the top of the shaft would probably be a longer piece of work than was by some sanguinely calculated. At that time the men were in the chamber of compressed air which had been walled off by the doors, and the operation was still a critical one.

The intelligence that the men had been reached was brought up to the pit's mouth by Mr. David Thomas, and the cry was heard that Dr. Henry Davies was wanted, and he was immediately sent for, and in company with another doctor was soon dispatched below. A large number of other doctors were in attendance offering every assistance, but for those purposes the services of only two medical men were needed. The scene at the shaft's mouth had become an animated and busy one. Few of the crowd were permitted to enter the gates of the yard, but within and about the wooden barrier round the pit's mouth a small circle of spectators had collected. These were kept back by the police, and few were permitted near the pit's mouth, on account of the need there of fresh air. In the shed adjacent every preparation had been made for the reception of the expected patients. The



chinks in the wall were closed up with sacking, and inside the best arrangements were made for the comfort of the men when they were brought up. Skilful nurses were at hand every needful stimulant was in requisition, and the litters had been carefully prepared. In the centre of the room was a small table, and a roaring fire blazed in the grate. Among the few waiting outside was the brother of George Jenkins, who is the youngest of the party who were immured.

The rescuing party seem to have judged rightly when they estimated that about 7 o'clock the men would be got at. Provided there had been no difficulty with the gas, this would, no doubt have been the time when they would be reached. Round the fire in the yard hot bricks were placed ready to aid in keeping up the animal warmth of the men by placing them at their feet when they came up, and preparations were everywhere being skilfully and readily made for the arrival of the men on the surface. The following are the names of the men reached: — George Jenkins, widower, three children; Moses Powell, single; David Jenkins, wife and one child; David Hughes, lad, 14; John Thomas, single.

David Jenkins and Moses Powell are in a very weak condition, but the others are not so exhausted. The boy David Hughes, has been making singularly lively cries for his deliverance, and seems to have been as wide awake as any of the party in noticing those superintending the operations. The other day the name of Mr. Edmund Thomas was accidentally omitted in my report. This is to be regretted, particularly because he has been chief in directing the efforts to save the poor incarcerated workmen. The excitement everywhere now has risen to fever pitch. It will be remembered that there were three parties shut up in the pit. One of these was dug out; the second form the subject of the exciting proceedings related above and it is now felt to be certain that the third party of four have been drowned, as no one has heard them knocking.

### **Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> 1877**

#### **RESCUE OF FIVE COLLIERS - GREAT DEMONSTRATIONS OF JOY SCENE FROM THE PIT**

(From the *Western Mail* special correspondent – Porth, Friday night)

On the afternoon of Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1877, at half-past two o'clock, the five colliers who had been imprisoned in the Tynewydd Pit by an eruption of water since Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> – a period of ten days and nine nights – were rescued, and safely brought to bank. Although very weak, they were soon progressing favourably, and the hopes that their ultimate recovery from the effects of the severe privations to which they have been exposed are confidently anticipated by the medical men, who are unremitting in their attentions. The dangers apprehended from accumulations of gas and the compressed air, which it was believed held back a large body of water, interfered with the progress of the first

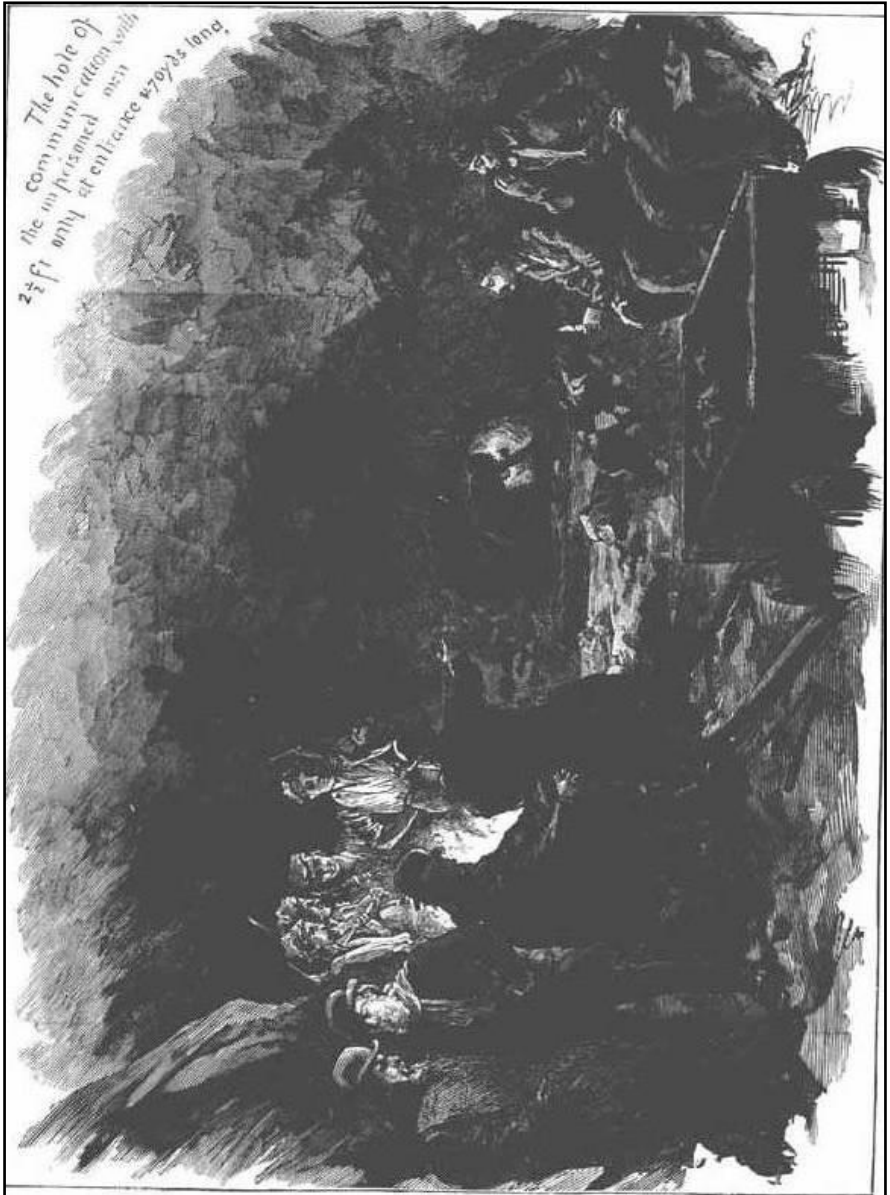
rescuing party. On Friday, when great fears were entertained of the recovery of the men in Thomas Morgan's stall, seven fresh men volunteered to proceed with the work at all hazards. Their names are: - John Hughes, William Rollins, Thomas Ash, Daniel Owen, Isaac Pride, William Parsons and Charles Parsons.

They at once broke through the last remaining five feet of coal which intervened between them and the imprisoned men. The moment this was done the concussion of the compressed air created a great noise, which was compared to salvos of artillery, and lasted for some minutes, but fortunately did no injury to the imprisoned men or their deliverers. As soon as the atmosphere became settled, and of the same density on each side of the partition, a large breach was made, and the relief party, headed by Thomas Ash and Isaac Pride, entered the stall in which the five colliers were confined. It was found that the persistent pumping in the drift had so reduced the level of the water that no danger existed in that part of the workings being again inundated, although the five colliers were still seated in water, and had been that morning flooded up to their waists.

They were carefully assisted through the cutting, the first to be brought out being the lad David Hughes, whose father and brother are now lying, having, it is feared, been drowned, in another part of the mine. George Jenkins and Moses Powell retained sufficient strength to walk out. But John Thomas and David Jenkins were so weak that they, like the boy, had to be carried out. Having arrived at the double parting the nearest open space having headroom to the scene of their confinement, beds were provided for them, and nourishment, in the form of warm milk and coffee, was administered under the direction of Dr. Henry Naunton Davies, of Cymmer; Dr. Davies, Mountain Ash; and other medical men. The rescued men complained principally of pains in their legs and the pits of their stomachs.

They were afterwards conveyed on stretchers to the bottom of the shaft, and thence to the bank, where they were received with deep but silent remarks of sympathy on the part of an immense crowd collected near the colliery, and clothing the slope of the neighbouring hill. By a remarkable coincidence a message of sympathy from the Queen, couched in the following terms, reached the pit at the very moment the last man was brought to bank. The queen's message: - *"The Queen is very anxious for the last accounts of the poor men in the mine. Are they saved? Pray telegraph."* When this message was read to the crowd, cheers for Her Majesty were given by the dusky miners, which awakened the echoes of the distant hills.

When the men were brought to bank they were placed in a temporary hospital fitted up in a disused shed near the pit's mouth, where every care and attention



The communication hole – Rescue nears completion



**The breakthrough! Print of the time with the men named left to right: - Isaac Pride, David Hughes (boy), Gwilym Thomas & Thomas Jones. (The Graphic Magazine).**

was paid them. The men state that they did not suffer much physical pain during their confinement until within the last day or two, when severe pains in the legs and stomachs attacked them. The only food they partook of consisted of the tallow composing the candles, 18 of which were found in the stall. Some of these they burnt, but during a great part of the time they were in total darkness. The water, of course which they had plenty, was quite drinkable. They kept themselves warm by huddling in a tram partly filled with small coal. They slept a great part of their time, but had lost all idea of the duration of their imprisonment.

At one time they had given up all hope of rescue, and say they cannot describe their feelings when they heard the first knockings from the outer world, indicating that they had been discovered. From that time they never doubted that they would be rescued. The fate of the other four colliers who were working in other parts of the pit now known to have been flooded is despaired of, but steps are being taken to recover the bodies dead or alive. The names of the four colliers still missing are: - John Hughes, 50, married, America Vach; William J. Hughes (boy) America Vach; Edward Williams, alias Edward o'r Maindee, 35, married, seven children; and Robert Rogers, 13 (boy). We subjoin fuller and very interesting details of this heroic rescue, supplied by our various special correspondents: -

They are saved!

They are saved! It is, I commence this note, half-past 2 p.m., and the monotonous beat of the hammer on the pit's mouth striking on the heart strangely, awakening, after nearly 10 days of hope deferred, alternating feelings of fear and expectation. The watch on the bank has been so long, rumours so varied have day and night floated in the air, that one is inclined to doubt even such information as the most trustworthy and responsible men may convey, but the group on the bank, albeit sad and sickened with the weary waiting for tidings from the dark cold-submerged underworld, must needs press forward once more as the dripping chains begin to play, and the water-freighted cage moves along its cavernous course. A messenger, perspiring heavily, steps, or stumbles rather, forward; it is impossible, judging from his care-worn countenance, to say whether he brings news of good or evil. But happily our suspense is of a slight duration.

"They'll be up directly," he whispers, and the words go round, if only a few moments more and we will see them, poor fellows, there is no doubt this time. Thank God at least it is true, they are saved. Again the carriage is played, again the clanking of chains grates on the anxious ear; again the rail at the pit's mouth is locked by the ascending stage, and a band of the rescuing party stagger forward, and are caught by friendly hands. The information of the last messenger is confirmed. "Moses Powell and George Jenkins," one of the men observes, "want

to walk out!" There was a shock in the suddenness of the news. The heart leaped upwards, and the stifled throat and trembling tongue made expressions a difficult task. I looked at the gallant men who had arrived from below, as they strove to command themselves sufficiently to answer with calmness the inquiries of the gentlemen on the bank.

From these I turned my eyes to the vast multitude of men, women, and children who covered the sides of the Tynewydd hill, every head anxiously directed towards the mouth of this now famous pit. There they were – fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers, oh, so patient under the deep excitement of this supreme moment. They knew, by the arrival of members of the rescuing party above ground, that the critical period which would reveal the value or otherwise of these long days and nights of toil had now arrived, and the sublime calmness linked with the intensity of feeling that necessarily swelled the hearts of the far reaching lines of people evidenced the self-possession qualities of the Welsh.

Not a sound is heard to disturb the serenity of this calm, sunny afternoon. If the boiler still hisses, its steam we heed it not, used as we have been to the underground roar of the most intricate and marvellous appliances probably ever used in a coal pit. The grey and half-stripped smiths in the rickety workshop close by have ceased to beat the iron belaboured anvil. Half-dozen women, with eyes that bespeak the longing of their souls, attired in the usual style of pitmen's wives, sun-bonneted and neatly dressed stand near the doorway of the rude hospital situated to the right of the smithy, some four yards from the mouth of the pit. The eye glances half-timidly at this suggestive structure.

On pieces of cast iron covered with hay are the make-shift beds; a few bottles and mugs on a table in the centre, candles stuck here and there on the sooty walls, some wax tapers, some cloths. Surely these arrangements, however useful, one contemplates with a sort of half-shudder, feeling indeed that the pitman's infirmary may prove to be a dead house. But hark! Again strikes the dull knock as ever, the signal hammer on the rusty pan. And the police, for the hundredth time, request that the passage leading to the tarpaulin doorway of the improvised hospital be kept clear. The venerable looking banksman alone stands on the very brink of the gaping shaft, but there is an involuntary rush on the part of the mining officials as the carriage reappears, and peeping just over its side, half hidden by blankets, is the hand-piece of a stretcher.

Carefully, almost tenderly, four grave and brave men, followed by two medical gentlemen lift up their precious freight. The pent-up hearts of the women in attendance, and the gentlemen in the immediate vicinity, break the death-like silence which has seemed to seal the lips for hours. Oh, it's David Hughes, the

strong and gallant boy who has braved 240 hours in the cold tomb of the Rhondda who is being borne to his warmed bed close by! It is about quarter to three, and he, the late imprisoned youth, has already asked for his father, and his sympathising and over-worked friends have not dared to reply, for the truth is more than can be yet told – the poor boy's father being among the dead. It is not permitted for us to look upon the little fellow's face, no more than it is permitted him yet to open his eyes upon daylight.

He is muffled over from head to foot, and forthwith treated with coffee and milk, for which, it is stated, he had already asked. Hot bricks were taken into the hospital shed, and the medical men eagerly but noiselessly pass and re-pass. A few moments only elapse, and next in turn George Jenkins is brought up to the bank. Then comes John Thomas, the lower portion of whose face is visible, black and perspiring, and spirit of ammonia is mixed with the coffee and milk with which it is decided to treat him. The fourth brought up to the surface is David Jenkins, and then, last of all, Moses Powell. The work of bringing to the pit's mouth the five prisoners has occupied very little over half-an-hour, and now it is that one has an opportunity of learning from the rescuing parties on the bank some of the incidents of the imprisonment and release. The case of Moses Powell is especially touching.

A studious and highly respected young collier and much interest from the outset centred round his case. By his own desire, being, as he said, stronger than the others, he was brought up last of all, and the state in which he was discovered admitted of his having been conveyed to the rustic infirmary with his face uncovered. His brother, an intelligent police-constable, stationed at Llantwit, stood by me as the heroic fellow was carried past, and a soft, sad smile stole over the features of the latter as his dark expressive eyes caught those of his brother. Notwithstanding the other's determination to control himself in that trying moment, he burst into tears like a child, and all the bystanders on the pit's mouth, and the hundreds who had crowded up to the outer walls and railings, exhibited at this stage an intensity of sorrow, not loud nor violent, but ineffable, which none who witnessed can ever forget.

It was extremely interesting, as opportunities afforded, to learn the events which transpired in the pit. Jenkins asked one of the rescuing band, named Ablett, "What night is it?" The other, afraid of discouraging the prisoners, replied "Wednesday." instead of "Friday." The next question was put "What is the time?" Ablett answered: - "Seven, although it was as near as possible midnight. Ablett then cried out "Cheer up," adding that he would send some food, when George Jenkins replied, "Oh, dear, I hope you don't. Don't interfere anymore with the plug (alluding to the plug which the confined men had themselves inserted to prevent

the loss of air consequent on the bore). "It's very hard with us here; we have nothing but our shirts on our back ever since we are here."

As a matter of fact it seems that the men at the time of the flooding had to run away in their trousers and shirts in order to affect their escape. It was stated besides that when the communication had been got through, about 2 o'clock p.m., Moses Powell walked a distance of some 60 yards with the manager of the Llwynceilyn Colliery, who stood at the mouth of the hole receiving the men. As indicating the intelligence retained by the unfortunate fellows, I may mention that from time to time during the morning the voices of Powell and George Jenkins were heard making such requests as these: - "Get a doctor in readiness; prepare some food; make haste."

Powell said on one occasion, "My feet are like a coal of fire; I cannot get my shoes off." It was ascertained, also, that the men had lights for two days, when they were accidentally extinguished, after which time they were in total darkness. For some considerable time they could not bring themselves to drink the muddy water by which they were surrounded, but as the weary hours grew upon them of course there was no help for it, and thankful they were to have the supply at hand. They did not, as was supposed, eat the candles, but merely sucked the grease which, by tallow drippings had accumulated about the boxes.

For the purpose of retaining heat in their bodies they lay upon a bed of coal in a tram. The warmest man for the time being would get under, the coldest would lie next and the remainder over and about him, and thus they changed about. They talked but little, and when they gave their knockings a sledge, a pick, or bar was sometimes used. George Jenkins once made an attempt to wade his way out through the water, and actually got in far as his armpits. Dr. Davies, of Cymmer, who was supposed by an able and devoted band of medical gentlemen, informed me that on examining the men he found they had very well retained the natural expression of their countenance, and the proper colour of their lips. Their temperature and coated and roughish.

As regards the difficulties in the way of the work of the successful engineering, the two main questions for consideration were the chances of stopping a communication with bank by a possible flooding; the risk of an interference with the ventilation of the pit; and possible outburst of gas in the vicinity of the imprisoned men. House-coal men are not accustomed to gas, and in consequence of the obstruction on Thursday night I found, on visiting the colliery at 5 o'clock this morning, that there was among some of the men a hesitation to return to the pit. But this did not long continue, and the number of volunteers from among the



workmen and pluck and skill of the colliery managers and scientific gentlemen, were such as to inspire confidence among the men.

Additional enthusiasm, too, was given to the labouring parties by the circulation at an early hour of Sir George Elliot's telegram to the editor of the '*Western Mail*,' announcing the fact that he had received subscriptions from members of the House of Commons on behalf of the rescuing band. Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, by his singleness of conduct and great prudence, excited much admiration, while among the numerous local managers who have so highly distinguished themselves the names of Mr. W. Davies (of Coedcae Colliery), deserves to be particularly referred to, that gentleman, with the exception of a few hours on Monday, having remained in the pit all through since Saturday, not returning to bank until the men were brought up. I should add that the level of the water at the time of the rescue, as nearly as I could ascertain was nine inches.

Incidents of the rescue  
(From an occasional correspondent)

Just behind the colliery a hill, bare and blank, rears itself, and commands not only the approaches to the colliery, but the pit's mouth and banksman's lodge improvised for a surgery. On this hill, like as upon an amphitheatre, a vast mass of persons had congregated, and every movement below was watched with the keenest interest. It was a solemn spectacle – no shouting, not the sound even of a voice. Far away in the same direction, nearly half-a-mile from the shaft, was the wooded braes and farmlands, beneath which, deep down in the earth below, had been the silent struggle for life. It was touching to think that where the young lambs were playing and sporting about, and the green grass of spring was bursting forth there had been the long combat with famine and the fierce gas of the mine. One of the most energetic of the adventurers was one of the Bute divers. He was an old man, in a red cap, and as resolute and determined in his wanderings in a pit as he would have been in the better-known and more easily traversed sandy banks and mud depths of the channel.

Another of the exploring party who had assisted in the rescue was a slight, inoffensive looking man, and his only anxiety after completing his arduous task was to get some beer. The dry tongue and parched lips spoke it, the eyes as they wandered about in sight of an inn spoke it, and in the intervals of questions and answers poured upon him he himself uttered it – "Beer. Lord, we have risked our lives and we would do it again, but the country and the people for whom we slave ought to think a little more about us." I thought, as I spoke to the man, that now the first-rate burst of joy has passed we must not forget the heroic deliverers who deserve something more than beer for the noble work they have done this day.

The heroes of the day were the black-faced men. To be grimy of face, and to have wet boots, and to look as if you had stood under a water-spout, was to be the observed of the observers. A man who told you news and had none of these indications was not thought much of; but if he had, a crowd was around him and he was an oracle. Let mine be the task to single out a few who have done good work, and whose names should be enshrined in many annals. At the face: - Daniel Thomas, David Davies, and Thomas Jones. Erecting brattice: - W. Thomas, H. W. Lewis, Edward Thomas, W. Davies (Coedcae), and Thomas Curnew. Taking charge of the tubes, supplying food, keeping record of water level, and Co.: - Mr. Beith, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Edward Richards. These rendered great service, and deserve the prominent notice we gave them.

### Opening of the inquest

Meanwhile, the same day as the second lot of men were rescued, at 2 o'clock on Friday, April 20<sup>th</sup> 1877, Mr. George Overton, one of the coroners for the county, opened an inquest at Porth on the body of William Morgan, who was crushed to death in attempting to get out of the pit. Mr. T. T. Davies acted as foreman of the jury. Thomas Morgan, who was examined, deposed that he was a collier and a father of the deceased, who was 20 years of age, a married man and the father of one child. They were working together in the Troedyrhiw Colliery on Wednesday last. There was another son of his and two other men working there.

About 4 o'clock they dressed themselves for the purpose of going away, when the water suddenly came in on them. They were in George Jenkins's stall at the time. They had to go about a hundred yards away back on the heading. As they were going towards the drift they were stopped by the water. They could not proceed any further. The water was making a great noise and coming in very rapidly. If they had been half a minute later they would have been swamped. They got into a hole. They then went through it and got into the other heading, and from that they got into the stall in which Edward Williams and John Casher were working.

There was no water in that place. Williams and Casher said they were preparing to leave when they heard the noise, and they thought it was an explosion. He (witness) said that it was not, but the water which had broken in. Williams asked what it was, and he (Williams) replied that he did not know, nor where it had come from. They kept their lights burning while they lasted.

They then endeavoured to make their way higher up, where they thought the water would not have reached, but they were disappointed, for when they got there they discovered that the water had reached it before them, and that they could not get out that way. They then consulted together as to what was best to



**At the top of the pit, Thomas Wales, Inspector of mines explains the situation**

be done. Some of the men became very excited, but he retained his presence of mind. They remembered that there was another airway higher up, where Mr. Thomas once intended to make an opening.

The parties that were outside when the hole was made ran away. He could not say whether it was the parties outside or the deceased who made the hole. When the hole was made the air commenced to rush through with great force. About the time the air was admitted into the pit the water was approaching nearer to them, and they were afraid that it would overtake them. When the pit was first opened the water was about 15 yards from them, but it approached within about 10 yards soon after. He could not say the exact distance it was from them, because they were in the dark, and the only way they could ascertain the length it was from them was by throwing stones into it. The deceased ran forward to the opening for the purpose of enlarging it, and he (witness) cautioned him to stand back.

He told him they would 'scheme away' outside, and let him be contented and quiet. The deceased took a chisel with him for the purpose of enlarging the opening. As the deceased was approaching the opening the pressure of the air was so great that it forced him into the opening, and he was so severely crushed that he was killed on the spot. He never spoke at the time. He (witness) tried to take him from it, but he could not even move him, he was so tightly pressed. They were obliged to cut the coal around the opening to get him out. The parties on the outside cut five or six small holes, which took the pressure off the airway. When the opening of the pit was enlarged they were able to escape. They got out about 10 o'clock on Thursday morning. Neither of them were injured. The inquiry was then adjourned until the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May. The coroner directed to have a tracing of the pit made out and forwarded to them.

They proceeded up this airway to the top, and commenced knocking and calling out. They had not long knocking when they heard knocking at the other side. They set to work immediately to make an opening through, and worked hard from half-past-four until about 5 o'clock in the morning, when they found a party meeting them on the opposite side.

## Chapter four

### Porth, Saturday night, April 21<sup>st</sup> 1877

PERSONAL NARRATIVES OF THE SURVIVORS - FUNERAL OF WILLIAMS AND ROGERS - CONDITION OF THE RECOVERED MEN - RECOVERY OF TWO OF THE MISSING BODIES - SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE SUFFERERS - ANOTHER MESSAGE FROM THE QUEEN. (FROM A 'CARDIFF TIMES' SPECIAL REPORTER]

Today the excitement which so long has prevailed in Porth, in some measure, began to subside; but the trains again brought in heavy loads of visitors, and the neighbourhood of the pit's mouth was continually inspected by large groups of spectators. The inhabitants seemed to have given themselves up to general joy and mutual congratulation. Everywhere it was felt that a heavy load of suspense had been lifted, and it needed little discrimination to detect the changed expression of countenance, and the gladsome look which had succeeded to the despairing agony of the previous morning. In the course of the day many people were admitted to the long room at the Tynewydd Inn, which is being used as a temporary hospital for the five happily released sufferers, but conversation with them was as far as possible interdicted, as calculated to distress and agitate the poor fellows. In the meantime efforts to recover the bodies of the men still missing—for long ago all anticipation of the men being got out alive had been considered a forlorn hope — were proceeded with diligently, and late in the afternoon were rewarded with success, the corpses of the lad Rogers and Williams being discovered and brought to the surface.

At the time of writing there is little prospect that the other bodies will be got out for some time — perhaps several days. They are in a much deeper position, and the only means of arriving at the spot is by still further reducing the considerable volume of water even yet remaining in the pit. Pumping is going on vigorously, and no doubt before long a sensible diminution of the water will permit of the two remaining missing bodies being brought to the surface.

I have obtained from George Jenkins the following account of the manner in which the long period of his nine days' imprisonment was passed, and of his rescue. I give it in his own words. The peculiar interest attaching to it arises from the fact that George Jenkins, in company with Moses Powell, assumed the lead, and took in hand the direction of affairs during the time the five were immured. The statement is a clear, straightforward narrative of what passed throughout the whole period, from the first day of their confinement to the time of their release. This is it:—

## Narrative of George Jenkins

The first notion we had of the accident was by hearing the water flowing. We were then at work — all five of us. We were boring a hole in the top of the coal at which we were working. There seemed to me to be a rush of about 18 inches of water. As soon as I noticed it I said to my partner, "There's something the matter; the air has left from its former state." We were under the impression, however, that No. 8 door was open, so we went on boring at the hole, and bored another inch, but then the air came stronger. Then we heard the alarm from men calling out from the other side that there was something the matter, and my partner (Moses Powell) called out to me that there had been an explosion in the pit. I ran back to the door, thinking that the door was open, and called out that the water was in the pit. The water came out about 20 yards to us, and we ran about 100 yards to the door, but we failed to get through. We went on about 100 yards from the face of the heading, and came to some water — we were up to our waists in it — back to the level. As fast as ever we could we went through Thomas Morgan's road until we were up to our necks in water. Then we were about thirty yards from Thomas' stall. Moses Powell was first, I was second, the little boy, David Hughes, was next, and Thomas and Jenkins were behind.

Moses Powell called out, "You must go back, it's all over." Little Hughes had fallen down with fatigue, and I caught hold of him, and we went back to Thomas Morgan's stall a second time, and went up it thirty-five yards, I should think. The water had not come into the stall further than about twenty yards. We waited here a bit to see whether the water would clear away, but there were no signs of that.

There we stayed until Thursday. We had lights with us. In fact, we had lights with us for five days, reckoning by the candles as we burnt them. We commenced a second time to dig on Friday, and to do so I went up to my waist in water. Then we found a hole about two yards. I think it was about Friday afternoon when we heard knocking from the outside, and we were able to answer it. I mostly answered it. During the whole from between Wednesday and Thursday, we could hear the men working higher up, but we could not join to one another. They were too high up from us. In Thomas Morgan's stall we found a tram full of coal. We threw out all the lumps except about six inches in the bottom, and there we slept. Every time we heard the knocking outside, one of us would get up and answer it by another knock. We all slept in the tram by turns, and Powell and I nursed the little boy between us, relieving one another as we became tired.

Every three hours we tried the water, and soon we found that it was receding. Then it came into our minds that the water was clearing away altogether. We

tried the water to see if it was abating, by going into it. The second time I tried it I went into it to my waist. About this time we thought it was Tuesday, and the water seemed to have then gone back from three to four feet. Now we knew that they were working down from the heading towards us, and we knew, too, that they were working very hard. We could hear them well, and we were convinced that they were making their utmost energy to come to us. We heard the knocking most distinctly, and we could hear them so well that we could tell that they were coming nearer. The next thing was that the outsiders bored a hole, and tried sending some food through. As soon as they bored the water came on, and the water came up to the face of the heading. Then we were there in about nine inches of water, which was gradually rising.

We were in about nine inches of water on Friday morning, and seeing it still rising at that time we gave up hope, and surely thought it was all over with us. In a short time afterwards the sound of the knocking came to us again. By this time we had been obliged to retreat from the top of the road to the furthest end of the stall. The tram in which we had been sleeping had become filled with water, and now the water completely covered it. Yesterday (Friday) morning we could hear them outside working towards us, and coming nearer and nearer. They knocked a third time for the last time during the last four yards that they worked. Mr. James Thomas - the manager, called out to us that we should be out soon, and that we should have food in a short time. But we were in for a few hours after that. To the knocks that were made outside I made answer, and then I called out to Mr. Thomas and asked him how long did he think we should be there. "About half an hour," he answered. But it was longer than that, a good bit. While this working was going on, Mr. James Thomas called out and asked us if the water had lowered. I replied, "No, it has not." Presently Mr. James Thomas asked a second time and one of the men inside called out that it had gone down almost two yards. I said, "No," for I was sure it had not. So I tried the water.

I found that it had abated about half-an-inch. The last thing I asked Mr. James Thomas was if they had food, or had anything to take ready for us when we came out of the water. "Yes, my dear boy," he said, "sufficient for you." They were then trying to push through some tubes with food in them. But we had no food until we came out on to the level. Then I thought they were now trying to bore a second hole to send food to us. We could hear a loud roaring noise caused by the air as they bored the hole through, so I plugged the hole up with two of our caps and some coal. We were afraid, and we did not know then it was food being passed through. Then I remember no more till we got out, and we were very glad to see the people outside, and the people everywhere.

There never was such work done in all my life; there was no such work ever done for the sake of saving men's lives. We had no food there during the whole time, and we lived only by drinking the water. We did not sleep very much for we felt so uneasy. John Thomas and David Jenkins lost their coolness at times, and I and Powell felt very much afraid on that account. Moses Powell and I acted as leaders of affairs. The lad David Hughes was not very much frightened. But we kept up our spirits pretty well until Friday. I did not feel very afraid of the gas. We burned 3 lbs. of candles while we were there. For the first few days we burned them at the rate of two per day; during the last few days we only burned one a day. It was about last Sunday when the stock of candles gave out. Nobody ate any candles. Thomas had just the drippings of the bottom of the box, and the boy Hughes, I think, had the same.

At this stage the narrative was for a while interrupted. Two little lads and a little girl - Jenkins' children - were brought in to see him. They were good looking, intelligent little people, well dressed — the oldest perhaps 12 or 13; the little girl, the youngest, eight or nine. It was a rare pleasure to witness the long, fervent embrace they received from their father. Their earnest looks, and the joy lighting up every line of their little faces made a scene long to be remembered. After a little time was spent saying much, they withdrew, but not before the elderly man who brought them in had had a few excited words with Jenkins in the vernacular, in the eloquent, graphic terms of which, by the bye, the foregoing statement was delivered.

“According to the estimate of the surveyors, resumed Jenkins, “it was thought there were about 60 feet of water behind us, but it was the air compressed in the space before the water that kept us on dry ground. I had not any notion that it was being tried to pass food through to us in tubes. I was afraid of the hole being opened, because the hole was drawing in the air, and so allowing water to come up to us. I was very much afraid of that. I did try to get at a rat which was about, and I should have eaten him if I could have caught him, but I failed.”

“I walked up the level, but I don't know or don't remember exactly how far. Gwilym Thomas and Isaac Pride were the last that worked, and they worked like horses. Abraham Dodd went into the hole first, and turned the coal away from me. Abraham Dodd kissed me, and he wanted to nurse me, but I called out to him that he had better catch hold of John Thomas. We were very cold at times, because we had nothing but our thin working clothes on. I didn't remember any more of what occurred, and I think that's all.” While the interview detailed above was in progress, David Jenkins, whose bed was next but one to that of George Jenkins, and furthest from the door, turned over on his couch, and noticed Mr. Brown, of the *Graphic*, busy sketching the scene. He made a sign to one of the



nurses, and told her he should like to see what the artist was drawing, so Mr. Brown went up to his bedside and the poor fellow had a long look at his sketchbook, and seemed much amused and pleased. It may be worth mentioning here that Mr. Brown took a large number of sketches of scenes and incidents of interest, all pronounced to be exceedingly faithful by the people about the spot, who manifested no little curiosity as they watched his skilful fingers at work.

#### Moses Powell's narrative

On the Wednesday afternoon when the water came upon us we were boring, that is, George Jenkins and me. We were working in a level heading. George Jenkins was holding the chisel, and I was hammering, when I felt something come to my ears. I said to George Jenkins, "George, there's something the matter", and he replied, "Mae drws No. 8 yn agored" (No. 8 door is open). "Never mind, I then said, and turning around the chisel we went on boring the hole, when I again thought that I felt something on my ears."

Reporter: - "Something pressing on the inside of your ears, I suppose?" Powell (continuing): - "Yes, sir. I felt a great falling down in my ears, and I again said to my butty, George Jenkins, "There's sure to be something the matter." I heard, or felt it, a third time, and it was then our last ring of the hole we were finishing. As I just said, I felt my ears falling a third time, and I then said to George, "Mae wedi tani," (there's been an explosion). 'That isn't possible,' said George Jenkins back to me."

Reporter: - "Were there no other persons in the stall but you two?" "Yes, sir, there was a little boy as well. A little further down were David Jenkins and John Thomas, who were working together, turning a stall from the level heading. They were about thirty yards away, behind us. When I felt my ears fall a third time I called out in Welsh "Come here boys, there's something the matter." Then it was, sir, we left our working place, leaving everything as they were. I was in my shirt, trousers, and boots, and so was George Jenkins. After we ran about 30 yards we felt ourselves running through water. We strove to go on, but were obliged to go back. Just at that place there is a little swamp and a little slant, and we ran up that slant. We had tight work to go up that, as we had the little boy with us. We had run a short distance again and met the other two men, David Jenkins and John Thomas.

Then we felt ourselves again running through water. Running back about 100 yards, where there is a door turning to an airway to Thomas Morgan's stall. David Jenkins and George Jenkins tried to open the door, but failed, as there was too much pressure of water. We then turned up the windway to Thomas Morgan's stall, and I told the boys to follow me. We ran through that windway and down

through the road to Thomas Morgan's stall, which is worked in about 35 yards, and down into the heading, to try and make our escape out that way. Then we went into about two feet of water, and because of the water back we went about 30 or 50 yards to try to make our way through the wind-road — that is the other one which would lead us to the top road of the upper level. I was leading through the water, and was about four yards before the others. I saw it was all over, as the water was above the seam of coal, which is 3½ feet thick, with about 2 feet of top. I saw that the water was filling the heading, and then I told the chaps to go back. I told them there was no chance to go on, and we went back and into Thomas Morgan's stall, and in that stall we resided until yesterday.

We heard the water coming in about a quarter of an hour afterwards, but were in a dry place, about 35 yards up the stall, which is about 12 yards wide. The height of the stall is about five feet or so. We stopped there. We had a light from candles, and we managed to keep our minds.”

Reporter: - “Did you not apprehend danger?” – “No sir, not much. We thought it was all over when the water did cease to come to us. We thought it was only a little rush from another stall which had become empty. A little drop did come sometimes. We comforted ourselves like that, sir, by thinking it was not much and would go away. About the following morning we drank the water, which was about 25 yards away. We had no sleep that night. On the following morning we tried to see if the water was going back in the working. I stripped myself of my shirt to see if there was any chance, and we went down to where the water was, and I walked in as far, or perhaps a little further, than Thomas Morgan's parting, and I saw there was no chance, as the water was 9 inches off the top.”

At this point of the narrative Dr. Davies, Cymmer, who is unceasing in his attentions to all the invalids, entered the room and approached the bedside of John Thomas, which adjoins that on which Powell lays. Powell turns round and taking a glance at the haggard and evidently suffering man, proceeds to resume his narrative by saying: - “We had a deal of trouble with him, sir. He was not himself. I cannot say exactly when he did begin to go like that. We had no idea of time, but perhaps it was about Sunday or Monday, as far as I thought at the time. He was always wanting us to take him from there. He used to speak like that when he was sleeping and awake.” Reporter: - “How did you occupy your time at first?” – “Well, sir, we did everything to keep ourselves warm. We had a sledge, and we kept knocking the coal continually.”

Reporter: - “Did you do that so as to let the other colliers in the pit know where you were?” – “No, sir; we did it to keep ourselves warm; it was so cold, and we had no clothes about us. We did not know of all the water that was there, and which

we are told of now. We thought it was only a little drop there. Some time afterwards we heard knocking to us, and that kept up our hearts. We were very thirsty, and the water that was there was very bad. We had not much taste, so we did not take much notice of it. We had to walk 20 or 30 yards for the water each time, and we had to stoop down and suck it up, or sometimes we used to raise it in our hands."

Reporter: - "Did you think that you were in the stall for a very long time?" - "No, sir, and I cannot understand how it was. I was quite surprised when I was told it was Friday, and that we had been there 10 days. We had lost all time, and we had no idea at all."

Reporter: - "You had a light for a time from candles?" - "Yes, sir. We found about three pounds of candles, and at first we burned two at a time. That was our luck, sir, to have so many candles. When we had only ten candles left, I said to the chaps that it was best to have only one at a time, and then we did begin to burn them singularly."

Reporter: - "How did you manage to get water after your last candle was gone?" - "Oh! Sir, we felt our way down the stall, and we soon felt the water at our feet."

Reporter: - "Did you not do anything to occupy your time - singing, or praying?" - "It was like this, sir. There is David Jenkins, who did pray very nicely for us all on the first night, and we did try to manage for ourselves. We comforted ourselves that we should be from there soon."

Reporter: - "Then the fact was that you did not think there was any danger?" - "Yes, sir, we did not think there was any danger, and we did not believe we could have lived so long. We were very glad to hear the hammering on the other side, and we did then hammer the coal in answer. When we did hear the water quite close we did get uneasy, and we did not think there was so much but that it would soon go away."

Reporter: - "What were you doing during the many hours you were in the stall?" - "Well, sir, there was a full train of coal in Thomas Morgan's stall, and we emptied it, leaving some small coal in the bottom of it. On the small coal we laid down, and it was in the tram we spent our time, the whole five of us forcing ourselves into it. We nursed the little boy, George Jenkins and I, between us."

Reporter: - "Was he complaining of cold then?" - "Yes, sir, and we were all complaining of cold. [At this point George Jenkins' children were brought into the room to see their prostrate father, who raised himself from the bed and warmly embraced and kissed the lads.] Powell continuing his narrative, said: - "It was in

the tram we spent our time, and all got in so as to keep ourselves warm - as warm as we could."

Reporter: - "And did you sleep?" - "We did just doze now and then, sir. We were forced to go on our sides in the tram, three of us, and to sleep along side, and we took the little boy on us. We were doing that all the time. We only used to go out to knock the coal in answer to the men on the other side. We were glad when we found the water going back in the heading. At one time we thought the water was nearly gone, and we thought we could pass through it. That was, I think, about last Wednesday evening, perhaps. George Jenkins and I talked together, and we thought it would be best to shove the tram down to the water, and see if we could go through. We did not, luckily, take the tram, and George Jenkins ventured in himself, and walked through.

We were listening, and he hollared out that it was impossible to go further. He then came back, dripping wet, and we took him to the tram. He was shivering with the cold, and so we lay upon him, and by that way we did wet ourselves very much. That was the last effort we did make to go through the water. We did not dare go in again, and we did not think it was so high. George, when he came back, said, "No chance; it is all over boys; I have been in so high as my shoulders, and the water is much higher than the top." Then the only comfort we had after that was trusting to the knocking, and that they would work a way through the coal to us."

Reporter: - "Did you hear the knocking before Jenkins went into the water?" - "Yes, sir, but we had no patience to wait, for the water was going back as the pumps were working."

Reporter: - "You could not hear the working of any of the pumps?" - "No sir."

Reporter: - "Did it strike you that the air was different in the place you were confined than in the other parts of the colliery?" - "No, sir, we did not notice anything the matter with the candles, but they were burning not very clear. We did not give ourselves up for lost when Jenkins came back after failing to go through the water."

Reporter: - "The water was not gaining upon you then?" - "Oh, no, sir, it was going back as far as we could understand. We were very glad when we heard voices from the other side of the coal. We had to shout out when answering and we had to go close to the coal to do so. We did not shout out at all except in answering them on the other side. When we heard knocking we jumped off the tram by turns, George Jenkins and me; David Jenkins now and then. Thomas did not go out at all. The only time we did lose hope was when the working to us did stop. We knew they were gone away because we could not hear any work done. When they

did tap the coal, that was bore a hole in it, we heard the air go out, and the noise was awful. We did not mind that. Soon then George Jenkins did go down to the water, and when he did come back he told me 'Well, do not be wild, the water is coming back to us.' I said 'Indeed.' We were awfully frightened, but we did not like to show the others, as we hoped they would not take much notice of the matter. We were very glad when Abby Dodd (Abraham Dodd) came into us. I did not know Abby for a minute. Then we were standing, I should think, in about nine inches of water." At this point it was deemed advisable by the medical gentleman that Powell should have some rest, as it would be prejudicial to his recovery to continue any longer.

#### Recovery of the two missing bodies

At about twenty minutes past six this evening (Saturday) two of the missing bodies were brought to the surface. Under the control of Mr. Jones, Ynyshir, Mr. Daniel Thomas, Brithweunydd, and Mr. Jones, of New Cymmer, they had been dug out of the hole in which they had been lying, and where, it will be recollected, it was found when the first search was made that water came out, showing that the spot was flooded to the roof. The corpses were those of Edward Williams, alias Edward o'r Maindee, 35 years of age, and leaving a wife and seven children, and Robert Rogers, a lad of from 13 to 16.

The bodies came up in a tram, decently covered over, and they were at once carried into the shed, and laid out on the hay strewn beds which had been prepared for the five happier survivors. Both had apparently been dead many days, and Dr. Davies was of opinion that death ensued on the day of the accident. Maindee had his face horribly crushed by a large stone, and both presented a sickening spectacle. Those who from morbid curiosity had crowded into the shed to see them were soon glad enough to come out. These men had to be dug out; the other two cannot be reached till the water is still further reduced, and pumping is proceeding steadily. At the time of writing it was not generally expected that the other two bodies would be got out for a few days.

#### Thanksgiving prayer meeting

A public thanksgiving prayer meeting for the recovery of the poor fellows who had been so long imprisoned was held at the Bethlehem Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Cymmer, this (Saturday) afternoon. The meeting was commenced by singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Then followed prayer by Mr. Idris Williams, the Rev. Mr. Thomas, Baptist minister, and Mr. Jenkin Howells. Mr. Idris Williams next gave an address, during which he narrated a story about a little

lad imprisoned in a coal mine, who on his tin food box scratched the 89th Psalm, in Welsh: —

"O, Arglwydd Dduw fy iachaw-dwriaeth, gwaeddais o'th filaen dydd a nos. Deued fy ngweddi ger dy fron; gostwng dy glust at fy llefain," &c.

Appropriate hymns, such as, "Yn y dyfroedd mawr a'r tonau," "Cofia fenaid cyn it' dreulio, D'oriau gwerth-fawr yn y byd," "O, Arglwydd Dduw rhagluniaeth, Ac iachawdwriaeth dyn," &c., were sung, and the meeting lasted over an hour and a half. At its close arrangements were made for the holding of public prayer meetings next day. A few words with reference to this remarkable meeting may not be out of place. As Mr. Williams explained, the meeting was not held in any way as a novelty, but formed one of a series which had been carried on all through this trying time. In simple, unvarnished language — all the more telling because every word was weighed, and there was no attempt to invest the subject with unnatural horror — the story of the marvellous escape was referred to, and its lessons pointedly brought out.

As was said all through those heavy troubled days that had passed, prayers of trust and hope had been offered for the safe release of the poor-fellows, whose escape seemed almost miraculous. They had been praying in hope, asking for a blessing; now they offered thanksgiving. Relatives of the survivors, and some of the men who rescued them, formed part of the audience in the chapel, and the quiet impressive effect of the whole service was an affecting spectacle. There were no loud demonstrations, and absolutely no spasmodic fervour but deep earnest feeling pervaded the whole service.

Every member of the congregation wore a thoughtful, intent look — painful in its expression of pent-up feeling mingled with overflowing thankfulness — and the hymns were sung and the prayers offered with inexpressible thrilling force. The beauty and expressiveness of the Welsh language gave the singing a solemn charm which will long be remembered. One of those who prayed (and very fervently) began in English, commanding the use of the language well. Slowly the words came from his lips, and by-and-by a sudden burst of emotion led him on into his familiar mother tongue, and the phrases seemed to flow more smoothly on to the impressive "Amen," with which the prayer concluded. It was no ordinary prayer-meeting, and the quiet self-command of those who took part in it was remarkable. The warm-hearted thankfulness of the Welshmen found appropriate and welcome vent in this homely but solemn gathering. Later on, at about half-past six o'clock, Miss Jenner, who, with great kindness is assisting the doctors as the nurse, delivered an address of an impressive character near the pit mouth. A large number of people listened to it attentively.



Scene at the pithead

## Another message from her Majesty

During the day another message from her Majesty was received at the Porth post-office, inquiring how the recovered men were progressing in health, and asking for the latest news. Steps are being taken to decide as to what form the services of the rescuing party are to be recognised, and a committee met this afternoon at the Rheola Inn, to consider on the precise course to be adopted.

Meanwhile subscriptions are pouring in from all parts of the kingdom, and are being received by various persons connected with the colliery and otherwise. The widespread sympathy has been seldom if ever paralleled by a disaster of a similar character. Not only have enquiries been dispatched from all parts of the United Kingdom, but several messages desiring information have reached Porth from America, and from many out-of-the-way places where there are Welshmen have come messages of sympathy and kind enquiry.

In drawing this letter to a close, reference to Mr. Beith, of the Navigation Colliery ought not to be omitted. Throughout, the bravery he has shown has been admired by everyone who has taken part in the work, and it was doubtless through his daring, in a large measure, that the successful release of the imprisoned colliers was so happily consummated. He entered the dangerous spot where the gas was flaring, and cheered the men on when their courage was drooping. To the efforts of others reference has previously been made, but it is due to all the colliery proprietors of the district to say that a spirit of brotherly helpfulness has been shown which can hardly be too much admired or too highly praised.

The pressure of business at the public-houses, and the demand for accommodation, has never been felt so much before, and at the telegraph offices at Porth and Pontypridd more work has been done within the last few days than is got through generally in weeks. At Pontypridd the arrangements in this respect (under Mr. J McMurray, the postmaster) deserve a special compliment for the rapidity and accuracy with which the late newspaper telegrams — some of them running to great length — got through, and for the kind assistance and facilities he offered to the representatives of the Press.

**Porth, Sunday night, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1877**  
(A '*Cardiff Times*' reporter)

During the whole of to-day Porth has been mainly up to thanksgiving services in the chapels, which have been numerous attended, chiefly by the inhabitants, who were present at one or another of them almost to a man. The scene of the accident has been visited by a large number of people, and at times little crowds



have congregated outside the Tynewydd Inn, with a view, if possible, to gain admittance to the long room above. Naturally, there was a little impertinent curiosity mingled with the general desire to view the sufferers, but on the whole there was less of the kind of intrusion so obnoxious at these times than might be expected. Yesterday the poor fellows were subjected to the ordeal of the sight of a large number of visitors, and they were furthermore "interviewed."

The excitement they went through has had a distressing effect, and great care is now needed for their recovery, and the order is to keep them quiet. The men are not in any immediate danger, but their condition is critical. John Thomas to-day seemed very weak, and his symptoms require much watching. There were many applications for admittance, but all inquirers had to leave the spot with their curiosity ungratified. Some of the men's friends naturally feel very anxious to see those from whom they have been separated so long, but, in the interests of their recovery, it is not advisable that they should be subjected to any excitement which can be avoided, and those who have the real welfare of the poor fellows at heart, and desire their speedy return to health, will do well to restrain the wish to see them for some time yet. Last evening the committee who had met at the Rheola Inn to consider on what steps should be taken for getting in subscriptions, drew up an advertisement, and forwarded it to the newspapers. It will appear in another column of the '*South Wales Daily News*.'

Mr. R. Packer, managing clerk to the company, is appointed secretary to the fund, and Dr. H. N. Davies treasurer. Already several handsome donations have been received, including 100 guineas from the London Stock Exchange, £10 from General Codrington, £5 from Mr. T. A. Richards, Cardiff, &c. The charitably inclined will not easily find a better chance for their generosity than in contributing to this fund. The families of those who have lost their lives by the inundation of the colliery are, it is decided, first to be considered. Another portion of the subscriptions will be devoted to the assistance of the five men recovered, for they are not likely to be able to resume work for many months. Then it is also in contemplation to reward those who took a chief part in the rescue with some permanent record of their gallantry. The text of the message from Her Majesty, to which reference was made in last night's communication, is as follows: — "*From Sir Thomas Biddulph to Mr. W. Wales, Rhondda Valley, Pontypridd. The Queen is much gratified to hear that the men have been released, and wishes to know how they are. Answer to Windsor Castle.*"

#### Sunday's thanksgiving services at Porth

The thanksgiving services of Sunday were of a very hearty character, and the display of genuine feeling and fervent gratitude rendered the scenes at the chapels

unusually impressive. According to arrangement, services were held both at the Cymmer Congregational Chapel and at the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel. Each service, like that described yesterday, consisted of prayer and singing, interspersed with short addresses. The singing was admirable, a circumstance of which Welshmen will hardly need to be reminded, and the fervent petitions put forth were of a kind calculated to live long in the memory of all who heard them. At the Cymmer Congregational Chapel the service was rendered deeply interesting by the simple but spirited narrative Mr. Edmund Thomas, Llwyncelin, gave of the rescue, the difficulties that had to be encountered, the hopes and fears of the searchers, and the inexpressible joy which attended the final triumph.

During the recital of the story the attention of the congregation was intently concentrated on the speaker, and every word was followed with emotion almost painful. After the service a collection was made, and contributions flowed in liberally. £6 7s 1d was the amount realised, and this sum is to be devoted to a temporary relief fund for the widow of poor Williams, who is left with seven children. In token of the sad death of Williams and Rogers the chapel pulpits had black cloth cushions, and at the Tynewydd Inn a small black flag hung from one of the upper windows.

#### Sermon by the Rector of Merthyr

In the course of his sermon to a very large congregation at St. David's Church, Sunday, the Rector of Merthyr, the Rev. J. Griffiths, said: - "Look at that heroic deed which has been done in the neighbourhood this last week, a heroic deed which has never, and never can, I believe, be surpassed. Oh that we had 1000 men of such heroic spirit who would come out from the mob to save souls, and then the whole world would be saved. I say the truth when I repeat that there never have been such deeds as those which have been done during the last 10 or 12 days. They are deeds of which we may truly say that as long as men shall have coal to cut, or water runs in the River Taff, they will never be forgotten. I say well and truly has it been said, "Who shall say anything against the Welsh collier now?"

It was an Englishman that said that, and indeed braver men never existed. Think of it for one moment, facing death under circumstances the most hideous possible, and surrounded by accidents the most terrible that might have happened. These men kept on and dared all in order that they might save their fellow men. Talk of your Victoria crosses, and your bubble reputation sought before the cannon's mouth! What are they compared with these? There were these poor men shut up in the earth, a watery death upon one side and forty yards of coal upon the other side; and, brethren, you can picture the trial that God gave to them. I say, brethren, such a scene as this has never been witnessed before in the history of

the world. Ransack it as you will, and I know something of it; never in my recollection have I read anything like it. No wonder the Queen, and God bless her for it, sent a message in her own words, asking "Are the men safe. Telegraph back."

"No courtly phrases, look you, in this. Her mother's heart beats in every word of the message, and thank God for it. I pray for her brethren; bless her that one so highly exalted can think of us. Remembering, brethren, what has passed, I cannot help saying how true were the words of Her Majesty's inspector, who was not speaking against, and was not speaking for, when he said, 'Who shall speak against the Welsh collier again?' The Welsh collier may be, and I know he is, coarse; he may be rude; he may be given to drinking more than what is good for him, but this it must always be said of him — that he is a friend to man, that he can live, and if duty calls upon him, can die gloriously for his fellowmen." The rector was much affected during the delivery of these remarks.

#### How the missing bodies were recovered

Mr. David Jones, ex-manager of the Hines' pit, furnishes the following narrative of the recovery of the missing bodies: - "It was about six o'clock yesterday (Saturday) morning when the search for two of the unrecovered bodies — those of William o'r Maindee, and the boy Rogers — was commenced. The party which took the job in hand was made up as follows: - Messrs. Thomas Jones (Ynyshir), David Jones (the narrator), David Rees, and Richard Howell. The bodies were not got at until four o'clock in the afternoon. The water had all run off from the hole they were in.

They were lying on a tram in the pit bottom. The place seemed to be full of small coal. A large stone, about six yards long, lay on the men, and Williams' face had been bruised by it. Williams was lying in the tram in a half-sitting posture, and the boy was at his feet lying stretched on the small coal. Williams had his head down on one side, and only his legs were in the tram. They had to put ropes under the shoulders of the corpses to draw them out. The spot they were found at had been sunk into on the night of the accident, thinking that the knocking had been heard there. But when they sunk the pit that night they struck water, which had now pretty well dried out. The bodies had to be carried up to the main level. Then they were put into a tram and brought up to the surface. The smell from them was of a most offensive character, and at once made the presence of the bodies apparent when they were approached. The spot at which they were found is considerably deeper than the other workings.

As to the arrangements for an inquest, Mr. Coroner Overton not being on the spot on Saturday he was communicated with, and he directed the jury previously sworn

to view the bodies, and it was understood that a certificate for their speedy burial would be sent. The bodies were conveyed to the late residences of the deceased, and the funeral will probably take place on Monday.

Lest there should be any misapprehension as to who the noble fellows are whom we have to thank in the largest measure for the release of the five men alive, it may be as well to explain that the four 'shifts' of four men each who worked for four hours alternately during the whole time till the last few hours of the struggle were:—

**First shift**—Isaac Pride, William Rawlins, Charles Oatridge, and William Morgan.

**Second shift**—Davy Davies, John Morgan, Thomas Rees, and Davy Minton.

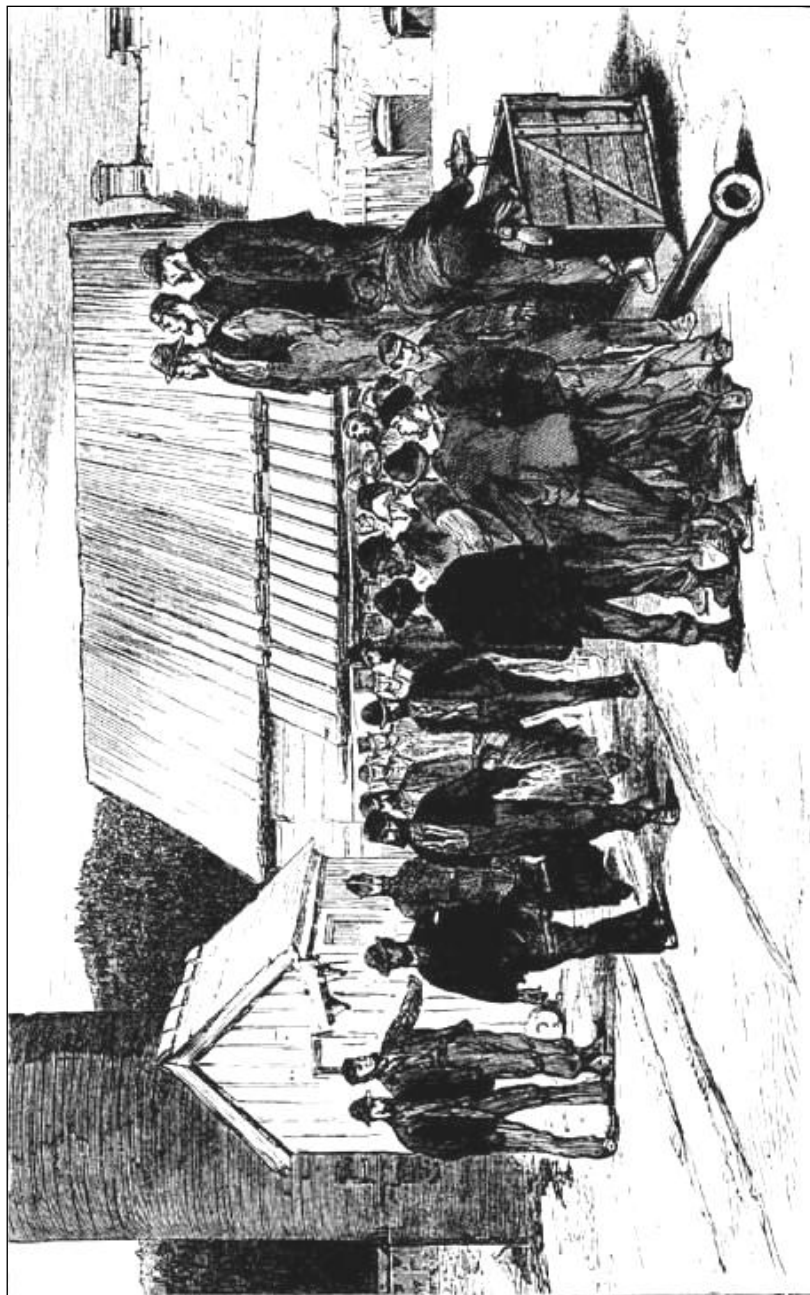
**Third shift**—A. Jones, Richard Hopkins, John Howells, and Thomas Jones.

**Fourth shift**—John Griffiths, Thomas Griffiths, Ioan Williams, and Thomas Thomas.

The exertions of these men, which have been most arduous, escaped notice to some extent, for the following reason: - Having worked the whole time, towards the closing of the week they naturally became seriously exhausted. They were worn out, in fact, before they left their perilous task, and were not in fit condition to tackle the job when the locality had suddenly become a more dangerous place than usual by reason of the quantity of gas near the face of the heading. Volunteers came forward the men whose names have been given — and while to them falls the honour of having actually brought their comrades out alive, the services of the others must not be overlooked.

With Thomas, Pride, and Dodd, there were others who encountered almost equal risk, Davy Rees, the fireman, to whom allusion has been, and David Jones, manager of Hines' old pit. Daniel Owen, too, was among the men who ventured into the dangerous locality. Miss Jenner's presence at the hospital was warmly welcomed, and she has been a familiar figure at the prayer meetings. Everywhere the people are loud in praise of her efficiency as a nurse. The pumping arrangements to-day are proceeding, but nothing further can of course be done as yet. The visitors are thinning this afternoon, and there is a marked difference between the aspect of the town to-night and last Sunday evening.

This afternoon the funeral of the two miners, Edward Williams and Robert Rogers, whose bodies were recovered on Saturday, took place at St. David's Church, Gyfeillion. Over 2,000 people attended. The deceased resided within a short distance of the Troedyrhiw Colliery, in the Ferndale valley.



Carrying the rescued colliers from the pit

## The funerals of Williams and Rogers

The great throng gathered in front of the cottages. Before leaving the cottage of Edward Williams, in which his widow and seven children reside, the eldest who is only 10 years of age, a chapter of the Welsh bible was read and a prayer offered up. Then the coffins were brought out, and placed on biers on the road. Here a Welsh hymn was given out, all lifting up their hats as the sublime sentiments of the hymn were uttered. Then a plaintive melody was commenced, and the tune being 'Hope.' Before the song had terminated the long procession moved down to the greater Rhondda valley, passing the fatal pit on their journey. Soon after passing the pit the words "In the deep and mighty waters" &c. were given out, the tune being "Rousseau Dream."

As the procession walked slowly through Porth, it became augmented by a gradually increasing crowd, and the road was thickly lined with spectators the whole way. The scene was rendered very impressive by the singing, and by the simplicity of the arrangements. It was a walking funeral, and the coffins were carried by comrades of the deceased. In this way the procession walked slowly down the valley in the direction of St. David's, the Llanwonno Chapel of Ease. At the Great Western Company's colliery most of the men turned out to catch a glimpse of the funeral and they lined the walls and clustered at the gateway.

When approaching the gates of the church the immense throng sang another hymn. The vicar of the parish stood at the gates with the sacred volume in his hand while the procession continued singing. When this was brought to a close he read the sublime words of the burial service of the Church of England, and walked into the church, followed by men carrying the coffins, which were placed near the chancel. The building was soon filled to overflowing. The service then proceeded. During the service in church the hymn 'Afon fawr sydd rhaid myn'd trwyddi' was sung. This portion of the ceremony over, the bodies were taken to the grave side. There they were solemnly committed to their last resting place, the hymn, 'Pan ballo ffafr pawb a'u hedd' concluding the service.

Mr. Jabez Watkins, who had the principal direction of the services of the day previous, conducted the singing, which was admirable in its solemn impressiveness from first to last. The poor fellows were laid side-by-side near the footpath leading to the church door. The coffins bore only the simple inscriptions, 'Edward Williams, aged 35 years, 1877.' 'Robert Rogers, aged 13 years, 1877.' Messrs Hughes and Edmonds, of the *Christian Globe*, made an application to Miss Jenner to-day for permission to photograph the men lying in the hospital. The following reply they received will be found interesting: —

**Porth, Cymmer Hospital, April 23rd, 1877.**

*"We do not wish to be photographed in the hospital, as we want our dear Queen that has sent to us to have our likenesses, and in our colliers' dress, when we are better. No one shall have them before her. Signed for David Jenkins, George Jenkins, Moses Powell and David Hughes. One collier not well enough to be asked, namely, John Thomas — Gertrude Jennings, nurse."*

As to the health of the men and their prospects of recovery, there have to-day been a large number of inquiries made, but few, and only those specially entitled to admittance, have been permitted to see them. The men are all progressing fairly towards recovery with the exception of Thomas, whose condition is rather more critical than that of the others. It is hoped, however, that all danger is now safely tided over. Among the visitors of to-day was the Rev. J. Powell Jones, vicar of Llantrisant, who was admitted in the morning. David Jenkins expressed a wish that the rev. gentleman would read to him, and Mr. Jones complied. The Misses Morgan, Tyn-y-Cymmer, and Miss Davies sent in a quantity of flowers during the day, which were gratefully received in the sick room.

The four shifts of men, whose names were given this morning, have been photographed by the representative of the *Christian Globe*, the 16 forming a group. Where so much brave work has been done, it is not surprising that several instances of heroism have, from one reason or another, as yet escaped the notice they deserved. Not the least to be admired among these is the part Mr. Josiah Thomas, Brithweunydd, played in the proceedings. Mr. Josiah Thomas, Brithweunydd Colliery, is brother to Messrs Edmund and Daniel Thomas. He volunteered to enter the hole in company with Mr. Thomas Jones, Ynyshir, when all the local managers stood back, a startling report having been circulated that gas was found to be accumulating, and that the place was filled with it.

This occurred about half-past one on Thursday afternoon. As soon as he volunteered to go, Mr. James Thomas, manager and owner, said that if he went he would accompany him. George Ablett and another man volunteered also. A workman was asked to cut through, but refused, on the ground that there was not sufficient compressed air to balance the pressure of water and gas. These are facts which take up little space in the telling, but require a good deal of cool courage in the acting. Mr. Isaiiah Thomas also took part in the explorations for the recovery of the two dead bodies.

About 10 a.m. a hole was made through the coal, but gas was found to have accumulated there, and it was seen to be necessary to pause for the conveyance of

air. This prolonged the work some time, and after receiving some refreshments, Mr. Thomas was asked by Mr. Thomas Jones who would volunteer to go down. He expressed his willingness to go, and in company with the men mentioned in yesterday's letter successfully accomplished the difficult task.

The Messrs. Thomas have had to contend a great deal with the water in working their own collieries, and hence their assistance was extremely valuable. It may be interesting to many to know that when reference was made, in the Cymmer Chapel, yesterday, to the Queen's gracious inquiries the whole congregation rose — an expression of loyalty worthy of remark. Subscriptions are being received steadily, and there is no doubt that a large sum will be raised. The search for the two bodies still unrecovered is proceeding; that is to say, all that can be done — pumping — is being done, though the work is found to be much impeded by the water gradually thickening and clogging the pipes. It is not anticipated that the bodies will be reached for some little time. The weather being fine to-day, there have been many visitors to the locality, and the interest taken in the neighbourhood of the scene of the disaster seems as yet unabated.

The Home Office instructed Mr. Wales on Tuesday to send to the Government the names of those who distinguished themselves in the Tynewydd Colliery, Porth. This has been complied with. Our Porth correspondent says that all the rescued men are getting on well, and that they ate a good meal of meat on Monday, and heartily enjoyed it. A large hamper has arrived at the hospital from Mrs Lavinia Price, Ivy House, Ross, Hereford, containing 60 lbs of fresh meat, a large supply of grocery, and four jars of spirits. A bundle of *Graphics, London News's, &c.*, has also been sent by Mr. T. Edwards, wine and spirit merchant, Merthyr.

Mr. Hussey Vivian M. P. has from the first evinced the warmest sympathy in the progress of the men, and almost daily telegraphs to enquire how they are getting on. We are requested officially to state that the influx of visitors at the Porth Cymmer hospital has proved so great during the last two days as to render it desirable for the present to prevent any but the relatives seeing the rescued colliers, the excitement of seeing so many strangers being absolutely injurious to the patients, besides an undue tax upon the time and strength of their attendants. Pumping operations are still going on, and the water is being raised at a good rate, but we have no idea when the bodies of the other unfortunate men will be discovered.

A Westminster rector writes to the '*Times*':—"I have just had the pleasure of sending £35 to the Lord Mayor, as the morning contribution of a congregation by no means wealthy, to the five poor colliers of Pontypridd and their rescuers. No circumstances are more calculated to unlock the sacred sources of sympathy than those of this deliverance, and the unshrinking courage and patience by which it



was achieved. The story will take its place in the glorious annals of humble heroism with those of the wreck of the Birkenhead and the burning of the Goliath.



**Interior of the hut where the survivors were taken  
first for sustenance.**

Sympathy ed by the  
subscription of thousands of pounds, and it is impossible not to feel that, if the  
hands of gentlemen who will administer these offerings are too closely tied, harm  
may be done by the overflowing generosity of those whose hearts have been so  
deeply starved.

I therefore write this line to express the hope that when ample has been done for  
the poor sufferers, for the brave men who rescued them, and for the families of  
the dead, the surplus may be applied for the permanent benefit of all the colliers  
of the district of Pontypridd." On Monday morning, the '*Daily Telegraph*' fund had  
reached fully £130, to which the proprietors added £20.

## Chapter five

### A review of the Tynewydd inundation

(*'Western Mail'* editorial, Monday, 21st April)

By the mercy of Providence, and by means of heroic effort a band of devoted men, five of the colliers imprisoned since 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> April, in the Tynewydd Pit of the Troedyrhiw Colliery, in the Rhondda, have been rescued alive. The chances against their preservation were, indeed, almost beyond calculation. When, on that fateful Wednesday afternoon, the way to life was closed against them, it might have been thought, especially under the particular circumstances, that they would never again see the light of day, and never again clasp the hands of their kindred or their friends. The great heart which beats in large bodies of men when their fellows are in suffering or are in sorrow has, however, been triumphant upon this occasion.

Circumstances that might have appalled the stoutest hearts, and might have even made the strongest despair of success, have not in any way availed for a moment to enervate of the efforts of those bold men who have, through danger and difficulty, fought their way from safety to the lives of their brethren. We will undertake to say that work like that which has been done in Tynewydd Colliery since the catastrophe became known is as heroic as anything recorded in the history of humanity. Notwithstanding all the chances – and the chances were many – that those who were working for the release of their brethren might suffer their fate, they have chosen rather to run the risk of death than to leave their fellows in what they considered at the time to be a living grave.

The interest and sympathy which this most romantic and tragic incident of colliery life has evoked are universal. From all parts of the country telegrams have poured in, inquiring day to day as to the probable rescue of the imprisoned miners. The Government, represented by the Home secretary, has shown a feeling which has always characterized conservative ministries by special inquiries with regard to the condition of miners. Members of parliament have placed in the hands of Sir George Elliott their contributions as tokens of their admiration for the brave fellows who have been working so long to rescue their imprisoned brethren, while from one end of the kingdom to the other the press has been active in giving currency to every incident of this most remarkable accident.

Of course we shall have cynics of the *'Saturday Review'* order asking why all this hub-hub should be made about the probable return to life of five or nine men,

while we regard with the utmost calmness the burning of a city, of the destruction of a district in India, involving the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives. The same critic will ask why the whole of Wales should be in commotion because of the immanent risk of the lives of five or nine colliers, while the news of a battle in which the loss of 30 or 40,000 Frenchmen or Germans was recorded would be received as simply a matter of course. To such critics it is enough to reply that the overwhelming visitations of providence, or the great catastrophes are brought about by the necessities of nations, or by the passions and ambitions of great potentates, are matters with which the common work-a-day people are not supposed to concern themselves.

It is enough for them that they find a condition of things like that which has prevailed during the last ten days in the Tynewydd Colliery. The Welsh colliers here, metaphorically speaking, men calling to them from the bowels of the earth, and asking to be restored to light and to life. It is natural, therefore, for them to become much more excited and interested than they would if they heard the news of another Waterloo. At the present moment we have not the means of going into detail as to the melancholy facts of this particular case. Doubtless they will be thoroughly investigated on the occasion of the renewal of the inquest upon the body of William Morgan, which was opened on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst., and which will be resumed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> proximo. Upon the face of things it seems to be abundantly clear that if proper precautions had been taken, and if the system of inspection had been thoroughly carried out, an accident of this kind could not possibly have happened. Upon that, however, we do not venture to give an opinion, but we do most distinctly say that the events of the last few days, and their tragic circumstances, show that it is necessary to bring our system of colliery inspection to the proof, in order that we may not be lapse in any full sense of security, but may know whether Government inspection is a sham or not, and whether we are to be left entirely to our own resources in these matters.

It is ascertained that if the proper regulations had been maintained in this case the water could not possibly have got to the workings which it reached. If this is so, it is quite clear that the responsibility is very easily traced, and the question will narrow itself to this – as to who permitted the communication between the two pits to be so easily broken down as it was. There are other matters connected with this very lamentable affair which ought to be inquired into, although we do not quite see how any tribunal is to get at the culprits. We hope it cannot be true – although we have been assured that it is – that in the beginning of the proceedings for the rescue of the unfortunate men who have been so long entombed there was a difference of opinion, not to say hostile feeling, arising from the different nationalities of those who were concerned in the matter.

To be a Welshman is a good thing; to be a Scotchman is a good thing; but it is better, without reference to any particular nationality, to be a man. We do not say that if all had worked harmoniously the men would have been released at an earlier period, but if during any time occupied by the proceedings in connection with the recovery of the men there has been anything ill feeling arising out of the nationality, or the official position of those concerned, all we can say is that it is a thing very much to be deplored. It is sufficient, however, for the present to congratulate themselves that the efforts, so long continued and under such discouraging circumstances, have been crowned with success, leaving for a future time to investigate – first, the causes of this most lamentable occurrence; and next, to see whether anything has occurred which has delayed the success which yesterday gave joy to the heart of every man in the Principality.

#### Public opinion on the rescue

*'The Post'* observes that no event of a purely local nature has for many years past excited such intense interest throughout the country as the temporary interment of the colliers, who, after nine days' confinement, were happily rescued. That interest has been growing in intensity from day to day, and it is not too much to say that it was in this country dwarfed, for the moment, the general desire to be made acquainted with the final resolve of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, or the latest movements of the Russian army encamped on the north flank of the River Pruth. Nor is this very astonishing. There is in every little incident which has happened during the past week in the Pontypridd Colliery something which appealed in language whose cogency was irresistible to the strongest and noblest feelings of nature.

The *'Daily Telegraph'* remarks that the long battle for the lives of the imprisoned men has ended in a happy victory, which will be regarded throughout the length and breadth of these islands as one in which every household may take its share. With the Queen and Parliament the whole people are united, hoping and praying that the poor souls might be saved; longing for the welcome tidings that their horrible tomb had been opened. Fiction stood utterly outmatched this time by the desperate realities of fact. No writer ever invented a situation of such thrilling dramatic tension. When folks talk again of the faults and failings of the mining people they will not forget the gallant work done for love of God and man in that South Wales coal pit.

The *'Daily News'* says the announcement of the rescue of the five miners will be received by the public with a great feeling of relief and thankfulness. The gallant men who have been risking their lives to save those of their imprisoned fellows may be assured that their heroism has not only tended to increase the sympathy

of the public with their class, but to add to the long list of noble examples which will ensure the doing of like deeds in future, and which already form a bright page in the history of mining enterprise in England.

*'The Standard'* remarks that water, air, gas, all combined to add to the perils of their position; while for 10 days they had to support the trial of hunger, and as it now appears, of thirst. No words of praise can be too high for the devoted band of volunteers who worked night and day to reach their imprisoned comrades, braving dangers of no slight kind labouring in a cramped and painful position, and during the last two days liable at any moment to destruction from the pent-up air and gases. It is probable, indeed, that the accident which cost the life of one of the first party reached was the means of saving the lives of all those rescued yesterday, and of the men who were working to save them.

The *'Pall Mall Gazette'* declares that the story of that ultimate extrication is as interesting and, as a record of daring and perseverance, as noble a one as any writer of fiction has ever imagined. It is difficult to know whether most to admire the calmness and presence of mind which, as the fact above noticed shows, was retained to the last by the men pent up days in their living tomb, or the men outside, who braved wind, fire, and water in breaking through the last remaining wall of coal to free their comrades.

*'The Echo'*, after narrating the facts, remarked: - "This the story; these are the men who have commanded the sympathies of the English speaking race from the Queen and the House of Commons to the lowest ranks of society, and Englishmen everywhere will feel that these brave Welshmen deserve to be gratefully remembered in all time coming, as the authors of one more inscription on that Roll of which we are all so proud."

Meanwhile, raising funds for the victims and relatives was beginning in earnest. The Lord Mayor of London often raised funds for such accidents or disasters and were termed 'Mansion House Funds' and help was requested again this time: -

**To the Editor of the *'South Wales Daily News.'***

Sir, - At 10.55 this day I wired to the Lord Mayor of London as follows :— "Can fund be started to support widows and orphans of the dead at Tynwydd Colliery, restore the rescued to strength, reward with a medal those noble fellows who have so bravely rescued their brother colliers from imprisonment and death?" Adding, "If so, a subscription thereto." At 11.35 I received a reply from the Mansion House "Have just started such a fund as you suggest. Thanks for kind

promise. Hope rescued men are progressing favourably."—I am, &c. **D. W. Williams, Fairfield, Pontypridd, 21st April, 1877.**

Other minds were also turning to the fundraising and what to do with what was raised. The following letter was one of many that local newspapers received: -

**To the Editor of the ‘Cardiff Times.’**

Sir,—It is evident the imprisonment of the colliers at the Troedryhiw Colliery and their almost miraculous rescue has created a vast amount of interest and sympathy throughout the country, from Her Most Gracious Majesty to the lowest subject in her realm. Last week, when with others within talking distance of the poor fellows, and while there was but a very faint hope of their being rescued, and hearing the cool, thoughtful, and lucid directions given by the tiny voice of the youngest of the imprisoned band, whose father and brother have no doubt met their death by the same deplorable accident, it struck me that should the brave and intelligent lad ever be brought out alive, the sympathizing public would have a glorious opportunity of practically showing their sympathy by subscribing funds enough to educate him for the mining profession.

Who knows of what value the bitter experience of a lad who has shown such fortitude and thoughtfulness may be to the rising mining population of his country, if he was educated and prepared to occupy a position amongst those upon whose judgment and directions the lives of so many thousands depend, especially when his experience, knowledge, and ability would be stimulated by gratitude to those who laboured for his deliverance and to a sympathetic public who had so generously come forward and provided the means of his education.

I am sure those owners and professional men who assisted at the rescuing operations, headed by our worthy and indefatigable mines inspector, Mr. Wales, would gladly form themselves into a committee to see that such funds as would be placed at our disposal would be properly applied. Allow me then, sir, through the medium of your paper, to appeal to your sympathizing readers for funds in aid of the education of the brave but fatherless lad. I have made inquiries of those who know him well, and I am informed he is a noble, kind-hearted, and intelligent little fellow, and one who would fully appreciate any kindness shown him. Trusting this appeal on his behalf shall not be made in vain,—I am, yours, &c., **W. Thomas, Resolven, Neath, 21 April, 1877.**

P.S. Mr. M. R. Williams, of the West of England Bank, Pontypridd, would, I know, gladly receive any subscriptions forwarded him.

The Tynewydd mine fund  
(The *Western Mail*, Monday April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1877)

The fund which was started in the House of Commons on Thursday night by Sir George Elliot and Mr. Macdonald, with the view of recognizing the services of the brave fellows who worked so hard in attempting to rescue their imprisoned fellow colliers, and those efforts, as the world now knows, was signally successful, promises to develop into something a great deal more considerable than the simple acknowledgement which was the first impulse of the members of the House of Commons who entered into this subscription. We have reason to believe that the amounts subscribed by members of the House of Commons alone reaches already at least £200, while the Lord Mayor has started a separate subscription list at the Mansion House for the purpose of rewarding the men who rescued their fellow workmen, and also providing for the necessities of the unfortunate men who have suffered so long and so unprecedented imprisonment.

There are likewise local subscriptions in progress, and it becomes a question of some importance to decide upon the form which the acknowledgement of the services of the rescuers, and the palliation of the sufferers of the rescued, should be taken. First and foremost, it is abundantly clear that the immediate necessities of the lately imprisoned men and their families should be attended to. This, as the French say, goes without talking, but while we're attending to the necessities of the living we must not forget that five colliers that have died in the course of this most extraordinary accident. Their relatives, where they are in situations of distress from the destruction of the breadwinners, ought to be the next objects of solicitude on the part of those subscribers to the general fund.

The men who have worked so heroically and successfully in releasing their fellow creatures will probably agree with us that the two classes before-named should take precedence, and that any recognition of their gallantry should be subservient to the absolute necessities and needs of those who we have named. It happens, however, particularly with regard to the House of Commons fund, that it has been subscribed for the special purpose of recognizing the services of the rescue party; but to avoid anything like a misunderstanding we would venture to suggest that the whole of the subscriptions should be amalgamated in one fund devoted to the three classes for the purpose we have indicated, viz; the relief of the necessities of the rescued men, the relief of the relatives of those who died by the accident, and the reward of those who contributed their un-bought services to so magnificent and so welcome a result.



If, after these purposes shall be served, there remains any part of the amalgamated funds applicable to such a purpose, we think that it would not be out of place, especially considering the whole of the tragic circumstances of this peculiar accident, to strike what may be called a Medal of Bravery. There are, of course, many gentlemen who took part in the rescuing operations to whom money would be no consideration; but we think it due to them, and we are certain that it would satisfy a public feeling, that they should have some enduring token of the recent event, and some recognition on the part of their countrymen of bravery under circumstances of danger, and of self-sacrifice under the conditions calculated almost to appal the stoutest heart.

In this country, and unlike France, we have very few decorations of this particular kind, and it is no small tribute to the strong sense of duty and humanity which possessed every Englishman that we should simply look upon such deeds as matters of course. The occurrence, however, is so exceptional in its circumstances, and so peculiarly singular in its accidents, that for once we may throw aside our British phlegm and immortalise a brave action by striking a medal in commemoration of it.

If, after all these purposes have been served, there still remains any part of the fund unallotted we think it would be by no means an inappropriate use of it if it were to form the nucleus of some other fund for the benefit of colliers, such, for instance, as that for the construction of a colliers' wing at the new Cardiff Infirmary, or a colliers' quarter at the Porthcawl Rest. We sincerely trust that enough may be left to lay the foundation of such special objects as this, so that at any future time the descendents of the present generation of South Wales colliers may be able to say that the awful sufferings of the men imprisoned in the Tynewydd pit were not altogether without fruit in the way of contemporary generosity and benevolence.

Meanwhile, back at the temporary 'hospital' in the Tynewydd Inn, the behaviour of Miss Jenner, who had taken charge of the proceedings there had begun to show some annoying traits: -

**Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 1877**  
The state of the rescued men

The five men are progressing favourably, but are very weak, and their paleness indicates the physical strain their constitutions underwent during the ten days they were without food. In answer to my inquiries they stated that they feel much weaker now than they did while in the mine. The medical gentlemen in attendance, Dr. H. Naunton Davies, and his assistant, Dr. Dukes, both of whom are

foremost amongst the medical men who entered the shaft, and who have been unremitting in their attention to the sufferers since their rescue, have commenced supplying them with solid food.

Miss Jenner, in her anxiety for the men, is very reluctant to admit anyone to visit them, even when the visitors are accompanied by the doctors, who state that a few visitors can be admitted daily without any risk to the sufferers. In short, the interference between the five men and the medical attendants is becoming intolerable, and they are loudly complaining of this. They state that the men are not supplied with the food they prescribe for them, and the matter is becoming really so serious that I have been requested to call attention to it in the interest of the sufferers.

The little lad, David Hughes, is an object of much interest and commiseration, and people begin to supply him with money. One of the medical men telling him that he should provide himself with a purse, he smiled, and, taking from under his pillow a very small purse, in which were six or seven shillings, he said, "This will hold as much as I am likely to have."

#### Consternation at rumours (Tuesday evening)

Considerable consternation was created here today by rumours as to the recall of the Taff Vale Railway locomotive boiler, which had proved so useful in the work of pumping. On, however, the explanation that it was still wanted being wired to the company, they, with that kind consideration which has distinguished their actions throughout the period of the Tynewydd disaster, sent instructions permitting it to remain. It would be impossible to speak too highly of the services rendered by the Taff Vale officials to the Troedyrhiw Company during the past fortnight. Besides the apparatus which has been supplied by them, their unfailing readiness when required to run special trains to the scene of the disaster entitles them to the warmest gratitude. Mr. George Fisher and Mr. James Hurmann, as well as Mr. Riches, have been unremitting in their efforts to facilitate the work of rescue, and subsequent process of pumping goes on at the flooded colliery.

Writing at the present moment I am in a position to state that, although the pumping is vigorously carried on here, there will be no chance of attempting a search for the remaining two bodies until Saturday at the earliest. Their imprisoned bodies lie in the extreme portion of the pit hence the difficulty of getting at them until a large amount of water has been cleared. Mr. Wales has today visited Porth, and spent a long time in company with Mr. Packer, of the

Tynewydd pit. It is stated that prior to proceeding with the inquest the local managers will examine the workings, and that a survey will be made.

**Wednesday, April 25th**

The patients speak - More complaints about Miss Jenner

The lady, who, it will be remembered, appointed herself a voluntary nurse on the evening the five men were rescued from the pit, and has since taken charge of their nursing in the temporary hospital established in the Tynewydd Inn, has by her vagaries and officiousness exhausted the patience of the doctors and all concerned in the well being of the sufferers. The poor fellows are naturally the objects of good deal of public interest and curiosity, and many have visited them in the hope of soothing them in their sufferings, and in a large number of instances relieved them personally, and provided them with comforts and even luxuries. It would have been thought that the medical men would have been the most proper persons to have decided how far these visits could have been borne by the sufferers, without injuriously affecting their condition, but Miss Jenner seems to entertain a contrary opinion, and has taken upon herself to overrule the wishes of the doctors, and the views of everybody else.

As indicating the spirit in which she conducts herself, I may mention that this afternoon, while a clergyman of the Church of England (the Rev. Moses Lewis) was offering up an extempore prayer, by the request of the men, Miss Jenner nudged him, and exclaimed very audibly, "Now, then, cut it short." Miss Jenner has assumed the custody of the various gifts, including wines, soups, and other luxuries suitable for a sickroom, together with sums of money intended for the poor fellows under her care. No doubt she will apply these in the best possible mode according to her judgment, but a great deal of dissatisfaction exists therewith on the part of some of those for whom the gifts were intended. It is quite possible that the poor fellows might wish to indulge too freely, but I must emphatically express the general opinion which prevails here that the medical men and not a self-appointed nurse ought to decide as to what is proper for use in a sickroom.

I found the patients more cheerful than on any former occasion, and colour beginning to return to their pallid cheeks. They are plentifully supplied with illustrated papers, and this afternoon on approaching little David Hughes's bed I found him on his side in bed with an open book resting on a chair. He smiled at my approach, and I asked "What are you reading, David?" "*The 'Chatterbox'*" was his reply. On scanning the open page I found that the article he was reading was entitled 'The armour of Light.' "Did you feel the want of this armour, David, "while in the darkness below?" He replied solemnly, "I did, indeed, sir." The amiable youth then spoke to me of his father, mother, &c.; little did he know that his poor

father is dead. He is occasionally wondering why his father has not yet come to see him, especially, the lad thinks, after he had undergone such awful perils. Alas, poor lad, he will never come again. May the youth find other protectors and guides, and there are indications that the great heart of the nation will not leave him unprotected! The wind is tempered to the shorn lamb.

It is impossible to stand near this poor lad's bed without discovering that there is an element within us which is not entirely dependent upon matter. He, with a childish glee, handed to me for inspection a cabinet portrait of Her Majesty, which each had received that morning from London with the words on the envelope, "With wishes for speedy recovery." George Jenkins, near whose bed sat his uncle, Mr. James Thomas, the managing proprietor of the Troedyrhiw Colliery, said he was thinking of his little motherless children at home while incarcerated in the mine was the most painful ordeal he underwent during his long imprisonment. "They lost their mother," he said, "five years ago. The eldest is only ten, and the youngest five."

Moses Powell has been the sole supporter of his aged mother during the last eleven years, and for four years previous to that he supported both father and mother. He is her only child at home, and, while speaking of how he pictured her solitude when his fate was in the balance, the tears rushed into his eyes, and with a wave of his hand and a bend of the head he indicated that it was still a theme upon which he could not dwell upon. He said that during the last two days of their imprisonment he had constantly to guard David Jenkins, who had become delirious. He would suddenly point in front of him and cry, "I can escape that way," at the same time trying to rush forward in the direction of the flooded workings. Moses Powell said they were all today suffering great pains in their legs below the knees. All are, however, progressing favourably.

Among the suggestions as to the disposal of the inevitable surplus is one favourable to the founding of a cottage hospital in the neighbourhood of Porth. Although, on the face of it, the idea seems practicable, certain difficulties in the way have already been mentioned. Owing to the comparative immunity of the district from colliery disasters, the cottage hospital might, for instance, for a long period be altogether without a patient.

Then, again, in case such an institution was founded the chances are that when a really serious disaster occurred it would be inadequate to the purposes of proper and exhaustive treatment. Considering it also as a home, medical men might (it has been observed) object to the patients being pent up in a place affected by the colliery atmosphere of the district, and might prefer to see them treated at a distance, at Porthcawl, for instance, or a colliers' wing at the Cardiff Infirmary.

## The Albert Medals

On this date the London newspapers announced the Her Majesty the Queen had, in the usual manner, signified her intention to contribute the sum of £50 to the fund which is being raised for the benefit of the men rescued from the Tynewydd mine, and for the benefit of those who rescued them. At the same time Her Majesty, has been graciously pleased to express her desire that the Albert medal, hitherto only given for gallantry in saving life at sea, shall be extended to similar actions on land, and that the first medals struck for this purpose shall be conferred on the heroic rescuers of the Welsh miners.

**Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup> 1877**

Survivors get dressed - Goodbye to Miss Jenner

Pontypridd Friday evening – The Tynewydd Inn hospital today bore a very different aspect to what it did on my former visit. Without wishing to say a word against the well meaning but mistaken lady who volunteered her services as a nurse, and who succeeded in making everybody feel uncomfortable, I have pleasure in announcing, and the public will learn with satisfaction, that she has withdrawn from the self-imposed task of attending to the sufferers, and that her place is most efficiently filled by Miss Rebecca Davies (Dr. Davies's niece). Everyone in the hospital wore an air of repose. No excitement, no rushing to and fro as during my former visit, with flying orders to be quiet, which ill-became the temporary abode of men who for many days had lingered on the threshold, as it were, of another world, and who are but slowly recovering from the effects of contact with the unforeseen. I found the five sufferers seated about the fireplace, some reading books and newspapers, others conversing calmly with their friends. Moses Powell was conversing with a respectable old lady to whom he introduced me. "My mother," said the affectionate son, at the same time directing his hand towards her. There was a world of expression in Moses's utterances of "My mother, sir." It conveyed as plainly as possible, without the employment of the actual words, that the noble fellow was grateful for having been spared, if only to stand between her and the world.

Little David Hughes's mother has not been able yet to visit him, being too ill to do so. Her house is still a house of mourning, for the father of her family and her son are still in the mine, without hope of being seen alive any more. I called to see the poor woman at her cottage. She was deathly pale, and with a white bandage round her temple. She was nursing a little girl, who was apparently in the last stage of consumption. She told me that she has buried seven children, and only a

month before this calamity had followed one of them to the grave. "I have not been able to go to see David," she said, "since his recovery from the pit, for I could not pass that pit if I had worlds for doing so. With an expression of unutterable woe, she said, "my heart is in that pit." In answer to a question from a friend who accompanied me she said that her husband and children usually attended the Primitive Methodist Chapel, and that David, before the accident, had been learning two pieces to recite at the Anniversary, which were to have been delivered last Sunday, and that the Anniversary meetings had been adjourned to enable little David to gain sufficient strength to be present to give the promised recitations.

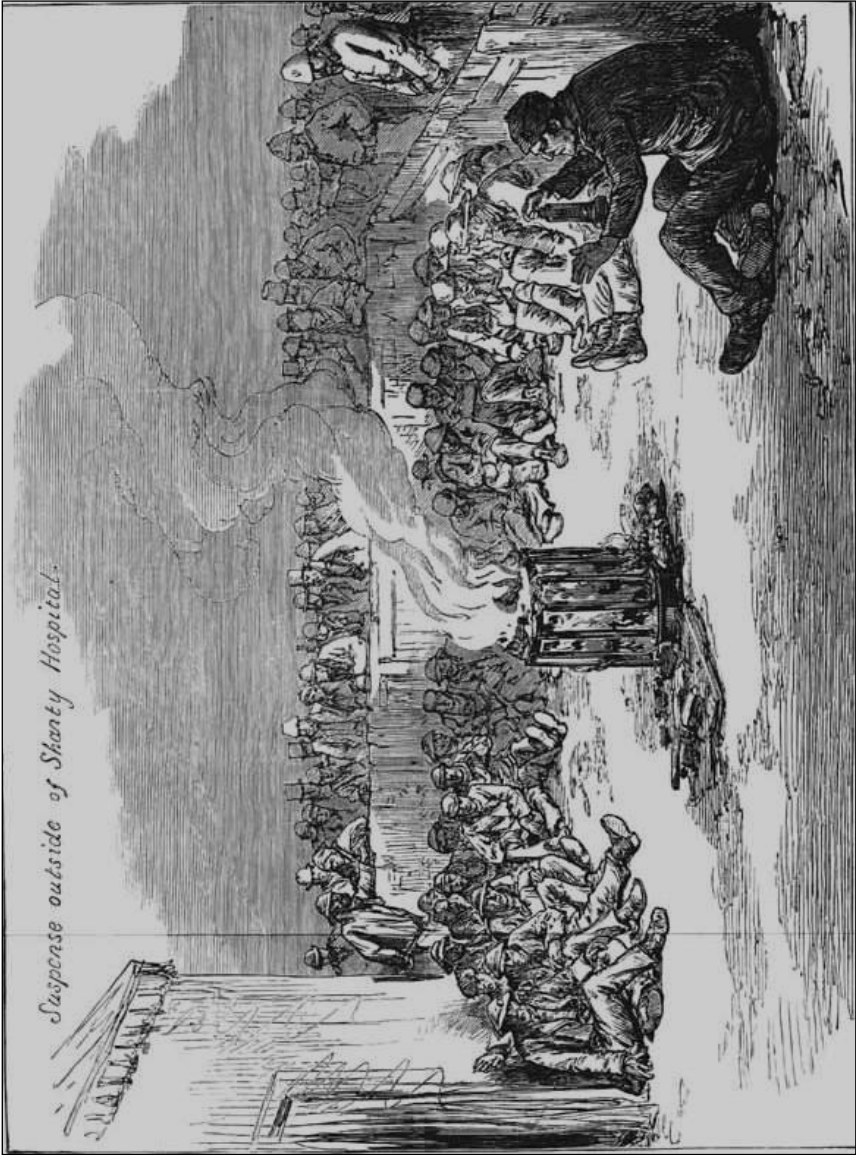
Those who know something about the inner life of Welsh miners will know that little David's task is similar to those frequently self-imposed by the lads of the mines of Wales. Chapters of the bible, psalms, &co; are frequently learned by heart while engaged in the task of dragging the small boxes filled with coal from the fall of coal to the tram, and no doubt little David, during his ten days' incarceration below, with the earth and her bars about him, often repeated what he had intended for the anniversary. As if by a special interposition of Divine Providence he is spared, and will appear after all at the Anniversary. It is interesting to learn that he entered the mine when he was nine years. He was "stopped" – to employ a word well understood among miner – when the new Mines Regulation Act came into operation, being then under twelve. Since he obtained that age he has worked constantly. Today the five put on their ordinary clothes for the first time since their rescue, and they were much surprised to find how much too large for them they had become. The difference between their size when they had last worn them and what they are at present was so great that one could hardly believe that they had ever belonged to them.

#### Mr. Wales on the disaster

The Lord Mayor on Thursday received from Mr. T. E. Wales, inspector of Mines in Wales, an official statement of the different plans which were tried to affect the release of the imprisoned men. After detailing several plans he states that about 3 a.m. on Friday, they could converse with the men, who informed them they could not live much longer if not rescued. The engineers and officials knew that the water, which was kept back by compressed air, was standing from three feet to five feet about the men. Mr. Wales then arranged for a consultation with the engineers, and suggested that the three holes which had been bored through unplugged, should be opened out, and the air allowed to escape from the imprisoned men till it was reduced to the same pressure as the air with them.

He pointed out that, of course, as the air discharged the water would rise, and if the men were not extricated in sufficient time they would be drowned. On the

other hand, they knew they could not pump the water out for some two or three days, and the men had told them they could not live much longer. There being a



**Outside the hut at the top of the pit where the rescued men were first taken.**

considerable portion of the mine filled with compressed air, he thought the water would not rise very quickly. After considerable discussion it was determined to carry out the plan he suggested as being the only possible way to recover the men alive. Up to that time the compressed air had kept the water back a distance of about 35 yards from the men. As soon as they opened holes, and allowed the air to escape, the water began to rise, and the men told them that they were soon to be drowned. The engineers kept asking them if the water was still rising, and reply invariably was "yes." The air being sufficiently relieved they put the colliers on to cut away the final six feet of coal, which took about two hours to accomplish.

During the whole of that time the imprisoned men continued to call to them in the most pitiful tones that they would soon be drowned; and they also tried to stop up the holes. At last, however, when the water had risen to within a few inches of their mouths it ceased to rise. That was the most exciting moment of all. They then told them they were quite safe, and would be relieved in a short time, and asked if they would have food sent through the hole or wait until they were relieved. They answered that would wait, as they could live a little longer. In conclusion, he could only add that the conduct of the mining engineers and colliers was far beyond the power of any language to express. He must also refer to the energy of Dr. Davies and his able assistants, displayed in the whole of the time, and would mention the bravery shown by the two divers from London.

### **Sunday April 29<sup>th</sup> 1877**

Pontypridd Sunday evening - The Tynewydd Hospital continues to be an object of much interest. On Sunday many ladies visited the place, among

them Mrs Morgan, the Field, Pontypridd, who presented each of the five men with a sovereign. Among the ladies who have very much contributed to the comfort of the men is Mrs Davies, Glyn Rhondda House. This afternoon the hospital was visited by a large number of working men, and they sat about the five beds chatting with the rescued. While this was going on Miss Jenner entered with a bundle of papers in her hand, and said with a loud voice: - ""How are you my five friends? This being the Lord's Day I cannot stay long with you."

At half-past-three o'clock the Rev. Morgan Evans, Ebenezer Chapel, Cardiff, held a religious service in Welsh in the hospital. He read the 88 Psalm, on remarkably applicable to the recent circumstances, and which, some years ago, was found scratched on a tin can near the skeleton of a Welsh collier by explorers two years



after the accident happened which imprisoned him. After reading other portions of the Holy Scriptures the men expressed a wish for a hymn to be sung. Mr. Idris Williams then gave out in Welsh, "The forward Jehovah's awful thrown," &c. This was followed by a most touching address by the Rev. Gentleman. Among the visitors today was Dr. Jones, of Mountain ash. The case of the five rescued men has excited much interest in the medical profession.

**Monday April 30<sup>th</sup> 1877**  
Recovery of the body of John Hughes

On Monday afternoon, the exploring party in the Tynewydd mine succeeded in entering the workings as far as the entrance into the stall in which John Hughes, (the father of the lad David Hughes, one of those rescued); who was working with another son at the time the calamity occurred. This stall was some distance beyond the bottom of the drift into which the divers penetrated, and is an offshoot from the level heading in which the five rescued men were working. The water in the drift has greatly been reduced, and on Monday the post, a distance of 100 yards from the top of the drift, was reached. Round the post was found the string which the diver, Frank Davies, stated he had placed there. It is thus proved that the divers descended to this point.

There is still too much water at the bottom of the drift for the exploring parties to enter the workings in that way. They entered the workings through the opening made to liberate the five men from Thomas Morgan's stall. They found some yards from the entrance into John Hughes's stall, two empty trams, the tops of which were a little out of water. Between the trams they found the body floating on the surface of the water. This was about 30 yards from the spot where the deceased was working on the evening of the accident. The body had only a shirt, trousers, and boots, and the sleeves were rolled up, thus proving that the poor fellow was at work when the rush of water came.

From the fall of coal where he was working was a windway running parallel with the heading along which the water rolled towards the drift. The water rushed almost simultaneously through the windway of the heading, but it reached him through the windway first. It seemed – judging by the position of the body and the fact that the door at the entrance of his stall had been forced away in the direction of the drift and not into the stall – he escaped before the water until he was stopped between the two trams, where the water dashed over him, carried away the door, and then met the volume of water rolling along the level heading. The search was then continued for the lad, but the water was so deep that it had to be given up for the night. The explorers penetrated into the heading of Charles Oatridge, where it was supposed the water broke in from Hines' pit. Here they

found conclusive proof that this was the place through which the torrent came. A large block of coal, several feet in thickness, had been forced out from the centre of the standing coal in this heading. The opening made was two yards wide by three feet in height. Charles Oatridge had only left the place a few minutes before the disaster occurred.

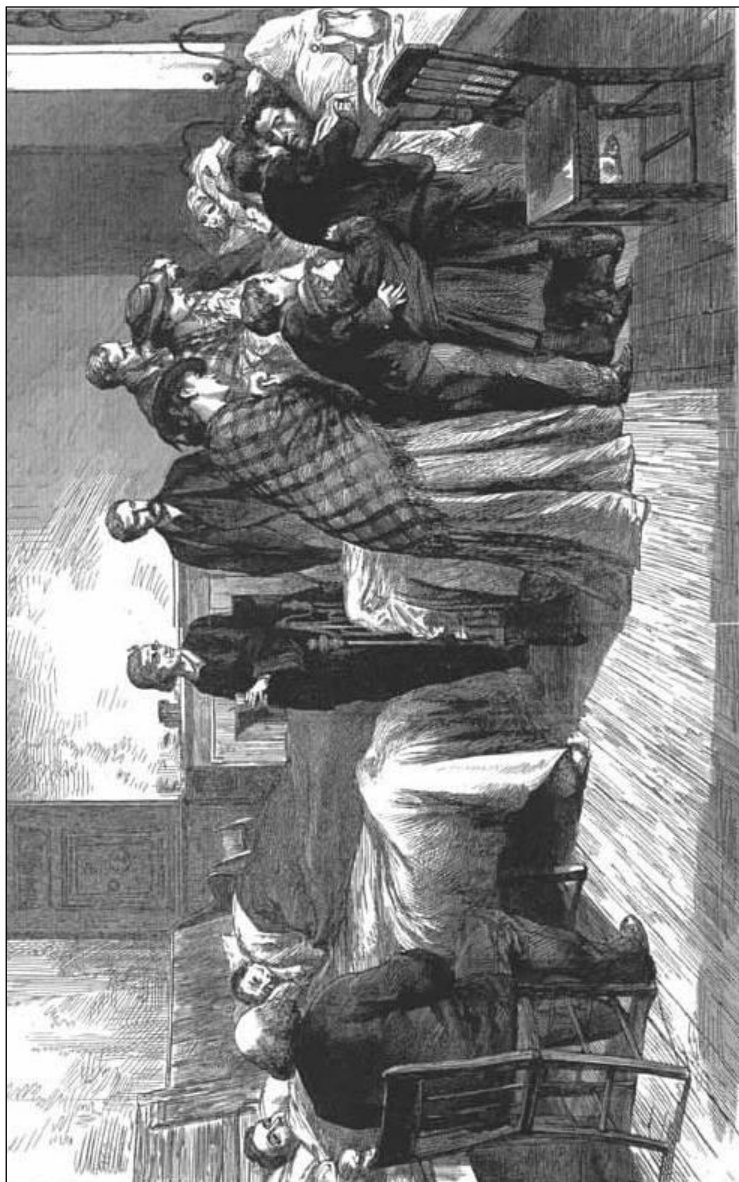
The '*Western Mail*' of this date wrote: - The Mansion House fund on this date reached £2,836. Another Briton writes to insist in strong terms that the several funds, now numbering nearly a dozen subscribed in reference to the inundation at Tynewydd belong entirely to the men, and to them alone, and that not one farthing of them should be devoted to any purpose other than on personal to themselves; that is to say, that the men confined in the pit and those that personally cut them out should have the whole sum of £3,000 or £4,000 handed over to them to do what they like with. He observed that to divert a charitable fund from its express purpose is a breach of equity, and may lead to consequences not contemplated in the beginning.

Dr. Davies, Mountain Ash on the condition of the rescued men

We are favoured by Mr. E. W. S. Davies, of Mountain Ash, with the following note of the mental condition of the rescued miners at the Tynewydd Pit, Cymmer: - "I had improvised a little cottage hospital in the shanty or shed by the pit's mouth, where the men in general evidently congregated before going to their daily labour. This was naturally darkened, and had a noble fire at the end. Planks, and sweet hay covering these, formed ex-temporaneous couches. Candles stuck in clay were arranged quickly and skilfully by some men against the walls. Warm coffee, gruel, and soup were in "jacks" warming by the fire. Some women nurses were present, and all was prepared to receive the rescued men and boy. The first patient I received was the boy David Hughes. His face was pale, but his expression collected. On being asked how he was, he replied, without any hesitation, that he felt much better. There was a peculiar calm in the face of all the men I subsequently received; and here I should say every patient brought in was attended by a medical man or intelligent student, and brought up the pit in his charge. Accompanied by this calm, there was an intelligent turn of the eye, and a little period before answering a question, but the answer in all cases was clear and calm, and with an indescribable air of intelligence.

On feeding George Jenkins, I said (after giving him, in spoonfuls, a cup of warm gruel) "George, I must 'stop tap now,'" and he grinned all over. I had to repeat this admonition in the same words when he was "interviewed" by a reporter, and with the same result — a hearty chuckle. I said, "They tell me, George, that you calculated the time you were shut up; how was this?" and he answered readily,"

“Well, sir, we burned the candles until Saturday, and I judged we had been in seven days to-day.” Now this was within half-an-hour's time of his liberation. His



**The rescued receive their family at their bedside at the improvised hospital at the Tynewydd Inn.**

mind was as clear as a bell. So also of Powell and the other Jenkins, although the former, I was told, had been a trifle excited below, but here they answered quickly and calmly and sensibly. Old John Thomas (deaf, and with peculiar pronunciation) was perfectly still, but with the calm, inquiring, intelligent roll of the eye, as in all. On shouting to him, "Well, John, how are you?" he answered, in a faint hollow, but perfectly intelligent manner, "Lled dda," "pretty fair" (or well).

He motioned to his ear, and seemed to think there was water in it, but it was evidently an internal sensation only. He was the only one whom light seemed to offend, and he motioned with his finger to have the candle above him removed, which was done. Not one was ravenous or excited, and when spoonfuls of gruel or hot coffee were given they took it like well-conducted children. John Thomas was the only one requiring a stimulant (a very little ammonia in the gruel). His abdomen was not only flat, but hollow — awful to feel. He had diarrhoea the last two or three days of his incarceration. They all took their meal on the Wednesday of the accident. In half an hour's time after their admission I would have guaranteed to have had a clear account from all but John Thomas, and even he would always return a hopeful "Lled dda" (Pretty well) to my questioning. He had a marked fetid smell of the breath. For men incarcerated without food for ten days the mental condition of these men was truly extraordinary and, what was remarkable, the pulse and temperature of all was not far from the normal condition, but that my friend Henry Naunton Davies will advise you of, he having such a splendid staff of young men (two students) as makes it a pleasure to remember.

Two of them bravely went to the extremity of the passage to pass the food through the hole (Messrs. Davies, of Guy's, and Dukes). The imprisoned men had drunk water freely during their incarceration, and three of them ate not more than an ounce of candle between them. The pressure of the air was more than of two ordinary atmospheres, and this appears to have acted possibly in preventing waste. Mr. H. N. Davies has been unable, through pressure of occupation, to complete his notes of the physical condition of the men in time for publication this week, but will forward to us his report next week." Meantime a Metropolitan hospital physician writes to us:—

The recent entombment of the five Welsh miners furnishes several matters of medical interest. In the first place, they were ten days without food without being thoroughly exhausted. It is known that man can exist for nine or ten days without food if a little water be supplied, but that is only under favourable circumstances. In the case of the wreck of the Arracan in the Indian Ocean, a few years ago, the

crew survived a much longer time than this, but then these men were surrounded by an atmosphere of high temperature, so that the demand upon the system to maintain the body heat was very small, and probably was quite met by the action of the heart and the chemical changes normally going on in the viscera. In the case of the miners, they also were in a comparatively high surrounding temperature.

Mines are always warm, and coal is a bad conductor of heat, so that there was very little loss of heat — at least, after their clothes were once dry. Two points are presented for speculation. The one is: - What was the effect on the chemical interchanges of the utter darkness in which they were during the last five days? The other is: - Is there any evidence furnished by their physical condition of any evil effect upon the lung-tissues from the prolonged respiration of an atmosphere of much more than its ordinary density?

When the water rushed into the main in which they were imprisoned, its outward progress was checked by the air, which was thus compressed, it is asserted, to twice its ordinary pressure on the square inch. That it was very highly compressed is certain, from the force with which it escaped when an opening was made. So far, they do not appear to have suffered therefrom. Probably it was a fortunate thing for them that the air was compressed, otherwise they might have exhausted the available air and died of defective oxidation, as imprisoned colliers commonly do. The absence of delirium in any of them might be influenced by the surrounding darkness and the absence of any high temperature.—**British Medical Journal.**

Very few visitors were allowed admittance into the hospital on Monday, the inmates feeling rather fatigued after the large number of persons received on Sunday. A short prayer meeting was held in the ward yesterday afternoon, when the Rev J. R. Jones, Baptist minister, Llwynypia, read the 88th Psalm, and the Rev D. Richards, Congregational minister, Caerphilly, prayed. The following note was sent on Monday afternoon by the inmates to Miss Jenner: - "**Porth, Cymmer Hospital, April 30th, 1877.** "Miss Jenner, — We five colliers request you to send for Mr. Downey to photograph us for the Queen on Wednesday next.—**Signed for all, Moses Powell.**"

A correspondent wrote in the '*Western Mail*' of Tuesday, May 1<sup>st</sup> 1877: - "I am sorry to say that the widow of Edward Williams has not received one penny towards providing food for herself and seven children, no did anyone inquire of her whether she had necessary means to bury her husband."

The newspaper replied: - With reference to the statement made by a correspondent which appeared in today's '*Western Mail*' to the effect that the wants of the widow and children of Edward Williams I am authorised to state that

the committee have given assistance. The widow of Edward Williams has received £4, being the wages due to her husband at the time of his death. It was also known that the benefit society to whom her husband belonged had advanced her a sum of money. The widow of John Howells was known to have received £5 from the benefit society of which he belonged, in addition to the wages due from the offices of the colliery company. The widow of William Morgan received the wages due to her husband, and Mrs. Wales, the wife of Mr. Wales, Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, presented each widow with a sum of money.

The five rescued men continue to be objects of much interest, and are visited daily by people from a distance. Every day messages of sympathy are sent to them. Amongst the presents last received was a large hamper from Mrs Price, Ivy Cottage, Ross, near Hereford. The hamper, which is the second sent by that lady, and contained large joints of beef and lamb, rolls &c; and a quantity of newly cut flowers. The men appear to fully appreciate the lady's kindness. The kind donor spent some of her younger days at Penygraig, Dinas, and was then, as now, remarkable for her goodness of heart. A basket of fresh cut flowers received also today from Agnes T. Dunn, Ellcot Park, Hungerford. Accompanying the flowers was a letter containing the following kind words: - "The flowers will bare a truer message of our feeling for them that I can send by the pen." The men killed have been interred at the cost of the colliery.

### **Wednesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1877**

The body of young William Hughes recovered

Early this afternoon the body of the lad William Hughes was discovered in the stall where he was working. He was found at the entrance into the airway which conveyed air to the place where the five rescued were working on the day of the accident. He was about twenty yards further in than the spot where the body of his father was discovered on Monday last. His mother's brother – a man named Baxter, an excellent type of the hardy Welshman of the northern division of the Principality – was one of those who came across the body of the poor lad. With him was "Padnwr" both of who have been diligently engaged since the disaster occurred. A diligent search has been made for the lad since Monday, when the explorers were first able to wade into the stall.

"We reached the face of the heading," said Baxter, "and it was full of evidences of the industry of my poor brother-in-law and the lad. Coal ready cut was there in heaps. Water filled the roadway scooped out of the rock, but the 'face' was now clear of water. We searched from one end of the face of the stall to the other – among the heaps of coal and rubbish. We turned the tram in the scooped roadway on its side and felt with our hands, and gently with our feet, for the body,

but without discovering it. We were beginning to feel that the body was not there, when 'Padnwr' called out 'There he is!' I looked in the direction indicated, and there my poor nephew's body was, with the upper portion of his body under large stones, and his feet towards us. His hands were spread out, and within a short distance of them was his little coat.

He had evidently snatched up his coat when the roar of the advancing water reached his ears, but had not time to put it on before the water engulfed him. He had apparently followed his father some distance up the roadway, but had attempted to enter the airway when the water was at his heels. This airway ran parallel with the level heading in which the five men were, and they state that when they were running back towards the stall from which they were rescued, they heard the water thundering on the other side of the 'gob,' towards where they had just left. This torrent must have passed over the poor lad found today."

Little David Hughes, the rescued lad, states that he had been with his father and brother in their stall that morning, and that he walked through this airway to where he was employed with George Jenkins and Moses Powell. The rescued men state that after they reached their refuge the roar of the water was deafening for about three minutes, when the roar suddenly ceased. They then returned a little along the airway of the stall in which they were, when they discovered that the water was up to the roof along the way they had sped three minutes before. They then retraced their steps to their refuge, and soon discovered that the water was not advancing.

Shortly afterwards they heard mandrills at work in the distance, and naturally concluded that men were engaged in cutting towards them and this cheered them exceedingly. Prior to this they were all crying, expecting every moment to be hurled into eternity. "We went back during that long night," said Moses Powell, "many times to look at the water. I was engaged in making a mark along the roadway with clay close to the water to enable us to ascertain whether the water advanced or not, when I was terrified by the water and suddenly 'shooting back' two pair of plates two yards."

The cutting the poor fellows heard was that of William Morgan, who was killed, and his, and his four friends, who were rescued on the morning, following the inundation, and 'shooting' took place when the compressed air, where they were incarcerated, was liberated. Moses Powell and his friends were at least 200 yards from this spot where this liberation took place, and all the intervening space was filled with water, and the whole of the immense body of water rushed forward in the direction of the hole made. This was the tremendous wind which hurled

William Morgan into the opening, where he was killed. - The following letter appeared in the '*Western Mail*' on this Wednesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>: -

Questions by Mr. Macdonald M. P.

To the editor – Sir, - The danger is now, I hope, all over in regard to the complete recovery of the poor men who were entombed in the Tynewydd Pit, and people begin to talk of making the awards from our gracious Sovereign and donations of a generous public. I think it is my duty, through your ably conducted journal, to put a few questions, with the view of finding out to whom the gallant honour really belongs. I am the more tempted to do this since I have been informed that some body of men have thought to meet at Porth, and they have taken upon themselves to settle and determine who should be rewarded, and to whom the decorations of her Majesty should be given. Your able article of Friday, the 27<sup>th</sup> inst; shows clearly the necessity of the following questions being put and answered by those who can give a satisfactory answer: -

1. Who was it that first discovered that the poor men were alive, the owners or managers of the mine, the chief inspector, Mr. Wales, or was it the sub-inspector, Mr. Galloway?
2. Who was it that got the pumps from the Glamorgan Coal Company – those whom I have already named, or anyone of them?
3. Who was it that sent to London for the divers?
4. Who was it that first suggested the necessity of the double-doors for getting out the poor men safely by staying the foul air and gas? Was it the owner or owners, or manager or managers, or the Chief Inspector, or the sub-inspector?
5. Who was in charge when Morgan was killed – the chief Inspector, the owners, the manager, or who?
6. Who was in charge when the break took place which allowed the water to rise?
7. Why was the sub-inspector removed from the mine altogether and by whose orders?
8. How is it that Mr. Wales in his report makes no mention of the sub-inspector, or of what he did?



9. Is it really true that a representation has been made, or is to be made, that the decorations which are to be granted by her Majesty should be given by some of the managers and owners of the district?

10. Why is it that such decorations are not being sought for Abby Dodd, Isaac Pride, and the other sons of toil who so nobly took their lives in their hands, and went into the workings, and brought out their companions in toil?

I trust you will give this a place. There are other questions that I desire to put – yet meanwhile let these suffice. My only object is that honours alone should be awarded to those to whom honours righteously belong. I wish earnestly to see the men who did the work have the rewards that their generous countrymen and women offered them – not the men who stood at ‘A’ or ‘B’, or anywhere else, as shown in the map. **I am, and Co; Alexander Macdonald, House of Commons, May 1<sup>st</sup>**. The day following the above letter from one of the rescuers, Daniel Thomas, gave the following answers in the ‘*Western Mail*’ : -

**Thursday May 3rd 1877**

Reply to Mr. Macdonald

Sir, - I observe in your yesterday’s newspaper several questions asked by Mr. Alexander Macdonald, M. P; it is said, with a view to finding out to whom the honour really belongs for the rescue of “five entombed colliers,” at the Tynewydd Pit; and as I have been in charge of the colliery in the daytime from Wednesday, the 12<sup>th</sup> April, to Friday, 20<sup>th</sup>, both inclusive, and afterwards, and was present without leaving the pit from the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> of April to 3 o’clock in the afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup>, when the five men were brought to the surface,

I claim to have had as good an opportunity of knowing what passed at the colliery during that time as anyone; and it is not from my desire to enter into any controversy that I tender this reply to the honourable gentleman, neither have I the time or inclination to do so, but as his questions were directed to the parties in charge (of whom I had the honour to be one) I feel it is my duty to reply to his questions. But before I answer his questions, allow me to state that the “body of men thought fit” to meet at Porth, as he has been informed, were men who each fearlessly faced every danger before them to effect the release of the five colliers from their awful position, and were men who did their duty, and are ready to do it again, at the risk of their own lives, to save the lives of their fellow toilers.

1. Who was this that first discovered that the poor men were alive, the owners or managers of the mine, the chief inspector, Mr. Wales, or was it the sub-inspector,

Mr. Galloway? **Answer:** - It was one of the first lot of men released, viz.; Edward Williams (Gelynog), who had heard the other five men knocking all through the night to the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, and told the manager as soon as he was able on reaching the surface.

2. Who was it that got the pumps from the Glamorgan Coal Company; those whom I have already named, or anyone of them? **Answer:** - It was Mr. Galloway who got the pump and men (not pumps) with the intention of putting it down Hines' Pit, but the Glamorgan Coal Co.'s mechanical engineer declined putting it down, as he thought the pit and pit framing were not safe for the weight. This prevented the local managers starting raising water by barrels for 15 hours, till Mr. Wales arrived and ordered it to be done. By this means the water was got to a slack barrel by early Sunday following, and luckily the pump was not put in the pit, or most likely it would be there now, and not at work in clearing the water from the Tynwydd Pits, where the two steam pumps were at work reducing the water from the dips, to which the Glamorgan pump was added as an auxiliary.

3. Who was it that sent to London for the divers? **Answer:** - Mr. Galloway was instrumental in bringing the divers down, but on their reaching the colliery he threw off any further responsibility on to the manager and others in charge with regard to the attempt to be made by the divers. By this fruitless attempt five most valuable hours were lost, as the pumps had to be stopped.

4. Who was it that first suggested the necessity of the double-doors for getting out the poor men safely by staying the foul air and gas? Was it the owner or owner, or manager or managers, or the Chief Inspector, or the sub-inspector? - **Answer:** - Mr. James Thomas, the manager, and Mr. Wales, the chief inspector, but owing, (after several unsuccessful trials) to gas, they were of no service.

5. Who was in charge when Morgan was killed – the Chief Inspector, the owners, the manager, or who? **Answer:** - The manager and other managers and owners, who entreated Morgan to stand back till the hole was made sufficiently large for him and the others to come out; the inspectors had not yet arrived.

6. Who was in charge when the break took place which allowed the water to rise? - **Answer:** - I do not directly know what is meant by this question, if it is meant the time when the compressed air and gas was escaping from the imprisoned men, more or less escaped with each bore-hole bored in advance to guide the approach to the loose, but no break was made till the release at about 2 p.m. on 20<sup>th</sup> of April. The men driving towards the imprisoned colliers were in charge of myself, William Davies, Coedcae, and the manager.

7. Why was the sub-inspector removed from the mine altogether and by whose orders? – **Answer:** - Do not know that this was done, but heard that when the divers went underground on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April the sub-inspector went home, and has not been at Tynewydd Colliery since.

8. How is it that Mr. Wales in his report makes no mention of the sub-inspector, or of what he did? – **Answer:** - This is purely Mr. Wales's business.

9. Is it really true that a representation has been made, or is to be made, that the decorations which are to be granted by her Majesty should be given by some of the managers and owners of the district? - **Answer:** - That is not true, but it is true that a list of workmen, owners, and managers has been sent to the committee of House of Commons Fund, and handed since to the Home Secretary. The selection is now entirely in the hands of the above committee and the Home Secretary, as far as the local committee is concerned, but it is right to say here that the workmen who so bravely risked their own lives did so entirely by seeing the several owners and managers joining them in their perilous undertaking. Isaac Pride stated, "We don't understand the risk we are running, but seeing you (the owners and managers) risk your lives with us, and having every confidence in you, will do anything you ask us."

10. Why is it that such decorations are not being sought for Abby Dodd, Pride, and the other sons of toil who so nobly took their lives in their hands, and went into the workings, and brought out their companions in toil? – **Answer:** - Their names are included in the lists sent, and beg to refer you to the list now with the Home Secretary. I am not at liberty to divulge the names. The list has been drawn up after very careful consideration of owners, managers, and parties in charge of rescuing the poor colliers, with Mr. Wales's assistance, who was present for the last 48 hours continuously, to the release of the men, and it is only these people who are able to give the names of those brave men, having faithfully shared the risk with them throughout.

Having answered each question truthfully, I beg to decline to answer any further questions that may be asked with respect to the conduct of any party or parties in connection with this sad calamity, trusting what I have done will satisfy the honourable gentleman who asked the questions. But before closing my letter I would respectfully call the attention of your numerous readers to the mistaken notion that the greatest danger was on breaking the last barrier of coal to the imprisoned men. That was not the case. The water having then been reduced to nearly the level of the imprisoned men's feet, the greatest danger was when work had to be done under compressed air, the doors then being securely fastened and clayed, leaving the rescuing party between the doors and the barrier of coal they

were then cutting through.; this was fast being done when the deadly gas made its way through the bore-hole made to provide the men with food, and to which force progress had for a while to be stopped.

At this time there was a pressure of nearly seven feet of water above the heads of the rescuing party, to resist the influx of which, when the barrier of coal would have been cut through, all the men inside risked their lives to have the others in their confidence of the strength of the doors. Hoping you will kindly insert this in your issue, and oblige, **Daniel Thomas, Brithweunydd Colliery, May 4<sup>th</sup> 1877.**

The Tangye 'Special pump,' which has done such good service at the Troedyrhiw Colliery, was supplied by Williams's from the depot of Tangye Bros, and Steel, of Newport, through Williams and Sons', Cardiff. Messrs Tangye and Steel lent the pump, and despatched it by train within an hour of its being sent for. There can be little doubt that had this pump been in position earlier, the release of the poor fellows would not have been so prolonged.

## Chapter six

### The Coroner's inquiry resumed – Interesting evidence of the rescued men

On Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, the coroner's inquiry into the circumstances attending the death of the five victims of the recent catastrophe at the Tynewydd Colliery was resumed at the Rheola Inn, Porth. Mr. T. E. Wales, the Government Inspector for the district, was present to watch the proceedings. Mr. G. F. Hill, solicitor, Cardiff, represented the Troedyrhiw Coal Company; Mr. W. Simons (Simons and Plews), Merthyr, appeared for Mr. James Thomas, manager of the Tynewydd colliery; Mr. W. Pickard and Mr. W. Abraham represented the Miners' National Union. Among the others present were Messrs. M. Cope, Cardiff; William Davies, Coedcae; H. Lewis, manager of the Energlyn Colliery, Caerphilly; David Thomas, surveyor of the Tynewydd Colliery; Edmund Thomas, Llwynceilyn; Daniel Thomas, Brithweunydd; &c. The following were the jurymen:— Mr. T. T. Davies (the schools), foreman; and Messrs William Jones (Porth Hotel), James Jones (builder), Howell Evans, Richard Evans, Thomas Jones (builder), Thomas Jones (Porth), William Jones (grocer), Ebenezer Bowen, William Griffiths, Christopher Griffiths, Thomas Evans (Troedyrhiw, farmer), Thomas Evans (Lledrddu, farmer), J. R. Davies, Samuel Smith, and Richard James.

### The Coroner's address to the jury

The Coroner, in his opening remarks, spoke as follows: - "Gentlemen, we are met here today to continue the inquiry, which was commenced on the 13<sup>th</sup> April, into the circumstances attending the melancholy catastrophe at the Tynewydd Colliery on 11<sup>th</sup> April. I am convinced that I need not solicit your earnest attention to the inquiry, as you must, I am sure, feel deeply the sense of importance. It has created the greatest sensation through the whole of the kingdom, and elicited the sympathy and admiration of all classes, from her most gracious Majesty the Queen to the humblest peasant, and it is extremely satisfactory to find that such noble, generous, and highly creditable conduct will receive so honourable a recognition and substantial reward. I would express my admiration to those who so richly deserve it, but we have a duty to perform, and we must direct our attention to that. I must first of all direct you to dismiss from your minds all the unauthorised rumours you may have heard on the subject, and confine yourselves strictly to the evidence to be brought before you on this inquiry. Although it has been my painful duty during the period of nearly 30 years that I have held the present position to investigate some of the most appalling and serious calamities in the kingdom that have occurred in this district, I never had to investigate a case which has created such a deep-felt anxiety and excitement as the present. It is the first instance of the kind that has occurred in my district, and it is truly fortunate that the

consequences are not as serious as we had reason to fear they would have been. I find that the loss of life on the present occasion amounts to five, and there can be no doubt after the evidence of Thomas Morgan, which we have already heard, it arose from an inundation in the Tynewydd Pit on 11<sup>th</sup> April last.

The bodies have now all been discovered, the last of them having been brought out yesterday, and I understand the water has been reduced to such an extent as to enable them to examine the whole of the workings in the pit, and allow us to proceed with our inquiry; and I confidently trust we shall be able to obtain sufficient evidence to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to how and from what cause the calamity arose. I have directed those persons who were present at the time of the catastrophe, and are, therefore, calculated to give useful information on the subject, to be summoned to give evidence before you. I have directed the officers of the colliery to produce the plans, rules, and journal of the pit for your information.

We shall also have the assistance of the Government officials, who have been incessant in their labours from the commencement up to the present time in affording counsel and advice, and personally examining the pit and all the circumstances connected therewith; and I intend asking some of those experienced gentlemen who so nobly and generously assisted in the rescuing of the sufferers to aid us in our endeavours, so that I trust, by these combined means, we shall be able to acquire all the information necessary. It will also be necessary that we should inquire into the measures which were taken after the occurrence to release the persons confined, and restore the working of the pit. I must also draw your attention to the fact that there is an important act of Parliament, called "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1872," which regulates all the matters in connection with the working of mines, and lays down certain general rules, which are obliged to be adopted in every colliery, and requires other special rules to be framed with the sanction of the Secretary of State for the same purpose, and it also directs who are the persons responsible for carrying out the provisions of the Act. It will be necessary therefore, that we should inquire whether the provisions have been properly complied with. It will be premature and unnecessary for me to make any further observations at present, until I have an opportunity of addressing you again, when, if it should be necessary, I will endeavour to explain to you the law on the subject. The following evidence was then taken:—

**Police-constable William Llewellyn** said he was a police-constable in the Glamorganshire force, stationed at Cymmer. On Wednesday, 11th April, about four o'clock in the afternoon, an accident occurred in the Tynewydd pit, by which five persons lost their lives. He put in the list of their names. William Morgan died on the 12th, in making his escape; Edward Williams and Robert Rogers discovered

on the 21st April; John Hughes discovered on the 30th; and William Jones discovered on the 1st May.

**Mr. James Thomas**, Porth, said: - "I am one of the partners and manager of the Tynewydd Colliery, trading under the name of the Troedyrhiw Coal Company. The owners are Messrs. Cope, Lewis, Thomas, and Collingdon. The colliery was commenced more than 22 years ago, and has been in operation ever since. The coal is lifted by means of a water balance pit, and the water is afterwards pumped back from the bottom by a water-wheel working two pumps at 12 inches each diameter. The average quantity of coal worked is about 160 tons per day. The plan produced is a correct tracing of the plan of the colliery. The rules and regulations, and the daily journal of the colliery are also put in. I am the certificated manager of the pit. Richard Howells is the overman. John Thomas is the fireman; David Thomas is the surveyor who prepared the plans and tracings. The size of the pit is about 17 feet by 12 feet in diameter. It is sunk down to the No. 3 Rhondda, and is about 88 yards deep. There are 150 men usually employed about the pit, and 15 horses.

About four o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, the 11th April, just as the men were about to leave, a rush of water came in from the south side of the workings, and soon overflowed the lower workings and flooded them. From the bottom of the pit the original level was driven in a westerly direction through the coal for a distance of about 390 yards, where there was a down through fault which threw the coal about 35 yards below the level. We were then obliged to drive a fresh hard heading under the original level heading for a distance of about 200 yards, so as to take a slice of 19 yards off the 35 yards fault, the hard heading being continued through the solid strata for a distance afterwards of 220 yards beyond the fault to the west before coal could be recovered again. The levelling was then extended through the coal in the same direction for a considerable distance, and from that point the coal was worked up to the time of the accident. A dip heading, or drift, was driven from the last level. It was about 140 yards in length, at an inclination of about four inches in the yard, the difference from the top of the drift to the bottom being 16 yards.

The distance from the pit's mouth to the top of the drift is about 930 yards. From the dip to the level the working was done by a steam engine. The same steam engine is used to pump the water — the pump being six inches in diameter. From the bottom of the drift two main headings were driven, one branching to the north, the other to the south, nearly in the same direction as the level above. The workings connected with these two headings became flooded on the day in question, and caused the calamity. One of the headings to the north side is called George Jenkins' heading, and it extends for about 230 yards. William Morgan, with

his father and brother, three of the men who escaped (one killed by the air at the time, and the others were rescued) on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April. They worked in a stall about 110 yards from the face of the heading.

Of the five others who were confined in the pit for 10 days, George, Jenkins, Powell, David, and Hughes, worked in the face of the heading; David Jenkins and John Thomas were also working in a stall in the same heading, 22 yards from the face. The heading to the south is called Charles Oatridge's heading, and extends about 330 yards back in the direction of the pit, and it was from this place the water is supposed to have proceeded. The deceased Edward Williams and Robert Rogers were at work at the time in a stall called Oatridge's heading. They were drowned, and their bodies were not recovered until Saturday, the 21st April, when they were found in the place where they were at work. These workings were 16 yards lower than the main level, and we sunk a pit from the upper level into the stall. But we found that the water still remained there and we could not enter it for some time on that account." At this stage of the proceedings, Mr. Wales stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Lewis, who had been instructed by the Home Office to attend the inquiry, asking when it would be opened. Mr. Wales promised to communicate with him by telegraph, to enable him to attend the proceedings on the day following. Resuming, witness said: - "The deceased, John Hughes, and his stepson, William Jones, were at work in George Jenkins's stall. Edward Williams and Casher were at work in the Gelynog heading.

**Dr. Henry Naunton Davies**, surgeon to the company, put in a formal statement as to the cause of the death of the five men, to the following effect: - William Morgan, suffocated by the compressed air; Edward Williams, Robert Rogers, John Hughes, William Jones, all drowned.

**Evan Thomas**, haulier, Troedyrhiw (who gave his evidence in Welsh, interpreted by Sergeant Rees), spoke to first hearing of the rush of water in the mine — it was about four o'clock in the afternoon. He felt the air coming the wrong way, so he went down the drift to see what was the matter. He went down the drift a distance of about 80 yards, and met the water. It was then rushing rapidly towards him. There was an airway on the left upper side of the drift, and he tried to get there to raise an alarm, but he failed. Then he ran to the shaft, came up, and met Mr. James Thomas and Richard Howells, the overman, who went down with him at once. At this time most of the men employed in the pit had left work. The fireman, Howells, was not at the top of the pit when witness called for assistance, but he came there immediately afterwards, and so did the other fireman, John Thomas. The engineman at the top of the drift was Joseph Moore, and he had left his work just before witness saw the water. By Mr. Wales: - "I was there when the





**The final five men saved after nine days at the Tynewydd inundation L to R: George Thomas, George Jenkins, David Hughes, Moses Powell and David Jenkins.**

first five men were brought out; cannot say the exact time when they were brought out. I was on the top of the pit when they were brought out.”

**Charles Oatridge**, the next witness, said he was a collier, working in the Tynewydd colliery. Had worked several years, and latterly had worked in the Gelynog dip, in a heading going to the south. Witness had driven the heading about 100 yards. Was at work there on the 11th April, the day the water came in. He as working there from seven in the morning until about four in the afternoon. Had noticed the coal weaker there for two or three days before. There was a little drop of water, but not much. It was just the same as usual, there was always a drop of water in all coal. He meant in all the coal in that part of the workings.

The Coroner: - “I understand you to say that for two or three days before the accident there was more water than usual. Was there an accumulation?” — “No sir.” “What did you do then?” — “I did not do anything.” “Where did the water come from?” — “From the face of the heading.”

Examination continued: - “Did not find any other difference, but found some slips, as though we were getting near to a fault in the coal. That was different to what it was before.” Richard Howells, the overman, came to witness's working place that day, between two and three o'clock. He came there to measure witness's work, and then drew Howell's attention to the water, but he could not see much then as witness had made a hole under the coal. Told Howells that they were bound to be near a fault, or near some water. He asked why witness thought that, and he told him the coal was getting weaker and that there was water in it. Howells then went to look for the water, but could not find any.

By Mr. Wales: - “After Howells made his examination, he said he could not see any water.” Examination continued: - “Soon after witness left work, and got home before the accident happened. The surveyors came to the heading occasionally. They were there that morning. Did not know who they were, but knew they were surveyors because he saw them measuring. It was in the morning, and they measured witness's stall, and placed a mark close to a tram. That would be two or three yards from the face of the coal. They put a mark on the top and on the rib (the side); the mark he thought was a letter "T." The width of his heading was about nine yards. For the last two or three days before the accident had noticed a little more water than usual.

By Mr. Wales: - “Do not remember saying anything to Howells after he said he could see no water. Showed Howells where he had seen the water. When Howells said he could not see any water, witness also could not see any.” By the Coroner: - “After Howells left the water came out again.” By Mr. Wales: - “When I

found the water again I did not do anything, but left off work. Did not tell anyone about having seen the water. Did not see the overman or fireman after that nor any of the responsible officers of the pit. Went home straight, and after being there about a quarter of an hour was told by a neighbour that water had broken into the Tynewydd pit. Then went back to the pit, and went down. Went straight from the shaft to the Gelynog dip, and saw the water there.”

Mr. Wales: - “How far down the dip did you see the water? Did you go down half way?” - Witness: - “No; I saw the water before I had gone down half way. Could not see the airway in the dip, and the water must have been above that. When I returned and saw the water in the dip, it was between 6 and 7 o'clock.” By Mr. Simons: - “It is usual to find a little water when we get near a fault. It is also usual to find the coal getting weaker at such a place.” Mr. James Thomas, the manager, had told him that he expected to meet a fault near there, when witness spoke to Howells, the overman, about the water. Also told him that he thought he was getting near the fault expected by Mr. James Thomas. The water had gone away, in consequence of his "holing" when Howell's made his examination. That made witness think there was very little water there. No one worked in the heading after he left it. Two of witness's brothers worked in the headings, and they left at the same time as he did.”

By Mr. Pickard: - “When the overman came into the heading, asked him to look at the slips as well as the water. The slips were like ordinary slips.” The over-man told him he thought they were getting nearer the fault. Got the coal down sometimes by powder, and other times by wedge. James Thomas used to tell him that there was a fault between his heading and the boundary. Neither witness nor any other workman had drilled holes in the face of the working or sides to find gas or water. Had never seen any tools brought there or used for the purpose. Was satisfied there were no holes in the face of the heading or sides on the day of this accident, or at any time previous.

Mr. Pickard: - “Have you received any information, or caution, or warning from the managers or subordinate officials of the pit that if you saw any water you were to inform them?” — Witness: - “No.” - “When you were making holes that day, did you hear any rumblings of water?” — “No, sir.”

Examination continued: - “Can read English and Welsh, the latter best. Having read the rules of the colliery, which were given me by the clerk of the colliery, I thought I was carrying those rules out to the best of my knowledge.” The Coroner: - “Did you know there were old workings near?” — “Mr. Thomas always used to tell me there was a fault near.” “Did you have any conversation with the officials about the old workings?” — “Yes sir.” “Just tell us what that conversation was.” — “Mr. Thomas, the manager, told us there was a fault between us and the old

working, and he told us we would never drive through the fault, and that there was a little coal on the other side of the fault, but it was not worth fetching." "Did he tell you there were any old workings adjoining?" — "Yes." "You have worked in the pit a long time?" — "For about 12 years, but I did not know much about the old workings being there." "Mr. Thomas, you said, told you there were some old workings, and that there was a fault between; and that he was not going beyond the fault?" — "Yes, had those conversations once or twice."

Mr. Pickard: - "I should like to ask a question arising out of the pertinent interrogations you have put, Mr. Coroner. I wish to ask the witness if in the conversations he had with any of the officials of the colliery he was told that the measurement was bringing them to the boundary." - Witness: - "No, sir; they used to tell me that they would come to the fault before they came to the boundary."

Mr. Wales: - "In speaking of the old workings, was there anything said about the water?" — "Yes, sir." "Now tell us what it was?" — "The people were telling that there was water in the old workings." Mr. Wales: - "I am speaking now of conversations you had with Mr. Thomas, the manager." — "Yes, sir." Wales: - "During these conversations, was anything said about water in these old workings?" — "Yes, sir." "What was it?" — "They told me there might be some water there." The Coroner: - "Who told you that?" — "Mr. Thomas." "Do you remember anything further that was said?" — "They told me there was no danger to work there."

**Mr. David Thomas**, Cymmer, Llantrisant, mining engineer, said he was engaged by the company as a surveyor, and attended to their plans. He surveyed the pit periodically—four times a year, and entered all the additional workings on the plan. The pit was last surveyed on the day the accident occurred—the 11th April, and 'plotted' the day following. Witness detailed the method employed — making a mark on the top of the coal at right angles with the last line measured, and a corresponding mark is made on the plan. The date of the last survey was also entered on the plan. The tracings had been correctly made from the working plan. To the tracing had been added the workings in the adjacent colliery — known as Hines' Pit. It was sent to him by the proprietors of the Tynewydd Colliery, with instructions to enter it on the tracing he was engaged on. This was done a few days after the accident. Had known the neighbourhood 30 or 40 years, and remembered the time when Hines' Pit was worked, though he had never surveyed it. The plan belonged to the Cymmer Steam Coal Company. The old pit was worked for five or six years; he could not say exactly how long, for he did not know precisely, and it had been discontinued, he believed, about 16 or 17 years. At this stage there was a short adjournment.

On resuming, witness was asked by Mr. Wales how long he had kept up the plans of the Tynewydd Colliery. He said about 20 years. If anything arose out of his survey he mentioned the matter to the manager. To him only he gave instructions. The last survey made (by his assistant) before the one made on the date of the accident was taken on the 11th of December, last year. At that time the Tynewydd Company had worked within 44 yards from the boundary. He did not know there were old workings on the other side of the boundary, and did not know that there was likely to be any water from such a cause. Had never himself been down the pit. After the survey of December he had had conversations with Mr. Thomas, and had been given to understand there was a seven yard fault down through the Tynewydd towards the Cymmer, between the heading and the boundary. He expected that fault would be struck before they came to the boundary. The reason for thinking the fault there was that they had struck it in the upper headings in the same seam. Mr. James Thomas never said he thought there might be water on the other side. No one else ever mentioned to him that there might be water. He was always under the impression that all the workings from Hines' pit were pumped from Insole's No. 1 pit upon No. 3 seam.

By Mr. Simons: - "A downfall fault of seven yards rendered the Cymmer workings seven yards vertically lower than the Tynewydd workings. In his experience as a mining engineer that would be sufficient security against any inundation between the two collieries, for a vertical barrier would be formed between the two collieries." By Mr. Prichard: -"In the heading; where the fault was struck it was 22 yards from the boundary. Presuming that the fault had continued in the same direction, it should have been struck at 38 yards from the boundary in Oatridge's heading. When he surveyed the heading's last December, they had driven to within six yards of the place where they expected to meet the fault. From December to the 11th of April the heading was driven in 48 yards."

By the Coroner: - "On the 11th April the workings were within a yard from the boundary or the rib or upper side, five in the middle and eight in the bottom from the boundary. There it was, he had been informed, the water burst through." By Mr. Pickard: - "Thought the fault, perhaps, had thrown a curve. Did not think there would possibly have been sufficient pressure of water in the old pit to press the water into the Tynewydd workings, and was not aware of any quantity of water lying in the No, 2, being always under the impression that it was pumped from No. 1. Obtained the tracings of the Cymmer from the working plans. Knew nothing of those workings himself, but knew that the tracing had been made correctly." At this stage in the proceedings the inquiry was adjourned to 12 o'clock Friday.

## The rescued men photographed – Disgraceful scene at funerals

The rescued men were able on Thursday to leave the hospital for a short time, and proceeded to the top of the pit, where they, with the rescuers, were photographed for her Majesty the Queen by Messrs. W. and D. Downey of London and Newcastle. It is believed the men will be able to return to their homes on Saturday.

The funeral of the unfortunate victims of the memorable disaster last discovered took place today. The following day the following letter appeared in the '*Western Mail*': -

**Sir** – Please allow me to call your attention to a disgraceful scene which I witnessed at the funeral of the last discovered two bodies today, near Porth. I visited the churchyard, and saw the two coffins brought out from the church to the graveside, when it was found that the grave was but about five-foot two-inches in depth. A complaint was made to the gravedigger respecting depth. The man replied that he could not make the grave deeper, as there was another coffin underneath, namely, that of a child of Mrs Hughes, buried six weeks ago. Mrs Hughes, I may say, is the wife of one, and the mother of the other now buried. Mrs Hughes stood by in great agony all the time, while her brother and others had to leap into the grave and take out the coffin of the child already buried in order to make the grave sufficiently deep for the two coffins lowered into the grave today. The child's coffin was meanwhile placed on the ground at one side. I suppose that it was afterwards replaced. This, I need hardly say, was a heart rending scene, and one which ought not to have occurred. Who is to blame? – **I am &c; F. Giller, Bristol.**

**Friday May 4<sup>th</sup> 1877**

The inquiry resumed

The inquiry into the cause of the death of the five victims of the Tynewydd colliery inundation, was resumed on Friday, May 4th 1877, before Mr. Coroner Overton, at the Rheola Inn, Porth. At the outset of the proceedings, the Coroner held a short consultation with the Government Inspector (Mr. Wales) and the solicitors engaged in the inquiry, as to its adjournment on account of the absence of Mr. J. H. P. Leresche, the barrister instructed by the Home Office to attend. The Coroner said: - "Yesterday, if you recollect, we received a communication from Mr. Leresche, the barrister, who said he had been instructed by Government to appear here, and asking us to adjourn. Mr. Wales telegraphed to him yesterday, saying that we should proceed to-day, and hoping he would be able to attend. Mr. Wales has since had a second telegram from him, in which he says it is utterly impossible that he can attend to-day. He therefore asks that we should adjourn to the week

beginning the 21st May, and until he arrives that we should confine ourselves to preliminary evidence.

I have consulted with the professional gentlemen here, and I find that all the representative gentlemen here are of opinion that we cannot properly refuse to adjourn at the request of Her Majesty's counsel, and I wish to consult the convenience of all parties, and therefore I think we should adjourn. I must say for my own part, I have had no communication whatever, either from the gentleman himself or from the Government. However, under the circumstances, we think it is our duty in all matters of that kind, out of deference to adjourn, and I therefore propose to adjourn. But, in the meantime, as we are here to-day we will take some evidence with regard to the steps taken in recovering the bodies, and, in fact, some particulars about the accident — leaving the more particular question of how the accident occurred, which is really the most important part of the investigation we are engaged in — and then we will adjourn to some future day.

We have to discuss what day will be most convenient. It is impossible that we should adjourn to the 21st. That day does not meet the convenience of any of us. For my own part I must say that I think it is injudicious to have such a long delay as that. We may forget all the facts, and it is not right or proper that a matter of this importance should be kept open for such a long time. Under all the circumstances, we think it would be better to adjourn to Tuesday week, which would allow this gentleman a whole week to make his arrangements, and to come down here, and it would suit all the professional gentlemen here engaged, and I hope it may suit you (the jury) as well. We will then adjourn to Tuesday week, the 15th of May.

To-day I intend to take the evidence of Thomas Morgan, one of the witnesses who escaped out of the pit on the morning following the accident, and I hope that one of those other men who were lucky enough to escape — Moses Powell — will be able to give evidence and perhaps those who have kindly assisted in recovering the bodies too. I shall to-day confine an inquiry to these matters, and I hope to take the other and more important matters when we resume. The following evidence was then called: -

**Thomas Morgan**, collier, America Vach, gave some evidence as to the death of his son, William Morgan, who was killed when the witness and three others were rescued on the 12th April. He was working in a stall in George Jenkins' heading about four o'clock on the afternoon of the accident. At that time he and those with him had dressed ready to go home, and were proceeding in the direction of the drift. When about a hundred yards from the stall in which they had been working they met a rush of water, apparently about a yard deep. They went up a windway to Edward Williams' stall, where they found Edward Williams and Casher

preparing to leave. They said they heard a noise like an explosion, and that was all they knew of what had occurred. Keeping their lights in, all five of them endeavoured to make their way to an old windway in the drift. They found they could not get out that way, the water having filled the place before them.

They talked matters over, and remembered there was a windway — or rather a place where Mr. Thomas had thought to make a windway. There they prayed and sang together, and afterwards began knocking. Soon after they knocked their knocking was returned from the other side. They worked as much as they could themselves, and at five next morning they found that the party at work on the other side had come close to meeting them. The water had in the meantime approached to within 30 or 40 yards of them. Before breaking the hole through their master (Mr. James Thomas) told them to put out their lights. When the hole was made the air rushed through with great violence, making a loud noise. The water had then approached to within about 10 yards of them; he threw stones into it for the purpose of finding out where it was. The nearness of the water frightened them, and witness's son became much excited. The men at work on the outside retreated, for though the two parties could not understand one another, he could understand that the rescuing party had run away. He put two jackets into the hole, and then they could understand one another. Witness's son said the men who had come to release them had been driven away by the water.

His son would not listen to witness's advice to be calm, but took a wedge and went to drive the hole through. He was then immediately struck into the hole and killed on the spot. The party outside drilled some holes to allow the air to escape, and enlarged the opening. Witness and the others with him, excepting his son, were got out safely. Believed there were then about fourteen men in the pit. By Mr. Wales: - Had never heard of any accumulation of water which might have flooded the pit. Had worked in the Tynewydd Pit fifteen years, and before that in the old Cymmer pit, where he worked in the No. 3 vein. Could not say when those workings were abandoned. By Mr. Simons: - During the fifteen years he had worked in the Tynewydd only one man had been killed there previous to this accident. That was six or seven years ago. Considered the pit one of the safest in the district. Mr. Simons: - "Was he not a man who went to cut coal for himself without anyone knowing it?" Witness: - "The master stopped him in the morning from going to work because he was late. When the banksman went to breakfast the blacksmith let him down. He then went to several stalls and asked for work, but they would not give it to him. He then got into another man's stall unknown, and commenced to work where he was killed."

By Mr. Pickard: - Was quite conscious at the time of his rescue, and recognised those who had rescued him. They were Mr. Edmund Thomas, Mr. W. Davies,



Coedcae; Mr. James Thomas, Jonathan Evans, Dinas; and several more. Never thought there was any body of water in Hines' pit. Knew that Hines' pit had been stopped. Hines' pit used to be called the Cymmer Colliery, and belonged to Mr. Insole. What was now called Hines' pit was then called the Cymmer upper pit. Afterwards it was sub-let to Mr. Hinde and it has since been called Hines' pit. Mr. Insole worked only the No. 3 vein there when he had it himself. When Hinde became possessed of it he worked the No. 2, and the No. 3 was abandoned. Knew that the two workings (the Tynewydd and Hines') adjoined, for when at work in the one pit he could hear the men at work in the other.

The next witness was **Moses Powell**. He said: — "I live at Porth, and am a collier. I worked in the face of this heading in George Jenkins' stall. George Jenkins and the lad David Hughes worked with me, and John Thomas and David Jenkins worked within 20 yards of us. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April about four o'clock, we were all at work. George Jenkins and I were boring a hole in the top, making the road higher for the horses to pass up. We felt that the air was stronger than usual. At first we could not make out the reason of this. We thought the No. 8 door was open, as when that was the case the air came stronger. I told Jenkins to turn the chisel, and we were just finishing the hole, I found the air was deafening me. George Jenkins said, 'There's sure to be something the matter.' The air nearly blew our candles out. I took the candle and put it out of the reach of the rush of air. We went on boring and David Jenkins, who was behind us, called out that there was something the matter. He said some water was about there. So we left the place in an instant and ran back about 20 yards, when we felt ourselves in water. We tried our utmost to run back through the water to the drift. With some difficulty we reached Thomas Morgan's stall. We tried to open the door, but failed.

Then we went up the wind-road into Thomas Morgan's stall, and on coming down the roadway into the heading we met the water again, — about two feet in depth. We went back through it and found ourselves getting deeper in it. The water overpowered us. Before we got to David Jenkins' heading we found the water was up to the top, and we were obliged to go back. I had the boy Hughes holding my hand. Then we went back to the roadway to Thomas Morgan's stall. The water followed us about 24 yards — the stall was about 40 yards long. When the water had got to that height all the noise ceased. Before then it roared like thunder.

The day following I threw off my coat and tried to get through the water. The stall was about 12 yards wide at the face, and had been "gobbed" up to within three or four yards. We lived in a space 4 yards by 12, and the water approached to within 16 yards of the top. On the second day, when we tried to get out, we found the water was within 9 inches off the top. We saw there was no chance of escape. We had no food with us, and we had left our over-clothes in the heading. We had kept

our lights in till we got to the stall, where we found about 3 lbs of candles, which belonged to Thomas Morgan and his two sons, who worked there. They were hung up near the face of the stall. We burnt them two at a time, till we had only ten left. There were sixteen of them to the pound. The candles burnt at the rate of about one in two hours and a half. Then, as we were expecting every moment to come out, we only burnt one at a time. As long as the candles went we had some notion how time was going. We did not try to eat any of the candles. During the time we were there we noticed that the water went back about eight yards. We put marks up to show how far it was going down. On the second day, while I was watching the water, I saw the water suddenly go back — as much as two or three yards. I called to my friends that it was going back, but shortly afterwards the water came back again. I believe now that this was caused about the time Thomas Morgan and the other men were released. The rest of the time was a blank.

We found a tram of coal in the stall. We unloaded all but a little small coal in the bottom, and the tram served us for a bed. We lay on our sides all together — changing sides now and then. We found it very cold, and that was the only way of keeping our selves warm. Every day we grew more thirsty, and we drank about three pints of water each a day — kneeling down by the water's edge to do so. We drank more as the days went on, for we became very thirsty. At first the water was very dirty and disagreeable. There seemed to be a good deal of coal dust in it, but afterwards it became better to drink. At last we were so thirsty that we drank about twice an hour. But for the thirst we had no strange sensations, and we did not perceive any difference in the air. It had no effect on our heads, eyes, or ears. We had no idea at the time. We could hear the sound when they were working for Thomas Morgan and the party with him. I have been told the distance is 122 yards.

As soon as we heard the men working to us we knocked back. We heard the men knocking the first night, and then it was a long time before we heard them knocking again. We did not work; only knocked. Sometime after when we heard the knocking we returned the signal, and this continued some days. We got weaker. As the rescuing party approached at last, they got near enough to call to us, and we were able to answer them. We knew it was a long distance. After they began to speak to us, at last they bored a hole into our stall. We heard the air rushing through with great rapidity. We stayed in the tram for about an hour as the air was going out. We could not sleep much, except John Thomas and David Hughes, who slept the greater part of the time. Then seeing the water coming in Jenkins and I told those outside the water was fast coming near us, awakened the three others, and went to the hole to stop it with a cap. The wind carried the cap through. With our caps and some coal we plugged up the hole as well as we could,

and managed to stop it. After that another hole was bored, and we called out that they were drowning us, and succeeded in stopping that hole up too.

The water by this time had reached the tram, which was within six yards of the face. The water, continuing to rise, flowed into the tram, and we were driven to the top of the stall, confined in a narrow space, the water gradually rising on us. The water came to about 10½ inches on our legs.

George Jenkins's mind became affected during this time. The water went down about 1½ inch afterwards. When we came out, about two hours afterwards, we were in 9 inches of water." By Mr. Wales: - "The water was only about 3 feet from the roof; we were standing then on the bottom." Examination resumed: - "Shortly afterwards an opening was made, and we were rescued. I walked out part of the way, and I don't remember any more." The Coroner: - "I am very much obliged to you for the way in which you have given your evidence."

Mr. Thomas, surveyor to the company, was recalled, and stated that the course taken in driving the dip heading to Thomas Morgan's stall, was taken according to his survey. Mr. John Thomas, pupil with Mr. Thomas, said that for the last 17 months he had taken the whole control of Mr. Thomas's surveying, had taken the measurements, and had plotted them on the colliery plan. The colliery was surveyed quarterly. The last survey was on the 11th of April, the day of the accident, the previous one on the 14th of December. The survey occupied two days, and the result was generally plotted on the day following the survey. Witness made the tracings which were accurate copies of the plan. From the 14th December to the 11th April Charles Oatridge's heading had been extended 67 yards. There were no bore holes there, and there were no symptoms of water.

By Mr. Simons: - "The pit was sunk to Edward Williams' heading in accordance with my surveys." By Mr. Wales: - "Had never heard of there being any water in front of Oatridge's heading." By Mr. Pickard: - "Knew that they expected to find a fault, and that they intended to stop at the fault. Had thought the fault would have been met with before they had got so far, but did not think they were going very near the boundary, for he thought the fault might have thrown a curve. Next day he found it out, when it was too late; but at the time he could not notice how near the boundary they were. The manager never asked, and witness never communicated to him, what was the distance. Entered it on the plan and left it at the office; that was as far as his work extended."

**William Thomas**, America Vach, collier in the Tynwydd pit, said that at the time of the accident he was working in a heading leading out of Oatridge's. He finished his work sooner than usual, at about two o'clock. He saw nothing of the water himself, but saw the deceased Edward Williams, and the boy Robert Rogers. When witness came out he called in on Williams and Rogers. Then they were at dinner.

Witness went in, and at Williams's request pushed the tram for him. He was the last man who saw Williams and Rogers alive. At this stage the inquiry was again adjourned, this time to the 15th inst., at 12 o'clock.

It is expected that the five men, yet in hospital at the Tynewydd Inn, will to-day (Saturday) be able to return to their homes. Advantage will be taken of the presence of Mr. Pickard in the neighbourhood to hold a mass meeting of miners on the evening of the 15th, the day of the adjourned inquiry and another meeting will probably be held the next day at Treorky. Messrs W. and D. Downey, London and Newcastle, photographers to the Queen, took a number of photographs of the rescued men and the rescuers during the day, especially for Her Majesty. The five men, George Jenkins, Moses Powell, David Jenkins, David Hughes, and John Thomas, were taken in a group at the pit's mouth in their colliers' dress. The men wrote their names on the back of the card on which the photograph is to be affixed. Moses Powell, David Jenkins, and David Hughes each wrote their own names; the other men had to affix their mark to the card. Another photograph was taken of the rescued and the rescuers together. In all, about a dozen views were taken, including portraits of the doctor and others. The '*Western Mail*' commented: - Moses Powell was so far recovered as to be able to attend the inquest today. He was conveyed to the inquest room in Dr. H. Naunton Davies's carriage. His entry into the room, muffled in a grey coat, was regarded with deep interest, and he was received with murmurs of deep sympathy. He gave his evidence in excellent English, and very intelligently. While giving his evidence Dr. Davies, Mountain Ash, and Rees Hopkins (Pontypridd) sat near him and quietly questioned him occasionally. He, however, did not evince any signs of fatigue at the close of his examination. The other sufferers continued to make satisfactory progress.

#### Rescued go home

About 11 o'clock Monday morning, May 7<sup>th</sup>, the five rescued colliers were removed to their several homes. Dr. H. N. Davies very kindly drove each one home in his carriage. All the villagers came to their doors to witness their return. In the afternoon John Thomas was taken to the house of his uncle, Mr. Edward Edwards, the manager of Bodringallt Colliery. The anthem composed by Dr. Parry, of Aberystwyth, on the recovery of the colliers, is to be sung by the united choirs, residing at Porth and the vicinity, at the Cymmer Congregational chapel on Thursday evening, the 17th of this month, and not on the 24th, as was before stated. Miss Jenner desires to state, through the medium of this journal, that owing to severe indisposition, she is still to her bed, and her medical attendant, Dr. Mitchell, having ordered her entire rest and quiet for the present, she is utterly unable to respond to the great number of letters she has received since her resignation as volunteer nurse at the Cymmer Hospital — in many cases enclosing



ABRAHAM DODD (HAPPY DODD)

**Abraham Dodd – One of the few that did not receive an Albert Medal although some reports say he was the only one who was brave enough to be first to enter the place where the men were trapped.**



GWILLYM THOMAS

**Gwilym Thomas, like Abraham Dodd, Thomas was there at the final breakthrough, but was also over=looked for an Albert medal of any sort.**

cheques for the relief of her late patients, to be distributed as she thinks best. She feels sure that the sympathy thus exhibited towards her in this matter will secure for her the forbearance of the many, until she is able to respond to every writer individually.

**Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> 1877**

Abraham Dodd injured

Just over a month after the inundation at the Tynewydd Colliery, most if not all of the rescuers were back at work and once more facing the dangers of their occupations. On this date news spread that there had been a small explosion at the Ynyshir Colliery and one of the Tynewydd rescuers, Abraham Dodd, had been one of those involved. The '*Western Mail*' the following Friday published the following letter: -

**Sir** - The men, Abraham Dodd, John Hopkins, and John Jenkins, who were burnt at Ynyshir Colliery on Saturday last are progressing slowly but well, the burns are, however, exceedingly painful. As regards Abraham Dodd, who was one of the three men who broke through to the five entombed colliers, special interest is felt. He was shockingly burnt about the arms and face. The poor fellow resides in a small straw-thatched cottage in the deep valley of Ferndale, and close to the Rhondda Vach river. I found him lying on a narrow bed on the ground floor, with his face and arms covered with bandages. He said, "I little thought when at Tynewydd doing all I could to rescue the four men and the lad that I should so soon be a sufferer myself."

Before I was aware what was being done one of the bandages was being lifted from sufferer's arms, revealing a part of the forearm which presented the appearance of cooked meat. It was perfectly horrible to witness, and in answer to an expression I made, Dodd's wife said, "That is not so nearly as bad as other portions of his arms." He said that at the time of the explosion he was engaged in cutting through into a passage which had been made to meet them, and the two other men stood behind him each holding a Davy lamp. A hole was being bored through to the empty space beyond, and soon after this was done gas fired in the two lamps. He, however, persevered, the lamps getting hotter and hotter owing to the gas.

He asked his two friends if they did not think it was full time to put out the lights. Hopkins replied, "No, there is no danger." He had been to the passage on the other side, and ought to have known the condition of the place. This reassured Dodd, and he continued cutting, and succeeded in making an opening about a yard

square in the coal. While he was busily engaged at this Hopkins retreated over some heaps of small coal; Dodd was with his head and hands through the opening, when he saw a lurid flash, and at the same time found himself as if in the midst of a furnace, he being burnt horribly. To employ his own words, "I tumbled over Jenkins and Hopkins, who were prostrate, a distance of five yards, which was the extent of the hole. I heard my arms and face 'frying' as I went."

The men were conveyed home, and were quickly attended by Dr. H. Naunton Davies. I cannot refrain from again asking why Dodd was urged to incur this new danger while the nation was applauding his former brave deed and was subscribing for his benefit? The managers and their friends have been writing their own share in the transactions. Is it in deference to them that Happy Dodd has been left neglected in his poverty? I trust the Lord Mayor and others who have collected funds will at once remember the claims of Isaac Pride, Abraham Dodd, and Gwilym Thomas, the three working colliers who incurred the greatest dangers and who did the deed.

**Your obedient servant, a Welshman, May 21<sup>st</sup> 1877.**

The recent catastrophe at Tynewydd Colliery near Pontypridd  
By H. N. Davies, L.R.C.P.L & Ed; Surgeon to the colliery

The '*British Medical Journal*,' May 12<sup>th</sup> 1877, reported: - The subjoined narrative of the recent accident at the Tynewydd Colliery is so remarkable in some of its features, especially those having reference to the prolongation and sustentation in air considerably compressed, that I have great pleasure in sending it for publication in the '*British Medical Journal*.' :-

I shall not in this report submit any opinions as to the physiological effects of compressed air on the waste of tissue, or arresting evaporation, and thus preserving the heat of the body and maintaining the temperature of the cell in which the rescued men were entombed. It is, perhaps, necessary to remind those of the profession who are unused to colliery operations that, when coal is to be dug, a shaft is sunk to the depth of which the mineral is to be found. From the bottom of the shaft radiate one, two, or three principal roadways, and it is on both sides of these roadways, and at right angles more or less with them, that headings are driven.

On each side of these headings, openings are made into the coal, called stalls. Tramways run along the main roads and branch off into each stall. Further, it is to be remarked that, with respect to this and many other collieries in South Wales, the headings run up from the roadways, at a dip or angle more or less acute with the plane of the roadway. It can, therefore, be easily understood that, a mine



being flooded, it is possible that, although all practical egress from parts of the interior is closed, the air driven into the upper headings and stalls will ultimately assert its limit of compressibility, and prevent the further advance of the water. This compression will, of course, increase with the weight of the superincumbent water above the level of the remote stalls, to which reference has already been made.

With this imperfect summary of the conditions as to the general structure of the colliery, which I think necessary before the gravity of the facts can be fairly appreciated, I at once come to the stall entombed five men, four of whom escaped, while one was unfortunately killed. This stall is known as Thomas Morgan's stall, and is forty-five yards long, thirteen yards wide, and three-and-a-half feet high (the height being the thickness of the coal.) For nine feet of the width a roadway has been cut along the bottom rock to a depth of two-feet, making a total height along it five-and-half feet. This roadway brings the trams from the heading to receive the coal from the gallery whence it is cut. The rise in Morgan's stall from the roadway is 1 in 12, and its distance from the bottom of the shaft is 900 yards. The cubic capacity of this stall, from which the four men and the boy were rescued, equalled 7,000 feet.

Thomas Morgan, with his two sons, had left the stall, having finished their day's work, at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. On their way out, they found a mass of water rolling and surging towards them with an indescribable roar. They succeeded in reaching another stall, where the black waters confined them, and shut out all chance of escape. Here they found two men, who had sought safety from the terrible element below them. In the meantime, four men and a lad had found refuge in the stall left by Morgan and his two sons, as described above. At six o'clock the same evening, knockings were heard as coming from the stall in which Morgan, his sons, and the two men were immured. The block of coal intervening between the stall and the main heading was 12 yards thick. Men were at once put to work to drive through this column of coal. (It must be remembered that only a portion of the workings was flooded.) The difficulty which presented itself was to effect a communication with the men without imperilling the lives of those waiting to be rescued, as well as of those working for their rescue, owing to the compressed air within the stalls. It was determined to bore through the coal. The orifice normally covered a surface two inches in diameter, and it was hoped that the escape of the compressed air through it would so release the pressure in the stall as to ensure the working through the block with safety.

I may remark here, that no fear was entertained that the water in the stall would rise high enough in the face to drown the men before they could be released. No sooner was a communication effected, than a tremendous rush of the confined air

tore through the hole with an unearthly shriek, carrying with it and hurling in all directions pieces of coal wrenched from the edges of the hole, while the terrified miners working in the face were compelled to escape to some place of safety. The men inside were previously warned, through the coal acting as a medium, to keep back from the bore until the pressure was exhausted. Poor Morgan, one of the sons, a young married man with one child, disregarding the admonition in his intense anxiety to get out of his dungeon, was speedily drawn into the adit by the irresistible force of the escaping air, so that his head was as firmly fixed in it as in a vice. Death was instantaneous, and resulted in asphyxia. The skull was not fractured. Other holes were bored, and when the stall was sufficiently relieved, the work of cutting through the coal was resumed. By 10 p.m. on the 12<sup>th</sup>, the body was removed and the men were liberated.

The next important question was the whereabouts and fate of the other imprisoned colliers, who total nine - the number of men still in the workings. On the evening of this day, knockings, somewhat feeble in their intensity, were heard, and were supposed by the sound to have their origin in Morgan's stall, referred to above - a distance 75 yards from the heading. In the then existing conditions of the workings, all hope of reaching the place had to be deferred until the superincumbent water had been substantially reduced. In the engineering difficulties and the magnificence skill with which they were surmounted, it was not my providence to enter. When measures had so far progressed as to render it a matter of hopefulness that the poor fellows would be rescued, I deemed it necessary to make such special arrangements as to the *locale* to which the poor miners should be brought as would ensure the most effective supervision and vigilant attention. With this in view, I engaged the large room belonging to the Tynewydd Inn closely adjoined the colliery, and had it fitted up as a hospital, with the most humane and skilful local nurses in attendance. Everything above ground being ready, I left the surface arrangements in the charge of my friend Dr. E. W. S. Davies of Mountain Ash, and of my brother, Mr. Idris Davies of Ystrad. It was determined, however, to utilise the shed near the pit's mouth as a temporary relief station for the rescued men, if it was found that they were too weak to be carried to the hospital.

I and my assistants, Messrs. Dukes and W. Davies, had been in the pit forty-eight hours in attendance, with a few intermissions in consequence of the frequent and harassing rumours that our services were immediately required. My object was to be in readiness to afford the necessary assistance, without a moment's loss of time, to men who had now been immured 214 hours. On Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, the crisis, in so far as the rescue of the men was concerned, was over.

*Condition of the men when released –*

1. David Hughes, the boy, was the first to be released. He was carried from the stall through the tunnel which had been made in the coal to reach it, on a stretcher. He was perfectly sensible. The general surface of the body was warm; pulse 84. He complained of a little weakness only. His voice was natural in tone; the breathing quiet, but a little hurried. Four ounces of warm milk and gruel were given, and were taken with apparent relish.
2. John Thomas was brought through the tunnel on a stretcher. He was extremely weak, and much emaciated, pulse very rapid and small. He was perfectly conscious. The feet and lower limbs were cold, his breathing was hurried. The surface of the face and trunk were warm. His voice was very weak. Six ounces of milk and gruel were administered, and appeared to be taken readily. Bottles containing hot water were applied to his feet. Having been wrapped in blankets, he was sent to the surface. On his way to the bottom of the shaft, the distance between which and the mouth of the tunnel is, as I have previously stated, 900 yards, another bowl of gruel and milk was given him, which he took without difficulty. Before the bottom of the shaft was reached, he had greatly revived.
3. George Jenkins – The next collier rescued, walked from the stall through the tunnel, a distance of 38 yards, the height being three-feet and a half. On reaching the main heading, he was found to be perfectly sensible, and talked readily; pulse 80, full, but not compressible. The general surface of the body was warm; the feet and legs were wet. His voice was strong. He was unwilling to be placed on a stretcher, but readily submitted. His boots and stockings were removed, and he was carried to the bottom of the shaft.
4. Moses Powell also walked through the tunnel. He was perfectly conscious; pulse 90, small and compressible. He talked freely.
5. David Jenkins was the last to leave the stall, brought through the tunnel on a stretcher. He was quite conscious, calm, and collected. He spoke readily but feebly. The pulse was 95, small and compressible. The general surface of his arm was warm.

To each, the same quantity of milk and gruel was administered; and enfolded in warm blankets they were brought to the surface. And here I must performe discharge one duty. In all the underground arrangements for securing the

necessary comfort and attention of the men as they were brought out, I have to express my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. E. Lloyd of Castalia, near Pontypridd, Messrs. Rees Hopkins of Pontypridd, Ivor Lewis of Llantrisant, T. Parry of Ferndale, as well as to my assistants, Messrs Dukes, C. Jones, W. Davies, and P. James, for their exceedingly valuable assistance, by which my efforts were supplemented.

*Treatment on the surface:* - When the surface of the pit was reached, the men were one by one carried to the temporary shed improvised for their reception, where Dr. E. W. S. Davies and his colleague at once saw them; and they were placed as comfortably as the limited facilities of the structure would permit. More milk and gruel, with occasionally a little coffee, was given to the men, who experienced no difficulty or inconvenience whatever in taking the food offered them. At the expiration of an hour-and-a-half, it was deemed desirable to remove the patients to the hospital prepared for them, which they reached a few minutes later, and where they were placed in warm comfortable beds.

*General conditions:* - Taking the cases, the following indicia to them as a whole. There was much emaciation, but not so extensive as might have been expected; with the exception of John Thomas, whose abdomen, in addition to being flat and tympanitic in common with those of his fellow sufferers, was hollow. The men were perfectly conscious. There was an entire absence of nervous excitement. No eagerness or avidity was manifested by and food or drink, which, when taken, was taken readily, and attended with no inconvenience. The tongue was tremulous, coated in the middle, and red at tip; the papillæ was considerably enlarged, and retained the impression of the teeth. The conjunctivæ presented a jaundiced appearance. The breathing was quiet; the breath was fetid, especially that of J. Thomas and D. Jenkins. Contact with light produced uneasiness to J. Thomas more than to the others.

*Conditions in stall prior to rescue* – Each was wet the first day, and all complained of chill during the whole time they were immured from their damp clothes, which never became dry. Heat was kept up by exercise, by cutting coal or wood, or by rubbing themselves. To sustain the heat, they lay huddled together in a tram half filled with coal dust; J. Thomas, however, drank but little. The bowels of the men were relieved on Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, and only once afterwards during their incarceration. J. Thomas, however, suffered from diarrhœa. Urine was passed frequently, and in small quantities, accompanied at the latter period of their confinement with a very fetid odour, which made the spot used as a urinal very disagreeable. J. Thomas became restless and delirious, and with difficulty could be restrained. D. Jenkins also became delirious towards the end of the period. A general tendency to drowsiness appeared to seize the men. D. Jenkins was the only one who took a portion of the candle, which he did in the form of pills. The rest could not get beyond the first stage of tasting it.

When the water advanced in the stall on the morning of the rescue, all except George Jenkins and Moses Powell retreated to a small hole in the face of the workings and above the reach of the water. The necessity of communicating with the rescuers compelled these two men, as the strongest, to stand or rather bend in the water, which had risen to their knees. All suffered more or less from neuralgic pains in their feet, especially the two mentioned. It should be remembered that these men were cooped up in a cavern only three feet and a half high, and with a floor damp from constant water-droppings. In the case of Jenkins and Powell, who so generously and heroically allowed their companions to retreat to a place of comparative safety, each was bending in this cave of stygian darkness with nine-inches of water around them, which they believed to be gradually rising only to drown them inch by inch before effective help could save them. In this view, the pains in the feet are explicable.

To withstanding the imminence of death, each was hopeful that he would be permitted to see the light and feel the air of Heaven again. Considering the adverse conditions, which are almost too painfully horrible in their ghastly grimness to be realised, it is extraordinary that the poor fellows, who are now on the fair road to convalescence, could have battled with their fears, with deprivation of food, and with constant chill in the atmosphere of 25 lbs. to the inch above the normal pressure, for 214 hours so successfully as they appear to have done.

*Particulars as to the condition of health previous to the accident* – On the morning of the accident, each took for breakfast bread, butter, and tea; and with him for luncheon, half-a-pound of bread with cheese.

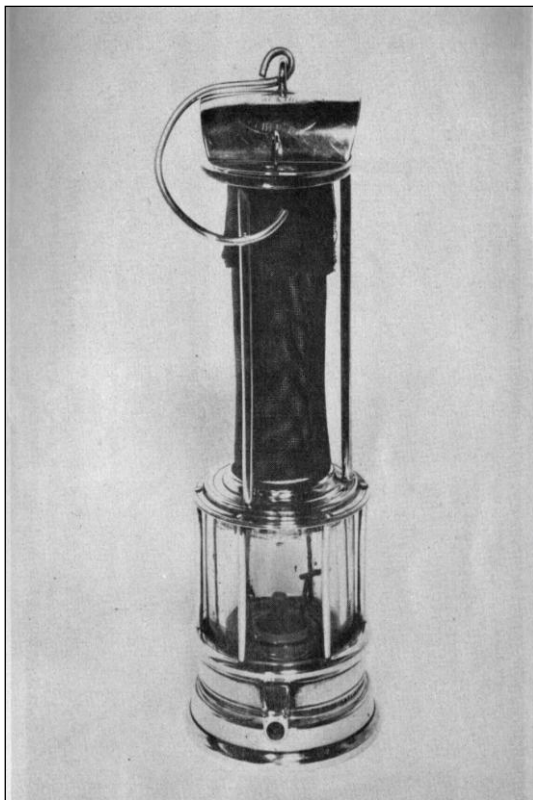
Moses Powell, aged 30, single, lives with his mother. His height is 5 ft. 6¼ inches; weight, 150 lbs. He is dark, of phlegmatic temperament; has always enjoyed good health, does not remember having had a day's illness. He is intemperate.

George Jenkins, aged 32, widower; height, 5 ft. 5¼ inches; weight, 160 lbs. He is slight, of a quick temperament. His health has been good, except that about 11 years ago he was subject to fits, which lasted for three years. He is very temperate.

David Jenkins, aged 40, married; height, 5 ft. 4¾ inches; weight, 130 lbs. He is dark, of a rather nervous temperament. He has had a dry troublesome cough for about three years. His health has been generally good. He is very temperate.

John Thomas, aged 26, single; height, 5 ft. 8 inches. He is fair, of a decidedly sanguineous temperament. He has had no serious illness. He is the son of scrofulous parents, is very deaf, and has an impediment in his speech. He is quiet and steady.

David Hughes, age 16; height, 5 ft. 1¾ inches; very slight. He has had scarlet fever and measles. He is a delicate boy, subject to coughs and shortness of breath. He was in his usual health on the morning of the accident. The men are now able to get about and dress, and are rapidly becoming convalescent. The pains in the feet are much relieved, though still a source of inconvenience to Powell and Jenkins. There is no indication of cough, or of difficulty of breathing, or pain in the chest in any of the invalids. All have gone to their respective homes.



**The lamp of Edmund Thomas which was used at the inundation and who was awarded an Albert medal for his part in the rescue at Tynewydd.**

## Chapter seven

The adjourned inquest - Error found in the plans  
[From *Cardiff Times* reporter.]

The adjourned inquiry relative to the cause of the inundation of the Tynewydd Colliery was resumed on Tuesday morning, May 15<sup>th</sup> 1877 at the Rheola Inn, Porth, before Mr. Coroner Overton. The various interests concerned were represented as under: - Mr. G. E. Hill appeared on behalf of the company; Mr. W. Simons appeared for the manager (Mr. James Thomas); Mr. Pickard watched the proceedings on behalf of the National Union of Miners. There were also in attendance Mr. J. H. Leresche, barrister, Manchester, who had been instructed by the Home Office to attend, and Mr. Wales, the Government Inspector for the district.

The evidence of Thomas Morgan having been read over, Mr. Leresche put some questions to the witness. Morgan said he did not know anything about the old workings, or that they had water in them. There must have been water in the mine when it was abandoned, for water always accumulated in old premises. Mr. Leresche: - "Is not it a fact that every collier expects that if there are old workings water does get in them?" Witness: - "Of course." Mr. Simons: - "If there are new workings connected with the old workings would the new workings take the water from the old colliery?" Witness: - "No, I don't know that they would." Further similar questions elicited nothing of importance. The evidence of **Evan Thomas**, haulier in the colliery, who gave the alarm of the accident, did not call forth any cross-examination.

**Mr. David Thomas**, mineral surveyor, employed by the company, was cross-examined on the evidence he gave at the last sitting. He said that after the survey, the last but one, which was made on December 14th, had the fault continued in the same direction it ought to have been visible at 14 yards straight from that point. At any rate they might reasonably have anticipated meeting with it. They did not look for it because they found no alteration in the coal. There were certain well known indications always met with in coming to a fault. Mr. Simons said that an error had since been discovered in the plans. Mr. Leresche said then that had better be explained before he proceeded further with his cross-examination. Witness gave the following explanation of the error. Some years before he had any connection with the plans, another person had them, and an error had been discovered in this surveyor's calculation, which made a difference of about 16 yards in the works towards the boundary. All the surveys he himself had made had been correctly done. Since the last sitting the workings had been carefully re-surveyed and checked twice. An error in laying down the workings had been

discovered in the interval since last sitting. Mr. Simons: - "Is the effect of the error to change the position of the dip-heading?" — Witness: - "Yes." Mr. Simons: - "Does it change the position of the dip-heading so that it ought to have been laid down more to the north-west?" — "Yes." "How more to the north-west? — "Sixteen yards and a half. The dip-heading has been laid on the colliery plans 16 yards out of its proper position — that distance too much to the south-east."

The Coroner: - "I thought the other day Mr. Thomas you wished to show me how very accurate your plans were?" — Witness: - "The face of Charles Oatridge's heading should have been indicated as 16½ yards further from the boundary." The Coroner remarked that the plan which had been put in was the plan used by the company, and they were bound by it. They might bring forward 100 alterations now, but what was the use of that? Mr. Simons said he had merely caused the fact to be made known that Mr. Leresche might not conduct his cross-examination under a misunderstanding. In reply to further questions from Mr. Leresche, witness said his information was based chiefly on the work of his assistant, to whom he had entrusted the work for some time past. Mr. Pickard asked witness if from conversation he had had with the proprietors of the colliery he knew whether they had agreed to leave a boundary or not. — Witness said he did not. "Did you ever suggest what should be done?" — Witness "No, never." "Did you ever have any conversation as to what they should have as a barrier?" — "No, nothing at all." Mr. Leresche: - "Or that there should be a barrier at all?" — Witness replied in the negative. Mr. Pickard: - "It is customary in Wales to leave a barrier I presume?" — Reply: - "No, not exactly customary. They generally work up to the boundary." "Do they strip the boundary as a rule?" — "They do unless they have an express covenant to the contrary." Mr. Wales observed that the custom followed entirely depended on circumstances.

**John Thomas**, assistant to Mr. Thomas, who had undertaken the work of surveying the pit for the last seventeen months, was next examined. Mr. Leresche: - "How did you derive your impression that the fault curved?" — "I thought it likely that the fault would curve in the same direction as shown on the plan." - "When you measured it upon the 11th April, was there anything whatever in Charles Oatridge's heading which suggested any alteration in the coal, or that all was not going on straight and right?" — "I did not notice anything, nor was anything of the sort told me by the colliers." "Had there been any signs, you could not have failed to see them?" — "I should have been sure to see them."

Replying to Mr. Simons, witness corroborated the statement given by the previous witness of the discovery of the error in the plans. He said the general effect of the error was to show that Mr. Insole's workings had come considerably into the Tynewydd colliery. They had crossed the boundary, and entered a considerable



distance into the Tynewydd property. The Coroner: - "Are you going to swear that?" Witness said he was. "Insole's workings penetrated about 16 yards over the boundary into the Tynewydd property". The Coroner: - "Are you prepared to swear that?" — "Yes." The Coroner: - "You are?" — "Yes." Mr. Leresche: - "How did you first find out there had been an error in the plans?" - Witness said he again surveyed the pit last Saturday, and afterwards checked the workings on the colliery plan by his field book. Then he found out the error. Mr. Leresche said he was afraid they would only succeed in establishing that all plans were worthless if they proceeded in that fashion.

The Coroner remarked that the discovery of this error did not affect the present question at all, for the boundary was distinctly marked on the colliery plan, and it was monstrous to believe that the plan by which they had always been working was incorrect. No facts whatever would be established if plans were allowed to be corrected in that way. Mr. Simons said he did not think it affected the present question in any way. He had not mentioned the matter with that view, but he thought it ought to be made known. Mr. Wales said it did not affect the present question in any way. They had 44 yards to drive to the boundary, and they drove these 44 yards.

Cross-examination continued: - On the 11th April witness found that Oatridge had extended his heading 44 yards from where it was on December 14th or rather he found that had been the case when he plotted it next day, the day on which the accident occurred. The evidence of P.C. Llewellyn, Moses Powell, and Dr. H. N. Davies was then read over, but called forth no cross-examination.

After a short adjournment for lunch, Charles Oatridge was re-called. In reply to Mr. Leresche, witness said the indications he saw in the stall in which he was working led him to the conclusion that he was approaching a fault rather than getting near water. The last time he spoke to Mr. Thomas, the manager, about those indications, was about three or four months before the water broke in. They were never troubled with gas in the colliery. Mr. James Thomas told him there was some water in the old workings, but there was no danger, because there was a fault between the two places. To Mr. Simons witness said Mr. James Thomas did not tell him it was a down-through fault towards Insole's property. He was constantly pricking water in the bottom, even when there were no old workings near. To Mr. Pickard witness said that Richard Howells, was overman over his heading, and visited it every day. Never felt afraid of the water. Had never known men leave the locality in consequence of the existence of water in the old workings.

**David Rees** said he had been a fireman in the Tynewydd pit, but gave up regular service in that capacity eight or nine months since. Latterly he had only had part of the work, viz., the Gelynog dip, where there were 25 men working. In it there were the following headings: - Charles Oatridge's, George Jenkins', and Edward Williams, or Maindee's. He could not read or write and he only knew what the rules were from what was told him. His duties were to inspect these workings before the men went in, to inform Richard Howells and John Thomas of what he had seen, and then he put a cross to it after it had been entered. The entries were not made regularly. He made the report to Richard Howell, the fireman foreman, but he did not write in the book; it was Michael Thomas, the machine-man, who did that. Had been working in the Tynewydd pit altogether from 21 to 22 years. Before that time he had worked for years in a neighbouring pit.

He was at home when he heard water had broken into the pit, and he went down to the level heading immediately. There he met Richard Howells and Mr. James Thomas, the manager. They were then beginning to work, there being several men with them. They were endeavouring to cut to the coaling below, having heard the men knocking beneath. Witness himself heard them knocking many times. Witness proceeded to describe the rescue of the first party. He said the rush of air when the hole was made through made a sound like thunder. William Morgan was drawn into the opening and killed. Witness detailed the incidents in the finding of Morgan's party and of the other bodies. The journal of the pit was put in. The Coroner said the entries appeared to have been made regularly, and the signatures were in the same handwriting.

To Mr. Leresche witness said Mr. James Thomas was the manager. Howells occupied the next position, John Thomas third, and witness fourth. Witness was under Howells and Thomas; he had not a district of his own. The mine was divided into three districts - the Troedyrhiw, Lledrddu, and Gelynog dip, but Howell and Thomas used to exchange rounds sometimes. Latterly he had the charge of Gelynog dip. He had to look after the fire in the morning, but he believed Richard Howells was also responsible for it. During the twenty-two years he had been engaged in colliery work he had sometimes taken the post of fireman; he had that work entirely the last nine months. The entries in the book were usually made every day; he was not with the men when they wrote, signing it afterwards. At this stage the inquiry was again adjourned.

### **Wednesday May 16th**

The adjourned inquiry relative to the cause of the inundation of the Tynewydd Colliery, was resumed on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> 1877, at the Rheola Inn, Porth, before Mr. Coroner Overton. The various interests concerned were represented

as under: - Mr. G. E. Hill appeared on behalf of the company; Mr. W. Simons appeared for the manager (Mr. James Thomas); Mr. Pickard watched the proceedings on behalf of the National Union of Miners. There were also in attendance, Mr. J. H. Leresche, barrister, Manchester, who had been instructed by the Home Office to attend, and Mr. Wales, the Government Inspector for the district. At the outset of the proceedings, the Coroner said he wrote yesterday to the Cymmer Coal Company, in consequence of what transpired during the sitting, and as they had sent a plan of the workings of their colliery and they would take that one first.

**Mr. William Peil**, one of the partners of the Cymmer Steam Coal Company, produced the plan of their colliery. The No. 3 workings up to the last three years were the property of Mr. Insole, when the present company purchased them. The Cymmer Colliery workings adjoined the Tynewydd workings for about three-quarters of a mile. There was a pit called Hines' Pit, marked on the plan, within about 50 yards of the boundary of their property. The plan had been made correctly by Messrs Dobson, Brown, and Adams, Cardiff. The Coroner: - "There was a witness brought forward yesterday to show that your workings had exceeded the proper limits. Do you believe there has been any encroachment?" - Witness: - "There has been no encroachment. Our plan shows no excess beyond our boundary. I am satisfied no encroachment has been made on our side. The distance from the workings of Hines' Pit to where the water broke in was about 100 yards. The whole of No. 2 seam has been worked out, and the workings are abandoned."

To Mr. Leresche witness said that No. 2 pit was on the dip-side of the down-cast fault of 30 yards shown on the plan. Abandoned workings invariably caused an accumulation of water. In this case the water had lodged in the corner formed by the fault and the boundary. Mr. Leresche asked whether, not having met the fault they expected to find, the Tynewydd colliery manager should not have taken some special precaution of the kind indicated under the 9th General Rule laid down in the Act of Parliament (relative to bore-holes) Mr. Simons objected to the question being put.

A discussion arose, and in the result the Coroner ruled that the question was admissible. Mr. Leresche: - "Having regard to the condition which is indicated by the plans produced of the Cymmer workings, and having regard to the fact that work was carried on the other side, do you consider that this is a case in which the precaution indicated in the Act of Parliament in the 9th Rule, related to bore-holes and so on, should have been observed?" — "Either these precautions should have been observed, or a barrier of coal left."

Mr. Leresche: - "Supposing in working in a particular heading the persons connected with the colliery, either as managers or acting as working colliers, were under the expectation of meeting with a fault, and they did not meet with it, do you think that that state of circumstances should have caused them to use extra care and caution in every further inch they went?" Mr. Simons said surely that was a question for the Jury. The Coroner considered that it was simply a scientific question, and perfectly admissible, and accordingly put the question to the witness. In reply to Mr. Simons, witness said he believed access to the Cymmer workings was now impossible. The plan did not show that the boundary had been crossed. Mr. Simons: - "Can there be any barrier better than a fault between two layers of coal?" - "That depends upon the size of the fault, and is entirely a matter of opinion."

After some further questions, David Rees, the fireman, who gave evidence on the previous day, was recalled. He said, in reply to Mr. Simons, that Howells was the overman, and also acted as one of the firemen. In reply to the coroner, witness said "I am the sole fireman on the dip district (Gelynog)." Mr. Leresche: - "I put that question to him yesterday, and he distinctly denied it." The Coroner said the witness had been trifling with the jury. Mr. Simons said the witness did not understand the question when it was put to him on the previous day. Mr. Leresche: - "The jury were watching the interpretation, and everyone will agree I did not press the witness unduly."

Mr. Pickard: - "Yesterday it was a difficult matter to ascertain what the position of the witness was." Mr. Simons was again proceeding to speak, when the Coroner said he would hear no more arguments on the subject. It would appear as though the witness had been tampered with. He came there one day and made one statement, and to-day he distinctly denied it. Yesterday he had denied the responsibility of being fireman now he admitted it. Mr. Simons: - "The man is perfectly right. He is only responsible as fireman not as overman." Mr. Leresche: - "I never had it from him that he was the overman." The Coroner: - "He wants to shirk it. It is not right of you, Mr. Simons, to press it." Mr. Simons said he certainly had not spoken to the witness in the way of tampering with him. The Coroner said the witness shirked the responsibility, he said he was only under somebody else. He was not surprised, because the fireman was in the peculiar position of having occupied that post without knowing the rules. He believed witness knew more than he liked to tell them. As fireman he held a responsible position, and he ought to know.

Replying to Mr. Pickard, witness said that Howells was not the certificated overman. Replying to Mr. Leresche, witness said Mr. James Thomas, the manager, was down the pit often. He had sometimes seen him down twice or three times a

week. Mr. Leresche submitted that according to the 29th section of the general rules, in order that a fireman should be competent he was required to inspect the pit every 24 hours, to report on his inspection, and sign the report. That, in his opinion, seemed to involve that the man must be able to read and write. Mr. Simons would undertake to say that half the firemen in the district could not read or write. The Coroner said he should like to hear the opinion of Mr. Leresche on the point. Mr. Leresche said that in his reading of the Act the word "competent" included reading and writing in the competence referred to.

For instance, a blind person could not be said to be competent, and to make a true report which had to be signed and entered in the book, a man must be able to read and write, he took it, under the 29th rule. Though this man's being unable to read or write might not have anything to do directly with the question of the cause of the death of the five men raised by this inquiry, still, as his view had been asked, he had no hesitation in giving his opinion that under a proper construction of that rule no person ought to be appointed to discharge those duties unless he himself was competent to do what was prescribed by Act of Parliament. Mr. Pickard mentioned that it was the practice in Lancashire that a man must be competent to read and write and enter his own reports. At this juncture Mr. Peil stated that after examining the plan he found that Mr. Insole had not worked to within two yards of the boundary according to the plan. The Coroner said that it had always occurred to him that the fact of the overman being illiterate was a source of danger and often led to accidents.

Mr. Simons, while he was not prepared to give an opinion adverse to the desirability of all officers having the qualification of reading and writing, submitted that it was of more importance that such an officer should be a man of skill, observant and clear-headed, than that he should be able to read or write. The word "competent" in the section did not refer to reading or writing, but to the other qualifications. It was sufficient if the man could sign the report, or put his mark to it. Mr. Wales said there was nothing in the 29th rule stating that a man must be able to read and write. It would be impossible to limit men in that way. The report in question need not be a written report, but might be given verbally to some one else, and afterwards signed. Mr. Pickard: - "Would you consider a man appointed to fill that office competent unless he can read or write?" Mr. Wales: - "I think he could discharge those duties without being able to read or write. I do not mean to say he would not be able to do them better if he could read or write."

**Richard Howells**, overman of the Tynewydd pit, and also one of the firemen, deposed that he lived at Tynewydd. He could not read or write English, but he could read a little Welsh. Could read the rules in Welsh, and had read some of them. He was overman over the whole colliery, and fireman for the Tynewydd

portion. David Rees was fireman for the Gelynog dip. Witness generally went to Gelynog dip every day in the capacity of overman. Was quite satisfied that the water broke in through Oatridge's heading. The water could only have come in from the workings in the old Cymmer pit. As soon as he heard of the accident he descended the pit before Mr. Thomas went down. He went at once to the dip heading, where he saw the water. [Witness detailed the steps taken for the recovery of the missing men, already reported.]

By the Coroner: - "There was no under manager excepting the witness." Replying to Mr. Leresche, witness said he was in Oatridge's stall between two and three o'clock on the day of the accident. Mr. Leresche: - "Did Oatridge call your attention to some water in the heading?" — "He told me the coal was weaker." Leresche: - "Did not Oatridge call attention to the fact that there was some water coming from the end of the heading?" — "He told me there were some drops of water there. Oatridge told me 'we were bound to be near some water.' I have been employed since 1863 as fireman and overman. There was no under-manager. I have worked 18 years in this locality. I knew that No. 3 pit was abandoned. I knew that water accumulates in old workings, but I did not know there was water in those old workings. I certainly did not believe they were full of water. I never thought of it at all, I knew Charles Oatridge was going in the direction of the boundary, but I did not know how near the boundary he had got. I never saw the plan with reference to the question how far Oatridge was progressing. I never gave it a thought that he was getting near the boundary. I never thought of there being any water in the heading.

Mr. James Thomas (the manager) never spoke to me about old workings. He never conversed with me about getting near the boundary; he only talked about the fault. Oatridge never mentioned to me about the coal weeping before that day "the loose" was tapped. I had had a conversation with Mr. Thomas respecting the fault about two months before this happened, but he never told me to look out for it. He never told me either that there was only 44 yards between Oatridge's heading and the boundary after the survey on the 14th of December. Nobody told me of that fact; I was quite ignorant of it." Mr. Leresche: "Were you going on blindly in search of a fault?" - "I was going on by my master's orders." To other questions witness said he had only received orders about the fault. Mr. Thomas had given him no idea of the thickness of the fault, and he had no notion whatever how much coal they had to cut to reach the boundary on the 14th of December. He took no steps of any kind to ascertain how near he was approaching the boundary.

Mr. Thomas never said a word about it to him. Supposing the water had not come in, he should have allowed Oatridge to go on cutting the heading until he came to

the fault or at any rate until he had orders from the master to stop doing so. The only directions he had from the manager were to continue Oatridge's heading up to the fault. Mr. Leresche:- "During those four months did not Mr. Thomas ever give you any indication where you might come on this fault?" — "No, or I should have looked for them." Mr. Leresche: - "Having no directions you did not take care?" — "No, sir, I never told Mr. James Thomas I had not met with the fault." In continuation, witness said it had never occurred to him where this fault might be met with. Except on one occasion witness had always made the measurings which were taken for the purpose of paying the men. Cross-examined at length by Mr. Leresche as to the rules, witness read some of the rules in Welsh, and admitted that he understood their meaning. To further questions he said he did not think there was likely to be any water in Oatridge's heading; he reiterated that in fact he thought of nothing but the fault. He did not know anything of the water until the dip was full of water. At this stage there was a short adjournment.

On resuming, witness was asked a number of questions by Mr. Simons, but in his re-examination no facts materially altering the statements he had already made came out. To Mr. Pickard witness said he used to accompany the surveyors when they made their survey. He had never known any workmen leave the colliery on account of the water in the old workings. He knew what bore-holes were, but had never known any used latterly. He did not enter the measurements he took in such a way as to see what the distance was from the place they were working to the boundary. In fact he never knew that. Asked some questions as to the release of Morgan's party witness said William Morgan was killed instantly. By the Coroner, at the request of Mr. Simons: - Witness remembered that about four years ago they tapped a largo quantity of water in Michael's heading with bore-holes, and succeeded in getting the water out.

**Mr. William Davies**, manager of the Coedcae Colliery, and residing at Coedcae, a mile and a quarter from Tynwydd, deposed that hearing of the accident, he immediately came to the spot to see if he could render any assistance. He arrived about eight o'clock. At the pit mouth he found a large number of people, all of whom were strangers to him, except Mr. Edmund Thomas, Llwyncelyn, who had just come from underground. Mr. Thomas asked him to go down to Mr. James Thomas, the manager, who was in the pit. He descended the pit and found Mr. J. Thomas driving a heading to the men confined in Williams's heading — Morgan's party. He remained with them about an hour.

Then he accompanied Mr. Thomas, the manager, to the Gelynog dip, where they found the water had risen to a distance of within about 14 yards of the main level. Then going back through the main return air course, they tried the place where they thought Edward Williams and the boy was confined, but could get no answer.

No answer was obtained from them at all in fact, and no doubt they were drowned immediately, for it was afterwards found that the place was not air-tight. The stall in which they were shut up was about 15 feet perpendicular under the return airway. A pit was sunk there, and ultimately the bodies were recovered. Water was found there at first, leaving no doubt that the men were drowned.

Returning to the men who were driving the heading, witness stayed there all night. Between five and six on the following morning they succeeded in making an opening through to Thomas Morgan and the four others confined there, and they were reached between nine and ten o'clock. After they had a consultation as to what was best to be done. Those who took part in the consultation were, among others, Mr. Daniel Thomas, Brithweunydd, Mr. Edward Thomas, Llwyncein, Mr. Jones, Hines' Pit; Mr. James Thomas, the manager, and witness. Mr. Edmund Thomas and witness took control of affairs. Mr. Wales also took part in the consultation, having by this time arrived. On the Thursday night a steam pump, borrowed from Hafod, had been put to work in the dip heading, the ordinary pump having been choked; they then obtained a pump from the Cymmer colliery.

At this point Mr. Edmund Thomas continued the narrative. "The additional pump," he said, "was put to work in the drift, and the engine at Hines' pit was also employed to raise the water by buckets, that being the place from where the water had entered. On Saturday morning a very powerful steam pump, borrowed from the Glamorgan Steam Coal Company, was put down, and got to work between 10 and 12 on Sunday night. On the Thursday previous, some of the persons engaged at work heard signals in the direction of Morgan Thomas's stall.

The attention of the searching party was directed to the place, and they distinctly heard further knockings, and as they answered the signals, the rescuing party were convinced those in whom they were in search of were alive. The water had risen 54 feet perpendicular in the drift. The total length they had to travel to the place where Jenkins and his party were imprisoned — through "loose," "gob," and water — was 122 yards. The place at which the men were confined was 6 feet below the bottom of the drift, so that the water was in fact 48 feet above the level at which they were confined.

They determined to drive a heading from the main level, and at a quarter to three o'clock began to drive at the pillar of coal. On Sunday they had commenced the preliminary work of securing ventilation, by driving into Williams's heading. They had to cut through 38 yards of solid coal. The water had not then been reduced. It was two feet above the level of their heading, and they were obliged to drain it out.



They worked four shifts of four colliers each for four hour shifts, and additional men to clear away the coal as it was cut. During the last few days they had five shifts. About 85 tons of coal was cleared away. They worked in a small space, only two using the picks, and the others "holing." Then they used shots as often as they could. Arriving within a distance of seven or eight yards they kept making bore holes, ready with a plug at hand to close them if necessary, the precaution being rendered necessary by the gas and water.

Relative to the air-tight doors which were used to form the chambers for the compressed air, Mr. Wales said he might say at once that those doors were of no use what ever, and had to be removed. In continuation witness said that the work was continued, pumping and cutting, till on Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup>, when they were able to make inquiries through the bore-hole. The bore-holes were one-and-quarter inch, or one-and-a-half inch, and when they drew near to the men they drove two holes; one was driven with the idea of passing food through to the men. That project failed, and the tube used for the purpose was left down in the mine now. Had it not been for the water the men would have been out by Thursday afternoon. They were stopped by the water, but were able to go on again on Friday morning, when they were able to make an opening through with the pick. The pillar of coal had then become so weak that the air came through. Up to that day the men were in front, but when communication was established they shifted a little to the left. The last five feet of coal was cut through between seven o'clock on Friday morning and about two in the afternoon. The Coroner, Mr. Pickard, and Mr. Leresche each expressed the opinion that the way in which the work had been done reflected the highest credit on all who had taken part in it. The inquiry was then again adjourned.

#### **Thursday May 17<sup>th</sup> 1877**

The last day of the inquest

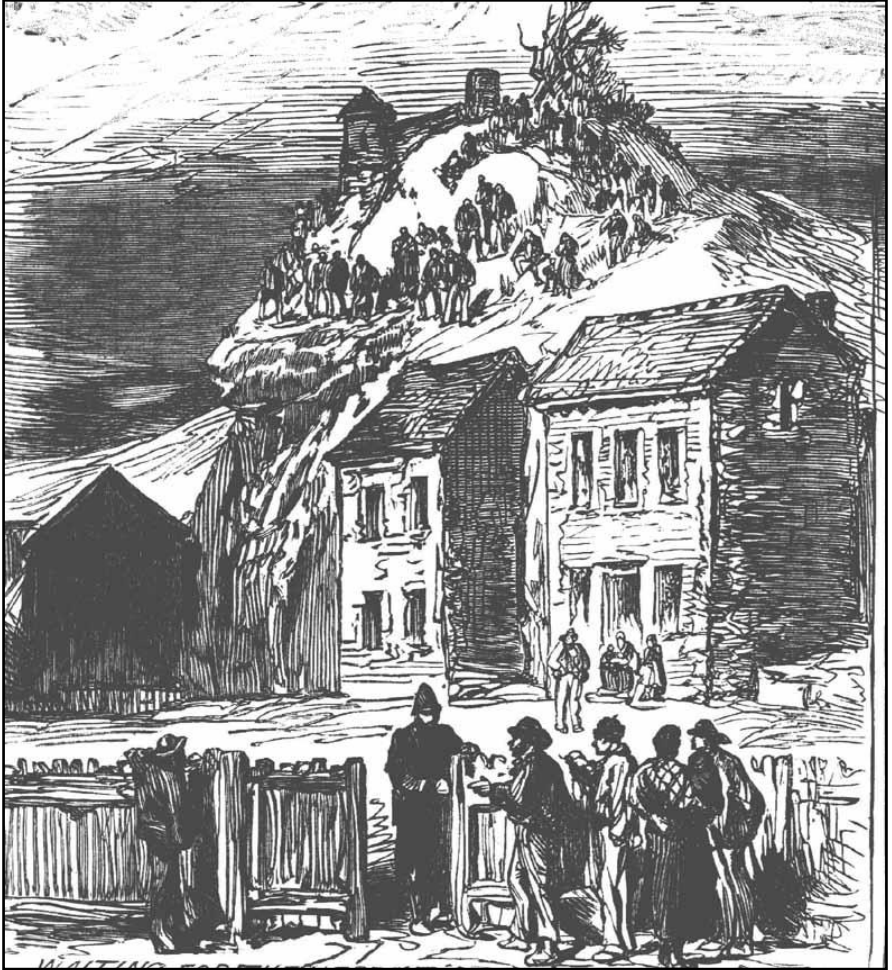
The adjourned inquiry relative to the cause of the inundation of the Tynewydd Colliery was resumed on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> 1877, at the Rheola Inn, Porth, before Mr. Coroner Overton. The various interests concerned were represented as under: - Mr. G. E. Hill appeared on behalf of the company; Mr. W. Simons appeared for the manager (Mr. James Thomas); Mr. Pickard watched the proceedings on behalf of the National Union of Miners. There were also in attendance Mr. J. H. Leresche, barrister, Manchester, who had been instructed by the Home Office to attend, and Mr. Wales, the Government Inspector for the district.

**Mr. Pickard** was first called as a witness. He said that on the 5th of May, by permission of the proprietors, he descended the pit, accompanied by Mr. Davies, Mr. Edmund Thomas, Mr. David Davies, and Richard Howell, the overman, and he

visited the points where the men were rescued, also the dip heading, and went to Charles Oatridge's heading. He saw how the work that was done, and thought it reflected the highest credit on all who had taken part in it. Held an examination of Charles Oatridge's heading where the water went through, and of the old workings in the Cymmer pit, in company with Howell, which showed no traces of the fault. He gave it as his opinion that there was not more than a yard of coal between the face of Oatridge's heading and the old workings, of which Oatridge had holed nearly 2 feet 9 inches. He was quite certain the water came from the old workings. In William Davies' stall he found the face of the coal between them quite dry, and as the water was 40 or 50 feet above that spot, he concluded that the compressed air prevented the water reaching that part in the same manner as in Thomas Morgan's stall. The force of the water must have been extraordinary, for large masses of stone from five to ten tons weight had been moved from their places and carried a considerable distance (several yards) by the water. Water always accumulated in old workings, and the Cymmer workings being on the dip, the natural conclusion was that water accumulated in them. Under the 9th rule of the Act of Parliament that was a circumstance which ought to have been provided against.

The company must have anticipated it — at any rate a man of ordinary capacity ought to have expected it, even a subordinate officer. The provisions of the 9th rule required the making of bore-holes in approaching a place likely to contain water, and that the working should not exceed eight feet in width. Had Charles Oatridge drilled a hole in the ordinary course of mining, he would, witness believed, have tapped the water; had he adopted the mode required by the Act, there would have been no danger of an accident. In Lancashire this had been done many times, and the water thus let out without any danger. That, he presumed, was the usual course, and was carried on in South Wales as well as in Lancashire. He thought the omission of that step amounted to culpable negligence. Mr. Simons objected to that way of putting it. Witness said it was the course which would have been adopted by any person in charge, if he had taken the trouble to think about it. It was the duty of the officials connected with the mine to have provided against the contingency. Replying to Mr. Leresche, witness said the very object of placing such persons as overman in a mine was not only to guard the property of the company, but to protect men's lives from such accidents as these. In cases where a fault had been expected and afterwards not discovered, it was usual to take special measures of precaution against such contingencies.

To Mr. Simons: - Witness said the immunity of accidents in the pit, if such were the fact, to this period, reflected credit on the company. In his opinion, Mr. James Thomas was a man of practical experience. He was certificated manager of three or four collieries, and he would not have been placed in that position unless he



Waiting for the verdict of the inquest being held at the Rheola Inn, Porth.

was a man of experience. Mr. Simons said Mr. Thomas was only certificated manager of this colliery. Mr. Pickard said then that he had been misinformed. Mr. Simons asked whether the existence of a 7-yards downthrow fault might not have impressed Mr. James Thomas with the safety of his operations, without the ordinary precaution of boring? Witness said that was a matter of opinion. He thought the water would rise up through the "listings" if it were above seven yards. A Juryman expressed his dissent from that view, and said there had been no experience of that kind of thing in South Wales.

#### Report of Government Inspector of Mines

The report of Mr. Wales, the Government Inspector of Mines, was next taken. In his report Mr. Wales stated that for some 20 years previous to the time of the inundation in the Tynewydd pit, the No. 3 Rhondda vein, lying at a depth of from 88 to 90 feet from the surface, had been worked. Adjoining the Tynewydd Colliery situated some 500 or 600 yards to the south-west, was Hines' pit, in which colliery the No. 3 Rhondda vein was also worked. Sixteen or 17 years ago these workings were abandoned, and the water was allowed to accumulate until it reached a certain point about 28 or 30 yards above the lowest point in the Tynewydd deep workings on the face of Oatridge's heading, when it flowed to what was now known as the Cymmer Steam Coal, or No. 1 pit, and was there lifted to the surface.

The workings of and to the rise of Oatridge's heading had not been driven to the boundary, but only to the fault running east and west, and was said to be at that point a downthrow from Tynewydd colliery of seven yards, and where last struck was from 17 to 20 yards short of the boundary. The survey taken four months before the inundation showed that the fact of Oatridge's heading was 44 yards short of the boundary; after that date, therefore, it had been driven at the rate of about 11 yards per month or 2¾ yards per week. No evidence had been given to show that during the time Oatridge's heading was being driven (i.e., from the 14th December to the 11th April) these 44 yards, any steps whatever were taken to ascertain whether or no the boundary had been reached. When the survey of the 11th April was plotted, it was ascertained that Oatridge's heading, which gave way, had been reached by the water, but though the water had reached, it had not passed over the boundary. From the evidence it would appear that Oatridge had spoken to Mr. Thomas, the manager, about the old works and the water, had drawn the attention of Howells, the overman, to the coal being tender, and showing a little more water than usual, and had said they must be either getting near a fault or water.

Had Howells known of any water in front of Charles Oatridge's heading, he thought he would have said so. No.9 General Rule of the Coal Mines' Inspection Act, 1872,

stated that "where a place is likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water, the working approaching such place shall not exceed 8 feet in width, and these shall be constantly at a sufficient distance (not being less than five yards in advance) at least one bore-hole near the centre of the working, and sufficient flank bore-holes on each side." As to what had been said about the fault his opinion was that if the coal were worked on each side of a seven yards' fault, such fault would not form a safe or sufficient barrier against a great pressure of water. When Oatridge's heading had been driven some 20 yards or so from the point indicated in the plan by the December survey, no indications of the fault having been met with, such heading should at once have been put in narrow, and bore-holes made in accordance with the general rule just quoted. This having been omitted he considered the rule had not been complied with, and to that he attributed the inundation and consequent loss of life.

With reference to the depositing of plans of old or abandoned workings, by the 42nd section of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1872, it was enacted that, except with the permission of the person depositing the plans of abandoned workings, no owners could see them until after the lapse of 10 years. He could not see any valid reason why such plans should not be accessible to any person fairly interested as soon as the plans were deposited, and in his opinion such plans should be kept, not in London but in an office under the control of the Inspector of Mines for the district. In this way information might be obtained which would prevent in future such accidents as these. No. 30 general rule of the Coal Mines Inspection Act (1872) provided for the inspection of mines at the instance of two persons engaged by those working in the mine, and he regretted that on the part of the workmen for whom safety it was enacted, this important rule was universally ignored and neglected. If the workmen were to carry out this rule they would at all times be fully acquainted with the condition of the colliery, and would be able to discover if anything went wrong. They would then be easily able to communicate the fact to the inspector of the district, and the matter would at once be attended to.

If such a system of inspection by the workmen were fairly and properly carried out, it would considerably aid the efficient working of the present Mines Inspection Act. In the present case it was pretty certain that some at least of the workmen in the Tynewydd Colliery must have known of the the danger discovered. He took the present opportunity of again directing attention to the neglect of the 30th general rule, and to the importance of accumulation of water in Hines' pit, and if this had been made known to him (Mr. Wales) the matter would have been investigated, and doubtless its being carried out by the colliers of the district. The Coroner drew attention to a statement made in a lecture in London, which he thought was rather pre-judging the case, and therefore ought to be contradicted, as it involved a

charge against the owners of this property. It was said that the Troedyrhiw Company ought to have had access to the plan of the workings of the Cymmer colliery. As a matter of fact the workings of the Cymmer were abandoned prior to the passing of the Act of 1872, and as that was the case there was no obligation on that company to deposit their plans, and the Troedyrhiw Company had no right to access to them. Mr. Pickard: - "Then they could have had no access at all to the Cymmer plans." - The Coroner: - "They could not." Mr. Simons said they had no right of access to the plan as matters stood at present, and therefore could not be held responsible for not having examined them.

In reply to Mr. Simons, Mr. Wales said that he had always found Mr. James Thomas skilful and courageous in carrying out the measures for the rescue of the imprisoned men. Everything was done that could be done, and he never heard such a thing hinted at as the sparing of expense. In reply to some other questions, Mr. Wales said that had Oatridge communicated to him the fact of the presence of water, he should have caused steps to be taken which would have prevented this accident. His opinion was that Oatridge thought water was in front of him. What could he mean when he said he was getting near a fault, or an accumulation of water? The Coroner: - "You don't mean to say that that relieves the proprietors from responsibility?" Mr. Wales said he certainly did not.

#### The Coroner sums up

The Coroner then summed up at great length. After recounting the circumstances under which the accident occurred, he said there could be no doubt as to the source whence the water which flooded the mine proceeded. It would appear that all the five men, except Morgan, who was killed by the rush of compressed air, were found drowned at or near the places where they were at work, showing that the inundation extended through that portion of the colliery. It was for the jury to consider whether the inundation arose from accident or from culpable neglect. It would appear that on one side of the heading, at all events, the company had worked beyond their boundary, and further, that Oatridge's stall was about ten yards in width, and that there were no bore-holes whatever in front. It must have been well known to the Troedyrhiw Company that the old workings which had been discontinued for 17 years adjoined their colliery, and the rational presumption must have been that they contained more or less gas and water, like all other old workings. The explanation offered by the manager was that he was ignorant of the existence of water in the old workings believing that they were lower than his workings by the measure of the downthrow fault, 7 yards, and that they were dry. He stated that Hines' pit was 11 yards deeper to the No. 8 vein than the Tynwydd pit to the same vein. He thought it was no use boring, as he believed his workings were at least seven yards higher than those in the Hines' pit.

This might, in some measure, extenuate, but he could not for a moment consider that it would justify or excuse the want of such caution as should have been exercised. Their not finding the fault should have rendered them more cautious, instead of their heedlessly driving in the heading, utterly regardless of the plan. He was not much surprised at this for the officers of the pit, whose duty it was to watch these matters (Richard Howells and David Rees) were so ignorant as not to be able to read or write. The mode in which the journal was kept also showed a want of regularity and proper system. It was attempted to show that there had been some error in the plans, and that the boundary of the colliery extended further than was described on the plan. That he did not think of the slightest importance in the case, as the working plan of the colliery was the proper official plan by which they should be guided. The result had shown, from the evidence of Mr. Peil, that the plan was correct.

Explaining the law as to culpable negligence, the Coroner said that the general rule was that when death occurred, either, firstly, from want of due caution on the part of a person in performing an act, or, secondly, from his neglect to perform a duty devolving on him, the law held him guilty of manslaughter. It was the province of the jury to decide whether what was proved before them in this particular instance amounted to carelessness or negligence of such a kind or degree as to come within the meaning of the general rule. Having cited a number of cases in explanation, the coroner proceeded to say that the cases to which he had referred sufficiently showed that managers, agents, and others who had duties to perform, on the due and careful performance of which depended the lives of miners and others engaged in these dangerous undertakings, were bound to bring to the exercise of their respective duties ordinary and reasonable precautions, as well as skill and ability.

If they should be of opinion that this unfortunate occurrence arose from the neglect of anyone, or the omission of any particular precaution which ought to have been taken, they would be able to ascertain from the rules whether it was required by the rules to be performed, and whose duty it was to perform it. By this means they would thus be able to discover who was the delinquent, and it would be for them to say whether the neglect was of such serious character as would amount to criminality or not. By clause 51, rule 9, it was enacted that where a place was likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water, the workings should not exceed eight feet in width, and there should be constantly kept at a sufficient distance in advance (not less than 5 yards) at least one bore-hole near the centre of the working, and sufficient flank bore-holes on each side.

The manager and under-manager were responsible for carrying out the provisions of the Act and the special rules for the safety of the colliery. The questions for the

jury were: - Did they consider that the officers of the pit were, or ought to be, aware of the old Workings in Hines' pit, and that the old workings were likely to contain gas or water? If so, did they consider the rules had been complied with? Did they consider that the condition of Charles Oatridge's stall, being 10 yards in width, and having no bore-holes, was in compliance with the Act. If it were not in such a state as was in compliance with the Act he feared they could come to no other conclusion than that there had been such a violation of the Act as amounted to culpable neglect, or manslaughter. If they were of opinion there had been culpable neglect, they would next have to decide who was responsible for it. It was quite clear by the Coal Mines' Regulation Act that both the manager and overman of the colliery, or one of them was responsible.

If they thought, on the other hand, that the Act did not apply, and that there had been no culpable neglect, but that the catastrophe arose from a pure accident, which no ordinary foresight or precaution could anticipate, then they could only come to the conclusion, however serious the consequences of the accident might have been, that it was purely accidental. In conclusion he left the matter in the hands of the jury, with full confidence that they would give such a decision as would satisfy the ends of justice and their own consciences. As to the recovery of the imprisoned colliers, they might, he thought, conclude that every possible exertion which science, skill, or practical experience could suggest, and manly courage, indomitable perseverance, and extraordinary labour accomplish, were put in force on this occasion, and this memorable event would always be considered as one of the most wonderful occurrences of the present century.

#### VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER AGAINST THE MANAGER

The jury deliberated for upwards of three hours, and on the re-admission of the public, the Foreman (Mr. T. T. Davies) announced that the verdict of the jury was to the following effect: — They had agreed that four of the miners who were killed met their death through the neglect of the manager, Mr. James Thomas, but they were of opinion that he was led to make a mistake by the impression he was under belief of the existence of a fault in the coal before the boundary was reached. The foreman said that the verdict was the unanimous opinion of twelve of the sixteen jurymen, four of the jurymen dissenting from that view of the accident. In accordance with the direction of the coroner the jury then returned a verdict of manslaughter against Mr. James Thomas, the manager of the colliery. Bail was accepted for his re-appearance, himself in £200, Mr. Edmund Thomas, Llwyncelyn, and Mr. Daniel Thomas, Brithweunydd, £100 each.





The colliers who fought their way through to rescue the trapped men. Unfortunately the names with this photo are lost.

## The united choirs

On Thursday an interesting gathering took place in connection with the unfortunate disaster at Tynewydd. The united choirs of the district, including representatives from the Methodist, Baptist, and Independent denominations, assembled at Cymmer Chapel, for the purpose of assisting in a thanksgiving service for the safe recovery to health of those of the imprisoned colliers who have been recently restored to their friends. The district choirs (numbering in all upwards of 200 voices) were supplemented by a good many strangers to the immediate locality, including a few representatives from Aberdare. The meeting partook of the character of both a thanksgiving and reception service, for the nine rescued men who on this occasion made their first public appearance together. An interesting feature in the proceedings was the singing of the anthem composed specially to commemorate the rescue, by Professor Parry, of Aberystwyth.

After hymns had been sung, and a portion of the Scripture read by the Rev. Mr. Evans, Pentre, an address was given by Mr. Edmund Thomas, Llwynceilyn. After Mr. Thomas's address, vivid accounts of their sufferings, and of the way in which their time was passed prior to their release, were given by the rescued men. Another address followed, by the Rev Mr. Thomas (English Baptist minister), and after Mr. Evans had delivered an appropriate address to the rescued men, the anthem was sung. Prof. Parry was unfortunately precluded attending, and a telegram was received by Mr. Jabez Watkins, who had the chief direction of the proceedings, regretting his inability to be present. In the absence of Professor Parry, Mr. Gwilym Thomas, whose name will be familiar from the prominent part he took in the release of the incarcerated colliers, led the anthem. The singing left nothing to be desired, and created a profound impression on a crowded congregation. In the anthem, which is written in Welsh, is incorporated a brief extract from the now well-known hymn —

In the deep and mighty waters  
There is none to hold my head.

The meeting, which was of a most impressive character throughout, terminated with prayer and the singing of the Doxology. The Lord Mayor of London, being anxious to distribute the money subscribed to the Mansion House Imprisoned Miners and Rescuers' Fund, Troedyrhiw Colliery, Pontypridd, 1877, has asked the Rev D. W. Williams, of Fairfield, Pontypridd, if he would, at his earliest convenience, kindly obtain the names of the persons composing the various exploring parties on the occasion of the accident, and some details of the services rendered by each, so that the committee, who will soon be called together, may judge on their merits, as far as the fund is concerned. He would also be glad to

have the names of the imprisoned men, and some particulars as to their families, &c., and, in addition, a list of the widows and orphans. The committee's suggestions as to the best way of appropriating the fund for the real good of the men would be most welcome. Some people, however, were cynical of the dangers faced by the rescuers, stating that the danger involved had been grossly exaggerated. The following is an example: -

**Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1877**  
Letter to the '*Western Mail*' newspaper  
The very few dangers

Sir – A desire not to dampen the ardour of a sympathetic public in favour of the sufferers by the lamentable accident at the Troedyrhiw, Porth, has hitherto prevented my addressing to you the purport of this letter. Now, however, that the funds generously subscribed for their relief are sufficient for their ultimate as well as their present need, I believe I run no risk of damaging their case, and am, therefore, justified in addressing you, and, through you, the public on the subject. I am a colliery man of many years' experience, and had the privilege of being several days down the Troedyrhiw Pit while what is now popularly called "the rescue operations" were being carried on, and I name this to show you and your readers that I have some knowledge of the subject I am addressing you upon.

Well, sir, not only am I ready to admit but I am proud to be able to bear testimony to the energy displayed by both the agents in charge and the workmen who drove or excavated the hole or headway by which the imprisoned men were ultimately relieved. I have, during an experience of forty years, met with many a good hard-working collier, and with many an energetic colliery manager, and have, ere now, seen some very good work done by both classes, but never in the whole course of my experience, have I seen – taking the means at hand into consideration – such an amount of work done within a given time as was done at the Troedyrhiw Colliery between Saturday morning, the 14<sup>th</sup>, and the afternoon of Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of April last. The men worked in shifts of four hours each, and the managers in charge, knowing almost every collier in the district, took good care that none but the very best working men were employed; and never was there a occasion when good hard workmen were more ready and more plentiful. They were volunteers from the Troedyrhiw and most of the neighbouring collieries; and never was "division of labour" carried out to better advantage than it was under the directions of the gentleman I have alluded to. I cordially agree with every word of praise that that I have heard and seen given to the agents and workmen who took an active part in the hard and praiseworthy task, as long as that praise is confined to the energy and perseverance displayed; but when I read and heard "brave deeds in the dark," of "gallant men risking life and limb in the cause of humanity,"

of “conduct heroic as any recorder in the history of humanity,” of “men who had chosen rather to suffer death than leave their fellow workmen in a living grave,” of “men working day after day with their fellow men,” and a host of similar pathetic almost heart-rending expressions, I, like many others, could not help being somewhat considerably disgusted by them, the fact being that there had not been the slightest danger to the “lives” or “limbs” of any of the “rescuers,” except of course the ordinary dangers incident to mining operations – from the time the unfortunate inundation took place until on the afternoon of Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, when an attempt was made to work under compression. Up to then the “rescuing” parties had not been in any danger whatever from gas, water, or from anything else.

True, there was a large volume of water above the level of the face of the headway where the rescuing parties worked from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>, but it is also true that there were many fathoms of solid coal between them and it, and this, as every workman and agent in the pit knows, put any danger whatever from water beyond the range of possibility until the barrier between them and the imprisoned men was considerably less than it was even mid-day of the 19<sup>th</sup>. The coal made “gas” or “fire-damp,” it is true, but the current of air that circulated was such as to render that gas perfectly harmless the moment it exuded from the pores of the coal, and when I tell you that until an attempt was made to work under compression, blasting the coal with gun-powder was allowed ‘*ad labium*,’ and that in the presence and by the directions of one of the most intelligent and cautious mining men of the day, Her Majesty’s Inspector, Mr. Wales, you will at once see there not the slightest cause for apprehending any danger whatever from gas.

I therefore submit that that from the commencement of the rescuing operations to the time the attempt was made to work under compression, the rescuers had not been exposed to any danger whatever from gas, water, or from anything else, all that had been done up to that time being the ordinary work of coal-cutting and water-pumping, carried on under ordinary circumstances, with the exception of its being done with more vigour, dispatch, and energy than such operations are generally attended with. This brings us to the afternoon of Thursday, the 17<sup>th</sup>, when the circumstances of the case changed a little. The face, or extreme end of the headway or passage, that was being driven or made in the solid coal, for the purpose of relieving the imprisoned men, was ascertained to be now within two or three yards of being “loose” or through the coal forming the prison wall of the poor fellows who were inside. A bore-hole was put through this barrier, and was immediately plugged up again with a wrought iron tube having a regulating valve fixed at the outer end of it. On this tube and between the valve and the coal was a gauge to indicate the pressure on the barrier.

A door had been fixed about 25 yards from the face or extreme end of the passage, and pipes connected with the air compressors had been laid inside of it. This airtight door was now closed, and compressors set at work, and the regulating valve at the end of the tube was opened, in order to diminish the pressure on the barrier of coal and throw it on the door, so as to keep the water at bay while the barrier was being cut through, and the poor men relieved. Unfortunately, before the pressure on the door was more than half what it was on the barrier of coal, the whole space between the door and the face was filled with gas, and the Davy lamps had to be extinguished, the regulating valve had to be closed, and the door had to be broken open. This experiment was tried two or three times, but each time with a similar result. A hasty retreat had to be made each time, and before midnight the "compression" experiment had been altogether abandoned, and there was nothing for it but to pump away the water in order to equalise the pressure on both sides of the barrier of coal, and by about mid-day on Friday (the 20<sup>th</sup>) this happy result was accomplished, and the barrier was cut through and the poor men rescued.

Now, sir, I beg to submit the only persons who risked any danger whatever were those who were inside the door when it was closed, and when the ventilation was cut off. Suppose, for instance, the experiment had proved successful, and that the gas had not compelled those inside to retreat, but what would have been their position? Just this: - Nine or ten able-bodied in full flesh and vigour (in addition to the five poor emaciated men whom they were trying to relieve, and who all knew, must be in a deplorable condition) would all of a sudden and in a small space have to breath atmosphere that had been contaminated by the exudations from the bodies, and the breathing of five men for some eight or nine days.

Not being possessed of medical knowledge, I cannot say whether there would have been any real danger in that or not, but this I will say, that unless being enclosed in a space of the kind I have described, filled with the miner's old and troublesome enemy, firedamp, under new and strange circumstances and with strange and inexperienced people, some of whom had probably never seen half-a-dozen lamps full of gas in their lives; and, unless trusted to providence that in breathing, if only for a short time even, the contaminated atmosphere I have alluded to would not prove a repetition of the never-to-be-forgotten black hole of Calcutta, constituted real danger, there was not even a shadow of it in connection with any other part of the rescuing operations, except, as I have said before, the ordinary dangers incident to mining operations.

My object in explaining that matter is thus, if possible, to prevent the money subscribed by an open-hearted public being voted to an unwise purpose, and I sincerely hope that not a single penny-piece in the shape of a pecuniary reward

will be offered to either the agents or the workmen who were engaged in relieving the imprisoned men; the workmen were amply paid by the owners, each man receiving a full day's pay for four hours' work, and the agents who assisted were, one may suppose, amply rewarded by the successful result of their efforts. At the same time, a token of public approval of the hard working on the men's part, and of the energetic efforts of the agent's part – such a token as they may show their friends and hand down to their rewards as heirlooms to their children would, doubtless, be gratefully received by all concerned, and would have its good effect in time to come should the occasion arise for a similar display of vigour and indomitable perseverance for the purpose of saving human life at our mines. I know almost every man who took a part in the rescuing operations, and I do not believe there is a single one among them who would not, in case of there being any legal difficulty in dealing with the funds, willingly sign a properly prepared document transferring any claim they may possibly have on any portion of the funds to the central of permanent committee for the purpose of providing for the widows and the orphans, and for educating the lad Hughes, or for any other purpose the committee thought proper to apply a portion of them to. Let me, therefore, suggest that a watch, a medal, or an address, or something of the kind, be given to each deserving person who had to do with the rescuing operations, and let a similar token, but of a higher class, be presented to those of them who risked any danger in connection with the sad affair, and trust no one will be insulted by the offer of a pecuniary reward for doing his duty towards his fellow men. – Yours, &c. "Dyfodwg,

Despite the Tynewydd Colliery manager having been found guilty of manslaughter at the recently concluded inquest, the workmen themselves were quite willing to show their loyalty to him: -

**May 21<sup>st</sup> 1877**

Presentation to colliery manager by the workmen  
(Cardiff Times May 26<sup>th</sup> 1877)

At a meeting of the workmen employed at the above colliery held at the Tynewydd Inn, Porth, on Monday evening, May 21<sup>st</sup> 1877, it was resolved to present Mr. James Thomas, manager of the colliery, with an address, expressing sympathy with him in his grief and trouble in consequence of the late inundation. The following is a copy of the address: -

Troedyrhiw, Cymmer, Pontypridd, "May 21<sup>st</sup>," To James Thomas, Esq.

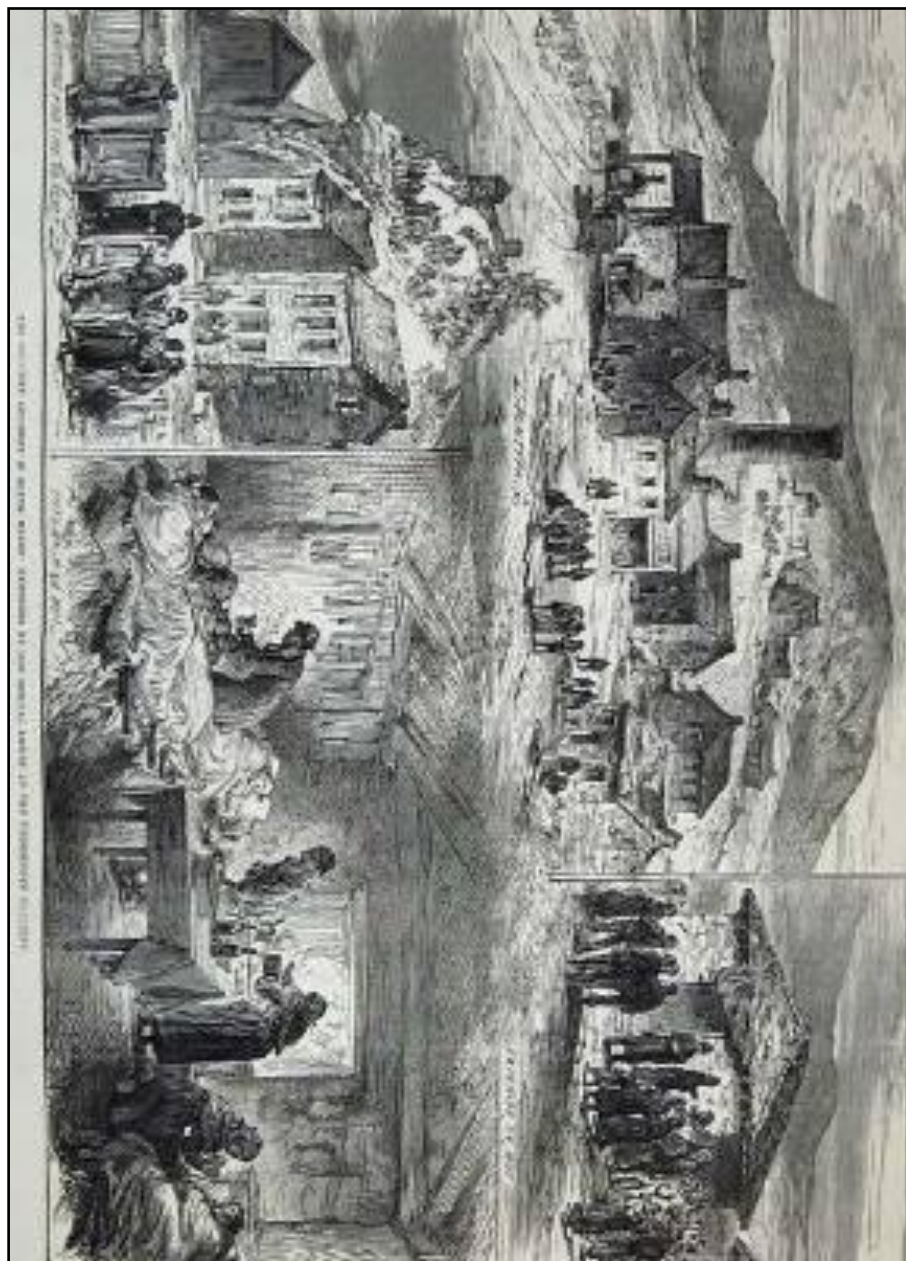
"Dear and respected Sir,— We, the workmen employed at the Tynewydd Colliery, desire to express our sympathy with you in your grief and trouble in consequence of the recent disaster at the above-mentioned colliery - namely, the inundation of a part of the same by the breaking of water into the same from the Cymmer

Colliery old workings. As you, sir, well know, many of us have worked at the above-mentioned colliery under your management and supervision for upwards of 20 years, and some of us for upwards of 30 years, at this and other collieries. During all this time you have, through your un-exampled competency, prudence, and care, in all cases of danger, been so successful in preventing accidents of any kind, as to create amongst your workmen such confidence in your abilities and care to watch against accidents, by either water or gases, that we always felt happy and considered ourselves safe in any place you should think proper to ask us to work.

We well remember your great skill and care in approaching the Dinas old workings, which was supposed to contain water (about 13 years ago), when you caused William Evans's heading to be driven narrow for a distance of from 100 to 120 yards, with three bore-holes kept in advance for the whole distance. The water was then tapped and drained through the bore-holes without injury to man, or damage to property. We are of opinion that the recent accident at Tynewydd was the result of a very uncommon occurrence. The suddenly running out to nothing of a fault of seven yards in depth, on which, we all believe, you relied as a barrier between your workings and the boundary, and which, we consider, would be a sufficient barrier against water or gas.

We, therefore, desire to assure you that the occurrence (serious as the consequences have been) has not in the least degree diminished or shaken our confidence in your abilities and care as manager, and we beg, one and all, to assure you that we are now as ready to work under your supervision as we were on the last day before the accident occurred. We beg you to kindly accept this humble but sincere expression of our sympathy with you, and we hope that he by whom all things are controlled will preserve your bodily strength and spirit, so as to enable you to wear away from your mind the effects of the sad occurrence to such an extent as to enable you soon to resume your position over and amongst us, when we may have further opportunity of demonstrating to you our continued confidence in you as manager, and on interest in all that concerns you and your family."

Signed on behalf of all workmen employed at Tynewydd Colliery, **David Davies**, collier, chairman of the meeting; **Morgan Davies**, collier, secretary of the meeting; **Thomas Llewellyn**, collier; **John Jenkins**, collier; **John Griffiths**, collier; **Edward Edwards**, haulier; **Gwilym Thomas**, collier."



Full page print of Tynewydd from the London Illustrated news 1877



The Lord Mayors Mansion House Fund  
(Cardiff Times May 26<sup>th</sup> 1877)

The Lord Mayor, being anxious to distribute as soon as possible the sum, now amounting to £4,200, subscribed by the public in connection with the Imprisoned Miners' and Rescuers' Fund, recently requested Mr. Wales, the Government Inspector, to furnish him with the names of the persons composing the various exploring parties on the occasion of the accident, and some details of the services rendered by each, so that the committee, who will soon be called together, may judge of their relative merits as far as the fund is concerned and also the names of the imprisoned men and particulars of their families; and lastly, a list of the widows and orphans together with suggestions as to the best way of appropriating the fund for the real good of the men. Mr. Wales, in reply, states that there were three widows and eleven children, and five rescued persons, but he regrets that he cannot at present give any details as to their families. To determine the number of men who might be considered as having assisted in rescuing the imprisoned miners was a matter requiring much thought and attention. Mr. G. Williams, stipendiary magistrate; the Rev. D. W. Williams, J.P.; and Mr. Wales, had been selected to take evidence as to those who were entitled to receive the Albert medals, and to report thereon to the Home Secretary. Mr. Wales therefore suggested to the Lord Mayor to wait till that had been done, and they would then be in a position to afford reliable information both as to the number of rescuers and their merits.

Heroes visited by M.P. from London

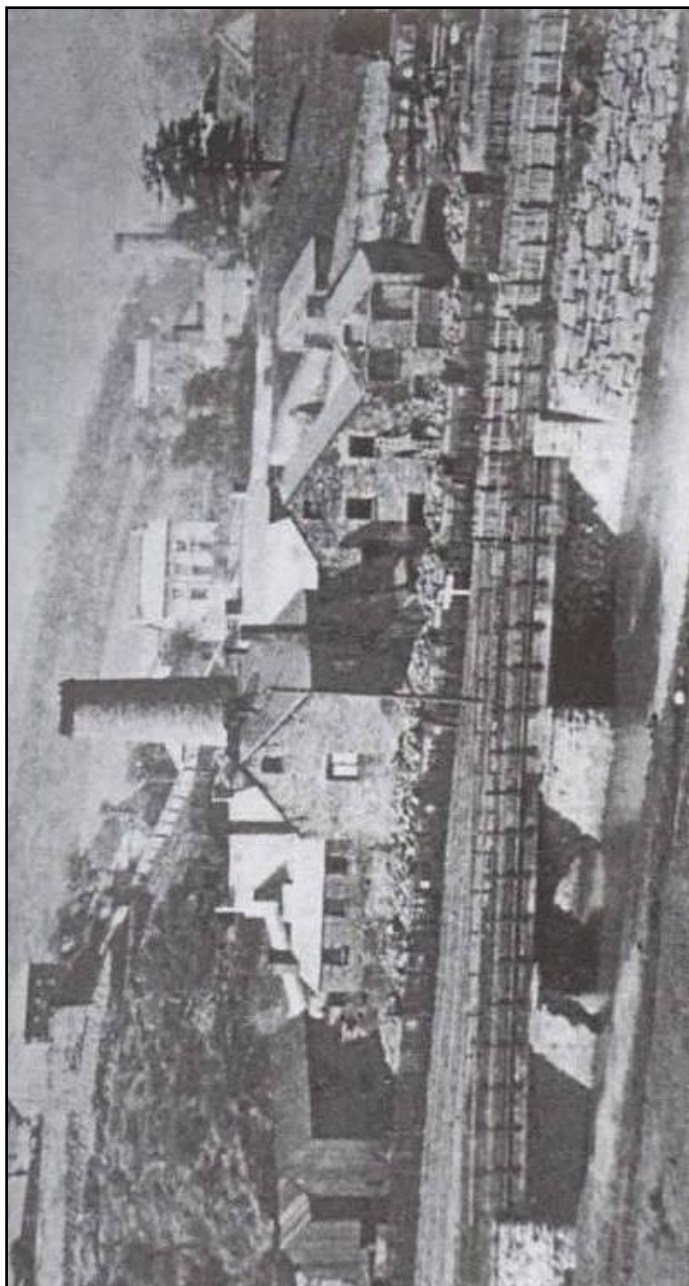
The '*Cardiff Times*' of the same date also reported: - "We have received the following communication :—Mr. Forsyth, Q.C., and M.P.; for Marylebone, accompanied by Mr. Williams, of Fairfield, visited Porth on Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup> 1877, in order to see the heroes connected with the late inundated colliery. Mr. Forsyth is a member of the committee of the Lord Mayor's fund as well of the House of Commons fund for the rescued colliers. Four of the rescued men came into his presence, the fifth having gone from home. Five of the rescuers also attended, besides five of the shift managers. The learned gentleman first visited the pit and its workings. He then walked up to see Abraham Dodd in his thatched cottage. On his return to the inn he questioned the rescuers and rescued, entering into any particulars from whence he could derive satisfactory information as to who were really deserving of being rewarded. Hence he may now, at any rate, hope for a disposition of the House of Commons Fund that will carry weight generally. In a very short time the division of the funds collected, and the distribution of the different medals awarded, will be decided upon.

### Letter from Mr. Forsyth M. P,

The following letter from Mr. W. Forsyth, Q.C., M.P., and dated Miskin Manor, Llantrisant, May 21st, appears in the '*Times*' in reference to the recent visit of that gentleman to Porth:—

**Sir,** — It may interest your readers to learn a few particulars about the Welsh colliers of the inundated pit from one who is a perfect stranger to that part of the country, and has for the first time visited the Rhondda Valley. I went over there on Saturday with Mr. Gwilym Williams, of Miskin Manor, the stipendiary magistrate of the district, and walked up to the Tynwydd pit. The boundary line between it and Cymmer pit, from which the water broke in, is the middle of the Rhondda stream, and the underground workings of the two pits lie on each side of this. I found the Tynwydd Pit in full operation, as the water has been pumped out from it and the Cymmer Pit to a sufficiently low level to allow the coal to be worked as it was before the accident. The chain that brings up the coal in the Tynwydd pit is not put in motion by steam, but by a water balance, which I need not here describe. I saw and spoke to all the rescued men, except one, Jenkins, who was not in the immediate neighbourhood. They looked thin and pale, but are going on well, and they all assured me that they feel in good health.

I was much struck with the delicate and what I may truly call the refined look of the boy David Hughes, who is only 15 years old, and will be sent to school, as his education has hitherto been much neglected. They told me that they felt little or no hunger after the first day, and I think the only way of explaining this extraordinary fact is by assuming that the excitement they felt in knowing that desperate efforts were being made to release them rendered them comparatively insensible to pain from want of food. Otherwise we must suppose that highly-compressed air has some unknown power of sustaining life, which it is difficult to believe, as such air necessarily contains an extra quantity of oxygen, the great sharpener of appetite. I met several of the brave men who assisted in rescuing their fellow workmen from their living grave, and visited the cottage of Abraham Dodd, who was so unfortunately burnt by an explosion of firedamp last Saturday week. He was in bed, and his face was glistening with oil, put on to relieve the pain, which, however, he feels little now, and he is going on well. I greatly admire the modesty of these poor Welsh miners, who so nobly imperilled their lives, and especially the demeanour of Isaac Pride, who, by the testimony of all, was the "bravest of the brave" in all the band. They seemed to think that they had only done their duty. But I am anxious that justice should be done to two persons



**One of the few photos of the Tynewydd Colliery**

whose services have not been sufficiently known and appreciated by the public. I mean the two brothers, Edmund and Daniel Thomas, who are coal owners in the valley. As soon as it was practicable they went down the shaft, and remained below the whole time during which the men were digging through the wall of coal, and encouraged them by their presence and example. Some of the men, indeed, told me that it was the confidence they felt in these two brothers which gave them courage to volunteer at the last dangerous moment, and face the perils of water and fire and suffocation.

They richly deserve that some suitable recognition should be made of their conduct. I made minute and careful inquiries as to the degrees of merit of different men, and I have gained accurate information, which will, I hope, be useful in the distribution of the funds, but it would be premature and improper to disclose that information now. Great anxiety is felt as to the award of the Albert Medals, and some of the men can hardly believe that so great an honour is likely to be bestowed. In fact, it is with them almost 'too good news to be true;' but never did men deserve such a mark of distinction more. I may add that I heard on all sides the strongest testimony in favour of the character and past conduct of the manager of the Tynewydd pit, Mr. Thomas, against whom the coroner's jury returned an adverse verdict the other day; but it would be wrong to say more on the question of his responsibility, which will be the subject of further judicial inquiry." **Yours &c. Mr. W. Forsyth, Q.C., M.P.,**

The flooding of collieries in the Rhondda Valley  
(*South Wales Daily News*, May 31st 1877)

To the Editor of the '*South Wales Daily News*.' Sir—Ever since the searching investigation which took place at Porth, and the verdict of the jury, were made public, people in this neighbourhood have been trying to make out wherein did the late accident at Tynewydd pit differ from that which took place about twelve months since at Penygraig Colliery.\* But, so far, it remains a complete mystery. It has occurred to me that the learned coroner who presided over the Penygraig enquiry, or the jury, either collectively or individually, could supply, through the medium of your paper, the much-sought-for information. In order to make myself intelligible, I may mention that both accidents are here generally considered to be identical, in character, at least, if not in extent. In both cases the men were working towards the different boundaries and old workings, which, whether known or otherwise, contained a large quantity of water; also, in both cases, a fault was supposed to intervene. Thus, the position of the works being identical, and hence the perilous situation of the men being identical in both cases, the necessary precautions applicable to the one case was equally applicable to the other. The two cases being thus identical in every particular, it therefore follows,

of necessity, that the regulations imposed by law were also identical, and so far as the public knows, the non-observance of the said regulations were equally identical in both cases. Hence arises the mystery—at Penygraig the jury returned an "open verdict " or "not guilty," whereas at Porth the manager was found guilty, and consequently stands committed in accordance with the verdict of the jury. In the face of such diversity we may well ask, What has become of our much boasted justice?"—**I am, &c., Rhondda Valley. Common Sense.** \* *Two men, Zachariaii Williams and Thomas Williams were drowned in the Penygraig Colliery in December 1875 due to water breaking in from an abandoned and flooded vein of the nearby Penrhiwfer Colliery.* The same newspaper reported: -

The Ynysfeio (Treherbert) workmen and the Tynewydd colliery inundation

The abatement of the excitement consequent on the Tynewydd catastrophe has given rise to a feeling of deep and sincere sympathy with Mr. James Thomas, the respected manager of the colliery. Mr. Thomas is almost as well-known here as he is at Porth, having been connected with the Ynysfeio Colliery (of which he is part owner) as manager since its opening, some 20 years ago. About three years ago he was presented with three silver sets of tea and coffee service from the workmen at Energlyn, Tynewydd, and Ynysfeio collieries respectively, and also a valuable gold watch and chain, and a beautifully illuminated address. The fact that these presentations were got up spontaneously and solely by the workmen speaks volumes for the high esteem in which he is held by the workmen. Whenever there has been any differences or difficulties at any of the works with which he is connected, his genial smile and assuring calm and straightforward counsels have acted as "oil on troubled waters." Last Saturday afternoon a general meeting of the workmen employed at the Ynysfeio Colliery was held at the colliery, in order to express their sympathy with Mr. Thomas. A number of the oldest workmen, who knew Mr. Thomas from having been under him for many years, addressed the meeting,

They all testified to his competency, his courtesy to the workmen, and his anxiety at all times to promote their comfort and happiness, and more than all to the scrupulous carefulness and anxiety he has always evinced for the safety of the workmen, sparing no expense to carry out improvements where such were necessary for carrying on the works safely and prosperously. One who had been under him for 20 years referred to the tapping of the water from the old Dinas workings, and how he walked hand-in-hand with Mr. Thomas through foul air for some distance, so as to find the best place to get at the water that remained in another part of the workings. Another referred to the time when (owing to incompetent and careless management) the airway to the flue at a colliery which Mr. Thomas was connected with, had become so obstructed with falls as to

interfere with the ventilation and stop the work, and how Mr. Thomas, on being re-appointed manager, drove a new air-way at great cost. Referring to the cause of the accident at Tynewydd, the speakers expressed their opinion that it was the result of a very uncommon and unexpected occurrence, the circumstances of which were beyond his control. At the close of the meeting the following were elected to form a committee, in order to express publicly to Mr. Thomas their unabated confidence in him, their sympathy with him in his present troubles, and their sincere hope that Providence will protect him, and enable him to bear his great calamity. The committee men are Messrs D. Thomas, William Lewis, Thomas Rees, D. Hams, H. Williams, D. Davies, G. Howells, and T. Jones.

**Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> 1877**  
The *Daily Telegraph* Fund

The '*Daily Telegraph*' of Tuesday's June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1877, gave the following account of how they had decided how to distribute their funds: - The fund opened by the '*Daily Telegraph*' for the benefit of the Welsh miners having been recently closed, there devolved upon us the pleasing but difficult task of making a division of the large amount so generously subscribed by the public. After deciding that it would be most in accordance with the wishes of the contributors not to merge their gifts in other similar collections, the next point was to fix upon an equitable way of fulfilling the various kindly purposes expressed by the numerous donors. Leaving others, therefore to aim at justice in their own manner, we considered that the objects of our subscribers would be best met by establishing the following categories of recipients:-

1. The four miners and the boy imprisoned during ten days.
2. The three miners and the boy imprisoned during eighteen hours.
3. The rescuers of the first and second rank.
4. The widows.
5. The orphans.

Such a definition, properly made out, promised to cover every claim, and we accordingly took the greatest pains to sift all the evidence and to obtain the fullest local information, in order that the list under each head might be just and accurate. But we were not content with this in a matter which related to such noble deeds of heroism and such endurance on the one hand; and which constituted us the almoners of such generous sympathy and love of true manhood on the other. We therefore took measures to obtain the free judgment of the mining people of the locality upon our proposed scheme of distribution, not necessarily to control it, but with a view to afford us the confirmation of the

general voice, and thereby to assure our contributors that the disposition of their funds had had the hearty gratitude and applause of the population on the scene.

The subscribers to the *Daily Telegraphic* Fund will, therefore, be pleased to learn that the amount placed in our hands was distributed on Saturday in a manner which received the warm approval of the best advisers living in the locality among those who have interested themselves in the matter as well as of the miners who were immediately concerned. A gentleman representing this journal was deputed to make inquiries on the spot respecting the men who had the truest claim to be known as the deliverers. On Saturday this member of our staff attended at the Porth Hotel, Porth, and consulted a number of the men upon the scheme which had been drawn up. This was, that, of the £1,200 to be dealt with, certain proportions should be given to George Jenkins, Moses Powell, David Jenkins, John Thomas and the boy David Hughes, whose imprisonment for ten days so greatly aroused the public excitement and sympathy; to Edward Williams, William Casher, Thomas Morgan, and the boy Richard Morgan, who were liberated after a confinement of 18 hours, but not before one of their companions had been killed while trying to escape; to the three widows, Mrs. William Morgan, Mrs. Edward Williams, and Mrs. John Hughes; to the children who were left fatherless; and last to the rescuers.

Our representative also had the advantage of conferring with the Rev. David W. Williams, J.P., of Fairfield, Pontypridd; Dr. H. N. Davies, Porth, Pontypridd; Mr. R. Williams, West of England Bank, Pontypridd; and Mr. W. H. Mathias, Porth. The men were informed that the large majority of subscribers to the fund had requested that the lad David Hughes, who had not only undergone such great peril, but had also lost his father and brother, should be placed at school under the guardianship of local gentlemen kindly prepared to see that he was educated for some less hazardous occupation. Mrs. Hughes is deeply gratified with this idea, because her boy, who is not very robust, naturally disliked the dangers of a mine.

The men whose names have been given above are now at Porthcawl, but those present all voted the scheme to be exceedingly equitable, expressed their grateful thanks, and, with characteristic generosity, hoped David Hughes would be remembered in the division of other funds. One hundred pounds was then formally placed to the credit of this boy - who will be fifteen years old in September — at the West of England and South Wales District Bank, Pontypridd; and the Rev. David W. Williams, Dr. H. N. Davies, and Mr. M. R. Williams consented to act as trustees. They will probably arrange that he shall be placed at a first-rate school for three years, but their decision will be influenced by anything else which may be hereafter done for him.

Hughes, there were then 10 orphan children to be dealt with, most of them young, and it was considered that another £100 should be devoted for their special benefit — that is to say, £10 per head. Mrs. William Morgan has one child, Mrs. Edward Williams seven, and Mrs. John Hughes two. The mothers were strongly advised to place the money in a local bank, and those who best knew the widows The Rev. D. W. Williams took charge of £200, to be equally divided between the four men who were immured with this lad, when they return home. The three men and boy who were liberated after 18 hours received £25 each. This last boy, Richard Morgan, about 14 years of age, seemed to have been well trained for his position, and his signature proved that he had made good use of his pen in school hours. To each of the widows was handed a cheque for £50. Excluding David stated their firm belief that the good women would assuredly do their utmost for the welfare of the children.

The chief difficulty then arose. It was to settle how the remaining £550 should be divided amongst the rescuers, on whose devotion so much public attention has been fixed. Many miners, firemen and pit-hands had rendered gallant aid, but there were also some of higher position who equally knowing the awful risks, yet deliberately and cheerfully faced a terrible death in the hope that they might bring forth their humble comrades. Again, it was a mistake to suppose the time of greatest peril was when the final blow was struck which enabled the captives to escape. Isaac Pride, the miner whose pick actually opened the way out, and who was unanimously recognised on the spot as one of the bravest of the brave, himself declared there were moments of far greater danger than the final stroke, and that there were others entitled to at least as much consideration as he. Pride, a very intelligent, modest man, who has more the appearance of an engineer than a miner, would have crawled through the hole he had made, but his broad shoulders prevented him, and Abraham Dodd was thus pushed forward.

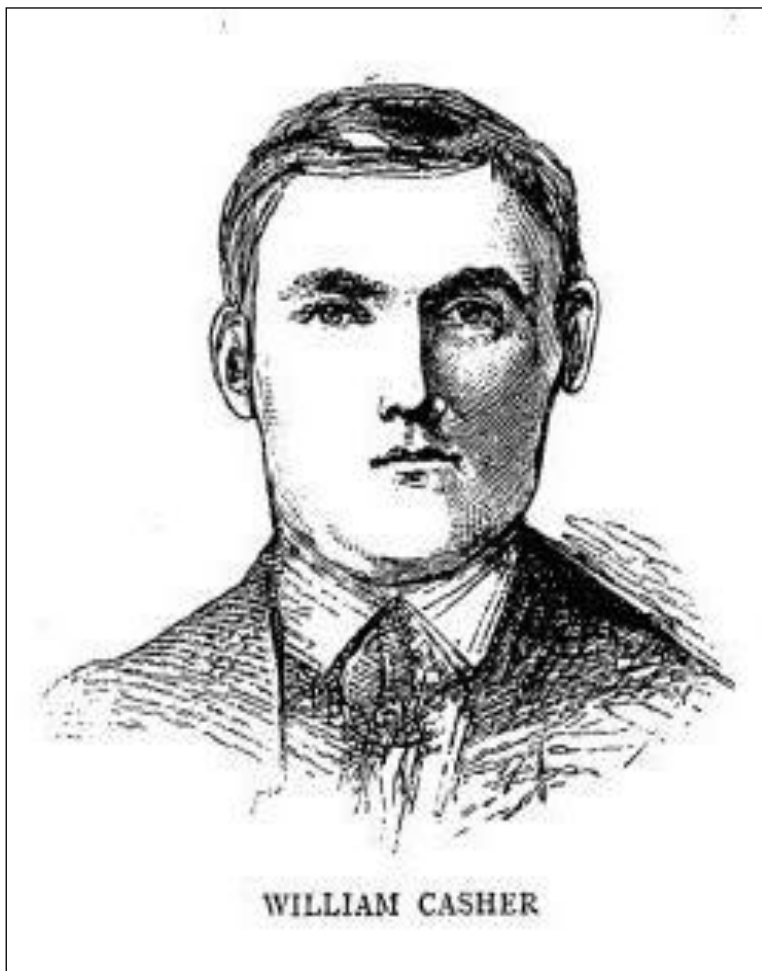
It was generally admitted that from about one till five o'clock on the Thursday afternoon, and from two till six or seven on that Friday morning when the men were set free, were the hours when an explosion or a rush of compressed air was chiefly to be feared — when, in fact, the brave workers fought on, not daring to think of life or they must have faltered. It is, therefore, right the public should know that several brave fellows whose names have hardly been mentioned strove from first to last like real heroes, were in the pit day after day, night after night, and are to be ranked with the foremost. Such men were John William Howell, Charles Oatridge, Gwilym Thomas, Rees Thomas, Richard Hopkins, and others.

Splendid service was done, too, by agents, engineers, and men to whom money could not be offered, but some of whom will doubtless be honoured with the Albert medal. They descended into the mine, and not only laboured hard with





Thomas Errington Wales - The brains behind the rescues



**William Casher, one of those rescued soon after the inundation.**

their hands, but directed the means which were successful. The most careful investigation of these various claims has been made by Lord Aberdare; Mr. Wales, one of her Majesty's Inspectors of Mines; Mr. G. Williams, a local stipendiary magistrate; and the Rev. David W. Williams. It is understood that a report has been forwarded to the Home Secretary, and will be submitted for the Queen's approval, after which we may shortly expect the names of the agents and workmen selected for Royal distinction to be gazetted. Near the scene of the disaster people are most anxious that if medals are to be bestowed her Majesty would graciously deign to find some occasion of distributing them with her own hand.

Without pretending to reward all the noble fellows whose toil and courage deserved some recognition, the following were finally selected by our committee as representative rescuers of the first rank - namely, Isaac Pride, John W. Howell, Charles Oatridge, Richard Hopkins, George Ablett, Rees Thomas, Abraham Dodd, and Gwilym Thomas. A cheque for £50 was given to each of these, and £10 each to thirteen in a second class: - Charles Beynham, Richard Howell, Ioan Williams, Robert Williams, Edward Davis, William Morgan, David Rees, John Griffiths, Thomas Griffiths, Thomas Rees Thomas, Job Williams, Thomas Cheen, and David Davis. Out of this number only one even hinted that he ought to have been classed with the first, but when patiently questioned he did not succeed in proving his case. One or two were sorry they could not be included, but quietly acquiesced, knowing there were other funds to be administered. The recipients repeatedly requested that their heartiest thanks should be given to those who had shown so much sympathy for them. Some of the miners themselves then asked if a little token could not be offered to their leaders who worked so manfully in the mine, but who could not accept money.

In compliance with this request it is proposed by us to expend the balance which remains over and above the amount thus distributed in the purchase of two larger silver tankards and thirteen smaller ones, which are to bear a brief suitable inscription and to be presented to the two leading officials who worked most devotedly in the colliery, and to the thirteen who next to them most ardently animated and helped the pit-hands.

These modest but proud souvenirs will be all the more worthy of their recipients because — sympathising with our purpose — Mr. Benson has undertaken to provide them at the cost price of the silver, without any charge for manufacture. Thus, then, we shall have fulfilled our stewardship, to the satisfaction we trust, of all the subscribers to the *Daily Telegraph* Fund; nor can we grudge any trouble or labour in a cause so thoroughly worthy of faithful efforts.

## Those forgotten?

The payments made by the '*Daily Telegraph*' caused much controversy as regards to some that were apparently omitted. A "Workman" writes: - "Among those who have not received a share of the spoils is Rees Rees, Cymmer, who went down Friday and Monday (the day the men came out) with John Howell, Richard Hopkin, and Rev. Thomas when the rest of the men had run away. What is the reason that he had no share in the money, while the other three had £50 each? They were rewarded for what they had done that morning, for their partners, who had worked with them other days did not have a share of the money. A word to this effect will prove satisfactory to the man himself, and to the public. A Correspondent calls attention to the fact that Mr. T. H. Riches, locomotive superintendent of the Taff Vale Railway, who devised the boring apparatus for carrying food to the men, seems to have been overlooked in the general distribution of rewards now going on.

### **Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1877**

Presentation of bibles by the British and Foreign Bible Society  
Interesting ceremony at Pontypridd Common

On the evening of Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 1877, a public meeting was held on the Pontypridd Common to present Bibles given by the British and Foreign Bible Society, to the widows of those who perished at the Tynewydd mine. The Rev. Parker Morgan attended as a deputation from the parent society. There were also present the Venerable John Griffith, archdeacon of Llandaff, the vicar of Llanwonno, and most of the dissenting ministers of the town and neighbourhood. The attendance was immense. Mr. Gwilym Williams, Miskin Manor, presided. The proceedings were opened with a prayer by the Rev. Edmund Davies, followed by singing. The chairman addressed the meeting in a telling speech, at the close of which he called upon the venerable archdeacon to address the meeting, which he did both in English and in Welsh with his accustomed eloquence. He referred with thrilling effect to the episodes of the rescues, and to the religious feeling displayed by the incarcerated, to hymns they sang, on the wings, so to speak, of which many of his countrymen and countrywomen had been wafted to the shores of internal life. The effect of the venerable archdeacon's speech upon the multitude reminded one of those meetings where the great orators of Welsh non-conformity addressed their fellow countrymen at their Cymanfaoedd.

He was followed by the Rev. Parker Morgan, who described what had been done by the society. He also stated that the bibles were presented at the suggestion of Lord Shaftesbury. The Rev. John Williams, the Rev. Mr. Rees, Llanwonno, and Mr. Edmund Thomas, Llwynceilin, also addressed the meeting. During the proceedings

the hymn 'In the deep and mighty waters' given out in Welsh by the venerable archdeacon, was sung by the vast multitude. Standing close to the venerable archdeacon was the venerable collier who had given it out in the mine, and some of those who were with him. The following were then presented with a Bible each:

Martha Hughes, Jane Morgan, Mary Rogers, David Jenkins (on behalf of himself and four comrades), Moses Powell, John Thomas, David Hughes (English Bible), George Jenkins, Isaac Pride (English Bible), Rees Thomas, Charles Beynham, Job Williams, Robert Williams, Edward David, Charles Ablett, Gwilym Thomas, Charles Oatridge, John B. Howells, Richard Howells, Richard Hopkins, David Rees, John Griffiths, Iowan Williams, Abraham Dodd, Edward Williams, William Casher (English bible), Thomas Morgan, and Richard Morgan.

David Jenkins briefly address the meeting, expressing his own gratitude, and that of the four he represented, to the Bible Society for the Bibles, and also to the public generally for the deep sympathy displayed towards them during their entombment and since their rescue. Isaac Pride and Abraham Dodd were very warmly received by the meeting. The cheers greeting Isaac Pride were led vigorously by the chairman. The meeting came to a close with a prayer and the singing of a well-known Welsh hymn.

**Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup> 1877**  
Serious unrest over awards

The '*Western Mail*,' of this date reported: - The distribution of the '*Daily Telegraph Fund*' has produced a large amount of ill-feeling in the district. It does not seem that anyone disputes the correctness of the awards, but what has produced the ill-feeling is that some, who are deemed to be as well entitled to rewards as those who have been singled out, have been left without any gifts whatever. It is unquestionably true that many deserving men have yet to be rewarded out of the funds placed for that purpose in the hands of the committee. That the central committee will carry out the wishes of the subscribers as the '*Daily Telegraph*' authorities have done is no doubt beyond doubt. The committee have nothing to do with the largeness or smallness of the amount received. They are simply the stewards acting for the public, and the moment they act contrary to the wishes of the subscribers, as expressed in the letters which accompanied the subscriptions, they will betray their trust.

The committee consists of highly intelligent men of well know rectitude – and there is no danger of a feeling of officiousness preventing them from acting justly towards the men. It is unquestionably true that the committee have a most

difficult task before them, and that the longer they delay coping with it the more formidable it will become. That there is an angry feeling rapidly gathering in the district, even amongst the working-men who were not at Tynewydd, owing to a conviction that the committee is taking unwarrantable liberty with money intended by the public for their fellow-workmen, who risked their lives at Tynewydd, and whose bravery no class are so admired than their own, is unquestionably true, viz; the large number letters, many in Welsh, others in English, which I have received and abundantly proves, and as soon as something practical is done by the committee to remove this erroneous conviction the better. The men were in a state of suspense as to the intention of the committee up to the time the '*Daily Telegraph*' money was paid, but since then matters have reached a dangerous pitch, and brave men feel, after seeing their fellow-workmen rewarded, while they are sent empty-handed away, that they are being slighted. Let the committee act promptly, and prevent scenes that may disgrace the district. There are indications that the men will not tamely submit to anything but for the committee to act in accordance with the wishes of the subscribers, and the men are right.

**The Queen's approval**  
(Cardiff Times June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1877)

We hear, on reliable authority, that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the list of persons who have been recommended to Her Majesty as worthy to receive the Albert Medal for their services in connection with the rescue of the entombed colliers. It will be some little time before the presentation takes place, but there is every probability that an esteemed local peer will be selected to make the presentation.

The Order of St John of Jerusalem has decided upon awarding five of its medals to those who rendered the most distinguished services in connection with the rescue. This presentation will probably be made by the president of the order, the Duke of Manchester, or by Sir Edward Lechmere. As already stated in these columns, the distribution of the *Daily Telegraph* fund has brought down quite a deluge of complaints from those who considered they were entitled to a greater proportion of that fund, and has also called forth scores of new claimants, who state that they are as much entitled to rewards as many of those who have shared in the distribution of our London contemporary's fund.

The Rev D. W. Williams, of Fairfield, on account of the prominent part he has taken in connection with the Lord Mayor's fund, has been inundated with letters from persons of every description, who consider they have a claim upon the undistributed funds. Many of the claims are of an extraordinary character, and in

many instances the grounds of the claim are as intangible as it is possible to conceive. It is from this cause, we believe, that the Rev. Gentleman has sent us the following characteristic letter:—

**Proposal by the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield**

Pontypridd, 16th June, 1877: -

Sir, - The Mansion House Committee meet on Friday, the 29th of this month, to apportion £4,600, more or less, amongst the deserving rescued and rescuers, &c., connected with the late inundated colliery accident. As there is so much dissatisfaction expressed by a great many persons who think they merited *some* part of the '*Daily Telegraph* fund, but who got *no* part thereof, and as I have here and elsewhere been applied to by so many of those who have been disappointed, I think the best, and, indeed, only plan to adopt now will be to invite all who assisted in the rescue of the imprisoned men, and also those who laboured to recover the bodies of those who had perished, to send in their claims in writing, stating fully the particulars thereof, and that this statement should be verified by one or more of the three shift masters:- James Thomas, Daniel Thomas, and William Davies, so that those who have been given reliable evidence or proof that they have really by active service rendered assistance in the rescue may be classified accordingly, and a list of those so classified be sent and presented by one of its members — Mr. Vivian, Mr. Talbot, or Mr. Dillwyn, or even myself — to the Mansion House Committee. That all who neglect or omit doing so will be ignored in the distribution of this fund. That such papers are to be sent to me addressed in sealed envelopes on or before Saturday, the 23rd of this month. — Yours faithfully,  
**D. W. Williams.**

P.S., — It would be, perhaps, too much to ask each applicant what amount of this fund he thinks himself entitled to, or how he would prefer being remunerated for his services, whether in special cup, or medal, or if in any other form his proportion should be remitted to him.

---

A meeting with the Lord Mayor

The '*Cardiff Times*' of June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1877 commented: - There is little doubt that the protracted and searching inquiries of Lord Aberdare, the Rev. D. W. Williams, Mr. Wales, Mr. Gwilym Williams, and other gentlemen, have resulted in a list being drawn of those entitled to rewards which will ensure as complete and just a distribution of the Lord Mayor's fund as it is possible to secure. It is inevitable, with so many claimants, and amidst so much diversity of opinion as to the relative value of each person's services, that some persons will not receive all the

consideration which their labours entitle them to, but we understand that the care which has already been given to the list, and the further consideration which every case will receive before the list is finally presented to the Lord Mayor will in the result prove that substantial justice has been done in almost every instance. We understood that the Rev. D. W. Williams, Mr. Wales, and Dr. Davies have already had a preliminary interview with the Lord Mayor, who received them with the utmost courtesy and cordiality.

The Lord Mayor manifested the utmost interest in reference to the circumstances of the rescue, and as to the necessity of a carefully arranging distribution of the fund, and expressed his especial thanks to the Rev D. W. Williams for the help he had afforded him in inaugurating the fund, and in the great assistance he had since rendered him in connection with the matter. His Lordship also remarked that it was rarely more than once in a lifetime that a man had a great opportunity of rendering distinguished services, and he congratulated Mr. Williams that such an opportunity had occurred to him, and that he had proved himself equal to the emergency. At the meeting of the Lord Mayor's committee, on Friday week, it is probable that those present will include Lord Aberdare. Mr. C. R. Mansel Talbot, M.P., Mr. H. H. Vivian, M.P., Mr. L. L. Dillwyn, M.P., the Rev. D. W. Williams; Mr. Wales and other local gentlemen, as well as Mr. Forsyth, M.P., on behalf of the House of Commons Fund. We have been requested to publish the following: —

"It appears that since the Tynewydd Colliery accident many professional artistes have applied to Miss Jenner to grant them a sitting for her likeness, owing to her services as volunteer nurse at the "Cymmer Hospital," but in each case Miss Jenner has declined the application, stating that her services had been "volunteered," and therefore she had no right to look for any recognition or thanks. However, the Queen having expressed her desire for Miss Jenner's likeness to be taken for her, through Messrs. Downey and Co., photographers to Her Majesty, they communicated with Miss Jenner, who was unable at the time, through severe illness, to attend to the order, but on Tuesday she had the honour of sitting in accordance with Her Majesty's desire, at their studio in Ebury Street, Eaton Square."

An offer to the boy Hughes  
(Western Mail, Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>)

The Rev. Dr. Dicksee, of Malden College, Malden, Surrey, has, we understand, offered to take the boy David Hughes into his establishment for one year, free of charge, in order to board and educate him. It has, however, been thought by the gentlemen to whom the offer has been made that it would be advisable to send the boy to a school in which, as he can only at present read and write, he could be



taught the rudiments of scholarship first of all, and that at the end of a year or so, if Dr. Dicksee should then be disposed to make the same offer, the subject can be again taken into the consideration of Hughes's trustees. This opinion was communicated to Dr. Dicksee, but the boys – about 50 in number – have written to say that the boy Hughes may be sent to Malden College at once; and they undertake, if he does go, that they will take the greatest pride and pleasure in treating him kindly and assisting him in his studies as much as they can. This offer, after much consideration, has again been declined; principally on the grounds that to send Hughes to a place where he is so fervently invited might tend to spoil him. Many persons are inquiring as to the House of Commons Fund, with reference to the application of which nothing has been officially heard since the visit of Mr. Forsyth to Porth.

The not so brave colliers – 'Heroism' called into question by rescuer  
(Western Mail, Saturday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1877)

**Letters to the editor** – Dear Sir, - Will you kindly allow the following to appear in your valuable paper, for it is full time the public should know that the reports of certain circumstances in connection with the Tynewydd accident have been highly coloured and exaggerated. I went into the compressed air. What very great danger there was in going inside those (when they had a cock to regulate the gas coming into them on one side with the door to go out on the other) I cannot see. A bore-hole was driven so as to give the men food. This hole could not be plugged owing to the two holes being too near each other. The coal breaking through, a call was made for volunteers to go inside the doors, and work in the dark. We found ourselves – the three managers, and only two colliers ready to do so. Finding we were too few to cut through the barrier, after a trial at the plug we retired for assistance, which, I am sorry to say we could not get. It was then decided to cut through the barrier, leaving the door open, and they worked till a collier went into one of the bore-holes. The noise made when the compressed air and gas rushed out led us to believe that we had struck through the barrier. The men went away, and I found myself with only one man in the face. I applied to Mr. James Thomas for assistance, when he told me he could not get the men to come. I went to them myself, but they refused on any account to follow me. Mr. Edmund Thomas, who knew them personally, asked them to go with me, but they still refused, and none of them would go inside that hole until the entombed men (finding the water coming towards them) came and partly plugged the holes with their caps. If I am rightly informed, no less than four of those men have been rewarded by the *Telegraph* Fund. From the time that hole was struck, about 2 a.m. on Friday, the gas and air escaped gradually, in spite of the plugs, and until by 7 o'clock the water had found its level, the pressure had gone, and there was no more danger than is faced daily in a steam coal colliery. When at the Porth

Hotel, on Monday the 24<sup>th</sup>, I heard the shift masters with other leaders, speak of a person who never would enter the face until all the danger was over, yet that man had been visited in his thatched cottage in the Rhondda Vach by Mr. Forsyth, M. P; rewarded with £50, and is still considered a hero. I have faced the two Ferndale and Pentre explosions, each one of them with ten times the dangers of Tynewydd, yet I have always had men to follow me when we were only searching for dead bodies to give them burial, while at Tynewydd, with lives to be saved, they refused. I therefore leave the public to judge of the heroism I witnessed at Tynewydd, and I hope the Lord Mayor and his committee, after providing for the widows and orphans, educating the boy Hughes, and supporting the rescued till they can follow their occupation, will be able to use the surplus for a purpose that might be of some benefit in time to come. It is well-known what a blessing the Hartley Colliery surplus has been at Ferndale, and &c. and &c. There was, it is true, good work done at the pumps and in cutting the coal, but as to valour and courage when the gas came out (with one or two exceptions), I never saw less displayed than at this accident – during the time I was there. No doubt the Rev. gentleman who distributed bibles on the Pontypridd Common to the rescuers were under the belief they were giving them to men who had risked their lives to save others, but I am certain Mr. Edmund Thomas knew well there were several amongst them who had refused to do anything of the kind. – **I am, &c. T. G. Davies, Tylacoch Colliery, Treorky, Near Pontypridd, June 21<sup>st</sup>.**

Distribution of the Lord Mayor's fund – letter by the Rev. D. W. Williams  
(Western Mail, Monday June 25<sup>th</sup> 1877)

Arrangements for the distribution of the large fund, amounting to £4,432, subscribed at the instance of the Lord Mayor for the rescued and rescuers concerned in the Tynewydd disaster are now approaching completion. We are enabled to state, on the very highest authority, that the terms set forth in the advertisement on the faith of which the money was subscribed will be strictly adhered to. And influential gentleman residing in this district writes me on the subject as follows: -

*As I was at the Mansion House Ball on Thursday night, I had an opportunity of speaking to the Lord Mayor and several of the committee who are active in the Tynewydd Fund. From them I gleaned that they will not apportion any of the fund to any but those from whom it was subscribed – being one of the subscribers myself, in fact, in fact the very first, I quite concur in his determination. Therefore anyone who expects to be rewarded (what for?) from the fund, but do not come under the terms of which the £4,432 was collected, will be disappointed, and from what I can at present understand there will be many indeed. The Lord Mayor also*

*expressed himself to me in the most determined language that he would act up to the wishes of the subscribers.*

It may be well to state here the exact terms of the appeal which was made when the disaster occurred, and upon which funds were subscribed and entrusted to the custody of the Lord Mayor. The following is a copy of the advertisement: -

*The Lord Mayor will be happy to receive donations at the Mansion House to reward those who, at imminent danger of their lives, rescued their fellow miners at the Troedyrhiw Colliery, Pontypridd, after an agonising imprisonment of 10 days duration; and, also, to provide, in a practical and suitable form, some mark of public sympathy with the men so happily saved.*

It will be seen that the object for which the Lord Mayor's Fund was subscribed did not include the apportionment of any part of the money to the following classes: -

1. The widows and orphans of those who lost their lives by the inundation, or in the endeavour to make their escape.
2. The men confined, at imminent risk of their lives, in that part of the workings from which the first rescue took place.
3. The members of the rescuing party.

As regards two of these classes little need may be said. It is sincerely to be trusted the Lord Mayor will see his way clear, either on his own authority or by the advice of some of the principal subscribers to the fund, to include the widows and orphans in the list of beneficiaries.

#### 214 claimants

We have received the following letter from the Rev. D. W. Williams, of Fairfield: - Sir, the great number (214) of applications from claimants to a portion of the Mansion House Fund prevents, at this moment, my acknowledging such, or I would do so. They will, however, be carefully considered by me. It will, after this, be my earnest wish and endeavour to give general, if I fail to give universal satisfaction, by guiding the determination of the committee, so as to make a just distribution of the amount in their hands. - Yours &c. **D. W. Williams, Fairfield, June 23<sup>rd</sup>.**

What a rescuer thinks of Mr. Williams's proposal

We (the '*Western Mail*,') have received the following letter from one of the gallant fellows who took a prominent part in effecting the rescue of the imprisoned

miners. We need scarcely say that we thoroughly sympathize with the writer's views. It is possible, however, that he and others have misread the Rev. D. W. Williams's letter, which very possibly was meant as a piece of incisive sarcasm. When the Rev. Gentleman invited the would-be participants in the Mansion House Fund to send in their names, together with a statement of services rendered by them, he doubtless was thinking of the old proverb which says "self-praise in no commendation." Perhaps it would have been as well if Mr. Williams, taking a leaf out of Artemus Ward's book, had appended his letter with the simple note "this is writ sarcastically": -

Dear sir, - Whilst deeply sympathising with the Rev. D. W. Williams's annoyance at the dissatisfaction caused by the distribution of the '*Daily Telegraph*' Fund, and fully appreciating the feeling which prompted him to pen the letter which appeared in your issue of the 18<sup>th</sup> inst., I cannot but condemn, and that in the most unqualified manner, his suggested mode of ascertaining who are and who are not worthy of a share in the Mansion House Fund; and I am certain that the Rev. gentleman himself will, on a calm reconsideration of the matter, see the utter absurdity of asking men who showed themselves possessed of manliness enough to cheerfully risk life and limb in trying to succour their fellow beings, to degrade themselves by becoming parties to a kind of 'begging letter,' system. Is it reasonable to ask men who rendered important services long before Mr. Daniel Thomas appeared on the scene, and who laboured night after night while that gentleman was 20 miles away comfortably ensconced in the bosom of his family, to make out a statement of what they did in his absence, and ask him to vouch for its voracity? Would the Rev. gentleman degrade Mr. Thomas Jones, Ynyshir, Mr. Dan Thomas, and their courageous comrades in the hour of extreme danger, by asking them to write out a statement setting forth that they repeatedly volunteered to go, and went and worked inside the air-tight doors, thereby knowingly risking their lives in the endeavour to save the lives of the poor imprisoned men, and take that statement, hat in hand, to a noisy, blustering coward, who not only did not volunteer to accompany them, but who, in spite of his being a 'leading man,' and a 'master shiftman,' positively refused to risk his nose inside the dangerous chamber?

Are they to ask him, "will you please, sir sign this document, which sets forth that we are brave, courageous men, who manfully volunteered to do so, and did, what was your duty to do, but which you deliberately shirked?" This would be putting courage at a discount, and cowardice at a premium, with a vengeance. No, no, sir, let the medals and the tankards, highly as they would be esteemed, sink to the bottom of the fathomless ocean, and let the money, useful as it would be, be scattered to the four winds of heaven, rather than either the one or other should



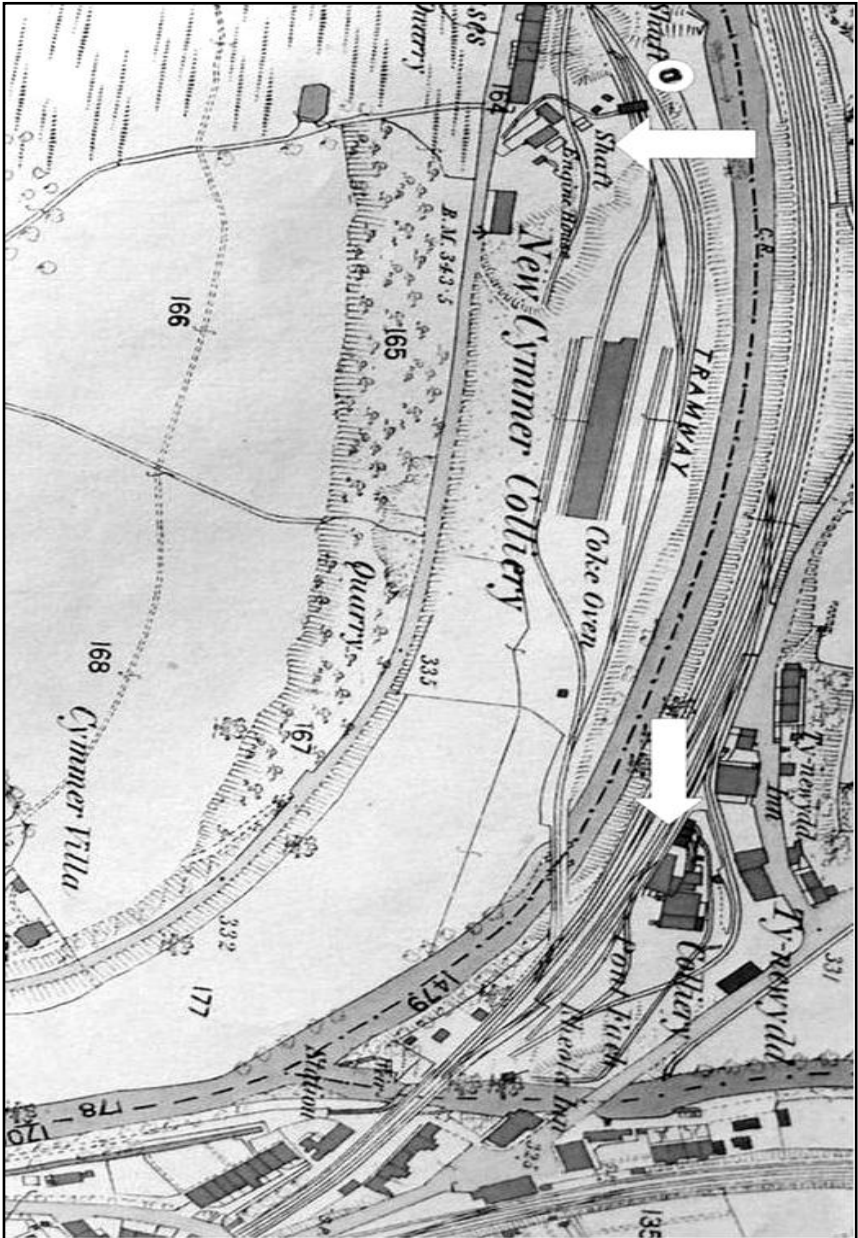
**Edward Williams, one of the first group rescued at Tynewydd.**



**Thomas Ash, another conspicuous towards the end of the rescue, but not awarded an Albert medal.**

be obtained by such degrading means. Indeed, the suggestion is so much at variance with the Rev. gentleman's life-long conduct that it is impossible to believe it is seriously meant, unless we take it for granted that he penned his letter whilst smarting under the mean, cowardly, insinuations which have been disseminated by some of his dissatisfied neighbours. But it is much to ask the Rev. Gentleman to brave dastardly insinuations he can afford to laugh at, and shield from humiliation men who braved danger they trembled at to save their fellow beings, and too fiercely and manfully do his duty buy them, regardless of the dissatisfaction of self-opinionated and cantankerous bigots? I hope not. Then as to the satisfaction that such a course as he suggests is likely to give. Does the Rev. Gentleman for a moment think the result of statements made and worded in such a manner as to be approved of by either, or by all the three persons named by him, is that all likely to give the public in general, and those interested in particular, more satisfaction than statements prepared by the investigating committee which includes that Rev. nobleman, Lord Aberdare, Mr. Williams himself, and that keen shrewd gentleman, the Stipendiary magistrate for the district. The manner in which the inquiry was held by Lord Aberdare's committee enabled its members to learn not only what the three persons named by the Rev. Mr. Williams had to say, but what many others, if not most of those who took an active part in the rescuing work, had to say in the matter. I, therefore, submit that the information that that committee obtained, the disinterestedness and well-known integrity of its members, their high intelligence, and their long and varied experience in dealing with evidence of various nature, highly qualified them for guiding the distribution of any reward a sympathising Government and grateful public may vote to the deserving. Let them, therefore, without fear or favour, continue the good work they have begun, and manfully do their duty to those who manfully did their duty to others, and thus prevent a host of useless, impudent applicants being honoured and rewarded at the expense of courageous but different men who cannot and will not take the hat round. – I am &c., **Robert o'r Aber.**

N. B. It would be interesting to know if the *Daily Telegraph* Fund was distributed by the recommendations of Lord Aberdare's committee. If not, that may to some extent account for the dissatisfaction. Mr. R. Williams, West of England and South-Wales District Bank, Pontypridd, has been appointed a member of the Mansion House Committee, and has been requested by the Lord Mayor to attend on the 29<sup>th</sup>, when the distribution of the funds will take place. It is rumoured that many who have sent in applications to the Rev. D. W. Williams for a share in the funds have done so in a joking spirit, provoked by certain expressions made in the invitation.



O.S. Map showing the actual position of the Tynewydd colliery (right arrow) 1875.



## Chapter nine

Porth revisited

“Happy” Dodd’s statement

A ‘*Western Mail*’ correspondent writes: - I had occasion this week (July 5<sup>th</sup> 1877) to revisit Porth, and was surprised to see the changes which have occurred ever since the disaster. The influx of life into the place, the notoriety it had gained winning for it, as for some of the Alma battle scenes, world-wide celebrity, had stimulated the people to make their locality a little more presentable. It was literally and truly “brushed up.” Painters had been hard at work, plasterers busy, a house which had been remained in a half-finished state was rapidly now approaching completion, there were more well-dressed people in the place, less squalor to be seen, and as for the young women, they were smarter than ever they had been.

Passing by the well-known pit, which has subsided into its ordinary hum-drum character, and ascending the road leading to Ferndale, I noticed a man standing by the wayside who I have seen under very different circumstances. He was in a summer suite, and had a red rose in his buttonhole. It was Abraham Dodd, but no longer “Happy.” Since the disaster he has been seriously burnt, and was now unable to work. His right arm – and he showed it – did not appear healing, and he was disconsolate, too. And I think justly, at the way in which he had been treated. Therefore, in justice to him and to the large number of subscribers who have taken an interest in him, I give herewith his unvarnished statement: -

"My name is Abraham Dodd. I am 23; have a wife and child. I was married when I was 20. My mother was a Welsh woman, my father an Englishman. He came from Monmouthshire, but I have relations in Sussex and in Staffordshire. At the time of the accident I was working as a sinker at Ynyshir, under the same company, and when the accident took place I went to the pit and descended with others to aid in the rescue, and worked steadily up to the day before the last. Then the critical time came, Mr. Daniel Thomas said he wanted volunteers. I called out to him and said, “I will go,” and he replied, “No, you are too young, and too raw for such a job, I must have older hands.” Doctor Davies, of Cymmer, was standing by, said, “You are mistaken about Dodd; he is one of the strongest men in the pit.”

Daniel Thomas, however, went round all the men, and not one volunteered. He came back to me and said, “Well, will you go?” And my pride was hurt, and I said ‘Well if I was not good enough to go at first, I am not good enough to go now.’ And that was the plain truth of the matter and no lies. They then tried the compressed air and put up doors, and when this failed, and the men went again to work at the hole, I went too, and was one of the first at the left hole, which was

the one from which the men were taken. When the hole was made Isaac Pride put his head in to go down headmost, and coming back he said, "Abby, it is too small for me, will you try?" He then added, 'I will make it larger,' and he did so, but he did not try a second time. I then stepped forward and got my feet into the hole first and went down, and as I got down into the place where the men were I called out to them, for I did not know how they were, and it was as likely as not the men who had been ten days without food should be dangerous and rush upon me. But I groped onto the men, and George Jenkins and Moses Powell caught me around the neck and kissed me.

I was still fearful how their minds were so I said, 'Loose me, and let me help you out,' and George Jenkins said, 'there is two that is very poor, David Jenkins and John Thomas.' I groped about and found them, and nursed one on each knee until Isaac Pride had taken the others to Gwilym Thomas, and then he took one and I took the other out through the hole." He continued: - "It was a mistake I was put in first because I am smaller. I am 8 st. 3 lbs., and as big as Isaac Pride. I did as much as the others." Question: - "What did you do with the '*Daily Telegraph* money?" said I. - "Put it into the bank," he answered, "all but £10, which was wanted badly, and I mean it to stop there. It will do for the missus and the child, if anything should happen to me."

Taking the statement as correct, and I have the fullest confidence that it is so it does appear hard that Dodd should be passed over with regard to the Lord Mayor's Fund. He was actually the first man to enter, and his reasons for declining to volunteer seem natural enough. Better for open-handed generosity to be linked with Tynnewydd than invidious selections and unfair distinctions.

Practical jokers?  
(*Western Mail* June 26<sup>th</sup> 1877 by 'Morien')

While Europe in ringing with the roar of cannon and the beat of drums, the men of the Rhondda Valley are quietly discussing the Tynnewydd awards and the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield, whilst some shake their wise heads and express an opinion that the '*Daily Telegraph*' Fund was not properly distributed, simply because they were not allowed to participate in any money. The Rev. D. W. Williams has worked hard in connection with the affair, and he has been so pestered by people, whose *trachwant* (covetousness) is the only reason why they have claimed any portion of the money, that it is not surprising that the Rev. gentleman, whose sense of the ridiculous is well-known to be extremely acute, has shot out like the fretful porcupine. He, however, seems to have been 'served out.' His sarcasms seem to have brought the deluge about his head, for 214 affidavits to a gentleman who does not keep a clerk must have destroyed his appetite for his breakfast. The Lord

Mayor, too, when he sees the budget, 'records of heroism,' which the Rev. Gentleman will convey to the Mansion House in a carpet bag, will be surprised where the 214 claimants, when the struggle in the Tynewydd hole was going on, could have been, for I am sure that the reports in the daily journals have no room to suppose that so many as that were engaged in the work of deliverance.

It is to be earnestly hoped that the Lord Mayor and the Mansion House Committee will understand that many of the applications are simply practical jokes. It is important, in the interests of those who risked their lives, that this should be well understood, for practical joking in connection with such an event tends to reflect discredit on all concerned. But who is responsible for this irony introduced into the affair? For in that light the practical joking must be regarded. I think we need not go far to find the cause for it. Had the committee acted in accordance with suggestions made in the '*Western Mail*' soon after the disaster, and called together those engaged in the rescue, and taken the evidence of each in the presence of his fellow-workmen, which would have tended as a check upon any tendency to exaggerate, the matter would have been long ago settled to the satisfaction of all. The presence of Lord Aberdare, the Rev. D. W. Williams, and Mr. Gwilym Williams as presidents, would have been sufficient to ensure complete order.

Instead of this, however, secret meetings were held, and proceedings instituted quite foreign to the spirit governing the people of this country, and the result we see is the present condition of affairs. And here, to crown all, the local committee, composed of men who best knew every particular in connection with the rescue, has been ignored altogether, while its president, without consulting the committee, is about to take to London in a bag 'evidence,' most of which clearly are, by the number given, 'jokes.'

Now, in answer to one signing himself '*Gweithiwr*' in the '*Gwladgarwr*,' I am able to state that the authorities of the '*Daily Telegraph*' acted as they did through a conviction that they would best consult the interest of the rescuers by paying the money they had received themselves, and not hand it to the local committee. They did not like the idea of secret meetings, and be it known that it is the local committee that is blamed for the secret meeting, and not the gentleman who instituted them. They object of Mr. Le Sage, acting for the '*Daily Telegraph*,' was to hand rewards to the most prominent of the rescuers, leaving the less conspicuous to be rewarded by the local committee out of the Lord Mayor's and other funds. It seems, however, that the Lord Mayor and the others are inclined to follow the '*Daily Telegraph*' plan, and not trust to the secret meeting influence. So that it appears that the result of the private meetings, which were condemned at the time in this journal, is to bring much discredit on the local committee, and it is

much to be regretted that those who were really responsible for those meetings had done nothing to correct the wrong impression.

The five rescued colliers  
(Western Mail, Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup> 1877)

Our readers will remember that about a fortnight ago we received a letter from Moses Powell, one of the five men who, on reaching a state of convalescence in their long enforced confinement in the Tynewydd Pit, were removed at the expense of Major Turberville to the Porthcawl Rest. In that letter Powell described in characteristic Welsh idiom their journey and the reception at the hospital. Having received some further kind attentions at the hands of their generous benefactors, Powell again writes: -

**Sir** – Finding it our duty to acknowledge our affair to the public from the seaside – as it is before stated that we are at the Rest, Porthcawl since the beginning of the month, fully at the expense of Major Turberville – we are, through the great kindness of the gentleman, wishing to call the attention of the people to the Major carrying out his intensions with energy to comfort the men that really suffered more than they can ever produce in want to their fellow creature. What has caused us to write this time is, that we were invited by the above named gentleman to visit him at the Ewenny Priory last Monday, paid us the second-class fare from Porthcawl to Bridgend, where his carriage waited to convey us to his palace, met at the abby by Mr. And Mrs Turberville, taken through the gardens and palace and likewise visited the ancient ruins of the old castle, spent a joyful day, conveyed back to Porthcawl by the same means as we came, we shall leave the reader to judge the welcome. Another fortnight has been offered to us at the Rest between Mrs Turberville and her brother, at their expense. What would the public think of this great kindness? We are all of us improving in our health; some better than others. David Jenkins is the worst. I am afraid that some of us will never ever regain our normal health. I am the best of us now, but far from being as strong as I used to be. Yet I do feel quite comfortable. **Moses Powell, Rest, Porthcawl.**

**An authentic account of the rescue**  
Interesting letter by Mr. Daniel Thomas  
(Western Mail, Wednesday, July 4<sup>th</sup> 1877)

Sir, - As one who had to do with the Tynewydd disaster during the whole time the rescuing operations were carried on, and having, with others, witnessed the plucky conduct of the men engaged there, I am very much pained at the uncharitable charges brought against them by Mr. T. G. Davies, in your issue of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult. Being myself one of the party in whose conduct Mr. Davies tells us he can see

nothing heroic or courageous, I naturally feel diffident in coming forward to defend my comrades from the charges of cowardice and exaggeration brought against them by that gentleman, feeling that what one would say in favour and in praise of one's comrades may be thought to be covertly intended for one's self, and that someone more able than myself would do so; hence my not having ere now replied to that gentleman's letter. Such delicacy should not, however, any longer prevent me doing my duty towards my friends. While giving all concerned my most grateful thanks for their ready and willing assistance, to the inspectors, agents, and colliery managers, for their valuable advice and help, and to the workmen, especially the colliers, for their hard and praiseworthy labour, I cannot undertake to say that up to mid-day, Thursday (the 19<sup>th</sup> April), any of us risked any extraordinary danger in connection with the affair, and so far I agree with Mr. T. G. Davies, but from this point we differ.

About the time I have stated, viz; 1.50 p. m; Thursday, it was known the thickness of the barrier of coal between us and the imprisoned men had been reduced a couple of yards, and it was then arranged to close the door, put the air compressors at work, and cut through the barrier. But now, the critical moment having arrived, the important question was: - Who would volunteer to carry out the arrangement? We were told by the surveyor in charge of the water levels that the barrier would be cut through, and the compressed air allowed to escape, the water would rise to within a short distance of the door that was to be closed upon us, and we had nothing but his word for it that the water would not fill up the whole chamber we were called upon to shut ourselves up in.

Now, supposing that gentleman had made an error of say a couple or three feet – not an impossible contingency under any circumstances, but less so under the great excitement everyone was then labouring under – what would have been the result? Why everyone will know that every man inside that door, both rescued and rescuers, would, to a certainty, be drowned, for the door had unfortunately been made to open inwards, and come what may, could not be opened while the air or the water pressed upon it. Indeed, some of us were so keenly alive to this fact that the surveyor was asked to accompany us inside the door, and thereby show us all that he himself had the same confidence in his figures as he would have us to place in them, and you can imagine that he repeated a positive refusal to do so did not tend to ease our minds, or diminish in our opinion the magnitude of the risk we were about to run of being drowned. Again, suppose those surveyor's figures were, in spite of his own want of confidence in them, found to be correct what would have been then our position?

I cannot explain it better than by quoting from Dyfodwgs' letter, which appeared in your issue of 19<sup>th</sup> of May, wherein he says "Nine or ten able-bodied men, in full

flesh and vigour, in addition to the five poor emancipated men who we were endeavouring to release, and who we all know must be in deplorable condition, would all of a sudden, and in a small space, have to breath atmosphere which had been contaminated by the exudations from the bodies and the breathing of the five men for some eight or nine days." Like "Dyfodwg," I do not know what the result of breathing such atmosphere might be, but I know that I, and some at least of those who accompanied me into that chamber, went there greatly fearing our attempt at rescuing the poor fellows would end in a repetition of the black hole of Calcutta. Again, I suppose we steered clear of being drowned and of being suffocated, there yet stared us in the face the terrible danger of being blown to eternity by the compressed air, as, to our sorrow, poor William Morgan had been blown a few days previously, and by a much less pressure than we have now to contend with.

The door we were to depend upon was roughly made, and more roughly erected, and we all knew that, should it give way under the pressure we should have to throw upon it before we could carry out our project, nothing could possibly save us from the jaws of death. In addition to these dangers, there was the fact that we were required to work in compressed air, a mode of work totally strange and new to everyone on the spot, and there was not, as far as I know, a man in the pit who had ever worked, who had ever seen work done under similar circumstances before, so that we were called upon to face the danger of being drowned, of being suffocated, and of being blown to pieces, and all that under strange circumstances and with strange companions, and we did all this as a simple act of duty, in our earnest endeavour to succour our poor imprisoned brethren, and before any reward or any kind of recognition was ever hinted at or dreamed of, and yet this man, who came there at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, and who seems to be smarting under the words of confidence the men had in him, will have the world to believe that he "cannot see any danger" in it. Truly, "there are none so blind as those who will not see."

We are all wise after the event, but as a proof of what was thought before it, of the dangers my comrades and I were about to risk, I may state that when the proposal of making a final effort to rescue the poor fellows, by means of working in compressed air, was made, there were present, I dare to say, some 50 or 60 persons, including mining engineers in extensive practice, colliery managers of long and varied experience, firemen and workmen of almost every kind, in fact many of one class and another who had seen underground life in almost every conceivable shape and form, and yet, when volunteers were sought for the daring experiment, all were as silent as the grave. Men were there, who, but for their diffidence could, like Mr. T. G. Davies, boast of having "faced the Ferndale and other explosions," and yet for a moment they quailed before the dangers they were

invited to face until the ice was broken by Mr. Thomas Jones, Ynyshir, singing out that he for one would go if Mr. W. Thomas, Resolven, would go. That gentleman accepted the challenge on condition that I retained the lead, and that every man who went inside should promise to strictly obey my orders. Then followed Mr. Jones, (Cymmer Level), Mr. Beith, Mr. David Ribly, Mr. James Thomas, Isaac Pride, J. W. Howell, Richard Howell, John Jenkins, George Ablett, Charles Oatridge, C. Baynham, Robert Williams, and Thomas Evans.

There were, doubtless, many others there who would have volunteered to go, had those whose names I have given not gone; but those were the people who volunteered to go, and who went with me to what we all thought to be a most imminent peril. That the colliers that accompanied us were alive to the peril may be gathered from what brave Pride said on behalf of himself and his fellow workmen, viz.: - "I don't know how much danger we run, but it must be great; but as long as you are here to share it with us we'll take care to do the work, trusting to you gentlemen to take care of our lives."

That we agents also thought the peril was great is evident from what I recollect Mr. W. Thomas, Resolven, to have said, when, shortly after the door was closed and made airtight, we agents held a consultation a short distance from the "face" where the men were at work, and when he told us he had come into that place, and was there firmly believing the chances were ten to one against our ever getting out of it again alive. In this opinion we were at the time quite unanimous, yet there we stuck readily for hours at our posts, until another and unexpected danger – firedamp – compelled us to retreat; and yet, in the face of this, Mr. T. G. Davies will have the world to believe that every man in the pit except his own worthy self was an arrant coward.

I was in the pit during the whole time Mr. T. G. Davies was there – before and after the short time he remained in, and I totally and in the most positive manner declare that there was not a single occasion, from beginning to end, where men were wanted and were not forthcoming. Mr. Davies's wild assertion is only equalled by his wild and foolhardy conduct while in the pit that night, which was as such as to bring upon himself the censure of one of the oldest and most experienced miners in the pit, who, whilst remonstrating with him, called him a "wild kite" (barcud gwylit). As for Mr. T. G. Davies's remarks, re the distribution of the Mansion House funds, the public will know what value to place on them when they are informed that he was one of the first to send a statement of the grounds on which he claimed a share of them, which statement had to be very considerably modified before it could be certified. **I am &c. Daniel Thomas, Brithweunydd Colliery.**

**A reply to Daniel Thomas by D. G. Davies**  
(Western Mail, Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup> 1877)

**Sir** – Referring to Mr. Daniel Thomas's letter of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. In your paper, I beg to state that, although I was not at the colliery for so long a time as Mr. Thomas, I was nevertheless there during the time when the situation was considered most critical. It appears to me that Mr. Thomas and I misunderstood each other. He refers to Thursday afternoon, when the experiment with the closed door was first made, while I referred to the period after the gas came off, as I stated, very early on Friday morning, and when the men, with the exception of one or two, refused to volunteer to work. The brother of Moses Powell went to the surface to search for others, notwithstanding that there then was sufficient numbers in the pit. Of course it is only fair to mention that most of the colliers present were unacquainted with the nature of gas. Mr. Thomas has omitted to state that there were two doors. There may, perhaps, have been some little uncertainty as to the level of the water at the lower door, although personally I was satisfied with the careful levelling of the surveyor, who Mr. Thomas has thought fit to assail in his letter, but, as a matter of fact, this lower door was never closed – the upper one only being closed, and which everyone knew was far above the water level, and, therefore, perfectly safe from any possibility of the water rising to it.

As to my foolhardiness I would thank Mr. Thomas to inform me when and by whom was I censured or remonstrated with in the pit, and for what act of folly? Mr. Thomas's modifications of my claim simply amounted to a refusal on his part to certify my appointment by Mr. Wales, on the Thursday morning, to the charge of the bore-hole, yet he most willingly signed a statement to the effect that I worked in the face with Job Williams when no colliers would go there. This rather contradicts what he says in his letter about there not being a single occasion from beginning to end when men were wanted and were not forthcoming. I should be sorry to detract in any way from such services as were rendered by Mr. Thomas. He worked exceedingly hard throughout, but it occurs to me that the situation was rather a novelty to him, and that he therefore very much exaggerated in his own mind the risks that were run by himself and others. I can safely say that I was engaged in the most critical part of the operations, but I did not feel at the time – neither do I now feel - that I incurred more risk than I have had frequently to incur in the management of fiery steam coal collieries.

As regards working in compressed air, it was an operation in which Mr. Beith and some of the other mechanical engineers had had considerable experience. But it is very evident Mr. Thomas was unacquainted with it, or he would not have written of the unfortunate circumstances of the door opening inwards. The case was a peculiarly exceptional and painful one, and it was quite natural that the public



should take such a generous interest in it. It was a great mercy to have got the poor men out, and the work quite deserved all the kind sympathy which had been given. But as I consider that the personal risk had been over estimated it occurred to me to suggest that the funds should be diverted to some charitable object. Finding that it was determined to divide the fund, and that others were sending in claims, I also sent in a statement of my services (signed by Mr. Daniel Thomas). My own workmen at Tylacoch well knew that it was my intention to hand over whatever I might get to the widow and orphan fund which was then being started at that colliery. In conclusion, I would say that it would have been far more satisfactory to the public and those engaged if a public inquiry had been held, as it would have probably have prevented misstatements. I am &c. **T. G. Davies, Tylacoch Colliery, July 6<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Monday July 9<sup>th</sup> 1877**

The Tynewydd funds - Another list drawn up

An Monday afternoon, July 9<sup>th</sup>, the managers engaged in the Tynewydd disaster met at the Porth Hotel to consider what should be done in the face of the great dissatisfaction felt by all classes in the district as the result of the private meetings held by Lord Aberdare, the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield, and Gwilym Williams, in reference to the awards, both of the medals and the money contributed, and a new list of names of those entitled to rewards was drawn up and sent to the proper authorities. The other lists, it is alleged, are incorrect, and have been drawn up by people ignorant of the real facts.

### **What Abraham Dodd really did**

(Western Mail, Tuesday, July 10<sup>th</sup> 1877)

To the editor – Sir, - I observe in your issue of the 6<sup>th</sup> inst; that one or your correspondents, having revisited Porth, met Abraham Dodd, from whom he obtained a statement of what he did and was asked to do in connection with the late accident at Tynewydd, and he refers to me as being a person who asked him to work, on (I presume) the day before the rescue, I consider it right that I should reply to that statement, as I regret that I cannot endorse his version of the affair. I well remember that at about 1.30 p. m. that day the shift of men to leave at 2 p. m. viz; John Griffiths, Thomas Griffiths, Thomas R. Thomas, and Ioan Williams, bored a hole through to the cavity where the imprisoned men were, and as soon as the hole was plugged and clayed safely by the men, assisted by Mr. David Jones, Cymmer Level, myself, and Mr. William Beith, I went to Mr. Wales, close by, and reported the circumstances to him. It was then decided to work under compressed air. Mr. Wales appealed for volunteers in English, and in Welsh, when Abraham Dodd and three other young men volunteered, and I, seeing them young

and raw for the task before them, questioned them as to their abilities, the four being strangers to me, when Abraham Dodd replied if I did not consider him fit I might get someone else to go, to which I said he certainly was the best judge of what he could do, and thereupon he and the other three went to the face of the hole to the six already named.

The time for the four colliers then at work to give up being nearly due, and having worked very hard, they did not feel inclined to go on working, and to replace them Dodd and his partners had come, but seeing the four colliers going out, Dodd and his companions then refused to work, saying it was too dangerous for the men going out to continue working, so it was for him, and out they went. After this other volunteers were obtained, and went to work under the compressed air, which Dodd had refused, and never from the time mentioned till 6 a.m. the day following did Dodd make an appearance at the face of the hole.

When he did, he was asked by Mr. James Thomas to help to cut through the coal, but again refused. After this he was absent until about noon, when he again appeared and asked to work. This time the danger was all over, and known to all, the imprisoned having become aware that the water was rather reducing than otherwise with them. And now Dodd was ready to do what he could, and it is but fair play to say he now did what was asked of him by those present, and was the first to go through the hole to the five colliers. In writing this reply, I have not the least desire to injure Abraham Dodd's position with regard to his participation in the funds raised to reward the deserving, and would not have written now had he not made use of my name in making his statement to your correspondent; but having done so, I consider it right that the public should now know the part he took in that memorable event, as his deeds have been vastly overstated, and the public consequently sadly misled. The facts are given by me here can be verified by the following gentlemen: - Messrs James Thomas, David Jones, D. Davies, E. Jones, and many others, who are, although not now admitted, the gentlemen – and a few others – that took the most active part in saving the five poor colliers. **I am, &c. Daniel Thomas, Brythweunydd Colliery, July 9<sup>th</sup> 1877.**

**Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup> 1877**

Lord Mayors Tynewydd Fund announces its awards  
Date announced for presentation

At the Mansion House on Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1877, the committee decided upon dividing the fund raised for the relief of the rescued miners, &c., as follows: -



**Three of the Tynewydd rescuers, Left to Right: Gwilym Thomas, Abraham Dodd and Isaac Pride.**

To the three widows of the deceased men £250 each, making in all £750. To the ten children £30 each total, £300. To the widow whose son died in rescuing the total, £600. To the three men rescued after 18 hours' confinement, £25 each in total, £75. For the education of the boy rescued after 10 days' imprisonment, £150. For the education of the boy imprisoned 18 hours, £50. To Isaac Pride, the hero of the rescue, £105. To J. W. Howell and Charles Oatridge, for their noble conduct in the work of rescue, £80 each, total, £160. To the 24 shift colliers, to be apportioned according to the time they were engaged in the work, £540 among them. To the 25 pump men, to be apportioned accordingly to the time they individually worked, the aggregate sum of £212. To the two London divers, £50 each; total: £100. To the Cardiff diver, £30. To the 37 carters, to be apportioned according to the time of work, £56. To each of the two carpenters, £10 total; total £20. To each of the two nurses, £10, total, £20.

The committee further resolved to present to the medical men, engineers, colliery agents, and others who exposed themselves to danger in directing the work of rescue, and attending to the wants of the sufferers, pieces of plate, suitably inscribed, and of the value stated below: - To Dr. Davies, plate to the value of £100. To the medical assistants, Messrs. Dukes and Davis, each plate value £30. To each of five other medical assistants, plate, value £10. To Mr. Beith, engineer, in recognition of his professional services, plate value £105. To Mr. Wales, Her Majesty's inspector, plate, £105. To Messrs. Daniel Thomas, James Thomas, and William Davies, colliery owners and agents, plate value £65 each. To five other colliery agents, plates value £30 each. Ten other agents, plate value £15 each. To four other agents, plate value £10 each.

The Committee likewise resolved to present a testimonial on vellum to the Rev. D. W. Williams, of Fairfield, Pontypridd, in recognition of his valuable and disinterested exertions on behalf of the sufferers by the accident and of the other persons claiming to participate in the distribution of the fund. The total amount received by the Mansion House Committee, as stated in our last report, was £4,432. It was stated by Dr. Davies in answer to an enquiry by one of the members of the committee, that the rescued men were all progressing very favourably, and there was no fear at all of their suffering permanently from the effects of the accident.

Finally it was arranged that the distribution of the fund should take place on August 3, the Lord Mayor announcing his intention to proceed to the locality, accompanied by the members of the Mansion House Fund Committee, to distribute the fund on that day. Upon the conclusion of the business the members of the committee were entertained to a luncheon by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.

**Friday July 13<sup>th</sup> 1877**

On this Friday evening, July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1877, the five colliers rescued from the Tynewydd mine returned to their homes from the Rest at Porthcawl, much improved by their sojourn at the seaside. The *British Medical Journal* states that the committee of council of the British Medical Association resolved unanimously on Wednesday, that a special gold medal be present to Mr. Henry Naunton Davies, and silver medals to some of his medical coadjutors, for their honourable and devoted services during and after the rescue of the imprisoned miners.

**How the Mansion house fund was apportioned**

A statement by Rev. D. W. Williams  
(Western Mail, Friday July 13<sup>th</sup> 1877)

We published on Thursday the proceedings of the Mansion House Committee, and be the courtesy of the Rev. D. W. Williams, of Fairfield, we are now able to give his report as submitted on the occasion of the apportionment of the funds: -

**Fairfield, Pontypridd, July 10<sup>th</sup> 1877**

My Lord and gentleman, after much consideration and an incredible amount of inquiry amongst the claimants themselves to your fund, after reading various reports sent to me by post from 260 persons at least; after being present with Mr. Forsyth at his inquiry, after having been present with my three coadjutors in selecting the Albert medalists; after assisting the *Daily Telegraph* almoner in apportioning a part (£450 of that fund); after having listened carefully and patiently to the complaints of some more or less, and some not connected at all, with the inundated colliery, widows and orphans, rescued and rescuers, medical men and others who I thought could assist me in arriving at the approximate calculation of the just claims of all, in order to economize your time I have prepared the following scale of remuneration from your fund. This early, not without regret, I cannot refrain from alluding to the almoner of the *Daily Telegraph* Fund, who, from want of time and a patient inquiry, (this being the first public selection that took place) into the circumstances and services rendered in the rescue, did not give such satisfaction as would have been expected and desired. For instance, in the case of Cheen and Moon, two men who worked side by side from first to last, and were almost like the Siamese twins, to Cheen he awarded £10, while poor Moon goes empty away. Again, in the case of the sixteen shiftmen, who laboured equally or nearly so, he gave to six £10 each, to three others £50, and to the remaining four nothing at all, but Pride, Howell, and Oatridge also get £50 each. Under these circumstances are we to hurl down his hills and level up his valleys, so as to make one gradually eloping, inclined plane, or are we to ignore

his plan altogether, and divide our fund as if it were the only fund subscribed for the purpose? This question I lay before you, who are more competent to deal with it than I am. In drawing up my awards I have adopted much of what was suggested at our last meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult; at the Mansion House, though not our plan in its entirety. I much regret to find that our fund will not allow us to adapt the plan proposed by Mr. Vivian, which was to set aside for the widows and orphans such an amount as would produce a sufficient income to mete out 10 shillings per week to each widow, and 3 shillings to each child. This would swallow up more than half of our fund. I fear this would not meet with the approval of the 20,000 subscribers, even if it would the majority of that great number. Consequently I have proposed a certain sum for each widow, and a certain sum for each child. The widows are all very decent women – keep their houses in order and their children cleanly. This is much in their favour. If you adopt (and I see myself no other alternative), my proposal, I propose there will be granted £200 to each of the three widows, and £30 to each of the ten children; in all £900. With regard to the fourth widow, whose son (being with her at the time) died in consequence of over-exertion in aiding the rescue, I find that she has two sons at present supporting her from their earnings. Such being the case I think that £50 will meet her deserts, if you approve of this.

To the boy David Hughes, imprisoned 10 days, I give £200 for his education, and to the boy Richard Morgan, imprisoned 18 hours only, I allot £125 for his education. If you adopt this suggestion I would happily recommend that these two sums be placed in the hands of trustees. To the four men imprisoned 10 days I award £100 each. To the three imprisoned only 18 hours I award £25 each; the latter sum is certainly more than they deserve, in comparison with the four others – this with your approval. Of the 27 collier rescuers, there were 16 selected as the very best colliers to be found in the surrounding collieries – these 16 worked from first to last in shifts of four hours each. Of these 16 I mark out three – Pride, J. W. Howell, and Oatridge – as meriting more than the other 13 and of the three I mark out Pride as meriting more than Howell and Oatridge, his two compeers. I have therefore, placed him in his pride of place as *facile princeps* in his class (colliers), and award him £105.

To J. W. Howell I award £80 and the like sum to Charles Oatridge, to the 12 shift colliers I give £30 each, but £5 only to Richard Hopkin. To the 12 of the 13 shift men I award £30 each. Richard Hopkin, who received £50 from the ‘*Daily Telegraph*’ Fund, I accept, give him £5 only, with the same sum to three others, who got £50 from the ‘*Daily Telegraph*’ Fund. The remaining 12 I divide into two lots. To the first lot of eight I give £20 each, and to the remaining four £5 each, with your approval. The pump-men worked with a will indeed, and very hard, for it was by their exertions that the immense body of water was reduced so as to give

the imprisoned men hope that they would yet be rescued. The first four not only laboured hard up to the rescue, but also afterwards in wading, often up to their chins, in search of the bodies of the poor fellows who they knew were long since dead; and whose bodies then found and handled presented a horrible sight, and produced a sickening stench.

**Divers** – In addition to the two from London I have since found that there was one from Cardiff, who, though not so experienced as the London men, rendered very valuable assistance. I give him £30 with your approval.

**Firemen** – These had two very important duties to perform; and this, too, in the midst of danger. In their work they gave great satisfaction to the engineers and agents, as they were employed mostly underground throughout the time.

**Carpenters** - Two were making, fixing, and repairing air-tight doors. The repairing and fixing, having to be done close to the face of the workings, was attended, of course, with very great danger – from gas, water, and compressed air.

**Nurses** – The two were employed for 21 days in caring for, and waiting on, the rescued men, and, as the result proved, they were successful in their efforts.

**Doctors** - These in my list are only four – but four others rendered great assistance on and off, in descending the pit, and venturing to the face. Their names and services I have obtained, and will lay before you, if it seems to you desirable, as I humbly think it does.

**Engineers** – I first name Beith, the mechanical engineer, as in his class *facile princeps*, just as Pride was also in his (colliers), and award him £105.

**Engineers, &c.:** - Among these I would place the name of Mr. Wales first, but I think you will deal with him separately. I shall, therefore, pass him by, leaving his case in your hands, where I am perfectly confident it will be safe, and treat it to the full as it deserves. The other three in this class render invaluable assistance in advertising, cooperating, and exerting themselves to the utmost to hasten the work, and bring out the poor fellows to light again. Mr. Adams, in his reply to my inquiry as to his claim for remuneration, stated candidly that, though suffering at the time so much that his medical man forbade him to go, he came up to see if he could in any way by his advice assist Mr. Wales. He, however, went, and did what he could, but that, as he himself said, was little enough. Still, under the circumstances, I think his pluck (for he is by no means a strong man) deserves some mark of recognition at your hands.

**Agents and proprietors and Co.** This to me, is the most difficult task of all, and I must confess that I wish it were in other hands; but, as I have had the responsibility placed on my shoulders by you, my Lord Mayor, I shall not shirk it – for, if I did, who will now undertake it?

I place in the first class Daniel Thomas, James Thomas, William Davies (three shift-masters), with Edmund Thomas, Thomas Jones and David Jones. I place David Davies, Thomas Thomas, William Thomas, Isaiah Thomas, David Evans, and T. G. Davies, in the second class. I place James Thomas, Henry W. Lewis, John Edwards, Mr. Adams, Lawrence Mathias, Mr. M'Murrtrie, Henry Abraham, Edward Thomas, E. T. Richards, in the third class. In the fourth class I place Curnew, James Edwards, and John Jones. Last comes the clerk of the works (Packer), who had to find everything needed, and to see it taken to its proper place in the pit and on the surface. I will not propose any sum for the above classes, but would refer you to do so – unless you would press me to give you my opinion as to what sum each class deserves, and how it should be handed over to each individual, whether in special or commemorative plate. These eight in the second class did much good service in advising, procuring things which were wanted, and seeing that the men underground did their work properly – in fact, without them the whole work would have come to a standstill. As I feel and know that I have trespassed far too long on your patience, let me come to the end of my report. But my sole object in doing so was to save your time, so that you might justly and fairly apportion your fund to the objects for what it was subscribed.

I can now, without hesitation, assert that had one class in my list been wanting, exception the divers, the object aimed at would not have been by this time attained. For, to begin, had the collier rescuers not done their duty, their imprisoned mates would have perished in their cavern. The pumpmen did their work manfully and expeditiously – and, but for them, the mine would have been inundated nearly from one end to the other. Next come the carters, but for whom – to remove the coal cut – the colliers would have been prevented from doing anything whatever. Without the air of the firemen the whole colliery would have been in a blaze. Had not the carpenters made, and, in the midst of peril, fixed the air-tight doors, all the operations for the last two critical days (namely, Thursday and Friday) would have come to a standstill. Again, but for the nurses and doctors, though brought up alive to the surface, the poor rescued men would have pined away in misery and pain; ending in death. How again would it have been, but for the engineers, agents, and proprietors? Where would have been the Suez Canal, but for the ingenuity and enterprise of Lessops? So in this case the brawny arm, without the nice, calculating head, would have availed nothing in the rescue, neither would the calculating head without the brawny arm have availed anything. But for the efforts of these fellows, you, my Lord Mayor, and gentlemen, would



not have had the opportunity of receiving a Welsh welcome on the romantic spot where these rewards of valour and suffering are to be presented; yes, and that a welcome such as you cannot get even in your own wealthy and populous metropolis; nor would I, humble individual as I am, with my two countrymen have had the honour of passing through the portals of the Mansion House, and partaking of its worldwide hospitality. But now a word as to the conduct of our motherly, tender-hearted, and thoughtful Queen. How many times did she telegraph down to know how the poor fellows were getting on, and whether and when it was thought they would be rescued alive. Did she not literally subscribe to the fund the sum of £50? Did she not send her own photographer down to take the likenesses of these poor emaciated fellows, after they were brought out from their imprisonment, and now has them hung up in her palace? Last of all, has she not extended the order of the Albert Medal, for the first time, to deeds of daring done underground? I now conclude that which has been to me, indeed, so far a labour of love, and which, I trust, my Lord Mayor and gentlemen, of this report, will be rendered equally so to you. **“My Lord Mayor and Gentlemen” D. W. Williams, and Dr. Davies and M. Williams, Esq. (West of England Bank manager).**

### **The intense dissatisfaction**

The announcement of the above awards was highly controversial and began arguments that would rage for the following months. The *‘Western Mail’* of Monday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1877 commented: - The intense dissatisfaction associated by the manner in which the Mansion House Fund has been distributed continues to find expression in a very large number of letters forward to us for publication by nearly every post. The space at our disposal precludes the possibility of a tithe of these being inserted. Many are, doubtless, the productions of disappointment and possibly undeserving candidates, but others are written by men whose position and services entitles them to a hearing on this subject. The following letter is written by one of the most prominent of the rescuers, and though he naturally desires to withhold his name, we are able to testify to the fact that his remarks do not proceed from any personal disappointment or chagrin, but are simply dictated by a strong feeling that justice has not been equally meted out. He says: -

Since the account of the distribution of the Mansion House Fund appeared in your valuable paper, I have been trying to think of some possible grounds for the absurd difference in the recommendations for recognitions as made by the Rev. D. W. Williams to the Mansion House Committee in respect to the several rescuers. What he did for the widows, children, and rescued, I believe everyone will endorse. But his recommendations as to the extent and kind of recognition to the rescuers, both workmen, managers, and others, has caused the greatest dissatisfaction, and I must say in many cases not without cause. The general cry is:

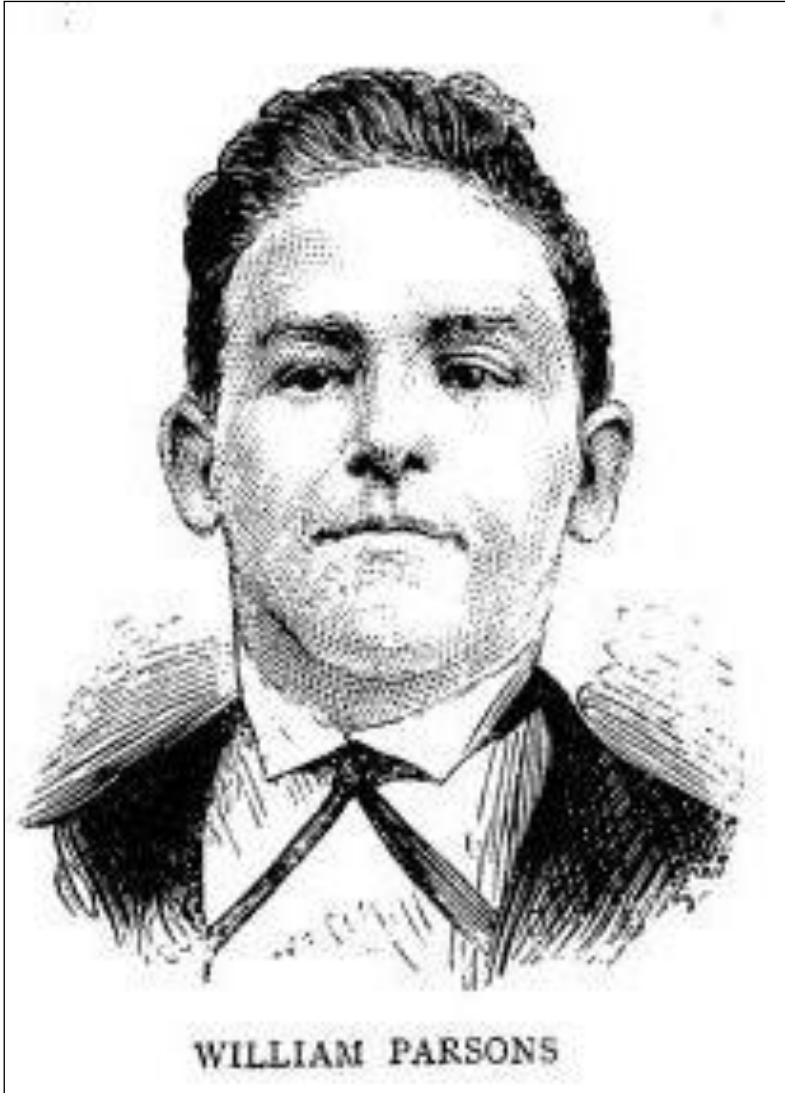
how could he, on what grounds, and for what object, have put such excessive values of the services of Isaac Pride, William Beith, J. W. Howell and Charles Oatridge? Those that were with them through thick and thin, and so who volunteered before any one of them, are totally unable to agree with the Rev. gentleman in the exalted position he has given these men over others quite as worthy, some no doubt much more so. I do not think any sensible person would deny that those best able to judge the merits of the different claimants were the managers and owners who for days and nights successfully worked hard in guiding and leading the workmen, and by their noble example encouraged them to work until a successful result was achieved. Yet the opinion of all these managers and owners is entirely ignored. That being so, those who voluntarily laboured hard throughout from the memorable events of the 11<sup>th</sup> of April last to the rescue on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the same month, and who afterwards day by day did all in their power to hasten to recover the bodies of the four men drowned, would feel extremely obliged in the Rev. D. W. Williams will kindly inform them: -

**First** – Did he strictly carry out the intimation contained in his letter inviting statements of claims, to the effect that those who would not send in their claims certified either by James Thomas, Daniel Thomas, or William Davies, would be precluded from participation in the fund?

**Second** – Did all the men rewarded send in their claims, and particularly Mr. Beith, and if so, who certified them?

**Third** – If any of these men sent in a claim without being first certified, did Mr. Williams consider himself justified in accepting that statement as correct without the confirmatory evidence he had declared to be necessary?

**Fourth** – Would he kindly let the public know what special service the four men named above rendered to entitle them to so much greater distinction than others, also what Mr. Beith did, when the Rev. Gentleman designates “valuable profession service?” It pains one to see a gentleman of the Rev. D. W. Williams’s position misled by interested individuals, or, owing to his natural excited temperament, acted so impulsively as to cause great dissatisfaction and ill-feeling, all which could have been entirely avoided if he had taken a little time and patience to hold a public inquiry, and been guided by the evidence of those best able to give the necessary particulars of each case brought before him. I hope that when the local fund comes to be distributed the Rev. D. W. Williams, if he is allowed to take a part in it, will permit the committee to “level the hills and the valleys,” made by his recommendations, as he tried to “level the hills and valleys,” caused by the action



**William Parsons, who played a part in the rescue of the five men early in the Tynewydd inundation.**



**William Rawlings, who worked on the first shift of the rescue team but received no reward either of money or medals.**

of the representatives of the 'Daily Telegraph.' To the four already mentioned, is that of Mr. David Davies, of Cilely. He, I see, was recommended for a second class position, a step below the local agents. For this there cannot be the least reason. Well I remember seeing that gentleman working hard to forward the early release of the five colliers. In doing this he faced the same danger as Mr. Beith; and I have no hesitation in saying that he and several others were of much more practical service in the work of rescuing the men than Mr. Beith. What, indeed, in the name of goodness, was it that Mr. Beith did which turned out so eminently successful? I think it will prove too hard a problem for even the Rev. Gentleman to solve, to give an answer to this question.

### The "carters" grievance

The following letter, written on behalf of the carters engaged in the rescue, and signed by a number of that body, has also been forwarded to us for publication: -

**Sir** – Now the result of the final meeting of the Mansion House Fund Committee is known to the public, we, the "carters" that were engaged in the "rescue" at the Troedyrhiw Colliery, and worked as hard and went through exactly the same danger as the "shift" colliers, beg to protest against the unfairness of the distribution. At the same time we would ask some few simple questions, in the hope that some persons more competent than ourselves will answer them. It is our humble opinion that the greater portion of the fund has been awarded to those who cannot legally claim a farthing of the same. To show that we are correct, we beg to lay before the public a copy of the advertisement that was used by the Lord Mayor to obtain subscriptions. It reads as follows: -

*"The Lord Mayor will be happy to receive donations at the Mansion House to reward those who, at imminent danger to their lives, rescued their fellow miners in the Troedyrhiw Colliery, Pontypridd, after an agonising imprisonment of ten days' duration; and also, to provide, in a practical and suitable form, some mark of public sympathy with the men so happily saved."*

In the above advertisement it states in very plain language indeed that the money would be awarded to "the imprisoned men and those who at imminent peril of their lives, rescued their fellow miners." Now, we beg to ask, who were the imprisoned men? Their names are known. And who were those that "rescued their fellow miners?" Were the doctors and their assistants "those who rescued their fellow miners?" Were the managers and engineers "those who rescued their fellow miners?" Were the contractors, clerks, and nurses "those who rescued their fellow miners?" We leave the public to judge. About £1,000 will be awarded out of the fund to the above ladies and gentlemen, while 37 poor colliers' "carters" will

receive £56 only. We are, yours humbly, **George Jones, John John, Rhys Rees, William Lane, William Williams, Cymmer, July 11<sup>th</sup> 1877.**

**Refusal of the Mansion House Fund awards**  
(Western Mail, July 17<sup>th</sup> 1877)

A meeting of the colliery managers in charge of the mining parties who liberated the Tynewydd miners was held at Porth on Monday, July 16<sup>th</sup>. It was decided not to accept the awards of the Mansion House Committee, based as they were on the report of the Rev. D. W. Williams, of Fairfield, whose conclusions as to those deserving recognition were declared to be grossly incorrect. The following protest having been drawn up was signed by those responsible for the work of the rescuing parties; the original was forwarded to the Lord Mayor of London and the Mansion House Committee: -

My Lord Mayor, and gentlemen – We beg respectfully to call your serious and immediate attention to the intense feeling of dissatisfaction felt in this district – the locality in which this late disaster occurred – with the list drawn up by the Rev. D. W. Williams, ostensibly for rewarding the rescuers of the rescued Welsh miners in the inundated colliery. We, who were actively engaged in the rescue, being the only persons in charge of the rescuing parties and the colliery during that excited period, and from the time the calamity occurred to the time the poor fellows were delivered declare most strongly, as we have already done in the list submitted by us to your committee and to that of the House of Commons, but the list submitted to you, by the Rev. D. W. Williams and approved of by you is grossly incorrect. We, therefore, respectfully protest against it, and appeal to reconsider the matter.

Our only reason for moving this appeal to your committee is that we are extremely anxious that justice shall be done, and honour given unto who honour is due, and to prevent the money which a generous public having subscribed from being distributed to the wrong parties, and also to guard against the rewards which her Majesty's Government have decided upon granting to the deliverers from being awarded to the wrong individuals. We are so satisfied that the list sent by us to your committee is the only correct one that we cannot conscientiously accept any recognition of our services except in accordance with that list. Therefore, Lord Mayor and gentlemen, while cordially thanking you for the very kind interest you have evinced in this matter, we respectfully decline to accept the rewards as proposed in the list prepared by the Rev. D. W. Williams. SIGNED, **Daniel Thomas, Brithweunydd Colliery; Edmund Thomas, Llwyncelyn and Gelli Collieries; David Davies, Pontypridd Colliery; David Jones, Cymmer Level; Thomas Jones, Ynyshir, Tylacoch and Hafod Collieries.**

In answer to the protest the Lord Mayor addressed to them the following communication: —

**To James Thomas, Esq., Tynewydd Colliery, and others.**

**Mansion House, July 17,** — Sir, — I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your telegram of yesterday, in which you express dissent from the result at which, after long, patient, and mature deliberation, the committee arrived as to the rewards to be given to those who took part in the rescue of the miners at the Tynewydd Colliery in April last. Your ground for such dissent is the assertion that the committee adopted the list (which you say was incorrectly prepared) by the Rev. D. W. Williams, a gentleman whose indefatigable exertions for the relief of the sufferers entitle him to much praise, and whose advice the committee not only sought but profited by. Now the names of the widows and orphans and of the rescued men were common to all, and the committee made their awards in accordance with the universal view. The rewards also to the shift colliers and pump men have been left entirely to Mr. Wales to settle at so much per day, and the carpenters, carters, & c., are to be remunerated on the same principle. As for the colliery agents, engineers, and others, amongst whom you rank, it is but just, to Mr. Williams to state emphatically that his list was not made the standard of adjustment, and that he took no part in the discussions as to the amount of the awards. The vote was adopted by the whole committee, and while I, personally, held (and still hold) that no part of the fund collected by me at the Mansion House was subscribed by the public with the views or for the purpose of rewarding gentlemen in your portion of life, yet it was thought that pieces of plate of considerable value, with appropriate inscriptions, might be acceptable to you in recognition of the meritorious services you rendered. I am sorry you think it right to decline a memento of such an event, but I fully accept your final determination in that respect. I am, sirs, yours very faithfully, **Thomas White, Lord Mayor of London.**

#### **The managers' list**

*(Western Mail, Wednesday, July 18<sup>th</sup> 1877)*

The following is a copy of the list forwarded to the Lord Mayor of London and the Mansion House Committee, to which reference was made in the "protest" by the six colliery owners and managers who had charge of the rescuing parties. The standard of merit is expressed by the unit one (1) and the relative value of each group or individual is calculated in decimal proportion to that standard: -

**Widows and orphans:** For mansion House Committee's consideration.  
The widow Catherine Owen, Ditto.

The first lot rescued, Ditto.

The second lot rescued, Ditto.

**Rescuers:** - Isaac Pride, John W. Howell, Charles Oatridge, and Richard Hopkins (0.5). Charles Beynham, John Williams, Robert Williams, George Ablett, Edward Davies, David Rees, Richard Howell, Rees Thomas, and W. Evans (0.25). John Griffiths, Thomas Griffiths, Thomas Rees Thomas, William Morgan, David Davies (Ynyshir), John Williams (0.15). William Moiling, Thomas Jones, Thomas Rees, David Davies, John Morgan, David Minton and John Jenkins (0.25). Note: - These last seven men did not participate in the '*Daily Telegraph*' Fund. Abraham Dodd and Gwilym Thomas did but very little work, and were not exposed to any danger, and have already received £50 each from the '*Daily Telegraph*.' **Men at the pumps and machinery** (22): - Lewis Baxter, William Baxter, John Baxter, John Davies, Joseph Roberts, John J. Thomas, Thomas Lewis, Josephus Moor, Frank Francis., Eleazar Moor, Roger Vaughan, Edward Thomas, William Daglan, Massinth Lloyd, Thomas Cheen, Thomas Woon, Howell M. Williams, Evan Thomas, George Warlow (0.1).

**Divers:** - Frank Davies and Thomas Purvis (0.1), David Adams (0.05). **Carters** (37): - Matthew Williams, James Jeremiah, Matthew Lane, Miles Griffiths, Rees Rees, 6 days each (0.03). Jenkin Williams, John Daniel, William Williams, and George Jones, 5 days each (0.025). William Rees, William Davies, Thomas Rees, William Leyshon, Even Jenkin, and Jenkin Thomas, 4 days each (0.02). Thomas Roblin, John Hughes (Cymmer), Edward Oatridge, Daniel Dodd, Jacob Rogers, Morgan Morgan, William Rees, David Davies (Jim), 3 days each, and John John (0.015). David Thomas and James Edwards (0.01). William E. Richards and Evan Thomas, 1½ days each (0.0075). David Thomas and James Edwards (0.01). William E. Richards and Evan Thomas, 1½ days each (0.0075). Joseph Lewis, Elias Rees, Jonathan Morgan, Taliesin Lewis, Thomas Henry, R. J. Richards, D. H. Howells, William David Thomas, and David Hopkins (0.005).

**Banksmen, fluemen and hitchers, &Co:** - William Thomas, Michael Thomas, Richard Evans, William Rees, William Lloyd, Alexander Leyshon, and David Leyshon (0.1). **Carpenters:** - Thomas Lewis, John Thomas, and David Thomas (0.05). **Nurses:** - Head, Miss Jenner and Miss Davies, for committee to decide. Under: - Mary Thomas, Elizabeth Williams, and Catherine Edwards (0.05). **Inspector, colliery owners and managers:** - Thomas E. Wales, James Thomas, Daniel Thomas, Thomas Jones, Edmund Thomas, David Jones, David Davies, and William Davies (1.0). **Colliery managers** only who assisted the foregoing: - William Thomas, Isaiaah Thomas, T. J. Davies, Thomas Thomas, and Henry Lewis, Energlyn (0.5). **Mechanical engineers:** - William Beith (0.2). **Engineers:** - F. Bell and T. H. riches (0.25). **Engineers, managers, and others assisting:** - W. H. Mathias, Thomas James Thomas, Richard Packer, H. W. Abraham, E. T. Richards, Thomas Curnew, David





**The Albert Medal (First class) awarded to William Beith**



Some of the doctors and rescuers – Left to right: Mr. Wales, inspector of mines; Dr. H. N. Davies, Dr. Hopkins, Dr. E. W. Davies & Dr. White.

## Chapter ten

Evans, W. G. M'Murrtrie, H. W. Lewis, John Edwards and John Jones, Ynyshir (0.25). **Medical Staff:** - Dr. H. N. Davies (0.05); and Edward Dukes and W. W. Davies, Dr. H. N. Davies's assistants (0.15). **Medical gentlemen who assisted the above voluntarily:** - Dr. E. Lloyd, E. S. W. Davies, Rees Hopkins, Dr. Parry, and Ivor Lewis (0.15).

Clearly, the Lord Mayor was now losing patience over the continual arguing over who should receive what from the Mansion House Fund and the refusal of the managers to accept their awards was the final straw. The *'Western Mail'* of Thursday, July 19<sup>th</sup> 1877 reported: -

### **Abandonment of the civic visit to Wales – Great disappointment**

The Lord Mayor's reply to the Colliery Manager's Protest – Pontypridd Wednesday

The announcement made in today's London journals that, in consequence of the "protest" of the colliery owners, leaders of the rescuing parties in the late struggle to deliver the entombed miners, against the list approved by the Mansion House Committee, understood to be the list prepared by the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield, the Lord Mayor has abandoned his intention to visit Pontypridd to preside at the distribution of the rewards, produced intense disappointment throughout the town. The date was being looked forward to as one of the most interesting ever witnessed in Wales, and preparations were being made to give his lordship, as the representative of the chief city of the British Empire, as hearty a reception as Cambria could give. The Rev. D. W. Williams had intended, at a lavish outlay, to entertain the company most royally. The Welsh choirs, under the leadership of Caradog, were about to be called together. The many thousands of miners employed in the district were prepared to turn out to a man, and march jubilantly to meet the Lord Mayor and his friends. The visit and reception would have been of such a nature as to be a fitting climax to the late stirring events in connection with the rescue.

Profound regret is expressed by all classes that anything has taken place to prevent all this being realised, and many express a fear that the dispute which has had such an unpleasant result will have the affect of stamping the Welsh people as a quarrelsome race, a character which their peacefulness and loyalty prove they do not deserve. They possess sturdiness and indomitable courage, qualities which have always belonged to the race, as its history proves; and the six new "Protestants" of the Rhondda Valley believing, rightly or wrongly, that they were not fairly treated made known their discontent unflinchingly in the face of the

whole world. I should fail in my duty were I to hesitate to make known to the public the principal causes that led to the “protest.”

It must be distinctly understood that the cause of complaint is not that the money allotted to each other, or the amount of plate that each was to be presented with, is not deemed sufficient; it would be a grievous wrong to suppose that avarice is an element in the question in dispute. The six colliery owners and managers would be the last men in the district to quarrel over the coin, and the readiness with which they have announced their intention to decline the rewards intended for them, because they deemed the list approved by the Mansion House Committee is incorrect, is sufficient to prove this. It is a question of honour, and not of reward. The six men, with the courage of lions, faced every danger in the Tynewydd mine in the cause of humanity. Their intrepidity in the murky inundated mine astonished the world and such men are not the breed to act meanly, and evince ingratitude. They unquestionably have been stung to the quick by what they deem, rightly or wrongly, a display of partiality in pointing out those entitled to the honours of rescue.

Those who came frequently in contact with the rescuers and their leaders in that forlorn hope know that the chief cause of complaint is the position in the amount in Mansion House list allotted to Mr. Beith, Navigation Collieries. They state that for eight days and nights they had proceeded incessantly in the work of deliverance according to their own plans, which eventually proved successful, before Mr. Beith came near the colliery, and that he, whose courage and services no-one calls into question, simply assisted them without suggesting any new plan of his own, and yet that in the Mansion House list he is complemented for “his professional skills,” and placed over the head of all, as if the deliverance of the five entombed men was mainly due to him.

There were others, moreover, with Isaac Pride when the communication was made, and not for an instant was he alone during the trying period before the happy result was attained, and yet in the Mansion House list he is singled out as entitled to the chief reward, while “Happy” Dodd, who crawled through the hole in the darkness, and waded through the water to the men, is left out of the list altogether. I am simply repeating what I hear in the immediate neighbourhood of the disaster, among those who were eyewitnesses.

Another cause of complaint is the secret meetings held, and which the ‘*Western Mail*’ was the first to publicly protest against. It is stated that Mr. Gwilym Williams has announced that Lord Aberdare has been instructed by the Home Secretary to hold the inquiry in secret. Why? The rescue and the deeds of heroism enacted were public enough, and why should the inquiry into the particulars, it is asked, be

held privately, and in the same way as evidenced in reference to indecent assaults is taken. Much surprise is expressed at the announcement made in the Lord Mayor's letter that the awards are based on Mr. Wales's list, for it was stated that both that gentleman's list, and the one prepared by the leaders of the rescue party, had been abandoned for that of the Rev. D. W. Williams, who has worked with immense energy, and with the view, no one doubts, of doing justice to all.

### **Another unhappy rescuer**

The story of George Ablett

George Ablett, one of the rescuers, was not happy that he was in line for a 'second class' Albert medal, and that he really deserved one of 'first class.' The '*Western Mail*' of July 18<sup>th</sup> 1877, wrote: - We have received the following letter from Mr. George Ablett, who took prominent part in the operations of the rescuing party. He says: -

**Sir** – I am greatly surprised, and many others as well, that my name is excluded from the list of first-class recipients of recognitions from the Mansion House Fund, in as much as the money had been subscribed for the express purpose of rewarding the entombed men, and of recognising valour shown in rescuing them. My claim was established, and was recognised by the '*Daily Telegraph*' almoner in his apportionment on the ground, as a volunteer to go down the pit when others were running out, and when the cry came from the mine that it was 'all over with the poor imprisoned men,' as no-one could be found to go down the rescuing heading to work towards them in consequence of gas having accumulated between the air-tight doors and the face.

On Thursday, on the ninth day of their imprisonment, I was near the top of the pit when this cry was made, and had on my evening clothes. As soon as I heard the cry I went home, changed my clothes, and went to the top of the pit, and asked permission to go down, which was readily granted. I went down, and went straight to the rescuing heading where I found at work at the time (having by this time plucked up sufficient courage to recommence working again) Isaac Pride, Charles Oatridge, and Robert Williams. Their time, according to the regular shift time, was now up to go out; but no-one could be found for any amount to go down with me. I went down to the face alone before they came from there, and sometime after, John Hughes, of Cymmer, came down to me, and several colliery owners and managers, amongst whom, to the best of my recollection were Messrs. Daniel Thomas (shift manager), Thomas Jones, James Thomas, David Jones, David Davies, Mr. Beith, Isaiaah Thomas, and Thomas Thomas.

The air-tight doors were closed on us all, and John Hughes and myself commenced working, and continued to work for several hours until the barrier between us and the imprisoned men had by us been reduced from 7 feet to about 2 feet. When this fact was ascertained by Mr. Wales, Government Inspector of Mines, he gave orders to cease working until the water should be reduced below the level line of the imprisoned men. Gas by this time had accumulated again, so that we had to run from the face up to the doors, and I was the last coming up. Before I got to the doors I heard the imprisoned knocking to us, having understood that we had ceased working to them. I there and then turned back to the face and spoke to them, and told them that they would be out in an hour's time. I knew better at the time, but I told them so with a view of consoling them, as they had got low-hearted when they understood that we had ceased working. I also, with the same view, took a drill and began drilling a hole to them, which Mr. Thomas Thomas (who had by this time with Mr. Beith and Mr. Isaiiah Thomas, followed me down) continued to do alternatively for some time. As it decided that the core should not be cut through until the water should be drawn below the level mark with the imprisoned men, I was told by Mr. Daniel Thomas to go to the pumpmen to assist in repairing one of the pumps which had got out of working order. There I remained until the water had got low enough that the coal, about 2 feet in thickness, could be cut through and without any risk to the imprisoned men, or to those that were working towards them.

When I take into consideration that the gentlemen I have named above are all cognisant of what I did, and of the truthfulness of this statement, I am at a loss to know the reason why I am so much disregarded as to be excluded from the list of first-class recipients from the Mansion House Fund, as well as from the '*Daily Telegraph Fund*.'

**Much regret at Mayor's decision**  
(Western Mail, Thursday, July 29<sup>th</sup> 1877)

The Editorial of the '*Western Mail*' of this date commented: - In consequence of the actions of some of the colliery managers interested in the distribution of the Tynwydd Fund, the Lord Mayor has definitely abandoned his proposed visit to Wales. That the gentlemen who by their protest against the Mansion House scheme have produced this result are acting conscientiously no-one who knows them personally will dispute. But many will, nevertheless, be of the opinion it would have been better for them to have submitted to an unjust award rather than to have raised the storm which now threatens to submerge, beneath a flood of angry recriminations and partisan accusations, the laurels won so nobly in the dark recesses of the inundated mine. It will be in the recollection of our readers that in response to the dramatic accounts which were published in the daily

newspapers detailing the incidents connected with the recovery of the miners who were imprisoned in the flooded colliery, large sums of money were subscribed by the public to compensate the imprisoned men for their sufferings, and to reward the gallant fellows who rescued them.

One fund, amounted to the aggregate of £1,200, was raised by the '*Daily Telegraph*,' and the proprietors of that paper despatched a representative to the scene of the disaster, who, on his own responsibility, distributed the money according to the best of his opinion and judgment. The bulk of the money was given to the dependants of those who lost their lives in the pit, to the men who were rescued, and to the working miners who took an active part in effecting their deliverance. A small sum was retained to defray the expenses of presenting some of the managers and others, to the number of 15, with medals and cups bearing suitable inscriptions. Although the '*Daily Telegraph*' commissioner undoubtedly made some mistakes in the selection of the objects of his bounty, the course of action pursued by him met with general approval, and it was that in substance the money had been handed over to those for whom it was intended by the subscribers.

The other considerable fund, raised by public subscription, is known as the Mansion House Fund, and amounts to the handsome proportion of £4,422. There are many persons, including the Lord Mayor himself, who hold very strongly that this money was intended exclusively for the objects set forth in his appeal, but despite their opinion, the Mansion House Committee have taken upon themselves to award very nearly 1-fourth of the total to Government Inspectors, colliery owners, mining engineers, medical men and other officials who directly or indirectly superintended or otherwise assisted in the work of deliverance.

It is amongst these gentlemen that the difference of opinion had arisen which has led to the present unhappy and embarrassing state of affairs. It does not fall within our provinces to offer any opinion as to the grounds upon which Mr. Daniel Thomas and his friends have based their protest. On the face of it, they would seem to be the persons best qualified by position and experience to give a correct idea as to the services rendered by those engaged in the rescuing operations; but, on the other hand, the fact that they were personally interested in the award cannot fail to throw a certain amount of suspicion upon the conclusions at which they have arrived. No man is a good judge in his own cause. It seems to us that the whole body of this difficulty might have been obviated if the sensible and equitable plan had been adopted of confining the distribution to those persons specially indicated by the Lord Mayor's appeal.

The gentlemen who have raised this protest and the other principal officials engaged in the work of rescue, would have formed a tribunal from whose decision no appeal could have been raised. It is too late, if now, to undo the mischief which the committee, acting no doubt from the best of motives, has wrought by diverting nearly £1,000 from the purposes for which it was subscribed into the pockets of the owners, managers, and other officials who are now squabbling over the distribution of the spoil. Mr. Daniel Thomas and his friends have declined the sums awarded to them. Let the other officials recipients follow their example. There then would be set at liberty £1,000, which might be applied to the erection of some permanent memorial of an event that signalizes alike the Welsh heroism and English appreciation of noble deeds.

**A reconsideration of refusal**  
Meeting of the dissidents at Porth

The '*Western Mail*' of Friday, July 20<sup>th</sup> 1877 commented: - We have every reason to believe that, upon reflection, the Lord Mayor or London will not punish the whole of south Wales by refusing to visit it on the occasion of the distribution of the Mansion House awards, in consequence of the dissatisfaction expressed by a small portion of those among whom it was proposed to distribute them. A suggestion has been made, which has met with the warm approval of the other recipients of the fund, that a general meeting shall be held forthwith, in order to express entire satisfaction with the course taken by the Rev. D. W. Williams, in connection with this matter.

Many letters have been received by us in which the writers express in unequivocal terms their gratitude to that gentleman for his labours to facilitate the work of fairly distributing the Tynewydd awards, and their complete satisfaction with the conclusions arrived at and the state of the data furnished by Mr. Williams. Our Pontypridd correspondent: - In compliance with a request made by some local gentlemen, several of those who signed the "protest" to the Lord Mayor, met on Thursday at Porth. Mr. A. A. McLucas, the secretary of the local committee, was in attendance, with a paper prepared by him, being of the nature of an appeal to the Lord Mayor, which he solicited the "protestants" to sign. This they refused to do, but at the same time they expressed their regret that the Lord Mayor had renounced his intention of visiting Wales, and expressed their readiness to do all in their power, should he alter his decision, to promote the success of the reception which was the intention of the Rev. D. W. Williams and others to give his lordship and his friends.



## The Lord Mayor of London and the Tynewydd Mansion House Fund

From the sublime to the ridiculous.

The *'Cardiff Times'* of 21<sup>st</sup> July 1877 was also very critical over what had gone on over the presentation of awards and medals: - From the most heroic act of daring to the most contemptible huckstering. Such are now the historical phases through which the Tynewydd disaster has passed. All England followed, with breathless emotion, the story of the rescue—all England are astonished, and pretty much disgusted with the peddling, meddling, squabbling over the moneys subscribed for rescued and rescuers. On the one hand we see the stuff out of which the world's heroes are made—on the other the "un-commonly common" material out of which personages like Dickens's *Quilp* are manufactured. It has been customary on the part of certain flippant writers to question the effects of civilization on the Welsh people. While we can throw back the insinuation with scorn, we shall not so easily efface the mischievous effects of recent squabbling over the Mansion House fund. When the grumbling and depreciation began, we received communications on the subject from several parties, but feeling how ungracious, unbecoming, and un-heroic were such letters, we gave them no encouragement.

We felt then, as we feel now, that if there was genuine ground for dissatisfaction through some workers being overlooked and others undervalued, yet there was good sense enough and patriotic Welshmen enough in the higher circles to put right what might have been wrong. It is a good proverbial philosophy not to "look a gift horse in the mouth," and it is a thousand pities this philosophy did not influence all parties. It was most honourable on the part of the Lord Mayor of London to originate a Mansion House Rescue Fund. It was noble on the part of the English people the response which followed. Unfortunately for the credit of South Wales, the reviling, abuse, and moral fisticuff over the distribution of the Fund converts the heroics of the story into an open and unblushing display of avaricious grumbling and individual depreciation. If we are to take the estimate of certain people, the vaunted heroism of the rescuers was an ordinary affair not to be treasured as an illustration of the better and noble side of Welsh character, but a thing to be computed by decimals, and dragged through the mud of epistolary contention. As a matter of fact, the Lord Mayor of London—Sir Thomas White—was entitled, as the custodian of the fund, to distribute it as to his judgment seemed best.

But his Lordship was most deferential to Welsh opinion and judgment. He accordingly called round him some of our most honoured members of Parliament, the Government Inspector of Mines, Mr. Forsyth, Q.C., the eminent member for Marylebone, and the Rev. D. W. Williams, of Fairfield, as patriotic a Welshman as we desire to meet. After careful investigation, a list apportioning the Mansion

House Fund was issued. We can easily believe that mistakes and omissions were made but for these the Lord Mayor of London was not personally to blame. Instead of insulting the Head of the Corporation of London, why did the discontented not address Sir C. R. M. Talbot, M. P., Mr. Hussey Vivian, M.P., or gentlemen of kindred status! Such a course might have led to inequalities being redressed but insult, innuendo, and charges of favouritism were freely indulged in until Sir Thomas White not unnaturally washed his hands of the whole affair in supreme disgust.

Urged to reconsider his decision, the Lord Mayor has apparently good-naturedly done so, and from a telegram which we print in another column, he will be the guest of the Mayor of Swansea, and of Mr. Hussey Vivian, M.P., early in August. We are extremely thankful, for the good name of South Wales, that a disastrous and unforthcoming termination to an episode that will live in English history, to be averted. It should read all parties a lesson in forbearance, good manners, and self-respect. Mining disasters, unhappily, are frequent, and the sufferers deserve all the practical sympathy they can get from the general public. Such conduct as has been pursued respecting the Mansion House Tynewydd Fund is enough to make every individual John Bull button up his breeches pockets. However much Welshmen may contend among themselves as to politics, or ecclesiastical matters, never let it be said that our humble heroes are influenced, as Scott's miser was, "for a consideration."

#### **A clash of dates**

(Western Mail, Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup> 1877)

The '*Western Mail*' of Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup> 1877 foretold of a problem with the proposed awarding of the Mansion House Fund at Pontypridd on August 4<sup>th</sup>: - We do not wish to put the slightest impediment in the way of a most enthusiastic gathering at Pontypridd on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August. In fact, in is our earnest hope that not only will the Lord Mayor of London be present, that by-gones will be regularly noted by-gones, everybody shake hands with everybody, and the curtain fall, finally, before the great stirring drama of Tynewydd, a smile of sincere satisfaction mantling the face of every actor. Such is our wish, but, possibly, it has escaped the notice of the principal movers in the forthcoming demonstration that the assizes will open on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month, which being on Saturday, it will follow that it will be Tuesday, or even Wednesday, before any of the important business comes along. The connection between the Pontypridd demonstration and the assizes is possibly an enigma.

Let us further explain that it is at the forthcoming assizes that Mr. Thomas, the managing partner of Tynewydd, will be tried by a jury of his countrymen for the

manslaughter of the unfortunate sufferers of Tynewydd – those over whom no roars of echo welcomed, at whose appearance in the broad daylight of heaven, no glad shouts of joy arose – who received no portion of a generous nation’s bounty, but were brought up battered, dead, to be hurried into coffins, and hastened away as a noisome sight, unfitting for the eye to dwell upon. Rightly or wrongly, for the death of these men the managing partner will be tried, and to those who read the evidence as given before the coroner’s jury, or know the leading particulars of the case, it will be very evident, not only that it is likely to be a lengthy one, but that the majority of the rescuers, and a large number of others who figured in the drama, will, in all probability, be required at Swansea as witnesses. If in this case it would be exceedingly awkward if, on the day announced, when the Lord Mayor would be present, possibly with Lord Aberdare, and all the prizes, medals, and &C.; ready for distribution, that, be the necessities of the case, the actors would be away rendering evidence for or against at the assizes. It would be like giving an orchestral prelude, and lifting the scene without having anyone to appear before the foot-lights! We trust the subject will meet the consideration it demands, and that, thus forewarned, the movers will be forearmed to avert any fiasco.

**Letters to the editor from Thomas Jones**

(Western Mail, Friday, July 27<sup>th</sup> 1877)

**Sir** – So much having been written and said in connection with the sad but glorious affair, in one way or another, I would gladly remain silent on the subject were it not that I could consider myself deficient in moral courage and manliness if I did not repudiate the motives laid to the charge of myself and others in reference to the distribution of the Mansion House Fund. This being a public matter, I think I am not out of place when I say that beyond a doubt six of the seven signatures to the “protest” are the *real rescuers*. Let it not be believed for a moment that the letter which has been sent to the Lord Mayor and committee was written with a view to prevent the Lord Mayor coming amongst us to distribute the awards, but I unhesitatingly say that no body of men was, or is, prepared to give his Lordship a thoroughly hearty and loyal welcome than the seven already alluded to, their soul object being to guard against the wrong distribution of the money so generously given by the public for the benefit of the rescued, the widows, and orphans. The Lord Mayor’s compliment, viz; “That the contributions were not intended for their class,” is thoroughly appreciated by them. Still he may be surprised to find that there was no work in connection with the rescued but what anyone of the seven was competent and able to perform; one and all being practical men, who have risen to their present position through their own industry and perseverance, and are therefore jealous of their honour, and full of “pride” upon this matter.

There is no-one who will deny the fact that either one or all of these seven men were on the scene of action from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> day of April continually performing their duties day and night. No-one either will deny that it was through their labour and skill the pressure was reduced and the water taken down, as five out of the seven worked under the compressed air. One of these was the first to volunteer to go and work inside the doors, when everyone else shrank from doing so, and if this had not been done no doubt the whole of the five entombed men would have been allowed to perish after existing without food or light for such a length of time in their prison. As a proof of this it may be mentioned that the £10 which was sent to the Rev. William Lewis, vicar of Ystradyfodwg, to be given to the man who first volunteered to go under the compressed air, was given to the widow and orphans of Edward Williams, at the request of him who volunteered.

It is therefore, any wonder, after all they have done that they protest against distributing these funds without any discretion as to the meritorious work done by each recipient? The name of those who worked under the compressed air are as follows: - Daniel Thomas, James Thomas, David Jones, Thomas Jones, David Davies, William Thomas, William Beith and six colliers whose names have been sent in on our list, and can be given out again if applied for. I have myself no doubt that had the water not been raised from Hines' Pit and reduced by the special pump, and the compressed air allowed to escape the rescue would never have been accomplished. The apparatus for the latter was made by Mr. T. H. Riches, Taff Vale Railway, and the air-doors by Mr. James Thomas, part-owner and manager of the flooded colliery, and the only dread and indescribable feeling I had during the whole time I was working under the compressed air was when Mr. Beith made a mistake in stating that instead of reducing (after two hours pumping an escape of air from inside the flooded heading), the pressure had increased from 4lbs to 25lbs.

I know of no mechanical engineers in connection with the affair, except Messrs. T. H. Riches and H. W. Lewis, and if a mistake for the want of proper information was made (which is to be regretted), this is no reason why the "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" should not come out, and I say again that the seven real rescuers want nothing but "Honour to whom honour is due." I may also say that Mr. Edmund Thomas, being a gentleman in whom those inside had every confidence, was placed, at our express wish, outside to guard the doors and answer signals given by those inside – an arrangement absolutely necessary for safety. Apologising for troubling you to insert this lengthy explanation, **I am, and Co; Thomas Jones, Porth, July 21<sup>st</sup>.**

[We are authorised by Mr. Thomas Jones to state, in answer to the remarks made by the Lord Mayor at his banquet on Tuesday, viz; "The gentlemen who had

refused to accept the plate tended them as an acknowledgement of their efforts to rescue the imprisoned miners had since asked him to withdraw his unconditional acceptance of their refusal," that he has no knowledge of any request having been made, but if it has it is without his consent or approval, as he can see nothing to retract from the post.] – **Editor, Western Mail**

### **Monday, July 31<sup>st</sup> 1877**

Trial for manslaughter of James Thomas - Manager of Tynewydd Pit

Opening the mid-summer assizes at Swansea on Monday, July 31<sup>st</sup> 1877, Baron Bramwell in addressing the Grand Jury said that there was one case of manslaughter which he thought it necessary to refer to. It had not been before the magistrates and he was doubtful it would be brought before the Grand Jury. It was a case where several men were drowned in a colliery through an inflow of water from an adjoining and disused mine, and the defendant was the managing owner of the colliery. He (the Baron) had no special knowledge of mining matters, but he thought that when there were evidences of water a small hole should be driven to ascertain if there was danger. The defendant did not do this, although he was told that the coal was wet or "sweating" at the boundary adjoining the old mine.

He believed there was a fault at the boundary and that there was no danger. The learned Baron thought there could be no doubt the defendant had some reason for not doing what he ought to have done. If he believed there was danger from the water, he would, for the sake of his own mine, have taken necessary precautions. In the case of manslaughter, however, good motives would not excuse the defendant if it were shown that he was guilty of negligence resulting in the death of one or more persons. It was impossible to say how much negligence constituted criminal neglect, and it would be for the jury to say whether it was a case where heavy damages would be sufficient, or whether there was such a culpability as would warrant the charge of manslaughter being carried out. (The case was put back a week to accommodate the presentations at Pontypridd)

On Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup> in the criminal court of the Glamorgan assizes, it was arranged that the charge of manslaughter against the manager of the Tynewydd Colliery should be taken on the following Monday or Tuesday. On Tuesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> the following letter appeared in the '*Western Mail*': -

**Sir** – We desire, through your columns to publicly thank the managers and other gentlemen who kindly assisted us in our endeavours to rescue the entombed men in our Tynewydd Colliery. We also desire to express our thanks to the various colliery proprietors and others who so kindly lent us machinery and material so

urgently required. Though late, we trust they will not consider this expression of our thanks any the less sincere. – **We are, & The Troedyrhiw Coal Company, Bute Docks, August 1<sup>st</sup>.**

The editorial of the '*Western Mail*' of August 3<sup>rd</sup> 1877, carried the following comments: - It is pleasant to find, after all the bad passions aroused in connection with the glorious event at Tynewydd, that the authorities at Cardiff, Swansea and Pontypridd have risen to the height of the occasion, and have resolved to give the Lord Mayor of London and his friends a fitting reception in south Wales. Everyone who is aware of the onerous nature of the duties of the chief magistrate of the first city in the world will acknowledge that in coming to distribute awards he is devoting a portion of most valuable time which is fully occupied in London at every hour of the day, and that nothing but a desire to recognize an act of heroism which he is in some measure identified justifies his departure from the scene of his duty for a long period. The injudicious act of the Tynewydd "protestants" nearly wrecked the whole proceedings a few weeks since, and caused his lordship to observe, in his second letter to the same gentleman, "my impeding visit to your district would have been a happier one had the ill-feeling caused by your protest not been excited." It is to be hoped that there will be no renewal of the ill-feeling mentioned in his lordship's letter when he arrives amongst us, but that each and all will endeavour to make his lordship's welcome typical of that enthusiasm which has always characterized the people of Wales.

#### **Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup> 1877**

A plea for a trouble free day

After all the arguing and name called of the previous few weeks, at last the big day for the presentation of the Albert Medals had arrived. The '*Western Mail*' newspaper on the Morning of August 4<sup>th</sup> 1877 was hoping there would be no public outcry by anyone who had a 'grudge' to bear and made the following appeal for a trouble-free day: - Today, we hope under a sunny sky, admits a paean of welcome from Caradog's band, the Lord Mayor of London will bring the great drama of Tynewydd to a happy and harmonious conclusion. That which was begun in the dark mine, and in the fell and ghastly presence of death; that which was continued under circumstances of such long drawn out and thrilling horror that the nation paused in its thousand duties to listen, to linger at the forge, at the mill, in the workshop, in the office, in the drawing room, in the very senate house, in the very agony of doubt and fear, is come to an end.

The curtain which was lifted at the side of the coal pit, disclosing a group of men as near madness and death as it was possible to be, and live, is again raised, and this time the scene is on the old druidic gathering spot of Pontypridd, and England's

chief magistrate presides. The accidents, unparralled of human endurance and worthy heroism, have called forth an exhibition and finale equally unparralled. Accidents we have had even in Wales which have aroused the greatest sympathy and that not from a section of the public, but from the whole nation. To this day the widows and orphans of Gethin (1862) receive substantial benefit from the £7,000 which the bounty of the country supplied to them; but we never heard of any civil functionary, of any nobleman, attending in person, and amidst public demonstration and 'eclat' winding up the drama.

It was left for Tynewydd; and even during the memory of every living man amongst us, and afterwards perpetuated in history, will the tale of Tynewydd remain – the grim black cloud which on the fourth of August turned around its silver lining. But, even as amidst of our home gatherings at festive hours the memory of one who filled the vacant chair will steal in, and tears not infrequently blend with our smiles, so admits the fullness and glory of the presentations today that some recollection be given to those who will feast no more, but at whose board there will be no sumptuous plate, and around whose neck no medal will ever hang; some thought to be given to those whose bodies rocked to and fro in the dark underworld stream, as idly and symbolically as the piece of wreck upon the tide, while maids and mothers sat in darkened homes, and children cried for those who in this world would come home no more!

Let thoughts such as these check parade and boisterousness, and temper the humour of "Protestants," and inclined to modest expression and action those who would fain reap all reward, and all glory. Today, on the mountainside, history is made. Let it be such that in after years it will awaken just pride and yield no regret. May the pages of history written today have no blending of the mean, the paltry, or the selfish. England, in the person of the Lord Mayor, will today soothe the suffering and reward the action of every actor.

No more dignified occasion, more honourable to all concerned, as ever occurred amongst the Welsh mountains; and hence the need again and again to urge, for individual and national reputation, that every care to be taken "to rise to the height of the most glorious circumstance, and have no tint, no stain upon the mirror of our state." The same newspaper continued: -

### **Official announcement**

The Albert Medal and the Tynewydd medal

We quote the official announcement of the award of the Albert medals to the Tynewydd rescuers from the '*London Gazette*': - The queen has been graciously pleased to confer the 'Albert medal of the first-class' on: -

**Daniel Thomas**, colliery proprietor, Brithweunydd, Rhondda valley, South Wales.

**William Beith**, mechanical engineer, of Harris's Navigation Colliery, Quaker's Yard, South Wales.

**Isaac Pride**, collier, Llwynelyn Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**John William Howell**, collier, Ynyshir Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

The following is an account of the services in respect of which the declaration has been conferred: - On 11<sup>th</sup> of April the Tynewydd Colliery, situated near Porth, in the Rhondda Valley, South Wales, was inundated with water from the old workings of the adjoining Cymmer Colliery. At the time of the inundation there were fourteen men in the pit, of whom four were unfortunately drowned and one killed by compressed air, leaving nine men imprisoned by the water; of this number four were released after eighteen hours' imprisonment, and five after nine days' imprisonment. It was in effecting the release of these latter five that those distinguished services were rendered which the conferring of the 'Albert medal of the first class' is intended to recognise. The rescuing operations consisted of driving through the barrier of coal, 38 yards in length, which intervened between the imprisoned men and the rescuers, and kept back a large quantity of water and compressed air. This task was commenced on Monday, the 16<sup>th</sup> of April, and was carried on until Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, without any great amount of danger being incurred by the rescuers; but about 1 o'clock p.m. on that day, when only a few yards of barrier remained, the danger from an irruption of water, gas, and compressed air was so great as to cause the colliers to falter. It was at this juncture that the above-mentioned four men volunteered to resume the rescuing operations, the danger of which had been greatly increased by an outburst of inflammable gas under great pressure, and in such quantities as to extinguish the Davy lamps which were being used. The danger from gas continued at intervals until half-past 3 on the following morning, and from that time the above four men, at great peril to their own lives, continued the rescuing operations until 3 o'clock p.m.; when the five imprisoned men were safely released.

The Queen has been graciously pleased to confer the 'Albert medal of the second-class' on: -

**George Ablett**, collier, Tynewydd Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Charles Baynham**, collier, Brithweunydd, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Richard Hopkins**, collier, Ynyshir Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Rich Howells**, overman, Tynewydd Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Charles Oatridge**, collier, Tynewydd Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**John Williams**, collier, Pontypridd Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Robert Williams**, Collier, Dinas Isaf Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Edward David**, collier, Havod, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.



**William Morgan**, collier, Havod Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**David Rees**, fireman, Tynewydd Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Rees Thomas**, collier, Tynewydd Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

During the five days from the 16<sup>th</sup> of April to the 20<sup>th</sup> of April, the above-named 11 men were at various times engaged in cutting through the barrier of coal separating them from the five imprisoned men, and while exposing their own lives to the great danger which would have resulted from an outburst of compressed air and water, and to the danger which actually existed from the presence of large quantities of inflammable gas, continued to perform their work until the five men were rescued.

The Queen has been graciously pleased to confer the 'Albert medal of the second-class' on: -

**David Davies**, colliery owner, Penrhiwfer, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Thomas Jones**, colliery owner, Ynyshir, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Edmund Thomas**, colliery owner, Llwynceinlin, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

James Thomas, colliery owner & manager, Tynewydd, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Thomas Thomas**, colliery manager, Ynyshir, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Thomas Getrych Davies**, colliery manager, Tylacoch, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**David Evans**, colliery manager, Ferndale, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**David Jones**, colliery manager, Cymmer Level, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**Henry Lewis**, colliery manager, Energlyn Colliery, Monmouthshire.

**Isaiah Thomas**, colliery manager, Brithweunydd Colliery, Rhondda Valley, South Wales.

**William Thomas**, colliery manager, Resolven, Neath, Glamorganshire.

From Thursday, the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, when the operations for the rescue were commenced, until Friday, the 20<sup>th</sup> April, when the intervening barrier of coal had been cut through and the imprisoned men released, the above named 11 men were engaged in the work of rescuing their comrades.

**Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup> 1877**  
**Presentation of the Albert Medals**  
Pontypridd and the decorations

Arrangements having been made for the presentation of the Queen's medal, the Mansion House and other "Funds," at Pontypridd on Saturday, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1877, the day was proclaimed a holiday throughout the Rhondda Valley. The Lord Mayor of London came to Wales on Wednesday, and was splendidly received and

honoured by the Mayor and Corporation of Swansea. The people of Pontypridd feeling the national importance of the occasion out-did expectation in the luxuriance and beauty of their welcome to the distinguished visitors of the day. To record the many and profuse decorations is a task of no great ease. The town was so completely 'en fete,' that a great distinguishing faculty is necessary in order to pick and choose from the efforts of the inhabitants, to show how cordial their welcome to the Lord Mayor was. The visitor was first attracted by the gay appearance of the Taff Vale Railway station. The officials of the company had evidently been seized with that spirit of emulation which was manifested amongst the inhabitants, and the result was that the station was neatly, though not profusely, decorated. The station is exceedingly open, and therefore, not as well adapted for curtain and carpet embellishments as other stations less exposed would be. The Taff Vale Railway officials evidently were of this opinion, and, with considerable taste, chose certain spots which, when attired in gay and festive colours and greenery, would catch the eye, and have the best effect. The iron bridge crossing the railway was adorned with evergreens, flowers, and banners, with the British crown in the centre, arches of greenery being erected at the foot of the steps at each side of the bridge. The colours, which were varied and pretty, had an imposing effect. A foot bridge was laid down for the occasion across the rails for the Lord Mayor, on his arrival, to cross.

At the outlet from the station there was an archway of greenery and flags. The bunting in the approach to the station had quite a grand effect, the archway at the entrance evidently having been taken pains with, and set off with the Unicorn and the Prince of Wales's leathers, with the word "Honour" in the centre. Great credit is due to the Taff Vale officials, and amongst those who helped in the decorations may be mentioned Messrs David Lewis, Jenkins, Price, and Jones. Leaving the railway station we notice a banner flying from the window of Mr. Thomas's the Bluebell Inn, with "Welcome to the Lord Mayor." Up the roadway, towards the police court, many banners were floating, and not a few windows are festooned with flowers and, &c., amongst which can be mentioned those of the Half Moon public-house, and of Mr. West, grocer. Proceeding down High Street attention was attracted by a number of gaily decked banners floating from the windows of Mr. Roger Jones's grocery establishment. Turning off into the Tramroad Street, the inhabitants here had done their best. Mr. Watkins, Greyhound Inn, floated flags from his windows and the words "Welcome to Town." The establishments of Mr. Miles, draper and grocers; Mr. Wm. Davies, of the Lamb Inn, whose house was festooned with greenery, were also set off with bunting. From the Hannan Spirit Vaults a banner wishing the Lord Mayor "Welcome to south Wales" occupied a prominent position. Mr. Barnhouse, of the Prince of Wales Inn, caused his place to look unusually lively by decorating it with greenery and floating a banner bearing the words "Welcome to the civic chief."

And now we come to the chief decorations, which were in the High Street; all down the street, however, they were in such a maze that it was impossible to notice all of them. The assistants at Mr. E. H. McMillan's drapery establishment had evidently taken great pains, and as a result, their decorations were very successful. A coloured text on a white ground, and the variety of ribbon streamers of almost every hue, had a pretty effect. Mr. Davies, chemist, and Mr. Palmer, of the Spirit Vaults, added to the scene by floating banners from their windows. Then came a grand triumphal archway crossing the High Street from the Clarence Hotel to Loxton's Hotel. This was a very handsome structure, arranged with evergreens, flowers, and coloured flags, surmounted with the city shield. Below the latter were the words, "Pontypridd salutes you," in blue letters on a white ground, and also "Croeso i Bontypridd" (Welcome to Pontypridd). At the offside was "Farewell, with thanks," and "Diolch Rhwydd hynt" (thanks to you). Messrs Davies and Francis, butchers, decorated their establishment, and banners were floated from Pegler's tea warehouse.

At the Ivy Bush (Mr. Evans) and the Staffordshire Warehouse tokens of welcome to the Lord Mayor were exhibited, and from the establishments of Messrs. Phillips and Evans, and Messrs. T. Evans and Co. (Temple of fashion), flags, banners, and streamers floated across the road. This was also the case from the shop of Mr. John Crockett, jeweller, to the Butchers' Arms (Mr. Jones), the entrance to the hostelry being gaily adorned with evergreens, flowers, and small flags. The New Inn, Mr. Bassett's chemist shop, Mr. Evans's ironmonger shop, Williams's tailoring establishment, Taff-street, were all bedecked with bunting and evergreens, and in several places streamers were run across the street, flying merrily in the breeze. The shops of Mr. G. H. Williams, saddler, J. and J. and Protheroe, grocers, were not behind their neighbours, and across the road hung "A welcome to the Lord Mayor of London," in crimson letters on a white ground. Passing along, the adornments all of which express a hearty welcome to the distinguished visitor, became still more numerous, and the remainder of those who assisted in the decorations in the High Street, were Mr. Morgan, Seedsman; Mr. Gronow, boot maker; Mr. Lewis, at the boot establishment; Mr. Elliott, Aerated water establishment; Mr. James, Tredegar Arms Inn, Mr. Morgan, painter, and Mr. Roberts, grocer.

Across the street, near Mr. Lewis's establishment, had been placed a beautiful crimson banner, bearing in white letters the sentiment "Welcome to Cambria, thou Civic Chief." Turning from High-street on to Bridge Parade, which runs over the spacious Taff Vale Bridge, on which was erected a splendid triumphal archway, decorated in a beautiful manner, surmounted with the shield of London, and bearing the motto "A good deed worthily done." On the other side was a "Farewell to the Lord Mayor," and the expression "Take with you the blessings of the widows and orphans." Mr. Hall, of the Maltsters' Arms, erected banners across

the road from his house wishing "A hearty Welcome to the Lord Mayor of London," and on the opposite side bearing the words "Thanks come again." In front of Messrs. Brown, Lenox and Co.'s chain and anchor manufactory another triumphal archway had been erected by the employees, and decorated with greenery, relieved by dahlias and mountain ash berries, having a pretty rustic effect. The word "Welcome" had been worked in bold letters with the berries.

The last decorations on the way to the Rocking Stone were those placed by Mr. R. Williams, grocer, and Mr. Thomas White, White Horse Inn, Llanover Street. As the Lord Mayor returned from the ground by way of Market-street, banners and streamers were hung out by, amongst others, Mr. Forrest, artist; Mr. Jones Powell, auctioneer; Messrs. Alexander Bros.; Mr. Williams, ironmonger; Mr. Griffiths, Mill-street; and Messrs. Jones and Co., of the London-house Establishment. "Long live the Lord Mayor," "Welcome to Wales," and "Welcome Guests," were amongst the sentiments placed on the banners. Dr. Hopkins, of Penuel Square, placed a pretty device in his garden, which was accompanied with an appropriate welcome to the Lord Mayor. Taking the decorations altogether they were a credit to Pontypridd, and thanks are due to Messrs L. Gordon Lenox, Tudor Crawshay, W. H. Jenkins. D. Morris and W. Cooper Penn, and the decoration committee.

#### The arrival at Pontypridd

The morning train sensibly swelled the great multitude which had gathered in Pontypridd, dotting the far-off hillside, thronging the streets, clustering on the bridges, and choking up the entrance to the station. Soon after noon the Lord Mayor and party arrived from Margam, where they had spent the night, at the residence of Mr. Talbot. M.P. As the special train ran on to the main line at the junction his Lordship was loudly cheered by the people who had lined the railway embankment. The arrangements for the special train and those at the railway station were carried out entirely under the personal superintendence of Mr. Hurmann, the traffic manager. The train was brought up to the station on the down line, but shunted on to the up line, and his Lordship and those who accompanied him alighted on the up platform, where the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield, the chairman and the following members of the Pontypridd committee of management were waiting to receive him: - Messrs. L. Gordon Lenox, Tudor Crawshay. G. J. Penn, C. W. Bassett. C, J. Alexander, W. Williams, W. Cooper Penn, R. Williams, Captain Williams, Dr. Leckie, Jabez Evans, W. H. Jenkins, H. S. Davies, D. Leyshon. W. Merchant, Phillip Williams, M. W. Morgan, H. Hopkins, J. Evans, D. Morris, J. Evans (surveyor), J. Briscoe, J. Jones, T. Williams and Caradog, Dr. L. Morgan, and Mr. A. A. McLucas, sec. The Lord Mayor was accompanied by Mr. White, junior., his Secretary, Mr. Soulsby, Mr. C. R. M. Talbot, the Lord Lieutenant of the county; Mr. Vivian, M.P., Mr. G. Williams, Miskin Manor; Alderman and Mrs

Nottage and party; Sir Alexander Wood and Mr. Richard Bassett, directors of the Great Western Railway; Major Duncan, Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem; the Hon. H. Bruce, Admiral Jones, Rheola; Rev Dr. M'Auslane, Mr. Scott Russell, Captain Tyler, R. N., Miss Talbot, Mrs Williams, and a number of ladies. On stepping from the carriage, the Rev D. W. Williams approached the Lord Mayor, and read the following address: -

“My Lord, we, the inhabitants of Pontypridd and, its neighbourhood, beg to take the earliest opportunity of publicly thanking your Lordship for your kindness in coming amongst us on an occasion of so much interest, not only to ourselves and to this county, but to the mining population of the empire, who will feel that they, too, have a share in the sympathy with their fortunes thus conspicuously displayed by your Lordship’s presence on this day. The life of a collier is one of constant peril, bravely encountered and resolutely endured; and when, as not infrequently happens, death and disaster do visit them, they are submitted to more patiently in the assurance that they invariably call forth the sympathy and benevolence of their Sovereign and countrymen.

Never have these kind feelings been more reverently displayed than on the occurrence of the recent disaster at the Tynewydd Colliery. There was one universal outburst of sorrow for the sufferers, of anxiety for the fate of the imperilled, of admiration for the heroism displayed in their deliverance, which found vent in generous efforts to reward the gallant band of rescuers, to relieve the rescued, and to provide for the widows and orphans of those who had perished. With the impulsive promptitude ever displayed by the holders of your high office, but never surpassed by any of them, your Lordship invited subscriptions for all these objects, and when they had flowed in with generous abundance, not only bestowed your time and invaluable advice in the difficult and invidious task of apportioning the collected funds, but have crowned your work of kindness by undertaking to distribute them among the selected recipients. For these reasons we once again welcome your Lordship among us. We venture to believe that you will appreciate the reception which will be given you by the grateful hearts and cordial voices of the colliers of Cwm Rhondda, and that as they will assuredly never forget the honour of this visit of kindness and sympathy from the Lord Mayor of the city of London, so your Lordship will ever remember with pleasure the part you have taken in this interesting ceremony.”

The address, which was very handsomely illuminated, was then handed by the reverent gentleman to the Lord Mayor amid loud cheers from those who were able to witness the ceremony, and by the thousands of other persons outside who took up the cheering, and which for some minutes could be heard dying away in the distance as those far off gathered from the action of those nearer what had

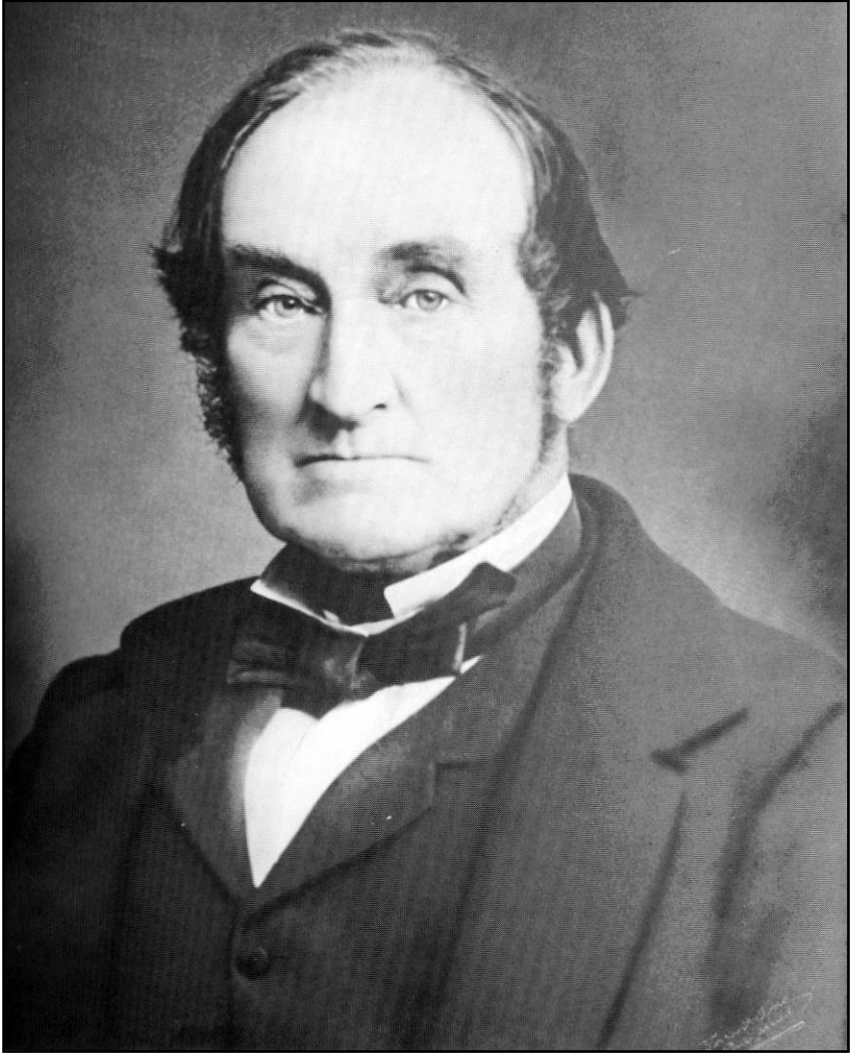
been done. On the Common where the distribution of prizes was to take place, salvos of artillery from time to time served to increase the enthusiasm of an enthusiastic people.

After a few minutes, the Lord Mayor, in acknowledging the presentation said that no one could regret more than he the unhappy circumstances which had led to his appearance amongst them, and no one could now be more grateful for his warm reception. (Applause.) So assisted had he and his committee been by their much esteemed friend Mr. Vivian, that to him he was deeply thankful. Under the most trying and difficult circumstances, he (the speaker) and his committee had endeavoured to do their duty, and when he returned to his citizens he was certain he should be able to say that the same kindness and good feeling had followed him from place to place, and that it was here the same as it was at Swansea. (Loud cheers.) He assured them that if he had thought for one moment such kindness and consideration awaited him, he should not have hesitated very much before he came into their midst. He should have felt how far short he came of the deserts to which they seemed fit to think him entitled.

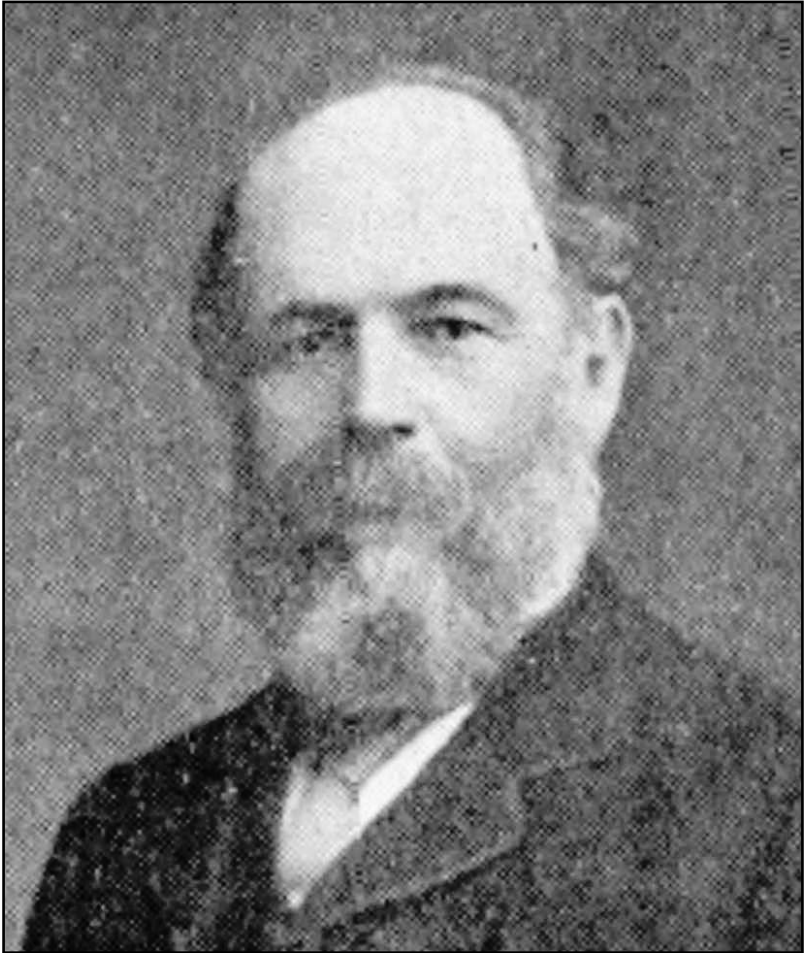
Certainly he had been received in a way he should never forget. He thanked them from the bottom of his heart, and asked them to believe that it would be the greatest satisfaction to him, when he arrived at yonder hill, to see the brave fellows who had endured so much, and to see the people manifested as they did one unanimous feeling of regard for their fellow-creatures. It was a credit to Wales. He could not tell them how much he thanked them for his reception. Words failed him. He assured them his happiest recollection had been to know that Wales had set such a noble example, which could not be forgotten, and all would do well to endeavour to follow. (Loud cheers.) With this the ceremony at the station terminated.

#### The procession to the Common

The local committee were now marshalled outside the station, prepared to escort the distinguished visitors to the scene of the day's ceremony, but suddenly it was discovered that the carriage had not arrived. There was a little delay, and a great deal of bustle and action. Just as everybody was beginning to grow desperate, and the word to advance had been given, the missing chariot, drawn by four high-mettled horses, guided by postillions in scarlet, dashed up the hill, and the Lord Mayor and his friends took their seats, a handsomely-appointed brake following with the remainder of the party. The procession now began to move forward in the following order:—



**The Rev. D. W. Williams, the much criticised man who had to decide who was to be awarded the Albert medals, and who were not.**



**Henry Naunton Davies, chief medical officer at the Tynewydd colliery.**



Mounted Police.  
Miners in working dress with their tools;  
Band of the 19th Glamorgan Volunteers.  
Friendly Society with insignia, and regalia, of every society  
headed by the Chairman and Secretary, viz;  
Oddfellows, Manchester Unity.  
Ivorites, Druids, Brass Band; Ancient Order of Foresters,  
Philanthropics, Ancient Britons, Shepherds.  
The Committee of management  
Carriages of Lord Mayor and Mansion House Committee.  
Tradesmen and Townspeople.  
Police.

In the front and rear of the principal carriage rode two police officials, viz., Superintendents Matthews and Thomas and Inspectors Thorney and Rodman, while on each side walked a strong staff of constables. As the procession descended the hilly street leading from the station the scene was one of an inspiring character. Far as the eye could reach along the single street was a long line of well-dressed people, eagerly looking for the approach of the men who had come to represent English generosity and to reward Welsh bravery. On the walls, and in the windows too, the people congregated, the pleasant faces of ladies forming a pleasant feature, and the bright eyes of girls eagerly scanning the scene below.

Away to the front was a long and brilliant vista of coloured flags and streamers, with here and there triumphal arches. Through such a scene as this, with an extended procession in front, with silken banners flaunting in the breeze, with the strain of martial music ringing in the ears, and with the hum of animated conversation and comment by a thousand tongues in the vernacular, did the Lord Mayor make his way through the crowded streets of Pontypridd, every face, every action, every surrounding circumstances be speaking that welcome which all alike extended. There was little or no cheering—the Welsh people are not given to cheering; but there was no lack of manifestation of the admiration which was felt at the arrival of the greatest of civic potentates, who, dressed in gorgeous apparel of crimson and velvet, and decorated with his magnificent gold chain of office, studded with costly stones, brought vividly before the popular imagination the reality of that which to thousands of people in the Rhondda Valley had hitherto been a mere tradition.

Passing the Bank, where one of the windows was filled with a very pretty group of children, the procession was enlivened at Penuel Chapel by the voices of school choirs singing a Welsh air, another pleasant surprise of a similar character being

provided near the Tabernacle Chapel. From this point the scene was grand. Above, the hillsides were dotted over with spectators; while slowly wending their way up the ascent were the various Orders forming the procession, resplendent with banners and regalia. Looking downwards upon the approaching procession, the town bright with colour, filled by an animated crowd, and the hills reverberating with music, there was as pretty a pageant and as much to do to delight both the eye and the ear as any man could desire. At the summit of the hill, the procession opened out, and the Lord Mayor passed through long ranks of Foresters and Oddfellows, Ivorites, Philanthropics, Shepherds, and Druids, resplendent in their white robes and mysterious in their signs and symbols, until he at length reached the summit, where Carradoc and his choir made the hills resound with the stately music of "The men of Harlech," The Lord Mayor was then conducted to the scene of the distribution

While the procession was marching through Pontypridd, and the bands filled the air with martial strains, the seated enclosure in which the presentations were to be made gradually filled. Many ladies in fashionable costume occupied the front seats, chatting agreeably, and occasionally listening to the music floating pleasantly from the valley below. Nearer came the procession, louder blew the brass instruments, and at this exciting moment the mists which seemed to overhang the Rhondda Valley temporarily disappeared in a burst of sunlight, tinting the hill with a golden hue, and warming up the faces of

Fair woman and brave men  
A Thousand hearts beat rapidly; and when  
Music arose with its long voluptuous swell,  
Soft eyes looked love to eyes to which spake again.  
And all went merrily as a marriage bell.

From this elevated position, 500 feet above the level of the sea, could be surveyed a succession of bold, rounded hills, beautiful forests, and romantic valleys. From the platform sloping up to the mountain top, stretched away a vast multitude of people, rising rank above rank, estimated at 50,000 in number. All around were thousands of those Welsh colliers who Mr. Wales described as the best and bravest of their class. In front was a fringe of aristocracy proud to do honour to the colliers' goodness and bravery; on the platform were those who had been rescued from a living tomb; the men before whose sturdy stroke the rocks crumbled and fell and gave up their prisoners were there also.

Hard by stood the widows and children. The prominent figure amidst all was the greatest functionary of the greatest city in the world. At the moment when Sir Thomas White alighted from the carriage, the cheering was something to be

remembered, in response to which he bowed gracefully, and as he ascended the wooden platform, the processionists crossed towards the back part of the vast assemblage—the masses round the flags and banners reproducing for all the world the camp scene in Balfe's posthumous opera, as exacted at Drury- Lane; and, as if to complete the illusion, one of the bands played *The Village boy*, vividly recalling the lines-

The minstrel to the war has gone  
In the rank of death you will find him.

The following among others had seats either on the platform or within the enclosure: - Lord and Lady Aberdare, the Hon Mr. and Misses Bruce, Mr. C. R. M. Talbot, M.P. (Lord Lieutenant), and Miss Talbot; Mr. H. H. Vivian, Mr. and Mrs Vivian; Mr. and Mrs Gwilym Williams, Miskin Manor; Rev. Mr. M'Auslane, London Mr. and Mrs Williams, Aberpergwm; the Rev D. W. Williams, Fairfield; Mr. and Mrs Stacey, Llandough Castle; Major and Mrs Turberville; Major Herbert; Major Duncan. R.A., Woolwich; Mrs Wyndham Lewis, Mr. and Mrs F. R. Crawshay; Mr. and Mrs Tudor Crawshay; Sir Alexander Wood, Mr. Scott Russell. London; Captain Spencer Nicholl; Alderman Nottage, London; Mrs and Miss Nottage; Mr. James Lewis, Plasdraw, Aberdare; Mr. and Mrs J. E. Price, Pontypridd; Mr. George Martin, Dowlais; Mr. Frank James, Merthyr: the Rev John Griffith, Rector of Merthyr; the Rev. G. C. F. Harries, Gelligaer; Mr. Henry Lewis, Greenmeadow; the Rev W. Gwynne Jones, Vicar of Aberdare; Colonel Tyler; Mr. T. W. Booker, Velindre; Rev. Jones, Ystradowen; Major Powell, Aberdare; Captain Howell. Aberdare; Dr. Davies, Aberdare; Mr. and Mrs E. C. Spickett; Mr. and Mrs C. Bassett; Mr. and Mrs Edwards-Price, Mr. and Mrs H. C. Linton; Mr. .J. T. D. Llewellyn, Penllegare; Mr. W. Davies, Aberdare; Mr. Evan Lewis; Mr. David Duncan, Cardiff; Mr. Robert Davies, Cardiff; the Rev O B. Pryce, Cowbridge; Mr. Thomas Philips, solicitor, Aberdare; Mr. David Williams, Taff Vale Brewery, Merthyr; the Rev. Archdeacon Griffiths, Neath; Mr. Geo. Overton, coroner; Mr. Thos. Williams, deputy coroner; Mr. T. E. Wales, Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines; Col. Page, Cardiff; Mr. George Wilkinson, Mountain Ash; Mr. John Thomas, Eastfield House, Cowbridge; Mr. D. Jenkins, Flemingston Court; the Rev. C. T. Llewellyn, rector of Coychurch; Capt. Edwards, Troedyrhiw; Mr. Walter Bell, Ynysowen; Mr. H. J. Hollier, Aberdare; Mr. and Mrs W. S. Kelly, Cardiff; the Members of the Committee, &c., &c., &c.

Caradog's choir having awakened the echoes with another song., Mr. C. R. M. Talbot, MP., Lord Lieutenant of the county, and President for the day, came forward and gracefully introduced the Lord Mayor to the company amidst rounds of cheering. Lord Aberdare, Mr. Talbot, and Mr. Vivian having been cheered as they ascended the platform and were recognised. Mr. Talbot was received with all

the cordiality of an old friend and an old favourite. When he stepped to the front a murmur ran through the crowd, gradually swelling to a roar of hearty cheering. Beginning with the distribution of the *Daily Telegraph* Fund.

“First of all it will be my duty to present the cups which have been given by the generous proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*. When that ceremony had been gone through, I shall call upon the gallant officer of the Royal Artillery who represents here the Ancient Order of the Knights of Jerusalem, who will present certain medals which have been voted by the association not to the colliers, but to those to whom money could not so well be offered. After that my hon. colleague, Mr. Vivian, will distribute 28 watches, which have been voted by myself and brother members of Parliament in token of their appreciation of the same services. (Hear, hear, and applause.) When that has been done the chief officer of the largest and richest corporation in the world will distribute the Mansion House fund, according to the distribution of it which has been agreed to by the committee sitting at the Mansion House. (Renewed applause.) I need not tell you that a person in the position of the Lord Mayor, from the time he takes his office until the time he lays it down, has scarcely 10 minutes he can call his own. His services are required by the Corporation of London, and very arduous services they are. We therefore ought to take it as a great compliment that he has found time to come down here, and with his own hands to administer these funds.” (Loud applause.)

“When that has been done Lord Aberdare has received the gracious commands of Her Majesty to distribute the Albert Medal. On this subject I will say no more than that it is the highest compliment that has ever been paid by a Crowned Head to a subject. Now, gentlemen, I call before me, Mr. Williams, who will be kind enough to bring them forward, one by one, the recipients of the cups voted by the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph*. You all know the character of that paper, that it has the largest circulation in the world” — (laughter) — and that it has generously used its circulation for the purpose of receiving money which without that circulation could never have been got together. The money which has been raised by the *Daily Telegraph* proprietors has already been distributed, but the cups, to those whom cups will be more valuable than money have now to be distributed by myself. (Cheers.) The crowd laughed when Mr. Talbot referred to the boasted large circulation of the *Telegraph*, but they cheered heartily when he felicitously observed that without a “good circulation” the money given away by the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* could never have been got together.” The following received cups :—**James Thomas**, manager of the Tynewydd collieries; **William Davies**, Coedcae; **Isaiah Thomas**, Brythweunydd; **Thomas N. Davies**, Treorky; **Thomas Thomas**, Ynyshir; **William Thomas**, Resolven; **David Evans**, Ferndale; **Edmund Thomas**, Llwyncelyn; **David Jones**, Cymmer level; **William Henry Mathias**, Porth; **David Davies**, Cilely; **Henry Lewis**, Energlyn; **Daniel Thomas**,

Brythweunydd; **William Beith**, Navigation; **Thomas James Thomas**, Caerphilly. The next feature in the programme was the distribution by Major Duncan, of the Royal Artillery, of

#### The medals of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem

Major Duncan said: - "Mr. Chairman, my Lord Mayor, ladies and gentlemen, the Duke of Manchester, Prior of our noble and ancient Order, an Order purely of philanthropy, un-sectarian and non-political in its sympathies, hoped to have been here himself today to deliver the medals and diplomas which it has fallen to me to distribute. In this hope he postponed his acceptance of the invitation until the last moment, when he was called away on an urgent journey he had to make to the Continent, and his last words to me were to say how very much he regretted being unable to be present today to swell the chorus of honour to such brave men. (Cheers.) Unworthy as I may be in many respects, yet there seems to me to be fitting circumstances in a soldier, such as I am, whose duty and whose glory it is to court danger for England, being made the channel of conveying the recognition of a badge which was once purely military, to men who have encountered dangers far worse than those of battle—(cheers)—without whose adventitious aids which enable a soldier to undergo trials through the pomp, circumstance, excitement and passions of battle which we enjoy. (Renewed cheers.) In the name of our ancient Order, always first is ameliorating suffering, I ask your leave to say a few words now.

My Lord Mayor, ladies, and gentlemen, I trust the medals which I am about to present are given to men who are merely typical Englishmen—(hear, hear)—but who have had given to them an opportunity almost unprecedented, which they have availed themselves of with high honour and glory. These men have done something better than saving life; something better than winning renown, for they have silenced the pessimists who would despair of England, and for a few days they held the nation so united that even class and political distinctions seemed to have disappeared. (Cheers.) Ladies and gentlemen, it is something to have lived to have seen in the same decade of years two such scenes as, first, a whole nation kept in suspense as a widowed Queen watched by the possibly dying bed of her eldest son, and again the same nation remaining in breathless suspense while a few imprisoned miners were being rescued by their comrades. On both these occasions the first question as man met man, whether peer or peasant, was not anything about money, not anything about politics, not anything about war or domestic jealousy, but, in the one case, "Is the patient conquering his fever?" In the other case, "Are the miners saved yet?" "Are any more feats of that terrible wall between life and death falling before the brawny arms of the rescuers?" (Cheers.) In the old days of our Order, knights used to be encouraged to the tilt by

the cry that bright eyes beheld their deeds. But these eyes were often bright with jealousy.

The eyes on the occasion which we now come to celebrate were bright from Queen to milk-maid—bright with tears. (Renewed cheering.) It is said that nations are created by similarity of tongue; by identity of interest; by mountain ranges, or by fretful seas. It may be so, but I take it that nations are welded like regiments, by community of danger, and sympathy with it. (Loud cheers.) In the name of our Ancient Order, I now call for Mr. Wales and his comrades to come forward and receive the medals and diploma entrusted to me.

And I say, with all the pride of a nineteenth century man that never beneath the cuirass of a belted knight did beat a braver heart than beats in the breasts of each one of these men. When the time comes, and it must, when they will find themselves in the presence of the Immortal Source of all that is good, and noble, and true, I pray that their children and their children's children, as they handle those relics with flushed cheeks, and lips quivering with pride, will talk of the grand deeds of their fathers, which made all the world wonder, and will resolve to emulate them if they need. (Cheers.) The gallant Major, who, we may remark, was a candidate for the borough of Morpeth at the last general election, whose pointed periods combined with his eloquence and brilliant style, stamped him as one of the leading speakers at the demonstration, was warmly applauded, especially when he compared the excitement and incidental daring in battle to the daring and heroism, without excitement, in the bowels of the earth. The recipients of the medals wore their miner's dress, and carried their picks and safety lamps. As they crossed the platform they were received with the wildest demonstrations of applause, especially when Isaac Pride, with a significant look, held aloft his pick, not only as the most eloquent speech he could make, but as a priest would hold aloft the symbol of salvation, which in this case it was in very sober truth and earnest. The diplomas and medals were given to Isaac Pride, John William Howell, Mr. Wales, Government mines inspector, and Mr. William Beith, Navigation.

#### The House of Commons' testimonial

Mr. H. H. Vivian, M.P., next came forward, to present the watches subscribed for by members of the House of Commons and he was received with tremendous cheering. Addressing the immense multitude, he said: — "My Lords, ladies, and gentlemen, I have been deputed by the House of Commons' Committee to present to those who have been deemed worthy of the honour, the testimonial which had been subscribed by that ancient body, in recollection of the great and brave deeds which they performed in rescuing those entombed men for whom we felt so much anxiety. Now, I think I ought, in the first instance, to give a slight

history of how this fund was created. A few gentlemen found themselves together one night in the House of Commons, and every one felt the deepest interest in the rescue of the entombed men. They knew that a gallant body of men was struggling against physical difficulties in cutting through the immense barrier of coal, so as to release those living men from their living tomb. They said among themselves, "We think that these men are deserving some recognition from the members of the House of Commons—not as a motion of that body; but not as a motion of the House of Commons—but as a proof of the sympathy of that august house."

"The idea was not to form a great fund representing a large amount, but their idea was to convey to those men their sympathy and heartfelt support. They agreed that the amount subscribed by each individual member should not be a large one, because I think they rightly considered that the honour did not lie in the amount subscribed, but in the spirit which induced members of Parliament to come forward and give this testimonial. (Loud cheers.) I think I ought to venture to remind this assembly that in these gifts they must consider that the recipients have a testimonial not from the 300 or 400 members who subscribed towards the fund, but that these members are representatives of great constituencies, and that they have thus come forward and said that they admire the bravery these men displayed in endeavouring to release their fellow-workmen from a living tomb. (Applause). It was not the individual voice of a Member of Parliament that spoke, but it was rather the voices of those whom he represented, and therefore in presenting these testimonials they came not alone from the members of Parliament, who subscribed for them, but from those who returned those members to Parliament. (Loud cheering.)

It is unnecessary, I think, that I should allude to the moving incidents of this occasion. Individually, I feel proud, very, very proud—that I represented these brave men. (Cheers.) I assure you the deepest sympathy was felt by every Member of Parliament. I scarcely was ever five minutes in the House of Commons before some member came up to me and said "What have you heard? What is the most recent news from Tynwydd?" I constantly received telegrams, and immediately circulated them to the best of my ability, and afterwards placed them on the doors of the House, where they were read by anxious crowds. I can hardly express to you the deep feelings which animated the members of the House of Commons generally in regard to this most moving incident—possibly the words just spoken by the gallant officer who presented the medals on behalf of the Ancient Order of St. John of Jerusalem, have abundantly explained what the feelings of every man must be in regard to the courage exhibited on that occasion.

I am glad that he—Major Duncan—who is a soldier, has come forward and anticipated the remarks I intended to make on the point. He, a soldier, had told them that he could not too deeply admire the courage exhibited by these colliers. In battle, he had reminded them, great bravery was shown, and gallant deeds performed, but these the men were labouring under the excitement of the battlefield. Here, however, in the deep, dark depths, these colliers faced dangers which were unknown. That required moral courage, and they did not do so for only a single day, or for only a few hours, but from day to day for ten live-long days. That does require courage. I think we are rightly met together to celebrate that courage. That great danger was encountered there can be no doubt—the fact that one poor man sacrificed his life in hastening the rescue of his fellow-workmen is sufficient proof, if proof were wanting. Therefore I have no patience with those who say that no danger existed. (Applause.)

Those who, like myself, live much in these districts where our coal industries are prosecuted, know very well that that this is not a single instance of men facing danger and displaying courage. Unfortunately there are constantly recurring instances, and, indeed, I have known instances where men have faced greater dangers—in my opinion—than those encountered on the occasion of the Tynewydd disaster; but they do not rouse the public as the public was roused on this occasion. I rejoice that the public have come forward to recognise the courage of these men, and that they have recognised it in a fitting manner. The public had come forward, as the Lord Mayor had said, from Her Gracious Majesty downwards. (Loud cheers.) I trust we shall raise the standard of courage by this movement, and that when dangers are run into in the future, they will be recognised by the public at large more than heretofore. Now I need hardly address the men who are to receive the watches on this occasion, and the other mementos of the courage they displayed—will become the dearest possessions which they have. I need hardly charge them to hand them down to those who come after them, as the most precious heirlooms ever in their power to hand down. I have nothing further to say, excepting that the possession of these testimonials ought to make the recipients proud that they are able to hand down to those who follow them such mementos of the courage they have displayed in endeavouring to save the life of their fellow men. I have only to say, in conclusion, that these watches will, I am sure, be an honour to them during their lives, and they will, I trust, incite their children to equal the gallant deeds their fathers performed.” (Loud and continued cheering.)

The numerous happy references made by Mr. Vivian were eagerly taken up by the crowd. When he described, in vivid language, the eager anxiety of the House of Commons, day after day, to read the telegrams posted on the doors of the House, telling the progress of the dire struggle going on for life and death in the depths of



the Tynewydd Colliery and how the people of the great city, by means of telegrams and newspapers, watched the desperate conflict waged far away in the hills of Wales and amongst the bowels of the earth, the crowd listened with breathless earnestness; while a hearty outburst of acclamation followed the expression of the generous sentiment of pride which he declared animated him at the thought that he had the honour to represent the men who carried on that dire struggle, and who waged that war with unseen and insidious foes "in the lowest depths, in a place of darkness, and in the deep." During the distribution of the watches one old collier, familiarly known as "Dan Rees," offered his grimy hand to Mr. Vivian, and that hon. gentleman promptly seized and shook it, amid the uproarious delight of the spectators. The precedent thus set was good-humouredly followed in regard to the other recipients, Mr. Vivian shaking each heartily by the hand, the crowd, Mr. Vivian, and gallant rescuers laughing heartily, and in concert, at the sudden and novel turn which matters had taken. Mr. Williams, stipendiary magistrate, during this and the succeeding presentations, did yeoman service, talking kindly in Welsh to the men as they came on the platform, and giving them, in a word, a timely hint. The watches subscribed for by the members of the House of Commons were awarded to: - Isaac Pride, Job Williams, Gwilym Thomas, Charles Beynham, George Ablett, Rees Thomas, Edward Davies, Richard Hopkins, John William Howell, Charles Oatridge, Abraham Dodd, Thomas Jones, David Davies, Thomas Griffiths, John Griffiths, John Williams, Thomas R. Thomas, William Morgan, Thomas Rees, John Morgan, David Rees, Richard Howells, Thomas Evans, David Minton and Robert Williams.

#### The Mansion House Fund – Reception of the Lord Mayor

Mr. Talbot here rose and said: - "I will now call upon the Lord Mayor of London to address you, requesting you to give him a hearty reception. It is solely by his permission that we are enabled to distribute the magnificent sum of nearly £5,000." The Lord Mayor, on coming to the front, was received with repeated outbursts of cheering. Again and again were the plaudits renewed, the audience rising, cheering, and waving their hats and handkerchiefs with the utmost enthusiasm. As a demonstration of gratitude to the city and the municipality of London, and to the generous people of England who had subscribed so munificent a sum to reward and to relieve sudden and complete destitution, it was complete and perfect, and the Lord Mayor was evidently much impressed by it.

After the cheering had subsided, the Lord Mayor said: — "Lord Aberdare, ladies and gentlemen, I will ask you not to pass a verdict upon that which I have to say to you from the funds provided, but rather in the sincerity of its meaning. (Cheers.) First of all it is my duty to thank the directors of the Great Western Railway Company, three of whom I have the honour of seeing amongst us, for the safety in

which they have conveyed myself and my staff in order that I might have this honourable opportunity and pleasure today. (Cheers.) Secondly, let me give my thanks for the assistance which I have had as a member of my committee from your Lord-Lieutenant, Mr. Talbot, and your excellent representative, as also from Mr. Vivian, your representative, and also from my Lord Aberdare, who lives, as it were, in your midst, and to whom you cannot be too grateful for the very valuable assistance which they have rendered me in this most arduous and difficult task. (Loud applause).

My Lords, ladies and gentlemen, our first and dearest consideration is the widows and orphans at my back, that has guided us. In the belief of our ability to help them, having before our eyes their necessitous requirements, the loss which, through God's mercy and wishes, they have unfortunately suffered in the removal of those who in all right they had to look upon for support and attention, they fell back then on our committee, and with the knowledge that we were English-men, and, I hope, gentlemen, who were aware of the difficulties that were placed before us, but who were not less determined, throughout all those difficulties, to do to the best of our ability. If we are in any degree to measure by your voice that you are satisfied with our conclusions, then today is another evidence of it which I have had the advantage of deriving since I have had the honour of being in the Principality of Wales. Wherever we have been, and whatever we have done, we have been met with that degree of kindness and consideration which must always be dominant in our memory, and ever in our grateful recall (Applause.) I do not wish, nor, believe me do my committee, to take one single expression or wish of thanks to ourselves. In these poor men who have so rescued, and these noble fellows by whom they have rescued them what we are about this day to do, I think you will, I assure, in fact, you will see, that a work so happily begun has been satisfactorily concluded. Ladies and gentlemen I must say I have the honour to distribute in money of £3,700 or £3,800 - (cheers) - and the rest as you see, in the valuable testimonials behind me.

Let me not forget the Rev. Mr. Williams. (Loud cheers.) His energy, and the untiring labours he has exercised, my Lord, ladies, and gentlemen, have been indeed unceasing. (Hear, hear.) The valuable aid which has been thus afforded to us we are unable to eliminate to its fullest extent, but believe me, that to him, and to all of you, ladies and gentlemen, my city, the city of London, will feel highly complemented at the reception and satisfaction which you have shown towards myself. (Applause.) Now I thank you all, and I wish I could find words in which to express the deep and lasting obligation I shall ever feel under to you one and all. I hope, however, that such an occasion as the one on which I have the honour of addressing you may certainly never again occur in any shape or form. And I hope, ladies and gentlemen, that you will, at the conclusion of our proceedings today, be



Isaac Pride wearing his Albert Medal (first class) and other awards.

enabled to see that all who have been acting with my committee—however short we may have fallen of pleasing everyone, may have the inward satisfaction of knowing our endeavours to do our best have, at least, met with the concurrence and general acknowledgment of the majority of you. (Applause.)

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I have a cheque here for £1,100 and let me, as briefly as possible, explain its meaning. To three widows we have had the satisfaction of awarding £250 each; ten children, £30 each; one widow, whose son died, £50; making altogether £1,100.

Please let us have your unanimous and express concurrence for what we are about to do with this. (Cheers.) We are told that for £250 these unfortunate widows could very soon get another husband. (Laughter.) And fearing there might possibly be—probably, I may say—some little truth in it, we felt the greater degree of safety in placing those £1,100 in the hands of your Lord Lieutenant, Mr. Talbot, and Mr. Vivian, in order that they might have a conference with each and every one of them to do the best, most equitable, and safest thing in securing, not an expenditure unnecessary and unjustifiable, but rather one of permanent and endearing benefit. (Applause.) And now, with your permission, to that esteemed and honoured gentleman (Mr. Talbot) I will pass the responsibility of this cheque. (Handing it to Mr. Talbot.) The safeguard adopted of placing the cheques for the widows in the hands of the Lord-Lieutenant was thoroughly approved, as it was felt that there was much truth in the little pleasantry respecting the money being entirely to serve as an allurements to catch a mate who might be anything but a helpmeet to the women.

The distribution of the Mansion House Fund now proceeded apace. Long lines of men appeared at one end of the stage in answer to their names, and disappeared at the other end the happy possessors of cheques, tankards, salvers, and other pieces of plate. The five rescued men were objects of great interest. They have improved wonderfully in health, and were loudly applauded, and seemed highly pleased with their reception. The boy, David Hughes, was a great favourite. As he came to the front he appeared to be a frank, nice-mannered genial youth. His features beamed with pleasant smiles as the Rev. D. W. Williams slapped him kindly on the shoulder in passing; and when the Lord Mayor, placing his arm affectionally around the young David's neck, led him with a fatherly air to the front of the platform, there was something in the modest, yet self-possessed, gentlemanly manners, and the intelligent countenance, which strongly impressed the spectators in his favour. Hearty cheering followed the announcement that £50 was placed in the hands of Mr. Talbot, M.P., to provide for the lad's education, and a general hope was expressed that the lad would be a credit to Cambria.

The rescuers as they were called up received from the audience a hearty mead of praise, and nothing could have been more genial than the demeanour of the Lord Mayor, who gave each man besides his cheque a kindly pat on the back, and a shake of the hand. The pat on the back produced results scarcely contemplated, for the men being in their working dress, the hearty slap of the Lord Mayor produced quite a little cloud of coal dust. A laughable incident occurred when the nurses came up for their rewards. The Lord Mayor handed to the first lady her cheque, and then to her evident surprise his Lordship proposed to bestow upon her a chaste kiss on the cheek. The damsel, with natural modesty, objected; the Lord Mayor pressed his suit, which she stoutly resisted, but in the end was vanquished, and received the civic salute amidst prolonged peals of laughter from the crowd at her discomfiture, and their cheers at the success of his Lordship's gallant efforts. The next young lady who came forward was kinder, and gracefully presented a pretty, blushing cheek, upon which, amidst thunders of applause, the lips of the Lord Mayor were imprinted. In presenting the awards, the Lord Mayor addressed suitable words of congratulation to each recipient. Referring to Mr. Beith, who was received with a burst of cheering, he said his name must be familiar to them all for the aid he had rendered in this unfortunate catastrophe. His Lordship also caused great laughter by expressing a hope that those who received tankards would always be able to fill them.

Dr. Henry Naunton Davies, of Cymmer, came in too for a cordial greeting from the audience and a special word of recognition from the Lord Mayor, who remarked on the length of time he had been underground, and on his valuable services as a medical man. To Mr. Wales the Lord Mayor said: - "The committee, after due and careful attention, had awarded a candelabra for his bravery and the determined spirit he had shown from the beginning to the end, and the invaluable service he had rendered to the committee. The committee felt that he was one of those who deserved at least the most favourable consideration at their hands, because upon all his deeds they could only place the most favourable construction. Therefore he was presented with these candelabra, which was of the value of one hundred guineas."

Turning next to Mr. Williams, his Lordship said: - "The most modest recipient of anything at our hands is your esteemed friend and neighbour, Mr. Williams (Tremendous cheering.) It may be difficult to reconcile you to the fact that we had the greatest possible difficulty in inducing Mr. Williams to accept of the most trifling acknowledgment of services so rendered, so conspicuously rendered, and I may so conspicuously appreciated. (Cheers.) Mr. Williams desires no remarks from my hands, either to enhance him in your estimation, or the reverse. He can well afford, for the remaining portion of his days, to lay the flattering unction to his soul that he at least has in this great and dire catastrophe done his duty, not only as a

man but as a neighbour. I am sure you will recognise him as such. I feel it a very great honour to have him as an acquaintance, and trust I may be permitted to enjoy that acquaintance for a very long period of time. (Prolonged cheering.) Mr. Williams simply expressed his acknowledgments in the brief phrase, "Thank you."

By this time the table had been cleared of the glittering display of plate, candelabra, tankards, and watches, the cheque-books had been emptied, property and money to the value of thousands of pounds had passed into the hands of those for whom they were intended, and the arduous task of distributing the Mansion House Fund was over. The Lord Mayor retired from the front and said: - "I shall leave Wales to-morrow deeply impressed with the universal kindness which I have received from one and all of you." The official list of the recipients of the Mansion House awards is appended:—

The three widows, £250 each; 10 children, £30 each; one widow whose son died, £50 making a total of £1,100. To the rescued men—David Jenkins, £150; Moses Powell, £150; John Thomas, £150; George Jenkins, £150; David Hughes (the boy), £50 (besides that already presented to him). To those men who were rescued after the first inundation were awarded—Thomas Morgan, £25; Edward Williams, £25; William Casher, £25. To the rescuers were awarded Isaac Pride 100 guineas and a book "The Death of Saul" presented by the author John W. Howell £80 and a similar book; Charles Oatridge, £80 and a book ; Mr. William Beith, £105.

The remaining awards were as follows — David Rees, £38 11s 6d; Richard Howells, £38 11s 6d Thomas Jones, £34 14s 4d; Thomas Rees, £30 17s 2d; Wm. Rollins, £23 2s 11d; David Davies, £30 17s 2d; John Morgan, £30 17 2d; David Minton, £30 17s 2d; Job Williams, £11 11s 6d; Thomas Evans, £19 5s 9d; Thomas Rees Thomas, £27; David Davies, £27; Rees Thomas, £23 2s 11d; Robert Williams, £7 14s 4d; John Griffiths, £23 2s 11d; Thomas Griffiths, £23 2s 11d; Charley Beynham, £7 14s 4d; Wm. Morgan £23 2s 11d; Richard Hopkins, £27; John Williams, £23 2s 11d; Edward David, £7 14s 4d ;George Ablett, £3 17s 2d; Thomas Ash, £3 17s 2d; John Jenkins, £3 17s 2d; Matthew Williams, £2 14s 6d; James Jeremiah, £2 14s 6d; Matthew Lane, £2 14s 6d; Miles Griffiths, £2 14s 6d; Daniel Rees, £2 14s 6d; Jenkin Williams, £2 5s 5d John Daniel, £2 5s 5d; William Williams, £2 5s 5d; George Jones, £2 5s 5d; William Rees, £1 16s 4d; William Davies, £1 16s 4d; Thomas Rees, £1 16s 4d; William Leyshon, £1 16s 4d; Evan Jenkins, £1 16s 4d; Jenkin Thomas, £1 16s 4d; Thomas Roblin, £1 7s 3d; John Hughes (Cymmer), £1 7s 3d; E. Oatridge, £1 7s 3d; Daniel Dodd, £1 7s 3d; Jacob Rogers, £1 7s 3d; Morgan Morgan, £7 7s 3d; David Davies, £1 7s 3d; John John, £1 7s 3d; David Thomas, £1 7s 3d; James Edwards, £1 7s 3d; William E. Richards, 13s 8d; Evan Thomas, 13s 8d; Joseph Lewis, 13s 8d; Elias Rees, 13s 8d; Jonathan Morgan, 13s 8d; Taliesin Lewis, 13s 8d; Thomas Henry, 13s

4d; R. J. Richards 13s 4d; D. H. Howells, 13s 4d; Wm. Dd. Thomas, 13s 4d; David Hopkins, 13s 4d.

Pump-men.—Lewis Baxter, £11 8s 7d; Wm. Baxter, £11 8s 7d; John Baxter, £10 7s 718d; John Davies, £10 7s 10d; Joseph Roberts, £2 1s 10d; John James Thomas, £10 7s 10d; Thomas Lewis, £3 2s 5d; Joseph Moore, £10 7s 10d; Frank Francis, £10 7s 10d; Eleaser Moore, £10 7s 10d; Roger Vaughan, £10 7s 10d; Edmund Thomas, £10 7s 10d; William Daglon £10 7s 10d; Maesinef Moore, £10 7s 10d; Evan Thomas (mechanic), £10 7s 10d; John H. Rhoda £10 7s 10; Henry Lloyd, £10 7s 10d; Thomas Cheen, £10 7s 10d; Thomas Moon, £10 7s 10d; Howell M. Williams, £8 6s 10d; Evan Thomas (Pentyrch), £9 7s 10d; George Warlow, £10 7s 10d.

The divers: Frank Davies, £50; Mr. G. F. Adams, (Cardiff) £30. The nurses: - Mary Williams, £10; Mary Thomas, £10. Mr. Wales, Government Mines Inspector, a handsome silver candelabra, value 100 guineas; Dr. Davies, a piece of plate, value 100 guineas; Drs. Edward Duke and Washington David, gold mediaeval watches, each of the value of £35; Rev D.W. Williams, (Fairfield), a piece of plate value £30; Mr. Owen Morgan, £10 and a salver; Dr's Ivor Lewis, Rees Hopkins, E. W. S Davis, Iris Davies, William Parry, and Lloyd were awarded pieces of plate of the value of £10. Edward William Stephen Davis, of Duffryn Ffrwd, Mountain Ash, received a silver inkstand, value of £10.

The following were presented with pieces of plate, value £15 :— Messrs. Frank Bell, T. H. Riches, Henry Lewis, P. G. Adams, W. Lawrence, Mr. M'Murtrie, E. T. Richards, T. J. Thomas, W. H. Mathias, Wm. Thomas, David Evans, T. S. Davies, and John Edwards (who selected a watch). Pieces of plate, value £10 were awarded to Messrs W. H. Lewis, Thomas Curnew, James Edwards, and John Jones. Mr. Thomas Thomas was awarded a piece of plate of the value of £30.

#### The Albert medals

Lord Aberdare's coming forward was the signal for loud and continued cheering. Upon its subsidence, his Lordship said: - "My Lord Mayor, ladies, and gentlemen,— If there ever was an occasion when I should have wished to possess a voice loud as a trumpet of silver sound, now is that occasion. But, unfortunately, the state of my throat is such that I cannot, without pain to myself, and without positive injury, venture to address you more than a very few words. I have therefore asked my valued friend, Mr. Gwilym Williams, of Miskin, to read to you those observations which I should have been glad to have made myself. I selected him not only because he was justly esteemed and lived in this neighbourhood, but because he shares with me the responsibility of having selected the fit recipients for the Albert Medal. The only other word I can now with safety add is this that I feel most

deeply the honour conferred upon me by the Queen of being the medium of presenting those brave and deserving men with the honour which was created expressly for them. (Loud cheers.) I now call upon Mr. Williams.”

Mr. Williams was warmly cheered, and he read as follows: — “I have been charged by the Queen with the honourable duty of presenting, on Her Majesty's behalf, the Albert Medals to those who displayed gallantry in saving life on the occasion of the accident at the Tynwydd Colliery. I need not recall to you the deep and incessant anxiety of which the Queen gave so proofs, during a memorable period of painful anxiety; and it will also be fresh in your recollections how, when our fears were happily relieved, Her Majesty, desirous of bestowing some mark of that public honour of which, according to the laws of our country, she is the sole fountain, on those who had eminently distinguished themselves in the rescue of the imprisoned colliers, finding no means of doing so immediately at hand, determined to create them. This was done by extending the Royal Warrant, under which medals of the first and second class were conferred upon mariners and others who had performed “daring and heroic actions in saving the lives of those who were in dagger of perishing by reason of wrecks and perils of the sea,” to actions of similar heroism performed in saving life on land. This earnest desire of Her Majesty to give honour where honour was due, excited, I need hardly say, universal satisfaction; and it is to me, as I doubt not it is to those who hear me, a matter of just pride and congratulation, that those whose courageous self-devotion suggested this new badge of honour, and those will have the privilege of being first to wear it, were found among the coal-owners, agents, and colliers of Glamorganshire. The task of selecting the proper recipients of such an honour was, I need hardly say, not only a responsible but a difficult one. Those charged with the duty performed to the best of their ability, and, I make bold to say, with entire impartiality. They arrived at unanimous conclusions, and it is satisfactory to them to know that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to approve of their recommendations. Before announcing the names of those thus selected for this honour, it is very expedient that I should remind you that the decorations I am about to present are not conferred on those who, during the operations for the rescue of the imprisoned men, exerted themselves in devising and executing the means of deliverance, unless they were also exposed to extreme personal danger, and in such danger exhibited courage and daring.

The time taken in enacting the rescue was nine days from the 11th to the 19th April inclusive; but, with the exception of a very short period on the morning of the 12<sup>th</sup>, when the first band of four imprisoned men were saved, the whole period of danger was included in the interval between one o'clock on Thursday afternoon and about six or seven o'clock on Friday morning. Admirable, disinterested, unflagging effort was made by many who neglected their own engagements in



order to labour with head and hand in the work of rescue; and I am rejoiced to know, and to have had the opportunity of seeing, that the public sympathy and liberality have been extended to all those who, in their various degrees, and according to their several opportunities, took part in this glorious work. But the Albert Medal, whether of the first or second-class, was as I have said, strictly limited to case of personal danger, encountered with courage and the saving of life. And it is absolutely necessary that if such distinctions are, in the terms of the Royal Warrant, to be "highly prized and eagerly sought after," they should be bestowed with the utmost discrimination.

With these precautionary remarks I proceed to announce the names of those who have been specially selected. They amount to twenty-five in number, and illustrate in a very interesting and remarkable manner the extent to which all classes of those engaged in colliery operations contributed, at the risk of their lives, to this memorable rescue. Four are colliery proprietors, viz.: -

Mr. David Davies, of Penrhiwfer Colliery.

Mr. David Jones, of Maindee, Ynyshir.

Mr. Daniel Thomas, of Brithweunydd,

Mr. Edmond Thomas, of Llwynceilin

Seven are managing agents of collieries, viz.; -

Mr. Thomas G. Davies, of Tylacoch.

Mr. David Evans, of Ferndale.

Mr. David James, of Cymmer Level

Mr. Henry Lewis, of Energlyn

Mr. Isaiiah Thomas, of Brithweunydd.

Mr. Thomas Thomas, of Ynyshir.

Mr. William Thomas, of Resolven.

One is a mechanical engineer, viz.: - Mr. William Beith, of Treharris's Navigation Pit.

Two are overmen or firemen, viz.: - Mr. Richard Howell, of Tynewydd, overman.  
Mr. David Rees of Tynewydd, fireman.

Eleven are working colliers. viz.: —

George Ablett

Charles Raynham

Edward David

Richard Hopkins

Charles Oatridge

Isaac Pride

Rees Thomas

Job Williams

John William Howell  
William Morgan

Robert Williams

All these brave men, encountered, under circumstances terrible enough to try the most dauntless hearts, and when many stout hearts quailed, the accumulated dangers of explosive gas and of pent-up air and water, the escape of which, only intercepted by a frail and ever-decreasing barrier of coal, would have swept them to inevitable death. These dangers were met and endured by all with equal fortitude, although all were not present during the same number of hours or on the same occasions. Were there in the deeds and bearing of any of these men, all of whom bore themselves so nobly, circumstances which justified the making of any distinction between them? It was thought that such circumstances did present themselves in the case of four of them, viz.:—

In that of Mr. Daniel Thomas, who was not only always to the front during the periods when the danger was greatest, setting an example of undaunted courage and inspiring others with his spirit, but who was unanimously chosen at the most perilous crisis to conduct the most critical operations. In that of Mr. William Beith, who, besides exposing himself with the boldest wherever danger was to be braved, and animated all by exhortation and example, at one especial period—when the band of deliverers had been driven from the working by gas, when the water had shown no signs of falling, and the condensed air had not been drained away, when in fact the work of rescue seemed baffled, and the only possible chance of delivering the poor captives appeared to rest in opening the barrier at all hazards, exclaimed that he believed that the destruction of those who executed such a plan was certain, but he would never ask others to do what he was not ready himself to do, and that he was ready to devote himself.

In Isaac Pride, who took part in the deliverance of the 12th as well as in that of the 19th, and also on occasions when even the boldest held his breath for a while, repeatedly volunteered to face the greatest dangers, and to work in the most perilous posts. And in John William Howell, who more than once, when men shrank from offering themselves, set a similar example of devotion and heroism. To me who, highly as I value my birthright as a Welshman, am still more proud of our common designation of Briton, it is a matter of great satisfaction that these chief honours have been won by representatives of the three ancient nationalities of which Great Britain is composed; and that, of the four men so distinguished, two (Daniel Thomas and J. W. Howell) are Welshmen, one (Isaac Pride) is an Englishman, and one (William Beith) a Scotsman. To these four, therefore, are assigned medals of the first class, confined to "cases of extreme and heroic daring," while to the remaining 21 are presented medals of the second class. It must not, however, be assumed that these were the only persons connected with

the rescue who exhibited courage and self-devotion. Others there were, and many, who so distinguished themselves, although they did not fall within the cases contemplated by the Royal Warrant.

Indeed in one instance, that of Mr. James Thomas, of the Tynewydd Colliery, I am permitted to say that he was recommended for a medal of the second class, but that his case, for reasons which you will readily imagine, has been reserved for future consideration. And there are names which I am not empowered to mention so specially deserving public honour. First amongst them is that of Mr. Wales, Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, who, had he not been one of those appointed to inquire into the proper recipients of the Albert medal, would, for the courage and cheerfulness with which he faced danger at the time, for his calm self-possession during the most trying hours, when his counsel was continually sought and acted upon, has been entitled, in the opinion of his colleagues in that inquiry, to that distinction in addition to those honours which I rejoice to know have flowed in upon him from other sources.

I cannot, too, refrain from expressing the regret, shared in by all my colleagues, at our inability to include in our recommendation Mr. William Davies, manager of the Coedcae Colliery, whose exertions had been incessant up to mid-day on Thursday, and who continued in the pit during the remaining hours of danger, though he was too exhausted by his previous efforts to take part in those operations which alone involved serious risk. Nor should Gwilym Thomas be forgotten, who, when fresh men were wanted on the Friday morning, volunteered to go below and work at the barrier, and did so, at a time when he believed the danger to be as great as ever, although, in fact, it had almost ceased. I gladly, too, avail myself of the same permission, to make honourable mention of the following gentlemen, who were all underground during more or less of the period of danger, were all usefully engaged, and were all ready to go whenever they might be required, viz. :—Mr. G. F. Adams, mining engineer, Cardiff; Mr. Frank Doll, mining engineer, Cardiff; Mr. Lawrence, (mining engineer), Cardiff; Mr. W. H. Lewis, mechanical engineer, Treherbert; Mr. E. Richards, colliery manager, Cwm Clydach. In the same class, too, I may fairly include Mr. Dukes, assistant surgeon to Dr. Naunton Davies, who went to the barrier at half-past five a.m., on Friday, when the danger from pressure was at its highest in order to convey food to the imprisoned miners.

I have now completed my task. I am convinced that you will join me in humble and hearty thanks to our gracious Queen for having added one more worthy motive, one more honourable incentive, to those which on all occasions have impelled brave and true-hearted men to imperil their lives for the sake of saving those of others. I earnestly trust that the proceedings connected with this memorable and affecting disaster may not have introduced a new motive of baser alloy, far from

the thoughts and the intentions of the generous men whose liberality has been so abundantly showered on the heroes of this day; and that hopes of pecuniary reward may never hereafter mingle with those emotions of pity, those aspirations for honourable fame, which have hitherto been the sole animating principles of our colliers when the lives of their fellow workmen were at stake.” (Applause.) Lord Aberdare, at the conclusion of the address stepped forward and personally delivered to the gallant fellows who approached the Royal insignia of honour which the Sovereign had conferred upon them.

His Lordship shook every member of the brave band warmly by the hand. Lord Aberdare observed that he had already said what he thought of Mr. Daniel Thomas, and would not make him blush by repeating the same to his face. To Mr. Beith his Lordship made a similar remark. The distribution was over.



**Sir Thomas White, Lord Mayor of London, who presented the Albert Medals to those deemed worthy.**

The distribution over, the Lord Mayor said: - "It is my privilege and pleasure to ask you to do, an act of justice to those who have done so much for your countrymen—to display with those manifestations to which you are so thoroughly well accustomed your approbation of the proceedings of the Lord-Lieutenant as chairman to-day. You will be good enough, if you please, and without further comment, to display one universal disposition of satisfaction by raising with one voice your approbation in favour of the Lord-Lieutenant. (Enthusiastic cheers.) To Lord Aberdare the same. (Repeated cheering.) And Mr. Vivian. (Prolonged applause.) Ringing cheers were then given for the Queen and the Lord Mayor. Mr. Talbot: - "Ladies and gentlemen it has given me very great pleasure to preside over this meeting. Of all meetings I have ever presided over in my life I never presided over a large meeting of such a character, conducted in such orderly fashion as this has been. In language often used in another place, language only too familiar to us during the last fortnight—(laughter)—I beg now to move that we ask for leave to report progress. (Cheers.) Three cheers were given for the Queen, the National Anthem was sung, and a telegram was despatched to Her Majesty, announcing that the medals had been duly distributed. Mr. Talbot then jocosely moved to "report progress."

#### Description of the awards

The Albert medal – awarding as coming from her Majesty the Queen – is an oval shape, surmounted with a crown. Into its face is sunk the monogram "V. A." (Albert and Victoria), while on the reverse is an engraved inscription, the name of the recipient, and for what awarded. Twenty-five of these were awarded. The medals of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem are about the size of a florin, with the following embossed – "For the service in the cause of humanity," and, "Awarded by the order of St. John of Jerusalem in England." The tankards presented by the Lord Lieutenant on behalf the '*Daily Telegraph*', like all the plate presented, were of silver, with flowery devices. Those presented by the Lord Mayor were of a similar size and patterned as those presented by the '*Daily Telegraph*.'

Dr. Henry Naunton Davies and Mr. Beith had each presented to him splendid candelabra of silver. Dr. Davies, Mountain Ash, was presented with a massive silver inkstand. Several silver salvers were presented, and gold keyless watches were presented to Mr. Dukes and Mr. Washington Davies. All the articles bore the inscription, "Presented to (giving the recipients name) out of the Mansion House Welsh Miner's Fund in recognition of the bravery in saving life at the inundation of Tynewydd Colliery, 1877." The Rev. D. W. Williams was presented with a massive salver, bearing a suitable inscription, in recognition of his services.

## The Banquet

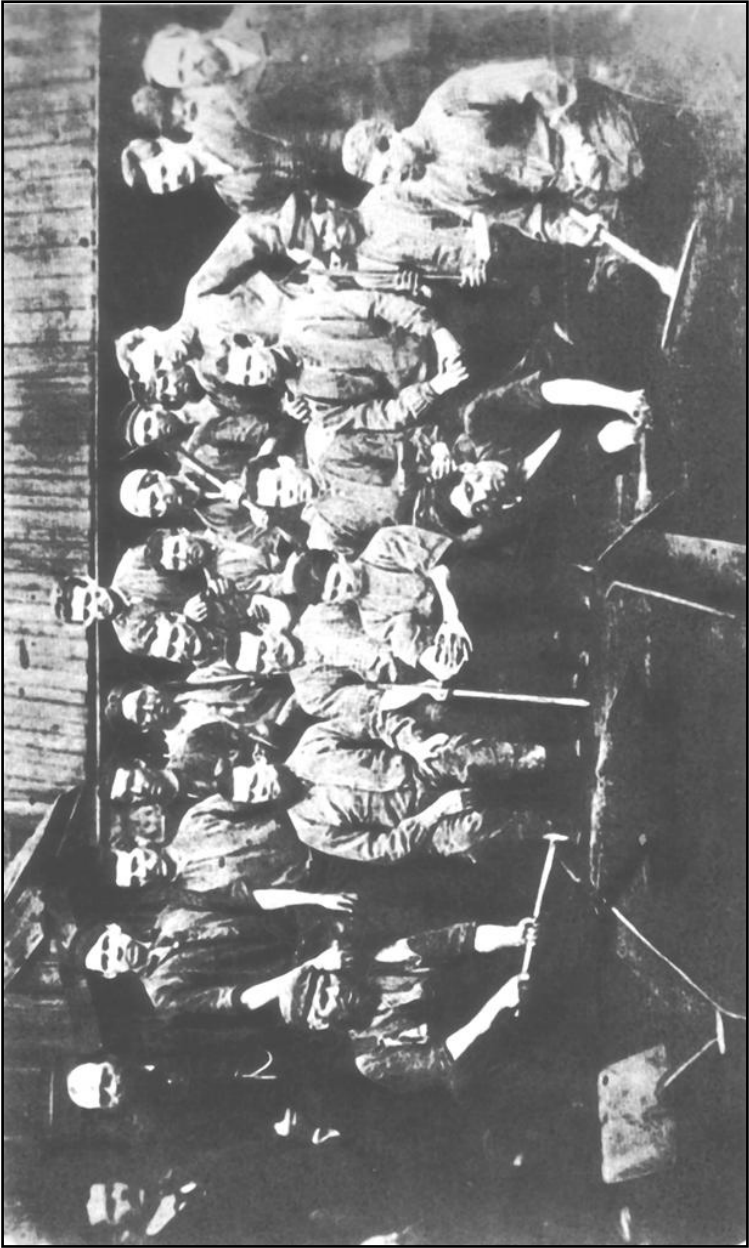
The procession re-formed and marched to the Market House, where a magnificent banquet had been spread, to which a large number of visitors were invited by the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield, who presided over the gathering. The repast, which was superbly got up, was supplied by Mr. C. Chalk, Cardiff and County Club. The ordinary appearance of the hall was completely transformed by the extensive decoration it had undergone. Festooned with evergreens, flags, and mottoes, and gilded shields adorning the pillars, hardly anything was visible but the profuse ornamentation. The Chairman, the Lord Mayor, and a distinguished party with him occupied seats at a raised dais. About 500 persons were present.

## The Illuminations

The illuminations at night were very pretty and general regret was expressed that the Lord Mayor was not in the town to witness them. The streets were crowded with people, and the whole place presented an unusually animated appearance. The first illumination which attracted attention was at the New Inn Hotel. It consisted of a crown and a "V.R." and was illuminated with jets of gas, placed in the centre of street facing Market Street, while at the same time in the window of the spacious building contained twenty night-lights, the whole producing a brilliant effect.

At the Church Street corner at Market Place an illumination in the shape of the Prince of Wales's plume lighted up the market Square. In Taff Street a star-shaped illumination showed down both streets a rich light. The illumination of the Old Bridge across which was thrown a triumphal arch, was the admired of the admired. It was made by bright jets of light projecting from the evergreens used in the decorations around the entire arch, and shone with a brilliancy that made the motto 'A good deed worthwhile done,' distinguishable a very long distance off. Numbers of people continued to throng the streets until a late hour. Order and quiet prevailed, and no accident of any kind has been heard of.

On Sunday evening, August 5<sup>th</sup> 1877 the recipients wore their medals in the various chapels in the neighbourhood of the scene of the disaster. On going and returning they were examined with much interest by all classes. The 'big day' being over, attention swiftly switched to the manslaughter trial of James Roberts, the Tynewydd Colliery manager.



**Another group photo of rescuers and rescued.**



The Albert Medal (second class) presented to Isaiah Thomas, colliery manager, Brithweunydd.



## Chapter eleven

### Monday, August 6<sup>th</sup> 1877 Trial for manslaughter of James Thomas

On Tuesday, August 7<sup>th</sup> 1877 James Thomas was charged before Judge Baron Cleasby and a jury on a coroner's inquisition for that he did at Llanwonno, on the 12th April, 1877, feloniously kill and slay William Jones. Prisoner pleaded Not Guilty. The following gentlemen were sworn on the jury: -

Evan Jenkins, foreman,	Henry Curtis
George Williams	Jnr. Bevan
Samuel Hill	David Thomas
Thomas Williams	Allen Patton
Richard Harris	Joseph Gibbs
John Daniel.	

Mr. Bowen, Q.C., and Mr. Dunn (instructed by Mr. Stephens, of Cardiff, as agent for the Solicitor to the Treasury) were counsel for the prosecution; and Mr. McIntyre and Mr. B. Francis Williams (instructed by Simons and Plews, Merthyr) were counsel for the prisoner. Mr. Bowen, Q.C., in opening the case, said it was one which had been discussed throughout the length and breadth of the land, and those connected with it had gained the applause of everyone; but, unfortunately, although many were rescued, five lost their lives, and the question was whether the prisoner at the bar was criminally responsible for his neglect by which those persons lost their lives. As recently as 1872, in consequence of the numerous accidents occurring, an Act of Parliament, called the Miners' Regulation Act, was carried through Parliament by Lord Aberdare, for the regulation of mines, and for the protection of the colliers employed in those mines. By that Act of Parliament it was enacted that every colliery proprietor should appoint a manager, who should pass certain examinations and be responsible for the safe working of the mine. In section 26 it was enacted that "every mine to which this Act applies shall be under the control and daily supervision of a manager, and the owner or agent of every such mine shall nominate himself or some other person (not being a contractor for getting the mineral in such mine, or a person in the employ of such contractor) to be the manager of such mine and shall send written notice to the inspector of mines of the district of the name and address of such manager."

The proprietors appointed the prisoner at the bar as manager of this mine; and he had passed his examination and was duly certified. He had known this mine for 22 years, and was conversant with the workings and also acquainted with the business, and therefore he was responsible for the proper working of the mine and

safety of the persons employed in it. Another regulation was made which was binding on the manager, that if the people working in that mine were approaching the boundary of an old working, and there was a reasonable probability that water existed there, or any other danger, such as fire-damp, certain precautions must be taken. This would be the principal point for the jury to answer, namely, whether the defendant had not, by not following these express directions, caused by his culpable negligence the death of the deceased. Sub-section 9 of the 51st section contained various enactments. "Where a place is likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water, the working approaching such place shall not exceed eight feet in width, and there shall be constantly kept at a sufficient distance, not being less than five yards, in advance, at least one bore-hole near the centre of the working, and sufficient flank bore-holes on each side." The object of this was, of course, that if they reduced the width of their heading to eight feet and kept boring five feet in advance, and assuming that they came against water, it would come out in such small quantities as to enable it to be plugged, and the safety of the mine would be secured.

Of course the object of reducing the width of the roadway would be for the purpose of securing such a body of coal as would be sufficient to prevent the inrush of the water. This Act of Parliament also enabled that certain sub-officers should be appointed — overman and fireman — who should make daily reports to the manager, and take his orders and obey his instructions. Their case against the prisoner was that he did not take these precautions, and that he ought to have done so. He thought it would be clear to them that had the prisoner obeyed the plain instructions of this Act of Parliament the men who lost their lives in this catastrophe would have been alive now, and the accident could not and would not have occurred.

It appeared that the Tynwydd Colliery lay alongside another colliery belonging to a different person for some three-quarters of a mile. It would be abundantly clear that about the point where the water broke into the mine there was a working called Hines' pit — a place which had been abandoned years ago, and from that pit the water came in and caused this terrible calamity. The defendant not only did not carry out these instructions, but he took none of the precautions which a prudent man ought to have taken if this Act had not been in existence.

There was a pit sunk on the surface in the ordinary way. A level was then run, and the coal run along that level was worked in that way. They went along the upper level, and it was necessary to go to the lower level to re-find the coal. Having done this they wanted to get the water out of the lower level into what was called the deep. They ran a drift down a slant, and when they got to the place where they wished to work in the coal, they had two new levels — Jenkins's level near to the

north, where the men were working when the water burst in from the abandoned workings, and Oatridge's level, running into Jenkins's level, and cutting off the escape of the men. Happily some of the men who got into one old working were, by what he might call the reckless gallantry of their comrades, saved; but unfortunately the five were drowned, and it was now respecting the death of one of the men so unfortunately drowned that they were prosecuting this case. In this Act of Parliament there was another provision, that the proprietors should have a plan, and this plan should be worked up, showing the condition of the colliery at least once in six months. In the present case, the last time that this plan was "plotted" out was in the month of December - he believed on the 14th, previous to the accident.

On that plan it was shown that on the 14th December Oatridge's level was within 44 yards of the boundary. At that time progress was made in Oatridge's heading at the rate of six or seven yards a fortnight, and therefore it was an easy calculation for them to know what time they would be getting into dangerous proximity to the old workings. Therefore, assuming that the work was going on at that pace - for of course it was the duty of the colliery manager to make himself acquainted with it - in the month of April they were getting into dangerous proximity to the old workings, that being where the accident took place. At one point they were within a yard of the old workings, and that, of course, was not a sufficiently safe barrier to prevent the water rushing into the coal, as the unfortunate result showed. Not only was the boring not carried on, but Oatridge was allowed to continue his level, not, as the Act prescribed, at a width of 8 feet, but he should prove to them that the width of the level at the time of the accident was not less than 30 feet wide; and therefore, when they got to this proximity to the boundary the water broke through the fragile barrier, and if the defendant had allowed Oatridge's level to be worked in the way described it was negligence for which he (the prisoner) was responsible.

He had not used his own experience as a collier, and had distinctly violated the rules laid down in the Act of Parliament. The surveyors would tell them that on December 14th in the previous year, they had "plotted" out the state of the workings, and that "fault" ought to have been come to, if it existed at all, 44 yards in advance of where they were working on the 14th of December. Had the prisoner attended to it, the non-existence of that fault must have convinced him that he was wrong in supposing there was a fault there. If Thomas had acted as a prudent man he ought to have gone from time to time to see how Oatridge's work was getting on. It was a case where he ought to have adopted the precautions laid down in the Act of Parliament, but he did not do so up to the time of the accident. The next person in command was the overman. The overman was in court, and he would tell them that if Thomas had exercised common prudence he must have

known that Oatridge was working in danger, but he never gave him instructions, and never told him that Oatridge was getting into danger, or that the heading ought to be reduced in size; he did not offer the overman any intimation at all by way of precaution.

The colliery had been worked with great success as far as accidents had been concerned, for there had been no serious accident there before, and perhaps that might be a reason, although it could not be a justification, for Thomas's want of precaution. The rules he ought to have adopted under the circumstances were clearly laid down in the Act of Parliament. If the colliery proprietors chose to take upon themselves the responsibility that their pits should be properly worked, and they did not give that attention and exercise that common sense told them they ought to exercise, and disregarded the sensible enactments of the Act of Parliament, they must be taught that they could not disregard those rules with impunity, and if they were satisfied that by their negligence an accident of that sort occurred they must take the consequences. If they were satisfied that these rules had been disregarded, and that the consequence had been that this poor man lost his life, their duty was plain, namely, to find a verdict against the prisoner. He then called the following witnesses: -

**Henry Naunton Davies**, of Cymmer, surgeon to the Tynewydd Colliery: - "I remember the accident at Tynewydd. I visited the colliery at the time of the accident. Among the bodies brought up was that of William Jones, and four other men met with their death also." Cross-examined: - "I know the colliery, and also Mr. Thomas, the latter for 20 years. He has been an extremely careful collier, and always shown great anxiety for the men under him. The men of the colliery presented him with a testimonial, and up to the time of the accident and now he was held in the highest esteem. He was most assiduous in his duties. "

**William Llewellyn**: - "I am a police-constable. I was present and viewed the body of William Jones.

**Thomas Morgan**: - "I Live at America Vach, and am a collier. I was at the Tynewydd Colliery the day the water broke in. I was rescued. I escaped with Edward Williams the day after the water broke in. I have worked in the colliery for 13 or 10 years. I know Hines' pit, which belongs to the Cymmer Colliery, and adjoins the Tynewydd Colliery. I had worked in Hines' pit, in No. 3 seam, before working in the Tynewydd pit. They gave up working No. 3 seam about 17 years ago. They then commenced working No.2 which is nearer the surface. When working in Hines' pit we could hear the colliers working in the Tynewydd pit. When I worked in Tynewydd pit I did not know whether there were old workings in Hines' colliery." Mr. McIntyre objected to the question. Cross-examined: - "There

was a pump used at Hines' Pit. I have not seen it at work. I know now where the water broke through. I cannot say whether the place where I was working in Hines' pit was a long way from where the men were working in the Tynewydd Colliery.

**Charles Oatridge** (who wore his medal) said: - "I was working at Tynewydd pit at the time of the accident, and had worked there before for 10 years. For the past 12 months I had been working in Oatridge's level."

**Mr. David Thomas**: - "I am surveyor, to this colliery, and have worked up the plan of the colliery produced. No. 2 pit on it is Hines' pit." The witness described the plan to the jury by means of a wand. In Edward Williams' heading some of the men were working at the time of the accident. He then pointed out the spot where the deceased, William Jones, was working. By Mr. Bowen: - "It was 77 yards from where the fault was tested to where the water came in. Supposing Oatridge's heading had come across the fault it would be seven yards from the boundary. Could not tell on the model where Oatridge was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. Could not tell by the working plan. Had been employed by the defendant to work up the plan of the colliery, and was still. Up to December, before the accident, he had worked up that plan. On the 14th December Oatridge's heading was 44 yards from the boundary. The width of his heading was then 10 yards; and at the end of the heading where water came in was about the same width, there were no bore holes then."

Mr. Bowen: - "If the fault had existed Oatridge would have struck it 14 yards in advance of where he was working in December?" Witness: - "Yes, if it continued, in a straight line. In April there were five yards between Oatridge's heading and the boundary. That measurement was taken from the centre of Charles Oatridge's heading. At one part of the face of Charles Oatridge's level it was not within one yard of the boundary, nor was it within one foot of the coal." Mr. Bowen: - "What do you say that the barrier of coal was?" Thomas: - "Five yards; two feet between the face of Charles Oatridge's heading and the boundary."

Mr. Bowen: - "Assuming that the coal which existed was solid coal up to the boundary, would that have been a sufficient barrier approaching the old working?" Mr. Thomas: - "Yes, I believe it to be, but won't pledge my oath of it." Mr. Bowen: - "How came you to say on the 15th of May—the day you gave your evidence—that the work on the 11th of April, 1877, was within a yard of the boundary on the upper side eight yards at the bottom, and five yards at the centre, where you were told the water burst in?"

Mr. Thomas: - "It is true, to the best of my knowledge." Bowen: - "Is it true that the mark of the 11th of April, 1877 was within a yard of the boundary?" Thomas: - "Yes it is true."

Bowen: - "Knowing that No. 3 pit had been worked would you not have reason to believe that the workings would have accumulated water?" Thomas: - "No; I never thought of it. I was always under the impression that it was worked into the lower of Insole's pit." Bowen: - "Do you know from your knowledge of the country and the strata that the 30 yards' fault cut off the lower working of Joseph's pit from Insole's?" Thomas: - "I don't know how far in Insole worked in No. 3." Bowen: - "Does not the 30-yards fault run in such a way as would cut off the water running from Joseph's pit down to Insole's pit?" Thomas: - "Yes, if they have not driven a level to take the off." Mr. Bowen was about to put other which were objected to by Mr. McIntyre. Bowen has not to prove his case by putting questions and cross-examination. Mr. Bowen: - "Assuming that there is no drift running across the fault, then the water could not run into Insole's pit?" Thomas: - "No. "

Cross-examined by Mr. McIntyre: - "I always considered that the seven yards fault was continued down to the 36-yards fault, and that was the general opinion of the mining engineers of the district. A prudent workman would have stopped at the fault. On the 14th December the working was within 44 yards of the boundary. In approaching a fault we find small percolations of waters and small slippings of coal, and these indications would lead me to suppose we were approaching a fault. I have known the defendant 20 years, and he was always very careful about the safety of the mine and the safety and comfort of the colliers."

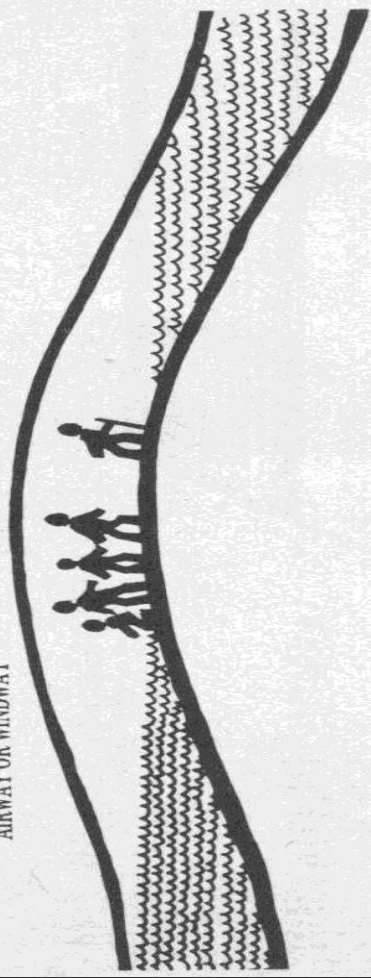
Re-examined: - "I cannot say that the indications previously referred to are indications of approaching water. I have struck a heading within a foot of the water, and have not seen any indications of the water." McIntyre: - "May I take it that you pledge your reputation as a scientific man that meeting with water, on the face of coal in small quantities—which is called weeping and coal scaling off that, is not an indication of approaching water?" Thomas: - "No; I say it is not."

**John Thomas**, late pupil of the last witness, proved that he took the measurement of the colliery in December last. Oatridge's heading was then 44 yards from the heading. Measured it again on the 11th of April. "I saw no indications of a boundary of the pit. In January following the mark was two or three yards nearer the one I must have seen it." Cross-examined: - "I knew they were not going to work beyond the fault, but to work up to it and there stop."

**Charles Oatridge**, recalled: - "I worked in Oatridge's heading on the 11th of April. I found a difference in the coal I had been working. The coal was weaker, and there

**FIRST RESCUE** This illustration explains why the trapped men saw the water approaching them from in front and behind. The compressed air collected at the highest point in the airway. (See also diagrams on P91 & 92)

AIRWAY OR WINDWAY



were drops of water on it. I remember the overman, Howells, coming to my place that day, and I called his attention to the coal. There were no indications of drops of water when he came there because I had holed under it, and that made a drain for the water. I left the colliery before the water came in. The width of my heading or stall is about 10 yards. Before I left I saw further indications of water similar to what I had seen before."

McIntyre: - "Did Mr. Thomas speak to you about the fault?" Charles Oatridge: - "Yes, several times. He said there were seven yards between Oatridge's and the old workings. Water might come through the rock, but there was no danger, in consequence of the fault. Witness continued: - "We had no boring implements furnished us, and nobody called my attention to the width of the heading. I remember the overman coming up to measure on the day of the accident. Before we left the colliery that day we had worked two or three yards further than the mark the overman made. We also had holed under the face." Cross-examined: - "During the last several weeks we drove six yards forward, and during the last fortnight we drove eight yards. The coal generally weeps, and we find little springs near a fault. I always heard from Mr. Thomas that we were to work up to the fault, and there stop."

**Edward Oatridge**, brother to the last witness, said: - "I was working with my brother on the 11th of April. Before that day I noticed the coal getting weaker and weaker. This had increased on the day of the accident." His Lordship: - "I cannot see how the fact of the weeping affected the prisoner, since it was taken as an indication of a fault." Witness: - "I had heard people say there was an old working on the other side of us, but that there would be no danger because of the fault." Cross-examined: - "We all thought we were working against the fault."

**Richard Howells**: - "At the time of the accident I was overman at Tynewydd Colliery. I am second person in command to the manager. I was in Charles Oatridge's heading at the time of the accident. Remembered his calling my attention to the state of the coal. Did not know that Oatridge was getting near to the boundary. I had seen the working plan of the colliery. The manager had told me the heading was going to a fault about six weeks before the accident happened. He had never given me any directions. He did not tell me how far Oatridge was to work. The last time I saw Thomas in the heading was a little before the accident. Each collier receives a copy of the rules. They have been explained to me, and I have read some of them myself." Cross-examined: - "I know the inspector of mines for this district—Mr. Wales. I never saw him there before the water came in. He was never in Oatridge's heading. I believe the men were in safety till they came to the fault. If I saw anything dangerous it was my duty to report to Mr. Thomas. I did not make a report of anything I saw in



Oatridge's heading, because I did not think it at all dangerous." Re-examined: "I saw Ellis's fault before the accident, but I have not seen it proved."

**William Peel:** - "I am one of the partners of the Cymmer Steam Coal Company. Hines' pit only works the upper or No. 2 seam at present. No. 3 has not been worked for the past two years. The appearance of weeping in the coal and scaling off would indicate that they were coming to a change, or a fault."

**William Pickard:** - "I am a miner's agent at Wigan. I attended the inquest. I examined the roof of Oatridge's heading. I could see no indication whatever of a fault. Weeping and slipping of coal are an indication of approaching a fault, or an old working with water." Cross-examined: - "I was appointed by the Miners' Association to attend the inquiry. I am a practical miner. My experience as a miner has been entirely in Lancashire. I have seen gas in the Tynewydd pit. Mr. Thomas took an active part in rescuing the miners."

**Mr. Wales, Government Inspector:** - "On hearing of the Tynewydd accident, on the 12th of April, I went down the pit. I made an inspection after the men were rescued. They were working in No. 3 Rhondda. There is a pit called Hines' pit, and I went into that pit. I found that No. 3 had at some time been worked from Hines' pit. At the time of the examination they were working Rhondda No. 2 from Hines' pit. I examined Oatridge's heading from the commencement to where the water burst in. Oatridge's heading was driven right up to the boundary. I have seen the seven yards' fault on the plan. I saw no indications of a fault along Oatridge's heading and in fact it does not exist there. I did not see any fault in Hines' pit. The seven yards barrier was not sufficient between the heading and the old workings to keep out the water. If there had been a fault I should have expected it to be from 15 to 20 yards from the mark made on the plan. Not having met with the fault in that spot I think the fair inference would be that the fault had either altered in its course, or gone out altogether." Mr. Bowen: - "That being so, ought Oatridge to have continued driving?" Wales: - "No; not without boring."

Bowen: - "Was it prudent to let him after he had passed the 15 or 16 yards to continue that work?" Wales: - "I think not. Bowen: - "Assuming that by some freak of nature it appeared further on, to make it a reliable barrier, how near to the boundary could it have acted as a barrier?" Wales: - "Judging from the nature and strength of the coal, I believe that if five yards of coal had been left in front of the fault on either side it would have been perfectly safe." Bowen: - "Assuming that they knew the fault to be on the boundary, what quantity of coal ought they, as prudent men, to have to have left on one side of the fault?" Wales: - "Not less than eight or ten yards". In reply to a further question, the witness said he

thought he would bore as near as 20 yards to an old working, which was supposed to have water. At this stage of the case his Lordship adjourned.

### **Swansea, Tuesday, August 7th**

James Thomas was charged on the coroner's inquisition, for that he did at Llanwonno, on the 12th of April, 1877, feloniously kill and slay William Jones. The case was resumed this morning by the further cross-examination by Mr. McIntyre of Mr. Wales, Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines who said: - "In reply to his Lordship, respecting his evidence as to the fault, that the reason he based his opinion was this, that the fault itself being in his opinion composed of very loose, soft material, would form an easy communication either for water or gas, and hence, when they approached a fault, they met with either water or gas." His Lordship: - "And therefore the water would get in through it? There would not be a sudden inundation?" Wales: - "No; I don't think there would be." His Lordship: - "There would be considerable inconvenience if composed of loose material?" Wales: - "Yes, and very likely break away suddenly." Cross-examination resumed: - "I have not known the defendant long. I received every assistance from Mr. Thomas. It was my opinion that Thomas was an intelligent, sensible, and practical man, and he gave me many very valuable hints and assistance.

I never inspected this mine before the accident. Some three or four years ago I inspected No. 3 Cymmer pit —Insole's. That pit has a connection with No. 2; but not with this pit. There is a communication between No. 3 pit and No. 2 at a point 30 or 40 yards above the bottom of No. 2 shaft, and there is no other communication. My opinion is that the stuff composing that fault would not prove a sufficient resistance for the pressure behind it. Mr. McIntyre: - "You are an Inspector of Mines, I believe?" Wales: - "Yes." McIntyre: - "Then how is it you never inspected this mine?" Wales: - "One principal reason is because they never had an accident there." McIntyre: - "Then you only think it necessary to visit a mine after an accident?" Wales: - "Not generally." McIntyre: - "You say they never had an accident in No. 3 Rhondda for a number of years?" Wales: - "I believe not." McIntyre: - "That speaks well for the management, at any rate." Re-examined: - "Am I to take it that assuming the fault to have existed, in fact, in the way it was supposed to exist, would that have been a sufficient barrier to keep the water from flooding the Tynewydd mine ? Wales: - "No, it would not."

**Thomas Cadman**, Inspector of Mines for the south-western district: - "I reside at Newport. I made a careful examination of the Tynewydd mine on the 13th of July and went into the Cymmer pit, but found no indications of a fault there. The fair inference would have been that not finding the fault where it was expected to be found, as shown on the plan, that it had died out altogether or taken another

course.” McIntyre: - “Are the faults very uncertain in their nature very much?” Cadman: - “Yes.” McIntyre: - “Would seven yards of coal in a down throw be a sufficient barrier against water?” Cadman: - “Not invariably. It would depend upon the materials whether it was a sufficient barrier or not.” Cross-examined: - “If the solid fault has no very great interstice, it would be a sufficient barrier?” Cadman: - “Yes, if there was not a large body of water to burst it.

**Mr. Wales**, recalled by Mr. Bowen. “Is James Thomas a certified manager of mines?” Wales: - “Yes; he was at the time of the accident.” His Lordship: - “If he acted as one, he must have all the obligations of one. Mr. Bowen: “I thought it was necessary to prove it formally. Then that is the case for the prosecution, my lord.”

Mr. McIntyre submitted to his lordship that there was not such evidence of culpable negligence as to render the defendant liable to a verdict of manslaughter. It seemed to him, from the evidence placed before his lordship, it could only be made out that there was an error of judgment on the part of the defendant in the working of this colliery; that it turned out that the barrier, which had been proved to be a sufficient barrier in other portions of the works of this colliery, was found by the result not to exist at this particular spot, and it, therefore, amounted merely to an error of judgment on the part of the defendant. He has proved to be a most careful manager, and he submitted that that error of judgment was not culpable negligence which would render a person liable to a verdict of manslaughter. His Lordship said that the question whether there was such a communication as would make it necessary to take precautions. Was the defendant justified in coming to the conclusion that the fault did not exist?

Mr. McIntyre: - “The last witness said that it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the fault did exist at that spot. This is not trying a boundary question, or whether a man ought to work up to a fault. The question is whether there is that culpable negligence proved to render the defendant liable to imprisonment. Having read the 51st section dealing with the observance of the rules on the part of the manager, he said the trial of the defendant was upon the coroner’s inquisition. His Lordship said the question with him was whether the obligation of the 9<sup>th</sup> rule came into operation or not under the circumstances. Mr. McIntyre said that Rule 9 stated that ‘where a place was likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water the working approaching such place should not exceed eight feet in width, and there should be a bore-hole the a sufficient distance, not less than five yards in advance.’ Five yards was the minimum, and therefore if a person did make a bore-hole five yards in advance that was a compliance with the Act of Parliament.”

The learned counsel proceeded to enter into further details, and contended that there was not sufficient evidence of culpable negligence to go to the jury. His Lordship said he did not wish to discuss the question any further. He thought there was a question for the jury as to whether, as a reasonable man, having undertaken the position and office as manager, the defendant ought not to consider it his duty to see that there was not a dangerous accumulation of gas or water. He was not expressing any opinion against the learned counsel, but he did not wish to discuss the point with him, that was all. His Lordship ruled that the case must go to the jury. A discussion then ensued between the learned counsel as to the right of Mr. Bowen to reply upon the whole case, and authorities were quoted pro and cons. His Lordship decided that Mr. Bowen might reply.

#### The defence sums up

Mr. McIntyre then proceeded to address the jury for the defence, and at the outset he complained that this prosecution was instituted by the Crown, who had not sent down their representatives to come to the front and take care that there should be a public investigation to give the prisoner the advantage of a public defence before the case came before the jury, but chose to let the coroner conduct the investigation and press the case against the prisoner who, as a matter of fact, had managed the colliery for a great number of years with the greatest care, skill, and ability; and although through a long series of years he had managed the colliery without a single accident, they placed him on the coroner's inquisition, without daring to face the magistrates, and giving the prisoner an opportunity of stating his case to the magistrates, and did not care to go before the grand jury, where the case would be investigated without feeling or bias.

Some of them, at all events, had had very considerable experience in courts of justice, but this was the one solitary instance in which those representing the prosecution had not ventured to go before the grand jury. They were not bound to do so it was true; they could come there on the coroner's inquisition and try the prisoner if they liked, but he could not help thinking that if they believed the prisoner to be guilty of the crime, they would have taken him before the magistrates and have him heard by the gentleman (Mr. Simons), who instructed him (the learned counsel). There was a gentleman present (Mr. Pickard) from Lancashire representing a great society, who cross-examined the witnesses, and after cross-examining the witnesses he was taken by the collar as a witness in this case, and therefore he (Mr. McIntyre) could not help saying that this was a most extraordinary prosecution, conducted in a most extraordinary manner in its commencement, vindictive in its continuance, and most persecuting in its result.

The prisoner had been the manager of the mine for several years, and every single person whom the prosecution had dared to call, or who knew anything about Thomas, had given him the character of being a most careful man, most assiduous to the interests of his employers, and careful of the lives of the men; yet it was urged that not by some error in reading an Act of Parliament, some error in not thinking that the fault was where it was, but that by some culpable negligence, he had brought this charge upon himself. Now they learnt from all those men who had associated with him, they learnt from all those who had assisted in the rescue, that Thomas was always careful before that time; and after that time, when it came to the time of rescuing the imprisoned miners, he was among the first to be on the spot and to make suggestions to get the men released, and yet they were now trying to make him a felon! The charge they preferred against Thomas was a charge of felony, and should he be convicted by the jury, he would for the rest of his life be branded by them as a felon. As far as the punishment was concerned, that was a question especially for his Lordship, and it might be that his Lordship could, if he chose, sentence him to penal servitude for life. Was that the sort of crime that Thomas ought to be convicted of?"

The learned counsel enlarged upon the efforts of Thomas after the accident had occurred, and went on to say that he thought it a most vindictive thing on the part of the learned counsel for the prosecution to claim a right of reply in this case, but as his Lordship had ruled in favour of Mr. Bowen, he (the learned counsel) of course submitted at once, although when his Lordship threw out the intimation that he hoped that would not be done, he had hoped his friend would not do so. His Lordship: - "You must really assume that this is done in the exercise of duty."

Mr. McIntyre resumed: - "It was inconvenient when counsel was addressing the jury on the main point of the case, that other counsel (Mr. Bowen being then speaking to his junior) close to him should make observations aloud so as to attract his attention and draw him away from the point. He could not help hearing Mr. Bowen and it was on a point upon which he (Mr. Bowen) meant to press against the prisoner upon the jury. Having dwelt in detail upon the fault in the mine, and to the evidence given by Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, Mr. Wales, he went on to say that one would have thought that a Government Inspector of Mines would have inspected the mine, and given an account of it, and the way in which it was worked; but it really did seem as if inspectors of mines were to be inspectors of mines only when accidents happened! One would have thought that the object of inspection was to prevent accidents.

Supposing they had an inspector on the great railway lines, as an inspector of engines, to see whether they were in good condition or not; would they expect him not to inspect them at all until an engine had broken down, and then inspect

it?" The learned counsel read the section of the Act bearing upon the duties of the Inspector of Mines. "The prosecution said that the provisions of sub-section 9 had not been carried out by the prisoner, but did Mr. Wales go down that mine to see whether the provisions of the Act were carried out or not? For 13 years had he been down the mine? Certainly not. Why? Because there was no accident! But he had gone now, and he had not saved the lives of those poor men. As far as this mine was concerned, until this accident occurred, and when it was too late to do any good as far as these men were concerned, the inspector's powers were never exercised. He, however, came here now to press the case against James Thomas, that he did not put in force the ninth sub-section of the Act of Parliament, and to say that you, Thomas, had committed an offence; you must appear before the justices to answer for this offence."

He could understand that but the prosecution went further. They said: - 'You are guilty of culpable negligence. You shall go into the felon's dock you shall not have an opportunity by your advocate, Mr. Simons, to cross-examine the witnesses the same as Mr. Pickard cross-examined them.' The attempt on the part of the Crown was to brand Thomas as a felon, and to hang the case upon the coroner's inquisition. Now when the coroner's inquisition was held there was very great excitement. The nerves of the public were strung to the utmost, and whether it was Thomas's fault or not that the accident occurred, it would in all probability be thought that as he was the manager he ought to have prevented it. When persons' minds were in that great state of agitation they were too prone to fix upon some one for the fault, without much discrimination.

It was unfortunate for the prisoner to have the matter brought up afresh by the visit of the Lord Mayor of London, who had come into Wales to distribute the prizes to the rescuers of the imprisoned colliers, and thus to bring prominently before the public the sufferings of those poor people who were rescued after so many days' imprisonment of some and the death of others. It did place Thomas to a considerable disadvantage, because the minds of the men were harrowed up with the thought of what horrors they went through. The jury would have to be satisfied beyond a shadow of a doubt, after carefully weighing the evidence, that the case was proved to their satisfaction before they pronounced the word "guilty." He felt satisfied that the gentlemen of the jury would restore Thomas to his family and friends, that they would re-instate him in the position he had so worthily held for years, and that by their verdict of not guilty they would efface the shame of being in the dock by letting him go forth a free man." (Loud applause in court, which was instantly suppressed.) The learned counsel then called witnesses as to character.

**Mr. Gwilym Williams:** - "I am Stipendiary Magistrate for the County of Glamorgan. I have known Mr. Thomas 12 or 13 years. During that time his character as manager had been such that he was most careful of the lives of those working under him, and he was a man much respected for his high integrity.

**Rev D. W. Williams:** - "I am a magistrate of the county of Glamorgan and a clergyman. I am a landed proprietor, and have mineral property in the neighbourhood. I have known James Thomas for 27 or 28 years, in fact, ever since he came to Glamorganshire as a collier. Since I have known him he has been one of the most skilful managers in the whole neighbourhood. His reputation has been of the highest character.

**Mr. Llewellyn,** magistrate, and mining engineer, Newport, said: - "I have known James Thomas for 25 years. He has held a very high character as a colliery manager. I have always heard him spoken of in the highest manner, as being very careful over his men.

**William Thomas Lewis,** magistrate: - "I am mining engineer to the Marquis of Bute. I have known James Thomas for 21 or 22 years, and have been agent for landlords on whose property he has worked minerals. I have always found him a most careful manager, and a thoroughly practical man. He is a man of the highest integrity of character and respectability.

The prosecution sums up

Mr. Bowen, Q. C., then replied, and with some warmth denied that the prosecution had been vindictively instituted. He put it to the jury whether they were not of the opinion that in such a case as this, where lives were lost, that however respectable, and able the defendant had been hitherto in the conduct of his collieries, if the five unfortunate men lost their lives by his neglect to carry out the plan of duty which was incumbent upon him to do, it would not be a disgrace to our laws if the case was not investigated by a public tribunal, to give an opinion whether he was responsible for the death of those men who were killed by the accident?

The facts of this he thought they were very simple. All he asked them to do was to consider those facts, and, as honest men, to say by their verdict what they thought the result ought to be — whether the prisoner was a gentleman in Mr. Thomas' position, or the lowest collier in the land employed in the mining operations of this kingdom. The colliers of this kingdom had a right to be protected from carelessness, and this Act of Parliament was passed for the special purpose of giving colliers that protection which he was sure the jury would think they were

very properly entitled to. He would go further, and ask whether, if they thought those rules had been neglected, however good and honourable that man might be, if he had neglected his duty, they ought not to say by their verdict that he was to blame. His learned friend had said that his lordship might sentence the prisoner to penal servitude for life, but he might also have told them that his Lordship might inflict upon him a nominal punishment. This prosecution was not interested for the purpose of getting a severe punishment for Thomas, but for the protection of the miners in future, to point out that if a man was guilty of culpable neglect of duty, whether he was a landed proprietor or the humblest miner who worked underground, he must be taught the law was no respecter of persons, and that juries would, if neglect was proved to their satisfaction give their verdict against him.

It had been a subject of complaint that at the coroner's inquisition Thomas was not properly treated, but the deposition showed that he was represented by an able advocate who cross-examined the witnesses brought forward for the investigation. Thomas could give his own view of what the matter was, and therefore he ought that instead of having any ground for complaint, the investigation was conducted so as to give him an opportunity of making what explanation he liked. They found by the Act of Parliament, that there should be appointed in every mine in this kingdom a person qualified to perform the duty of manager. Thomas tendered himself to the proper authority, and got a certificate that he was properly qualified to take such a position. He was appointed the manager for the proper working and inspection of this mine. The mine was to be under the proper control of the manager daily, and it was the duty of the manager to put up certain rules in a conspicuous place in the mine for the guidance of his workmen. Thomas had the rules put up, and when they came to define them it would explain what Thomas thought of the section of the Act of Parliament which he had read to them, and which had been so commented upon, as to the duty of the manager, when he approached a place likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water.

The 9th rule stated that in approaching such places the heading should be narrowed, and bore-holes should be made in advance. What were the facts here? Thomas must have known that Oatridge was working up to the old workings, for they now heard that he had been connected with collieries in that district for 25 years. That was not an immaterial matter for their consideration, when they considered the case, because he must be taken to have a general knowledge of the strata of the coal in that particular place. He must have known that Hines' Pit had been worked out 11 years ago, and abandoned. He should have known when he approached that old working, that in all probability it would contain an accumulation of water. They told them, on the other side, that there was no evidence that he knew there was water likely to exist in this old working. They also



suggested to them the totally different and inconsistent theory that they thought the water was carried away by pumping going on in Insole's Pit No. 3. It was the duty of the prisoner knowing he was coming to this boundary, not to have trusted to what he thought, but, by personal inquiry, to make himself perfectly certain whether as a matter of fact water was there or not.

It was all very well for his learned friend to say 'restore him to his family;' but nothing could restore those four drowned miners to their families. He asked them for the last time, was it reasonable for a man having hundreds of lives under his control to act in the manner the defendant had acted? If he had exercised proper care, and made a proper inspection of that particular work, he must have found, months before the accident occurred—or at any rate weeks - that Oatridge had passed the place where he expected to find the fault, and that he was coming in to dangerous proximity to the old workings.

Why had not the defence called people to contradict Mr. Wales's theory? The jury would ask themselves on these facts the questions — had Thomas, or had he not been guilty of culpable negligence? Was his want of proper precautions, pointed out by the Act of Parliament, such negligence as to cause the death of those unfortunate men? If they were of opinion that this was so, could they in justice hesitate to say so because Thomas was a gentleman and a man of property? Once more, he begged of them, if they thought the prosecution had not established to their satisfaction the culpable negligence of Thomas to say so by their verdict; on the other hand, and on behalf of the public, he asked them if they thought the case had been made to their satisfaction that Thomas was guilty of culpable negligence in the way he allowed these works to be conducted—he asked them, as men of honour, determined to do justice between the defendant and the public, to give a verdict of guilty. (Applause.)

His Lordship sums up

His Lordship then summed up with great care and lucidity, but his remarks were frequently inaudible in the reporters' seats. After referring to the rules respecting the working of collieries, as laid down in the Mines Regulation Act, and drawing attention to the instructions relative to the approach to old workings, where there might be a dangerous accumulation of water, he said if the width of the heading had been diminished and the bore-holes made as prescribed, the miners would be warned of the approach of any dangerous accumulation of water. The water could come through the bore-holes in small quantities, and the workmen would of course know that there was danger, and leave the spot. Undoubtedly there was a dangerous accumulation of water which was being approached, although, undoubtedly, when approaching that place there was no protection of the

workings. Nothing was done in the way of boring or warning the men. Having regard to all the circumstances of the case, they would have to consider whether the prisoner was justified in not acting in accordance with the prescribed rules of the Act of Parliament. It was said on behalf of the prisoner, first that there was no knowledge that there was water in this working, and no reason for believing it. It was said further, on his behalf, that even if there was water, they would first come across the fault, which would be a perfect protection against the water.

One question was whether reliance could be placed on the fault? David Thomas had told them that he believed that although the old working was not used, the water had been pumped out. Was it negligence to suppose merely that there was no water? If Thomas had gone to the other colliery and inquired, and when was told that there was no water there, he would not be responsible; but no such inquiry was made. The conversation between him and the prisoner in reference to the water took place after the accident. If they looked at the evidence they would find that the prisoner must have supposed there was water beyond the boundary, because it was shown that he believed the fault was a sufficient barrier against it. Charles Oatridge said that the prisoner had told him that there was no danger in consequence of the fault; that they must come to the fault before they came to the boundary. That meant that the water was there, and that there was no danger in consequence of the fault. He then dwelt upon the question as whether the prisoner was justified in considering that the fault existed at all, after what had taken place; and whether he was justified in allowing Oatridge to continue the heading, pointing out that in December they were only 44 yards from the boundary, and that as a manager he must have known just before the accident occurred that they must have been in close proximity to the boundary. Upon the evidence no reliance could be upon the fault, and that being the case it would be for the jury to consider whether he, as a reasonable man, could have expected to find the fault after what had taken place. If they thought there was sufficient justification for the prisoner acting as he did in approaching the boundary which was dangerous, and that he was justified in acting upon the more or less uncertain fault, they would give him the benefit of that finding, but if they were of opinion that he had been guilty of culpable negligence, they would find him guilty.

#### The verdict

The jury retired, and after about 45 minutes, they said they could not agree, and asked to be allowed to have refreshments. Mr. B. T. Williams, Q.C., who was in court, said it had been decided that a jury might have refreshments at their own expense. His lordship accordingly allowed them to refresh themselves. Subsequently, after having been retired a very considerable time, His Lordship intimated to counsel that from communications he had received from the jury,

they were not likely to agree. Mr. Bowen, Q.C., said that in that case he would request, on the part of the prosecution, that the prisoner should be discharged on his own recognisance's, to come up for trial at the next assizes. On the return of the jury into court, the foreman said that they were about equally divided, and were not likely to agree if locked up all night. His Lordship said they would be discharged if they were not likely to agree. The prisoner was then discharged, and was bound over in his own recognisances of £200 to appear at the next Cardiff Assizes, if called upon on the part of the Crown. The editorial of the '*South Wales Daily News*' of August 8<sup>th</sup> 1877 commented: -

### **The trial in the Tynewydd Colliery disaster**

After an assize trial, extending over nearly two days, the jury in the Tynewydd case have been dismissed, unable, as they declare, to come to a verdict. This is a legal drawn-battle—for Mr. Thomas, a verdict of not guilty and perhaps it as accurately sums up the divided state of feeling in the country as it was possible to determine it. The criminal trial which closed yesterday afternoon at Swansea was unquestionably the most important yet held under the Mines' Regulation Act, and it dealt with a novel point—one, indeed, which was not specifically provided for by the Act. The lawyers plume themselves upon being able to drive a coach-and-six through every enactment of the Legislature and the clause upon which the Tynewydd case rested, from a criminal point of view, ran as follows :—

"Where a place [not old workings, observe] is likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water the working are approaching such place shall not exceed eight feet in width, and there shall be constantly kept at a sufficient distance, not being less than five yards in advance, at least one bore-hole near the centre of the working, and sufficient flank bore-holes on each side." The prosecution—conducted practically by the Home Secretary contended that the disused Cymmer workings adjoining the Tynewydd Pit were "a place," in the true meaning of the Act, and that as no bore-holes either in advance or in the flanks of Oatridge's heading had been made, that Mr. James Thomas, the certificated manager of Tynewydd, had been guilty of culpable negligence, and consequently of manslaughter. The public, who are commendably jealous that mere sentiment and sympathy for a deservedly respected man like Mr. James Thomas, shall not unfavourably weigh down one side of the scales of justice, want to know who is responsible for the deaths of the five victims of the Tynewydd inundation.

The Mines' Regulation Act, which cost Parliament so much labour, was not unreasonably expected to provide the legal test, yet a fairly intelligent and most patient jury of Glamorganshire men have failed to apply the facts to the law, so as

to determine the actual criminal responsibility, if any, of Mr. James Thomas, the manager of the Tynewydd Pit. To the general public this may seem extraordinary. Yet the explanation is comparatively simple. All the evidence pointed to the fact that Mr. James Thomas has for more than an average lifetime been notably, perhaps, the most careful, practical, and hard-headed pit-manager in South Wales, who, indeed, was so free from the responsibilities attaching to accidents that Mr. Wales, the Government Inspector, did not deem it necessary, in the course of the long period of thirteen years to inspect the Tynewydd Pit even once although the law properly held Mr. Thomas technically and equitably responsible for the safe working of the Tynewydd Pit, it is difficult to convince a jury that an exceptionally careful man should be sent to prison—it may be to penal servitude—for non-compliance with an Act of Parliament which he has really tried to obey, so far as his personal knowledge and belief went, fortified as these were by the "plottings" of the pit survey, and the opinions of the pit engineer. There is not, and cannot be, the slightest doubt that a terrible blunder was committed in Tynewydd, and that it led to a sad sacrifice of life. How was Mr. Thomas, as the responsible manager, led to overlook the true state of the facts?

- (1) Because he trusted the engineer's survey.
- (2) Because the " fault" was never tested, and has not been tested yet.
- (3) Because the proprietors of the Cymmer Pit No. 3 worked up, seventeen years ago, to the last inch of, if not rather over, their actual boundary line.
- (4) The unexplained delay in making the quarterly survey.
- (5) And the inexplicable fact that during thirteen' years Mr. Wales, the Government Inspector, never once visited the pit—as he explains, because there had never been an accident in it.

Negligence there was, unquestionably, on Mr. James Thomas's part, but can it be called "culpable negligence "Stripped of the quirks and quiddities" of the counsel, the facts seem to be that the Cymmer No. 3 and Tynewydd pits worked the same strata of coal on the same level; that the Tynewydd colliers expected to find that the boundary was distinguished by a fault composed of rock, which, by a freak of nature, unexpectedly disappeared; and the coal in the Tynewydd Pit being worked up to the last yard or two of the Cymmer boundary, the water accumulated for seventeen years, forced its way through the last six inches of coal in Oatridge's heading, and produced the disaster. The body of water must have been immense, and the wonder is that a soul escaped on the 11th of April, when the pent-up water broke forth like a giant disturbed in his sleep, crushing all in its way. In the mysterious workings of Providence, the advent of the water was marvellously timed to let the majority escape and admitting, as we must, that a great blunder has been committed, the consolation is, that it arose more from an error of judgment, or defective knowledge, than "culpable negligence." Nobody

seems to have expected that a volume of water had been accumulating for seventeen years—the impression being that as the water gathered, it was drawn off by the pumping engines of No. 2 Cymmer Pit. It is human to err, and that evidently was the opinion of some of the jury, who would have been disposed, we suspect, to return a verdict of “not proven,” but English law does not recognise such. Mr. Thomas is bound over to appear at Cardiff Spring Assizes if called on, but we suspect we shall hear no more of the case, for the public are as much divided as the jury on the question of responsibility and “reasonable probability.” Yet the trial will read pit managers a stern lesson.

### **The tale of Tynewydd**

The editorial of the *‘Merthyr Telegraph’* of August 10<sup>th</sup> 1877 remarked: - So long as there be a Welshman to tell the story; as long as an ounce of coal is taken from the bowels of British soil; so long as the memory of man endures; the tale of Tynewydd, with its subsequent narrative of the gratitude of an appreciative nation, will be told with all the embellishments suggested by an increased intelligence. On Saturday last occurred the closing scene of a life drama in three acts - the first closed in darkness, despair and death; the second amid the cry of victory; and the third on the hill-top beneath the sun-light, and amid the plaudits of assembled thousands. Twenty years ago the Rhondda Valley, in which, as all our readers now know Tynewydd is situate, was a very different place from what it is now. The entire production of coal from the few collieries then in existence did not exceed 300,000 tons a year - an amount now represented by something like a couple of million of tons. But we have already pointed to the growth of this valley - so aptly styled the California of South Wales — and we need add little on this head. But could we compare for a moment the conditions of mining in those days with what they are now, perhaps the development of the locality will be better understood. One great change swept along the vale at the time of the coal-famine. Then all the tag-rag and bob-tail of the country, induced by high wages, came to the place to work in the mines, and present inhabitants could testify as, to the fearful scenes of riot and confusion which used to prevail there. That this rough element has not left behind it a majority of deterrent influences on the morale of the people, we think the characteristic features of the Tynewydd rescue will prove and it has been rightly said, that as fine a body of men may be found in the Rhondda as anywhere else.

That the ultimate state of the district is thus satisfactory is a matter of congratulation not only to those who reside within it or indeed to Welshmen in general — but to the whole of the coal mining community. It is impossible to look on the Tynewydd business with anything like a local feeling merely. There is no doubt of the fact that the spirit which led up to the desperate and continued

struggle on the part of the rescuers, and the calm, courageous patience of the rescued, are characteristic features of the coal miner's life. He passes his days under conditions which can only tend to encourage a demonstration of the kind we refer to. Let the ordinary individual descend a coal mine, amid the awful stillness which surrounds him; the thick darkness; the knowledge that he is only preserved from instant and terrible death, which might occur in a variety of ways, by the practical ability of his fellow; let such thoughts as these arise, under peculiar conditions calculated to give them the greatest intensity, and he will, we repeat, for once realize the everyday position of the miner. Now if it so happened that the latter, in return for the risk he runs, had an easy life of it below ground, the employment one would imagine would present features to repel most men. But coupled with all his danger the collier has to work, and down-right hard too, if he intends to make anything like a decent living. The rough, hard hand, the blue bespattered face, and the peculiar hulking walk of most of them, tell their own tale, and bear silent but eloquent testimony to the fact that the miner has a hard life of it.

Now just in proportion to the equal manner in which all these conditions are shared by the whole of the miners of the country, so does there appear to be a common spirit of bravery. "Familiarity breeds contempt," and in the present instance it is a contempt of danger. In some cases this regardlessness of consequences shows itself in a reckless carelessness as to the necessary laws and rules which govern a pit. This is reprehensible, and may be followed with punishment. But fortunately it is generally exhibited in case of accident, and there never was in England or Wales any grave emergency, but that volunteers were found to risk their lives or limbs. According to these hypotheses, the mining population of the whole country can appreciate the high compliment paid to their representatives on Saturday last. And what can we say as to the ceremony?

The chief citizen of the metropolis of the world, a member of the House of Peers, as representative of Her Majesty the Queen, the Lord Lieutenant of the county, and a gallant officer of the British Army, assembled, for what? To do honour to the collier. A year or two ago this would not have been dreamt of. To say that the head of this realm had inaugurated a new order for the recognition of a parcel of colliers and their managers would have been to cause a smile of incredulity. But surrounded with every gratifying circumstance this has been the case, and South Wales, as the head and front of the class referred to, wears her honours gracefully. In concluding our final notice of this affair, we pass over, but not without a feeling of pain, the dispute as to the identity of the rescuers rewarded. But we are extremely pleased to notice that after undergoing a searching trial, in conformity with the law, Mr. Thomas, the manager of the Tynwydd Colliery, remains a free man. The jury could not agree as to the facts before them, and the Lord Judge of

Assize, who might have empanelled a second jury, or have sent the first one back to reconsider the matter, allowed Mr. Thomas to go on his own recognisances. If there was one thing calculated to mar the happiness of Saturday last, it was the knowledge that the manager of the mine - whom we believe all loved - had to appear at the bar of this country to account legally for the unfortunate men slain in the accident. He now is at liberty, though he has faced the inquiry - a suitable finish to the great and ever memorable Tale of Tynewydd.

### **The Lord Mayor and the Welsh miners**

The great Tynewydd swindle

The Worcester Journal, Friday, August 10<sup>th</sup> 1877 reported: - The distribution of prizes and rewards by the Lord Mayor of London, at Pontypridd, to those engaged or supposed to have been engaged, in the rescue of the five men imprisoned in the Tynewydd mine at Porth, in Glamorganshire, may seem of small importance to the reader of this journal; but in reality it is not so, for many of them were generous subscribers to a fund which, we are advised from the spot, has been appropriated in a manner which will react upon future subscriptions of the kind. What are the circumstances?

A certain number of men are by the overflow of water from an unexpected source prevented from ascending to the top of the pit. Some of them are drowned, but others who after surviving many days are dug out by their comrades. It might be supposed, upon pure principles of reason, that the men who were rescued from a living grave would consider this a sufficient reward for the sufferings endured in the term of their horrible imprisonment. Indeed it is obvious that any one of them to save his life or to escape from his dismal dungeon would have given not only all that he possessed, but a considerable percentage of anything he might possess after being restored to the world. It is equally clear that the men engaged in getting them out were performing a simple duty of humanity towards their brethren, for which the offer of a money reward ought to be considered an insult. As for Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, the medical staff, and some of the engineers, they are specially paid to do in fact what they did, and in the beginning sad blunders were made only retrieved by the exertions of a gentleman whose name has never even been mentioned. The British public, with its generous instincts, and trusting the super-sensational accounts in the London and provincial press, rushed to its usual means of satisfying its emotions and subscribed the fund which the Lord Mayor distributed on Saturday.

There has been much talk of heroism. In fact there was little heroism about it, excepting the case of Isaac Pride, and he was an Englishman. Local tradition has it that many of the men who received the bounty of the English public, by the hands

of the Lord Mayor, were simply curs, and had again and again to be forced to the work. The bickering and protests which have attended this fund go to prove what has been hinted at, namely, that the whole thing is simply the greatest charitable swindle of modern times. Nearly every week in the valleys of Glamorgan more people are killed than in this accident, and every day colliers incur much greater danger than that which had to be faced by the so-called "heroic" rescuers.

The plain truth is that the heroism existed principally in the brain of a Welsh reporter, and how far romance can carry a Welshman we need not tell all our readers. However, the Lord Mayor, having to attend as a witness at the Swansea assizes, thought it a good opportunity of disburdening himself of the load of money which had been conveyed to him under false impressions. It was becoming a nuisance to him. Every day he was receiving protests of one kind or the other, and his soul was being continually vexed in the matter. So he determined that the best plan would be to make a general scramble of it on the Common of Pontypridd, and to get as much fun and *eclat* out of the occasion as he could. He was received by the local members and dined by two corporations, and we have no doubt he was glad enough to get back to London without having any more responsibility for a gift which promises to be attended by as many evils as those which sprang from the box of Pandora. To say that hatred and all uncharitableness, evil speaking, lying, and slandering has attended this distribution is to feebly express the state of affairs. Those acquainted with local matters assure us that legacies of recrimination as to the true heroes of the rescue are likely to be numerous, which is not improbable if there were no heroes save one.

One subject of comment has already come to the front, namely, the absurdly large amount expended upon that class of gentlemen who could by no possibility be considered as requiring a money reward. It will be with surprise that those who supposed they were contributing to a fund for the relief of distressed miners will find that 100 guineas (in plate) have gone to Mr. T. E. Wales, Her Majesty's District Inspector of Mines, for assisting in a disaster which is the subject of inspection to prevent; that a similar sum has gone to the chief of the medical staff (in plate); and a sum of nearly £500 to the engineers. The gentleman who got up the list of rescuers has the equivalent of £30, although he never did any rescuing, and even the reporter of the '*Western Mail*' is awarded £10. It would be absurd to pretend that it was the intention of the subscribers to the Mansion House Fund to have it misapplied in such a fashion as this. The terms of the appeal were explicit. It was for the rescued of the Tynewydd pit and for the rescuers who had risked their lives. To go, therefore, and give away plate to Inspectors of Mines and others in this reckless fashion exhibits the greatest disregard of the morality of the occasion, and we are only formulating the commonsense of the thing when we describe it as a swindle.



Would people have subscribed had they known it was to go to pay for plate of an Inspector of Mines, whose business it is to see that such accidents are impossible? Of course not. The thing does not require arguing. The visit of the Lord Mayor with his money bags to Wales may be called a carnival of indiscriminate benevolence, and if next time a real, instead of a sensational catastrophe, occurs in Wales, the British public will remember the £600 or £700 pounds spent upon gentlemen who do not want it, and withdrawn from real working men who do, and refused to open their purse strings. The Welsh miners will only have to thank the busybodies who have made it be understood that money meant for charity in Wales is likely to be converted into presentation plate. Those responsible for the distribution of the fund had no more right to award this plate than to give to Mr. Naplesome, to help him to retrieve the fortunes of his opera house building upon the Thames embankment.

### **The London divers and the Tynnewydd disaster**

Other letters continued to appear about the Tynnewydd disaster and the Albert medal awards, including the following which gives much information about what the London divers did when called to act during the inundation. Messrs. Siebe and Gorman, writing in the *'Times'* newspaper on August 16<sup>th</sup> 1877 remarked: - "The Albert medals have been awarded, and we do not say that the recipients have not earned them, yet we think that two names have been unduly overlooked – those of Frank Davis and Thomas Purvis, the divers. They did not rescue the imprisoned men, and yet they were awarded £50 each from the Mansion House Fund; they were not miners daily used to continuous toil underground, but none the less ready were they to attempt the saving of the lives of their fellow creatures. The imprisoned men were not their comrades in their toil, they knew not whether they were married or had children, they had no inducement to save their lives; such a companionship will sometimes cause heroic deeds to save a friend. They were simply asked to attempt, at the risk of their own lives, to save, if possible, their fellow men who were dying entombed from utter starvation.

Upon the receipt of the telegram from Mr. M'Connochie; of Bute Dock, Cardiff, we immediately dispatched the two men not knowing the duties that were exactly required of them, except that an attempt was to be made to help the imprisoned miners. They left London at 5 o'clock in the evening, about four hours after receipt of the telegram, and arrive at Pontypridd about 1 o'clock in the morning. They rushed immediately to descend into the pit; but Mr. Galloway, the Government Inspector of Mines, on account of intense excitement following their arrival, counselled them to wait until the morning before making the attempt, and in the meantime to take some rest after their journey, which they very reluctantly agreed to. About 6 o'clock preparations were made to descend, the shaft being 90 yards

deep to the bottom, from where the whole of the gear had to be taken, through a tunnel some 300 yards long, until they came to the heading of the water. There the position was so cramped that the men turning the air-pumps were in a stooping position. Before descending the shaft Frank Davis and Thomas Purvis were taken before a committee of gentlemen comprising several mine owners, engineers, and resident gentlemen of the neighbourhood, who requested the colliery engineers to explain to the two divers the plan of the mine, and the immense risk they ran in the attempt of reaching the imprisoned men. After some discussion as to the responsibility and who was to incur it if any accident happened to the divers, not one of the committee consented to take in the responsibility, and even counselled the divers not to make the attempt. Although the risks they would incur were fully explained, and were sufficient to appal the bravest men, yet these two men answered that they could never return to their firm without making the attempt, and that they would take all responsibility on themselves, even when the committee tried to dissuade them from the attempt. After arriving at the head of water, it was agreed that they were both to enter the cutting together and continue till they came to a corner some 3ft. from the entrance into the water, the water at that distance being 50ft. deep. On their coming then to the level, it was agreed that that Thomas Purvis was to remain there while Frank Davis was to try and push ahead, which he did for another 200ft; when insurmountable obstacles stopped his further progress. After attempting to overcome them, the extremely dangerous position he was placed in combined with his Herculean efforts for over one hour and forty minutes, and fears that his strength would not enable him to return, induced him unwillingly to turn his back to try, if possible, to return whence he came.

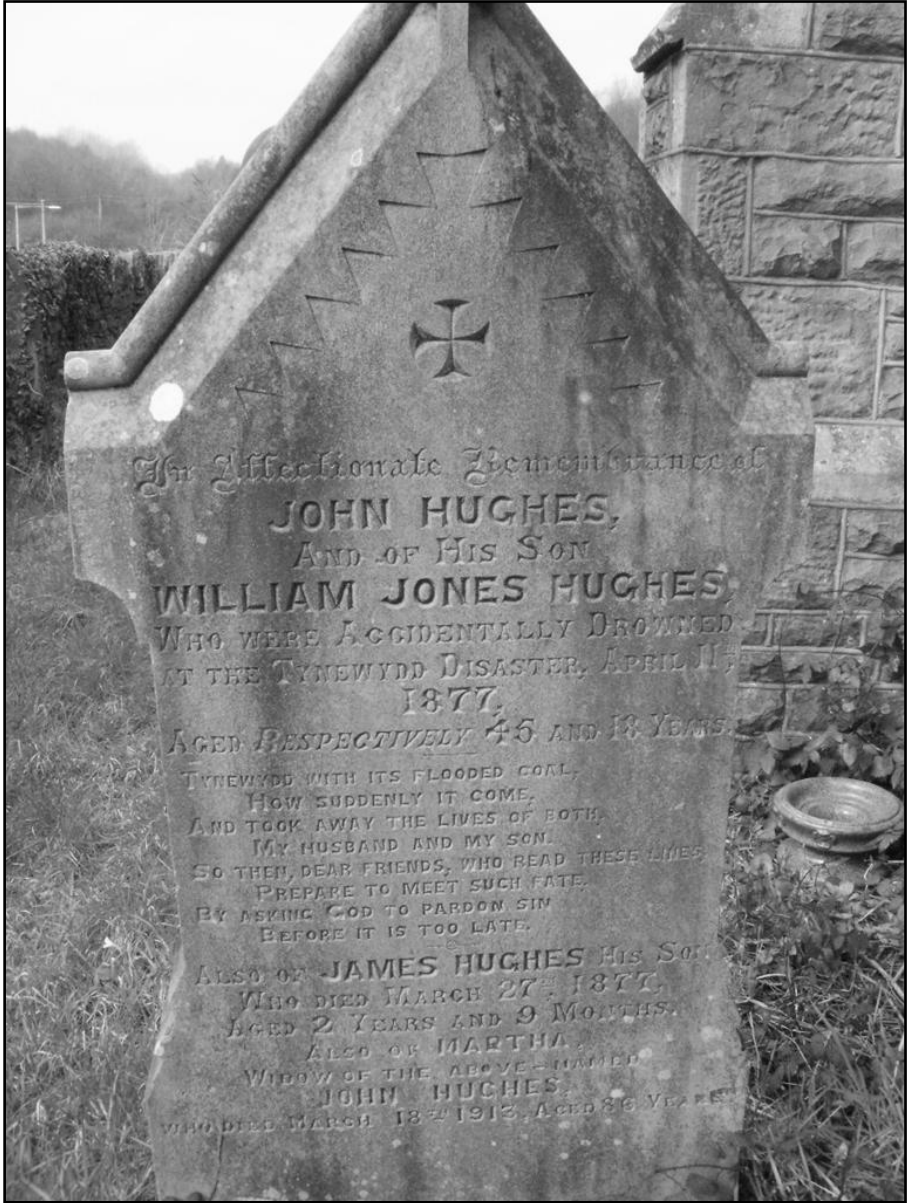
To understand more fully the immense exertion required to reach that point – that is to say, 500ft. from the head of water where he entered – it must be remembered that he took with him his air-tube, weighing 26lb. every 50ft., so at 500ft. he had a drag of 260lbs. and two life-lines, one to leave with the miners in case he reached them, weighing about 170lb; a total weight of 430lb. at a distance of 500ft. This was not all, the ground was slimy and water thick, and when pulling his air-tube and lines he often found himself slipping along instead of moving tubes or lines. During this time Thomas Purvis was standing like a lonely sentinel in utter darkness – such darkness, as he says, he never knew before – neither receiving signals from the heading nor from Frank Davis; standing there awaiting in the horror or solitude, with the hope that his fellow diver was still alive and had reached the imprisoned men, and yet uncertain as to his fate, waiting anxiously for his return. Few minds can grasp the continuous anxiety when waiting in a cutting with water 50ft. deep, with not even the consolation of receiving and answering signals. He did not have the continual battle that Frank Davis had in advancing, but the solitude of one almost counter-balances the other. Frank Davis was told that

when he left the corner where Purvis was stationed, he was to cross the cutting until he came to a turning on the right, then pass three other cuttings on his left until he came to the stable where the men were imprisoned, and that if he missed any of them he was hopelessly lost. He followed his instructions to the letter, but the obstacle that crossed his path was too heavy to remove, the more so, on account of his exhausted state. His helmet, a new one when sent, was battered to that extent as if it had seen 20 years of service, proof of the danger he had run. The engineer of the mine told the divers that when he saw them enter the water he never expected to see them back again.

The miners pass the majority portion of their lives in the mine and are daily habitants, knowing all the turns as a Londoner knows his streets; the making of the cutting to the imprisoned miners was what they do every day of their lives, only with less exertion and excitement than in trying to save their fellow miners; but these two divers were never in a mine before, yet they made the bold attempt, hopeless as they were told, but none the less they made it, and with continual danger that none of the miners ever ran; yet through their attempt not being successful they are overlooked in the award of medals, to which they had attached a far higher importance than to the pecuniary award. One satisfies the pocket, while the other satisfies the mind, one is soon forgotten, and the other is a continuous memento to themselves and their children. Frank Davis, who has seen service in the Royal Navy, would have far more appreciated the medal for having risked his life than any amount that might have been subscribed for him. Honour to the brave is dearer than all. Both Purvis and Davies must feel that they have been slighted, after having seriously risked their lives in trying to do a noble duty. We write this and feelingly, as we are more fully enabled to understand the dangers undergone by these two men than persons not knowing what submarine life is like." The nation newspapers during week ending August 25<sup>th</sup> 1877 carried the following letter: -

#### **Isaac Pride gives thanks**

Sir – I wish to thank Her Majesty the Queen for the first class Albert medal which Lord Aberdare was commissioned to present. And next, I thank Major Duncan for presenting me with the medal of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. Then I wish to thank the Lord Mayor and the subscribers to the Mansion House Fund and others for the money I received from them; and wish to thank the members of Parliament for their kindness in presenting me with a watch and chain. I wish to say I am very proud of the awards I have received, and little did I think the public would take as much interest in it as they did when we were working to rescue the men. The '*Times*,' of Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup> 1877 carried a similar letter: -



Gravestone of John and William Hughes at St. David's Church, Hopkinstown



Gravestone of Edward Williams at St. David's Church, Hopkinstown

## John William Howells gives thanks

### To the editor of the Times

Sir – I am sorry that so much time has gone by before thanking the public for the rewards presented to me – that £50 from the ‘*Daily Telegraph*’ Fund, the £80 from the Mansion House Fund, and beloved and gracious Queen for the Albert medal, and Major Duncan for the medal of The Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and the members of parliament for the valuable watch and chain, and at last, but not least, the bible Society for the handsome bible. Among other causes that prevented me from writing before is that I was rather badly burnt while trying the gas at Ynyshir Colliery, in company with ‘Happy’ Dodd; but, thank God, I am right again. In conclusion I beg to say that as long as I live, I will look upon my rewards with great pride and feel very thankful for the liberty and opinion of the British public; for I consider that none of us deserved so much as we received, because we did our duty, as every man ought to do. Thanking you if you will please put this in the ‘*Times*.’ I am, Sir, yours obediently, **John William Howells, Cymmer, near Pontypridd September 5<sup>th</sup> 1877.**

### Entertainments

At the beginning of September those of the Tynewydd rescuers and rescued who had not restarted work, were induced to take their story around the theatres and halls of the UK. The two separate parties were not, however, to be ‘stars’ for long. ‘*Western Mail*,’ of Wednesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> 1877 reported: - The Tynewydd heroes – “On Tuesday evening the Tynewydd Rescue Concert Party commenced their tour by a miscellaneous vocal and instrumental concert at the Swiss Hall, Cardiff, the party includes amongst its number the principal rescuers, whose names are so well-known – Isaac Pride, William Howell, Ablett, Davies, Griffiths and ‘Happy’ Dodd – who exhibited their Albert medals, and other prizes received from the House of Commons and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. There are several ladies and gentlemen vocalists, the “miners’ hymn” being sung by the rescuers, and interesting illustrations given, showing the operations undertaken for the rescue of the colliers who were buried alive at Tynewydd. There will be a morning entertainment this Wednesday afternoon at about 3 o’clock, and the programme will be repeated in the evening at 8 o’clock. On Thursday and Friday the party will appear at Newport. The entertainment on Tuesday night was highly appreciated by a numerous audience, not withstanding several counter attractions.” The same newspaper of September 10<sup>th</sup> 1877 disclosed that one of the groups had asked to perform before his Lordship the Mayor of London, which brought a quick and negligent answer: -

“It seems to me that the Tynewydd miners who proposed giving entertainments throughout the country with the help of a “select vocal troupe” are ill-advised. The letter of the Lord Mayor declining to patronise their entertainment, and stating that their proceedings went far to remove any kindly interest he had in them, only expressed a general feeling. There is something repugnant in the idea of brave men making a show of themselves even though they propose, as a sop to public opinion, to give one-half of the proceedings of their entertainments to the Mansion House Indian Famine Relief Fund. Their project, I know, meets with no sympathy in London, and I should think it would meet with none in the country. As a mere show, I am not sure that the thing would pay. We live fast in these days, and not even the Tynewydd miners have an abiding interest for the public. In the proposed entertainments, therefore, there would be a great chance of the “select vocal troupe” being the principal attraction.” Again, the action of the Lord Mayor brought the following week a newspaper letter in response to the above: -

### **The Tynewydd miners and the Lord Mayor**

The ‘*Western Mail*,’ of Saturday September 15<sup>th</sup> 1877 reported: - Mr. Moses Powell, Mr. David Jenkins, and Mr. John Thomas write to a London contemporary from Bridgewater, as follows: - “The report that has appeared in the papers lately, relating to the above, appears to have caused a misunderstanding with the public. We take the liberty of addressing you on the subject. The manager who wrote to the Lord Mayor is belonging to the rescuers who are now on a tour. We are the entombed men, and have appeared in a few towns and cities to give our entertainment or lecture, as we require change of air and scene. Since our entombment we are very weak, and not sufficiently strong to work; therefore we have been induced to leave our homes having families’ dependent upon us. The amount of money collected for us is £200 each, which is invested for us in the bank, the interest bringing us in £10 per year. If you will kindly insert this the public will know that it was not us that applied to the Lord Mayor, you will oblige.”

The ‘*Western Mail*,’ of Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup> commented: - “It was not a very tempting bait which induced the Tynewydd miners – the rescuers, I mean – to make a starring tour; only £3 a week each, I hear, which was to be guaranteed to them by the speculator who got them together. The entombed men are anxious not to be confused with the other party to whom the Lord Mayor’s letter of rebuke was addressed, but although Moses Powell lays down the distinction that, where as he and the other entombed men are going about with an entertainment for “change of air and scene,” the rescuers are going about with one for money, people are asking whether, after all, there is so very much to choose between them.” A month later the editorial of the ‘*Western Mail*,’ of October 18<sup>th</sup> 1877

reported the demise of the two touring Tynewydd groups and disclosed what became of the two youngsters that were rescued from the Pit: -

#### Editorial

“When the rescued men were brought to bank at Tynewydd we then thought that the long suspense was at an end, and curtain was about to fall. Still, it did not fall, nor did the interest cease. The progress towards restoring to health was watched with eagerness; the inquiry before the coroner attended with solitude; the trial before the Assize Court at Swansea noted with attention; and yet, before the grim mouth of Tynewydd, and the clanking chain, and the crowd, and the half dead rescued, the curtain did not fall. When at length the Lord Mayor of London came down, and Pontypridd became the scene of a vast concourse that ever it had welcomed before, and the sufferers were soothed, and the heroes were crowned, then we thought the end had surely come, and *finis* written to the story of Tynewydd. No, this curtain still hung. There was some hitch or other somewhere; what was it? It was this, the rescued were perambulating the country, giving concerts and relating the story of the rescue, until it was represented to them that this course was not a judicious one, and that the curtain had better fall. Again no, and perversely as ever the raven of Edgar Poe, the curtain still hung. This was the state of things until a few days ago. Now it is our pleasing task to chronicle the end of the great drama – a fitting end, a noble end.

We looked into a large schoolroom in Merthyr the other day, the school of Mr. Thomas Lloyd. There, actively occupied, zealously working, were the future men of the Principality. From far and near they had come – lads from the hills, lads from the vales. Here was one with thoughtful brow training for the pulpit. There are scores of others of brow and resolute in bearing, receiving the first instruction towards a knowledge of mining engineering. Their destiny was the pit as managers, and the fact that a good sound elementary education was first imparted, and then the technical knowledge necessary for safely and properly working coal pits, augured well for the interests of masters and the men in the future.

In a corner, busily employed, were two boys, to whom our attention was specially directed. One was Morgan, the lad who was rescued after a brief imprisonment, and the other, David Hughes. In the plump face, and contented, nay, happy look, one would never have recognised the boy we had seen drawn up like a half drowned rat from the coal grave, and later even the emaciated, terror-stricken youth whose progress towards recovery we had watched in the hospital at Tynewydd. This, then, was the end. Here, bravely working, are the two boys gaining that knowledge necessary to enable them to get an honest livelihood in



the world. Enabled by the bountiful generosity of a nation ever ready to honour heroism and help the suffering, they are now above the necessity of acting as door-boys or tram fillers. Steadily persevering, they will go on, and if the healthy life be spared the two rescued boys hereafter may figure in the honourable post of managers in collieries of their own valley. This, then, fittingly ends the drama. After this let the curtain fall, the play has been played out, the heroes rewarded, and the moral lesson taught." Obviously the '*Western Mail*' was forgetting several things before the 'curtain' finally came down. There were the awards from the Royal Humane Society and the Tynewydd Local Fund still had to make its awards from over £1,200 that been subscribed to them, and the Tynewydd Manager still had the charge of manslaughter hanging over him.

### **Royal Humane Society**

On Thursday, October 26th 1877, at a special meeting of the Royal Humane Society, at Trafalgar Square, Mr. Hawes, the treasurer, presiding, the silver medal medallion of the society, the highest award granted by the committee for saving or attempting to save life, was unanimously voted to Mr. Daniel Thomas, colliery proprietor, Brythweunydd, Rhondda Valley, South Wales; to Mr. William Beith, mechanical engineer of Harris's Navigation Colliery, Quaker's Yard; to Isaac Pride, collier, Llwyncelyn Colliery, Rhondda; and to John William Howell, collier, Ynyshir Colliery, Rhondda Valley, for their gallant conduct in rescuing the imprisoned miners at the Tynewydd Colliery. It was resolved to request Lord Aberdare to publicly present the medals to the men to whom they had been awarded.

### **Distribution of the Local Fund**

(*'Western Mail'* November 7<sup>th</sup> 1877)

On Monday evening, November 5<sup>th</sup> 1877 a meeting of the General Committee appointed in connection with the local fund raised for the relief of the sufferers from the Tynewydd inundation was held at the Porth Hotel, Porth, and final arrangements were made to the distribution of the fund. Mr. Lewis (Tynycymmer) in the absence of the chairman of the committee (The Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield) presided. After a short preliminary discussion, the secretary read the report of the Sub-committee, of which the following is a summary: - The Sub-committee at the outset consisted of seven members – Mr. Joseph Lewis, Mr. Jabez Evans, Mr. H. S. Davies, Mr. Richard Rogers, Mr. J. Calvert, Mr. Idris Williams, and the Rev. W. Lewis, vicar of Ystradyfodwg, the latter sent in his resignation subsequently, not having time to attend the meetings. In his place the Rev. Bickerton Evans was appointed. Subsequently he also withdrew.



**Some of the silverware and medals presented to those involved in the Tynewydd rescue. Now on display at the Big Pit National Coal Museum after being donated.**

## Chapter twelve

The committee had to deal with something like 200 claims. They came to the conclusion, after much discussion, to deal with the local fund as part of the whole of the funds subscribed, having regard to the fact that awards had been made under the Mansion House and '*Daily Telegraph*' Funds. The committee were of the opinion that certain individuals, both those who had sent and those who had not sent claims, had been substantially, completely, and apply remunerated and honoured. Where this was the case the committee declined to recommend such individuals to receive further grants from the local fund. With the exceptions indicated under this head, the committee laid down the principal that no-one was entitled to participation in the local fund whose work had been confined to the surface only.

The committee suggested that 12 of the shift colliers be paid at the rate of 6 shillings per the number of days they had worked, subject to the deduction in respect of each and any sums they might have received from either or both of the funds herein before mentioned. The committee recommended an allowance of £2 per day to the carters, subject to the like conditions; the sinkers £1 per day; colliers of the first batch £2. In recognition of the valuable services of Messrs. D. Thomas, E. Thomas, T. Jones, D. Davies, D. Jones, and W. Davies, the committee recommended that an address, illuminated on velum (cost of each not to exceed £10), being inscribed, and presented to each. The committee recommended grants to W. Thomas and Michael Thomas, banksmen, and C. Faull, Richard Jones and Andrew Rutter, enginemen for special gratitudes. They also recommended W. Morgan, L. T. Jenkins, Isaiaah Thomas, Frank Bell, Charles Faull, Andrew Harper, and George Morgan. They recommended the amount be appropriated to Mrs. Morgan and her child from the local funds be invested for the children's benefit in the hands of two trustees, Mrs. Morgan having since married. The fund was recommended to be therefore distributed as under: -

Widows: - **Mrs Morgan**, £10, one child £40, Total £50; **Mrs Williams**, £40, seven children, £10 each - £110 total. **Mrs Hughes**, £40, two children, £20 – Total £60. **Mrs Owens**, £20, Total £20. **Rescued men** (10 men entombed). **Four men** £40 each, £160; **the boy Hughes** £50 total £210; **Three men** 11 hours imprisoned, £10 each, Total £30; **the boy Morgan**, £25, total £55; Illuminated addresses, £60. **Shift colliers** (12), £144-2s-5d; **colliers**, first batch £12; **sinkers**, £32; **carters**, £164; **stokers**, £11-2s-6d; **enginemen** £2-15s; **fitters**, underwater, £14; **pumpmen**, £33-10s; **banksmen** £10-10s; **special gratitudes**, £61; total £1,057-19s- 11d. The total the committee had in the bank was £1,164-10d, leaving a balance of £106-11d to meet further contingencies. The chairman moved the adoption of the report and Mr. Calvert seconded.

The Rev. Bickerton Evans said that he could not concur with the report. Some of those who had behaved in the most heroic manner were entirely overlooked; Mr. Beith, of the Navigation Colliery, for instance, and Mr. James Thomas, the manager of the pit. He affirmed that the Sub-committee, instead of dealing with the facts, had gone out of their way to give an arbitrary opinion as to the cause of the accident. They withdrew all recognition, too, of the most deserving of the working miners, Pride, Oatridge, and Howells, which was in effect casting a slur on the decision arrived at by Lord Aberdare.

He proposed an amendment to the motion of the chairman, "that the claims of Isaac Pride, Charles Oatridge, and J. W. Howells, will be recognised in accordance with the resolution unanimously carried by the committee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October; and, further, that the names of Mr. Beith and Mr. James Thomas be added to the list of the managers who are to receive illuminated addresses. Mr. Jones (Pontypridd) inquired why Mr. James Thomas had, in the first instance, been excluded from the list? Mr. Idris Williams stated that the committee abstained from doing anything in the matter until after the trial. As to Oatridge, Howells and Pride, the committee had a memorial from them saying they did not do more than the other shift-men. This was not signed by Pride, who, it appeared, because he was afraid that if he did, what he had already received would be taken from him. It appeared, however, that he was of the same opinion as the others. Mr. Beith had already had so much more than it was possible for the committee to give to others who had done, in the committee's opinion, much more, that they did not see why they should reward him.

With regard to Mr. James Thomas, he was sorry the committee could not agree to present him with an address, as they were thus in a manner judging him, after the charge against him had not been proved at the assizes. He hoped Mr. James Thomas would be added to the list of managers to be presented with an address. After some discussion, the amendment, as it stood, was withdrawn. On the motion of Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Bickerton Evans, it was resolved to include Mr. James Thomas with the other managers who are to be presented with an address. The sum to be distributed will reach £1,067-19s-11d.

The committee received an application for payment for extra services to the police, from Superintendent Matthews, Pontypridd, on which they decided to make no order. To pay a bill of £16, from the proprietors of the Tynewydd Inn, where the entombed men were lodged after their release, was agreed upon. The committee resolved to defer the remuneration of Mr. McLucas (fund secretary) to its next meeting, which they decided to hold at Pontypridd. The proceedings then terminated.

## The distribution of the Tynewydd Local Fund

Our Pontypridd correspondent writes: - At Tynewydd, on Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup> 1877, was witnessed the last gathering of persons deemed worthy of receiving rewards for their deeds of valour in the inundated colliery of that place. It must be admitted that most of the recipients were in an un-amiable mood, but in justice to them it must be stated that their dissatisfaction did not arise from want of appreciation of what the public had done on their behalf, but from a conviction that the committee had not properly performed the duties with which they had been entrusted by the public. Numerous requests were made to me in Welsh to "expose" the "unfair" way the committee had dealt with the money. Judging by the statements of the men, members of the committee had treated them as the "three tailors of Tooley Street"\* might have been supposed to treat a deputation waiting upon them when the fit of dignity led them to suppose themselves to be the representatives of the people of England.

\* The "**Three Tailors of Tooley Street**" is a remark made in regard to any small group pretending to greater representative authority than they have in reality.

One workman declared to me, in energetic Welsh, that when he confronted one of the magnates he was asked by him, loftily, "Well, my man, what did you do?" The great man had at the time his legs stretched under the table, and was lolling back in his chair, and staring him full in the face, "Well," was the reply, "one day I was propping sir, and three days I was cutting coal." It appears that the committee are only cognisant of the "propping" and supposed, therefore, that the "three days" were simply an attempt to impose upon them, and the interrogated was told, in dogberry fashion, to "go and cut coal again," and that it was "a very useful occupation."

The distribution took place in an upstairs room at the Tynewydd Inn. The men were crowding the downstairs rooms, and the above incident is given as illustrating the state of feeling which prevailed among those who believed they had not been properly treated by the committee. I cannot vouch for the truth of the statement of my informant, but it was impossible to come to the conclusion that the complainants were not the men to have been led away by avarice, and that serious blunders were being committed in the distribution of the money. It was stated that the men who had worked together in the same shifts, had gone into the shaft together, had toiled at the same task, and again left together, had been unequally rewarded.

To illustrate this, four men were engaged in each shift as coal-cutters, when, with might and main, they were cutting through the coal to rescue the men, and the

moment this was done elicited from Mr. Wales, in my presence at the mouth of the opening being made, the words, "Who will say a word against Welsh colliers after this?" To some of these "fours" a couple of pounds only was awarded, while to others, who had performed the same amount of work, sums varying from £10 to £19 were awarded! Finding complaints about this so general and so bitter, I took some pains to trace out the cause which had misled the committee, and in justice to a body of gentlemen who laboured hard in the matter, I desire to point out what I believe to be the root of the evil. It seems that after the rescue all that had laboured had been invited by the owners of the colliery to send in their claims for the work done by them. Most of the men were from other collieries, and many of them neglected to send in any claim whatever. But when it became known "rewards" were forthcoming their names were inserted in the colliery book, together with the amount of work performed by each, from hearsay and not from the men themselves. I am, moreover, bound to make it known that the men declared that "favour" was shown by certain authorities to men employed by a certain company. It is hardly creditable that this can be true, and I simply chronicle the fact as stated to me.

Well, the book in question was, I am told, the chief guide of the committee, and the framers of the items in that book are, it is stated, responsible for the muddle which, unfortunately, has taken place, and not the committee or the men. Another important fact that has produced a large amount of indignation among the working population of the whole district is the treatment of "Happy" Dodd has received. There is not a collier in the whole district who is not fully aware of the fact that Dodd performed the most daring of the exploits enacted at Tynewydd. It was pointed out at the time in this journal and in the *Times* and *Daily Telegraph*, when no-one else dared to enter the opening made to the imprisoned men he penetrated in darkness through the hole, and waded through the water, which, in a height of about two feet ten inches – the thickness of the seam – was within a short distance of the roof, and reached the men, two of whom were delirious. The place at this moment was so dangerous, owing to the accumulation of gas, that when he called from inside for a Davy lamp, he was told by 'Panwr,' the fireman, who, in a lying attitude, was on the other side of the hole with Isaac Pride and the two others, that he could not have it; that the place was too dangerous.

It will be remembered that in a few days afterwards Dodd was burnt at another colliery belonging to the same company. I interviewed him at his cottage, and he related to me, as well as his pains would allow him, how the explosion in which he had burnt had occurred. From the time that his statement appeared in this journal, and copied into the *Times*, a great hub-hub was raised against Dodd, and, will it be believed, he was soon afterwards discharged altogether, and the poor

fellow has been idle now for over two months. The following is a complete list of the awards: -

**Widows.** – Mrs Williams, £70, seven children, £70 - £140; Mrs Hughes, £40, two children £20 - £60; Mrs Owen, £20; Mrs Morgan's child, £50 (in the hands of trustees). The widow of William Morgan has since remarried, and she, in consequence, did not get anything.

**Rescued (10 days)** – David Jenkins, £40; Moses Powell, £40; John Thomas, £40; George Jenkins, £40; Boy Hughes, £50 (trustees).

**Rescued men (18 hours)** – Thomas Morgan, £10; Edward Williams (Gelynog), £10; William Casher, £10; Boy Morgan, £25.

**Shift colliers** – John Griffiths, £2-10s; Ioan Williams, £14; Thomas J. Griffiths, £2-10s; T. R. Thomas, £5; W. Rawlings, £12; W. Morgan, £12; D. Davies (Nythbran) £17; D. Minton, £17; T. Rees, £17; J. Morgan, £17; T. Jones, £19; David Davies (Ynyshir), £5.

**Colliers (First batch)** – Matthias Evans, £2; Jonathan Absalom £2; John Ablett, £2; E. Williams, £2; Idris Williams, £2.

**Sinkers** – Noah Llewelyn, £2; Rees Davies, £2; John Lloyd, £1; Uriah Rapps, £2; John Rogers, £1; Morris James £1; Samuel Griffiths, £3; James Woodford, £4; Ioan Griffith Evans £2; E. M. Rees, £3; Jonathan Williams, £1; John Jones, £1; Daniel Francis, £1; David Davies (Llanelly), £1; L. Price, £1; E. Norman, £2; Joseph Hughes, £1; Daniel Matthews, £2.

**Carters** – Thomas D. Rees, £10; D. Dodd, £6-10s; D. Davies Jnr; £8; H. Harris, £2; D. Owen, £2; Watkin Williams, £2; Ambrose Morgan, £2; Jenkin Thomas, £2-3s-8d; D. B. Howells, £1-6-8d; James Jeremiah, £5-5s-6d; E. Oatridge, £6-10s; Morgan Morgan, £10; Matthew Williams, £9; Henry Thomas £1-6s-8d; John John, £1-10s-9d; D. Thomas, £7; D. Williams, £7; Miles Griffiths, £3-6s; Matthew Lane, £11; George Jones, £7; Jacob Rogers, £4-12s-3d; John Hughes, £12; Thomas Evans, £10; D. Davies, £2-3s-8d; E. Jenkins, £6-3s-8d; W. Rees, £6-3s-8d; Taliesin Lewis, £1-6s-4d; W. Leyshon, £7; Rees Rees, £8; Jenkin Williams, £5-14s-7d; James Edwards, £8; R. Richards, £5-10s; John Daniels, £1-14s-7d; Thomas Robbins, 12s-9d.

**Stokers** – Charles Jones, £2-5s; D. M. Rees, £3; W. Hopkins, £3-2s-6d; J. T. Williams, £2-15s. **Enginemen** – Charles Fall, £6; Rees Jones, 10s; Andrew Rutter, £4. **Fitters in water:** - John Andrews, £6; Joseph Hughes, £4; Joe Mills, £4. **Pumpmen, &c.** – John Evans, £3-10s; Andrew Harper, 15s; W. Evans, 10s; W. D. Thomas, 32-5s; D. J.

Thomas, £2-15s; E. Edwards £1-10s; D. Thomas, £1; J. Jenkins, £2-5s; Rees Evans, £3; A. Leyshon, £2-10s; W. H. Rees, £2-10s; D. Leyshon, £2-5s; J. Thomas, £3-15s; D. Thomas (Eirw), £2-5s; Thomas Lewis, 10s. **Banksmen** - W. Thomas, £5; Michael Thomas, £5.

Special gratuities – J. J. Thomas, £10; Isaiiah Thomas, £10; Frank Bell, £10; Charles Fall (compensation for loss of situation), £3; Andrew Harper (injury), £3; Mr. Packer (clerk of the colliery), £20; W. Lloyd, Dinas (fireman), £10; F. J. Garnish (diver), £10; Mr. A. A. M'Lucas (secretary), £30.

Addresses were presented to seven colliery managers and proprietors, to Mr. M'Murray (Pontypridd postmaster), and Mr. Fuge (sub-postmaster), Porth, at a total cost of £70. Printing expenses amounted to £1-10s; advertising, £2-15s; bills, stamps and other expenses, £2-10s. Mrs Jenkins (landlady of the Tynewydd Inn, where the men were in hospital) received £16; Witchell, 16s-4d; R. Evans, 26s-11d; Rees Thomas, 19s; J. Nash, £5; G. Warlow, £10; F. Thompson, 10s. The distribution was not concluded until a late hour.

### **Second trial of the manager for manslaughter**

(*'Cambrian'*, 9<sup>th</sup> April 1878)

On April 10<sup>th</sup> 1878, almost a year to the day since the Tynewydd inundation, James Thomas, 60, colliery proprietor, on bail, was indicted at the Glamorganshire Spring Assizes at Cardiff, before Judge Mellor, for feloniously killing and slaying one William Jones, at Tynewydd. Mr. Bowen, Q.C., and Mr. Dunne prosecuted. Mr. McIntyre, with whom was Mr. B. Francis Williams, instructed by Messrs. Simons and Plews, Merthyr, defended. The circumstances of the case are probably fresh in the recollection of the public. The defendant, who is the manager and part owner of the Tynewydd Colliery, Porth, Rhondda Valley, was indicted at the last assizes at Swansea, for the manslaughter of William Jones through negligence, which occasioned the accident which caused William Jones's death. Mr. Bowen detailed the circumstances of the accident at length. No one, he said, showed more determined gallantry in rescuing the entombed colliers, four of whom lost their lives, than did the defendant.

The defendant as manager of the colliery was responsible for the state of the mine. It was surveyed in December, 1876, and it was then showed that they were within 44 yards of their boundary from the colliery adjoining, where it was known there was water. Mr. Thomas excused himself for not carrying out the necessary bore holes by his opinion that before he came to this boundary a down-throw fault would be met which would be of such solid material, for an effectual barrier against any water that might otherwise come in from his neighbours workings. It



was anticipated that this fault would have been reached 20 yards from where the workings ended in December, when the plan of that date was made. Oatridge, who was working in the heading driven in the direction of the boundary, was working at a certain rate per fortnight, which was measured at the expiration of that term for the purpose of paying the men. Oatridge was the ganger. If a fault really existed the place must have been passed by many yards, and not only was the place passed on the place where it was anticipated to exist, but when the accident occurred the mine being flooded and loss of life ensuing, they had driven four yards over their boundary into the near pit. The learned counsel paid a high tribute to the defendant's bravery.

In connection with the rescue of the men, and summing up the charge against him, Mr. Bowen said it was one of negligence of the ordinary precautions which would have prevented the occurrence of such an accident. The evidence, which must be fresh in the memory of our readers having been heard, the learned Judge summed up lengthily. Having explained why the Act (Bruce's Act) was passed into law, and shown its bearing on mining, his lordship alluded to the fact that in this case the somewhat extraordinary course had been pursued of trying the defendant on the coroner's investigation. Though this procedure might be sometimes necessary, he thought in such cases it was desirable that the prisoner should be taken before the magistrates as well as before the coroner, and committed not only on a coroner's warrant, but also on a magistrate's warrant. At the coroner's inquiry evidence was given which might not touch on the particular matter of inquiry, and generally there was no person to protect the reputation of any individual who might be referred to. When the individual crime came before the magistrates the case was different. Another protection to the defendant had been omitted, for it would have been highly desirable that a bill should have been sent before the grand jury, which was done neither at Swansea nor at Cardiff. He, (his lordship) was not aware until the previous evening that this case was likely to appear, and it had been suggested to him that as there might be some feelings on the part of some of the jurymen a caution should be administered to the jury.

He felt convinced the jury would do their duty unbiased by any sympathy they might feel for Mr. Thomas. He had read all the depositions, and he must say he had never read a record of greater bravery, endurance, fortitude, and of more admirable qualities than in the records of the endurance of these unfortunate men. No one could read these records, if he had the feelings of a man, without thinking how deeply in the constitution of persons, tired as they were, the true feelings of religion must have been rooted. Mr. Thomas never expressed any alarm that there was any danger, except that there was a fault, and if he honestly thought that the indications were such as did not show danger, he could not see how they could find him guilty of wilful negligence. After all, the manager must

exercise his own judgment, and they could not punish him for an honest error of judgment. His Lordship commented on Howells not having been called, and, in conclusion, directed the jury as to the law of manslaughter. After retiring for about three minutes, the jury returned into court with a verdict, of acquittal. The decision was received with applause, which was suppressed. The defendant was then formally acquitted on another indictment. The court shortly afterwards adjourned.

The *'Cardiff Times'* of 13<sup>th</sup> April 1878 commented: - The jury on the second assize trial at Cardiff contained, it is said, several friends, and at least one relative of Mr. Thomas, the accused. Mr. Bowen, Q. C., mentioned the fact, yet did not exercise his right of objection. Then two of the material witnesses – the pit surveyor and the overman – were not called. Their evidence told rather in favour of the defence, but, as Judge Mellor said – and said truthfully – the Government were orally bound to present all the evidence to the jury which would illustrate the facts. Not a single new circumstance was offered to the jury, and as Judge Mellor laid down the law, that an error of judgment on the part of a careful colliery manager did not constitute manslaughter, the jury had no difficulty in bringing in a verdict of acquittal. Considering all the circumstances, we are glad of this termination in a case which will always be remembered for its singular and heroic aspects.

### **The prosecution of Mr. James Thomas of the Tynewydd Colliery**

The *'Pontypridd & District Herald'* of Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> 1878 commented: - For a man to find himself in peril of his liberty on so serious a charge as that of manslaughter is a serious position indeed. But to place him in the position of a criminal a second time, after an interval of six months and on the same charge, is hardly that only very exceptional circumstances can justify. The Tynewydd disaster has taken its place as one of the most remarkable events in the history of mining operations. Amid a great deal of sensational gush, the well-defined lines of an undue endurance that was remarkable of a courage that was never daunted; of efforts that were never sparing and of a national interest that was never paralleled, are distinctly and unfailingly impressed. Mr. Justice Mellor, at the assizes in Cardiff on Tuesday, paid a fitting tribute to the circumstances surrounding the rescue of the poor fellows who were for so many days shut out from the glorious sunlight, but what was the origin of the disaster, and why did it take place?

The workings in the inundated pit were pushed to such an extent that only a thin wall stood between the pit on one side and a large reservoir of water in a neighbouring works on the other. When such a condition of things is likely to be

met with, the Mines Regulation Act, which appears to provided for every contingency except the proper number of inspectors to see its provisions effectively carried out, has this clause: - *“Where a place is likely to contain a dangerous accumulation of water, the workings approaching such a place shall not exceed 8 feet in width, and shall be constantly kept in a sufficient distance, not being less than 5 yards in advance, at least one bore-hole near the centre of the workings, and sufficient flank bore-holes on each side.”* The terms of this clause are plain, and the precautions to be taken precise and particular. There is now no question as to the stipulations of the clause having been fully and completely ignored in the case of the Tynewydd accident. The consequences were the inundation and loss of life. At the inquest the coroner’s jury returned a verdict of manslaughter against the manager and proprietor, Mr. James Thomas, and under the circumstances they could take no other course.

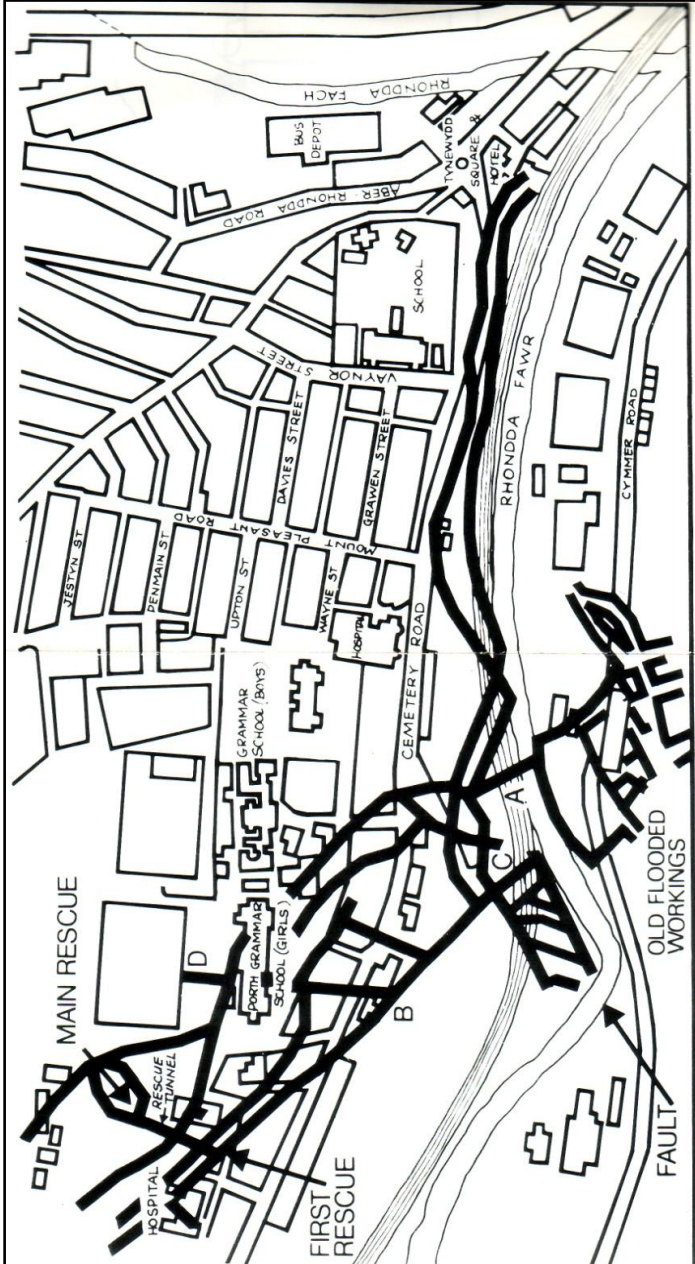
Mr. Thomas then had to stand his trial at the assizes in Swansea on a charge of culpable carelessness in not carrying out the terms of the clause made on that behalf. The jury could not agree to a verdict, and the owner was set at liberty on bail, in the painful position of a man who would in all likelihood be called upon to answer the same charge on a future occasion. That Mr. Thomas was culpable of carelessness in the eyes of the law could scarcely be maintained when it comes to be remembered that for 21-years he had conducted the working of the Tynewydd Colliery without, by his agency, losing a single life. This is the fact that added substantial weight to the testimony as to character and skill unhesitatingly given by Mr. G. Williams (the Stipendiary Magistrate), Rev. D. W. Williams (Fairfield), and Mr. Wales (Her Majesty’s inspector), who spoke in high terms of his practical sagacity.

One single feature which could not fail to influence the jury, and which has received no explanation whatever, was, in the second trial at the Cardiff Assize, the absence of two material witnesses, Mr. Thomas, the surveyor, and Mr. Howells, the overman, who the prosecution did not think fit to call. Were the arrangements with the prosecution purposely devised to allow the jury and opportunity of giving the venerable-looking accused an honourable acquittal? At any rate, after a powerful summing up by the learned judge, who did not lose sight of this remarkable proceeding on the part of the prosecution, the jury returned such a verdict as left Mr. Thomas free, and safe from further proceedings in respect of this particular charge. The procedure which marked the second trial appears to be altogether unsatisfactory, and quite outside the limits of things that can and should be understood.

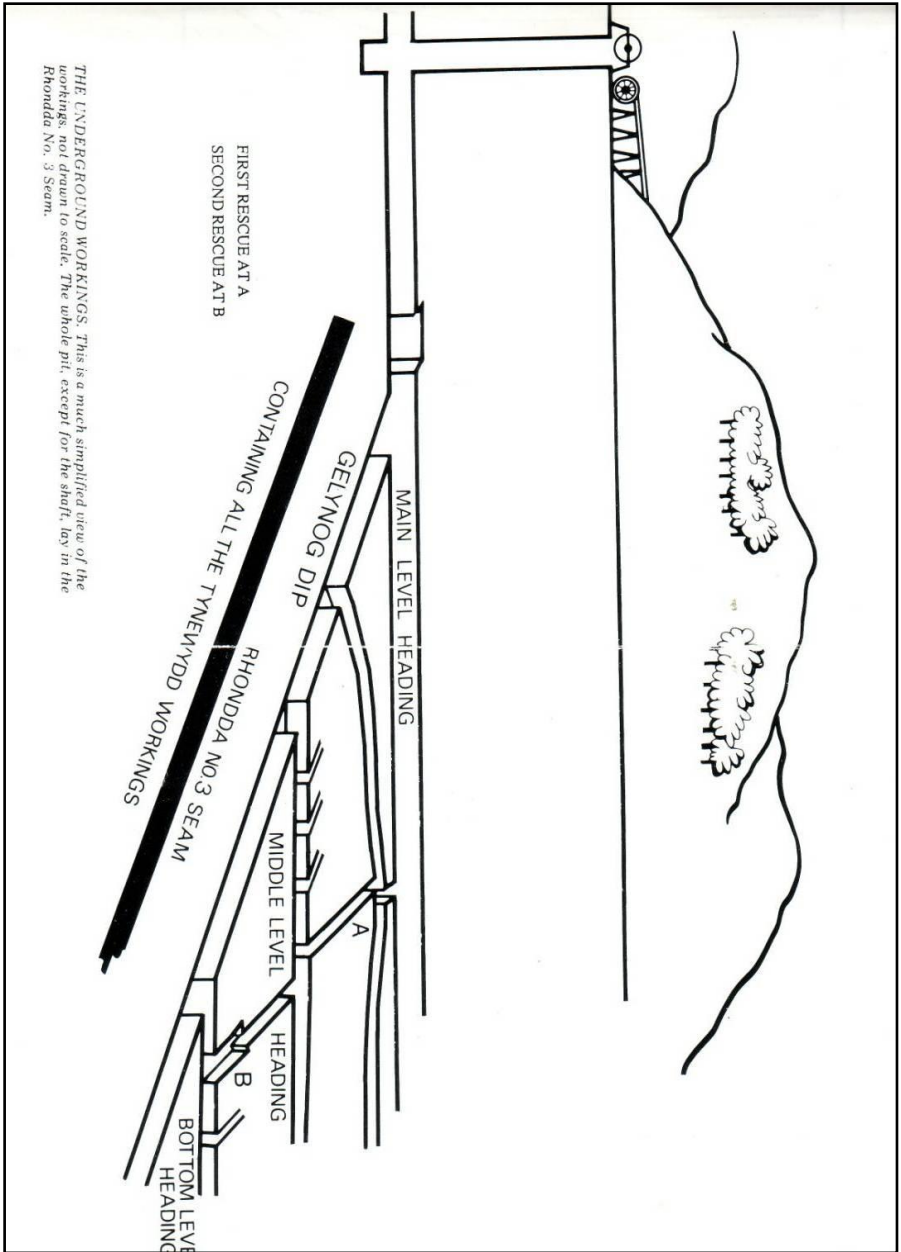
One fact in connection with this matter, however, is pretty clear, and it is worthy of the most serious consideration. It is the system of inspection which at present

obtains. It is undeniable that the existing provision for inspecting mines is really a farce. The inspector had never visited the Tynewydd workings before the unhappy occurrence which compelled his presence. For governments to pass acts of Parliament regularly, the mode and manner in which coal workings should be carried out, and to appoint a staff of officers who never succeed in penetrating a mine until an accident calls them to it, is simply absurd, a sufficient number of inspectors should be fixed to see that the act is properly carried out before an accident occurs, not to present at an inquiry to ascertain whether the act had been evaded after valuable lives have been lost in consequence of not observing its providence.

The Tynewydd disaster is fruitful in valuable suggestions, and not the least important of these is an organic change in the manner in which, at the present time, and in this and other districts, the small staff of officials have to discharge duties which are onerous and irresponsible, and which cannot be properly performed because the number is inadequate to the work they are expected to do. This is a matter that not only affects the lives of the colliers which are in danger, but the feelings and interests of the community which are outraged when such calamities as that of Tynewydd can be permitted to occur.



**Surface Map and plan of the workings** – (A) Indicates where the water broke through. (B) The main roadway ran from the shaft roughly along the line of cemetery road. (C) Edwards Williams and Robert Rogers died at this point. (D) John Hughes and Williams Jones died beneath the area now occupied by the former Porth Girl's Grammar School.



The underground workings – This is a much simplified view of the workings not drawn to scale. The whole pit, except for the shaft, lay in the Rhondda No. 3 seam. First rescue at 'A'; second at B.

## **Chapter thirteen**

### **What became of the rescued and rescuers**

As the days and years passed, many of the rescuers and rescued lived to a ripe old age, some didn't, but some still had an eventful time. The '*Western Mail*,' or Thursday, December 12<sup>th</sup> 1878 reported: -

#### The shame of 'Happy' Dodd

At the Pontypridd Police Court on Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> 1878, Thomas Jenkins and John Jenkins, Treforest, were each fine 20 shillings and costs for assault upon Thomas Jones, Pontypridd. 'Happy' Dodd, Tynewydd, was charged with assaulting Miles Griffiths of the same place. It was seen that the parties were drinking in a public house, when the defendant said that he was the best fighter in the room and by way of illustrating his powers he knocked complainant down and fell upon him, and bit his nose severely, taking the nose into his mouth and inflicting deep gashes on each side of it with his teeth. Defendant was fined 36 shillings and two pence including costs. Six months later 'Happy' had another lucky escape. The *Western Mail* of Monday, June 30<sup>th</sup> 1879 reported: -

#### Narrow escape of 'Happy' Dodd

The above named, who it will be remembered, was one of the heroes of Tynewydd, had a narrow escape from being killed at Cymmer Colliery on Friday evening last, June 27<sup>th</sup> 1879. A lad named James Nolan was assisting 'Happy' Dodd to place a prop under the roof, when stones and coal fell on Nolan, killing him on the spot, but Dodd only sustained a slight injury. But still there was a presentation left: -

#### **Presentation of local fund commemorative addresses**

On Wednesday evening, September 10<sup>th</sup> 1879 a public meeting was held in the long room of the Butchers' Arms Hotel, Pontypridd, under the presidency of Mr. Charles Bassett (the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield, being unable to attend) for the purpose of presenting the colliery proprietors and managers engaged in the Tynewydd rescue, also to present to the two local postmasters with addresses commemorating their services on that memorable occasion. David Jenkins, the eldest of the small group of entombed miners, never went down the pit again in his life. Instead he became an ironmonger in Porth. David Hughes, the young teenager who was rescued later in life never spoke of his ordeal and perhaps that is an indication of how terrible the experience must have been for him.

Meanwhile, hero of the disaster, Isaac Pride, met his death through injury in the mines.

### **Stealing of a “Tynewydd” watch**

On the beginning of April 1879, at the Pontypridd police-court, John Sherlock, Heolfach; Richard Tonkin, Pontypridd; and John Stevens, Hafod, were brought up in custody charged with stealing a watch, the property of George Ablett, presented to him by members of the House of Commons, in connection with the Tynewydd disaster. The prisoners, who said they took the watch from Ablett when he was under the influence of drink in order to tease him, were committed for trial.

### **Violent attack on Pontypridd policeman**

The *‘Weekly Mail’* of 1<sup>st</sup> September 1883 reported: - At Pontypridd Police Court on Wednesday a collier, well known in the district as “Happy Dodd,” one of the heroes of Tynewydd, was brought up in custody, charged with waylaying and assaulting Acting-Sergeant Row, Ynyshir. The last-named stated that at eleven o'clock on Friday night he was on duty near the Tynewydd public-house, above Porth. There was a row outside the public-house, and he and Police-Constable Williams went and stopped it, and ordered the crowd to disperse. Prisoner was one of the crowd. He and the others went away. Half an hour later he was proceeding in the direction of Ynyshir, and saw two men on the road. The two men passed up a narrow lane between gardens. Near a gateway opposite to where the men went he saw a man standing in such a way as to convey the impression that he desired to hide himself. He requested the man to go home and the man replied that he was about to do so. But the next moment he sprang upon witness striking him with such force as to half stun him. Drawing his staff witness ran after the man, and whilst doing so he heard two men following him. He stopped, and then the prisoner, with a stone in a handkerchief, aimed a blow at him. But the blow missed him and struck the wall, and the stone fell to the ground — Police-Constable Williams said that when arrested the prisoner said, “You have made a great mistake this time. I saw you and Row going to the row, but I went home with my wife and was in bed by half-past eleven o'clock.” — George Ablett said that he accompanied the prisoner from Tynewydd to Ynyshir, where they met prisoner's wife. —The Bench fined prisoner £5, including costs. The money was paid.

### **Another outbreak of water at Tynewydd Colliery**

Narrow escape of 15 colliers

On Saturday afternoon, August 1<sup>st</sup> 1885, news was circulated throughout the neighbourhood of Porth and the surrounding districts that some of the men employed at Tynewydd Colliery had struck into a 'point of the old workings where



water was lodged, and that the pit had been partly inundated. The rumour was not at all regarded as improbable, as about eight years ago a similar occurrence took place, when five men were entombed for about nine days. It appears that on Saturday morning, a few hours after the men had commenced their day's toil, one of the colliers struck into a cavity where an enormous quantity of water was lodged. This rushed forth with great impetuosity, sweeping everything in its way down a dip, where about 15 men were employed. An alarm was raised, and although several of the men were knocked down and carried some distance, they all managed to escape. Immediately information reached the neighbourhood, crowds of people congregated around the pit's mouth in a terrible state of excitement. Men were busily engaged on Sunday in pumping out the water, which, after it had subsided, covered an area of nearly 40 yards. The '*South Wales Daily News*' commented: - With reference to the "inrush" of water, we are further requested (by the company) to state that it was well known that there was a little water at a certain point, and that the men had been put there expressly to tap it. We are further informed that the water, when reached, came in a little more strongly than was expected, but that there was never the slightest danger to anyone.

### **Proceedings against the manager**

The 1885 incident was an almost identical inundation of water as in 1877, but strangely the manager at this time was actually found guilty of contravening the Mines' Regulation Act, a charge that could have been brought in 1877. The '*Weekly Mail*' of 17th October 1885 reported: -

At Pontypridd Police Court on Wednesday (before Mr. Ignatius Williams and the Rev. D. W. Williams, Fairfield) Zephaniah Thomas and John Griffiths, manager and overman respectively of the Tynewydd Colliery, near Porth, Rhondda Valley, were charged with breaches of the Mines' Regulation Act, 1872. Mr. Thomas Williams, Merthyr (instructed by the Home Office), appeared for the prosecution; with him was Mr. Randall (deputy-inspector of mines for South Wales). Mr. Walter Morgan appeared for the defendant. Tynewydd is the colliery in which in 1877 the entombment of a certain number of colliers took place, when desperate and gallant efforts were successfully made to deliver them. On the 1st of August last a considerable quantity of water had collected in the sump at the bottom of the shaft. In the workings of the colliery a certain stall was being driven in the direction of and at a lower level than the sump. This stall was named "The Bard's Stall." On the date mentioned Evan Thomas (the Bard) worked in that stall in the direction of the sump, and a large quantity of water broke through and poured into the stall and into the other workings. Fortunately, the men usually employed

in these workings had gone to dinner at the time and so escaped the rush of water, the Bard also most fortunately escaped.

According to the Act of Parliament the authorities should not have driven a stall having a greater width than eight feet in the direction of water. But in this instance the width of the stall was twenty yards. Mr. Randall (deputy-inspector) stated that on the 3rd of August he visited the Bard's stall, accompanied by Zephaniah Thomas, the manager. He found a hole four feet wide from the face of the stall through into the sump. There appeared to have been a flood of water through the said hole. There were no holes bored in advance as the law demands. He (witness) proceeded to the "dip" workings and found the bottom of the drift full of water. The manager told him that boring had been neglected during his illness. Evan Thomas now stated that working with him were Albert Jones and Richard James. The water forced a breach in the coal of its own accord. It had been percolating through the bottom—the "puckings"—for days previously. Zephaniah Williams, manager, was fined 40s. and costs, with advocate's fees. The charge against the overman was withdrawn.

#### **Assaulting a police-sergeant at Porth - A Tynewydd medallist in trouble**

The '*Western Mail*,' of Thursday, December 30<sup>th</sup> 1886 reported: - At the Pontypridd police court on Wednesday, December 29<sup>th</sup> 1886, George Jones, George Peters, **Isaac Pride**, and Seth Carpenter were charged with assaulting acting sergeant Llewellyn. There was a row at 11 o'clock last Monday night, and the officer arrested Jones for fighting and being drunk. This defendant struck the officer several times, and then Pride told the officer to leave the man alone. Peters came and kicked him twice.

Carpenter struck him twice under the left ear. Jones became very violent, and Pride jumped on the officer's back. The hearing of the case occupied a long time, for the defendants denied the charge, and Pride called a witness, who, however, contradicted himself. Pride charged the officer with being drunk, and with giving him a black eye in the station, but produced no evidence, and was not believed by the bench. Prisoners were each sentenced to 21 days imprisonment. Inspector Jones asked the bench to inflict a fine instead of imprisonment on Pride, who was a very respectable man. He received a medal at the time of the Tynewydd Colliery inundation. Mr. Blandy Jenkins, the magistrate, said, in consideration of what was urged by the Inspector, he would inflict on Pride a fine of 40 shillings and costs instead of imprisonment.

## **The painful death of a Tynewydd hero**

Twenty years to the day

On Sunday, April 11<sup>th</sup> 1897 Mr. Isaac Pride, night overman at Cymmer Colliery, the property of Messrs. G. Insole and Son, died at his residence, at Penypound, Cymmer. On Saturday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst., deceased sustained a fracture of the leg whilst following his employment, but, unfortunately, congestion of the kidneys followed, which insulted in his death. Mr. Pride was well known in colliery circles in South Wales as one of the heroes in the Tynewydd inundation. At the inquest a few days later two remarkable coincidences transpired during the inquiry that Pride had passed away twenty years to the day after the Tynewydd incident and on the jury was an aged man named Jenkins, who was one of the five men entombed in the Tynewydd mine. A verdict of 'Accidental Death' was recorded.

### Death of Dr. H. N. Davies

On Monday morning, July 3<sup>d</sup> 1899 Alderman Dr. Henry Naunton Davies, of Porth, died suddenly at the Caswell Bay Hotel, Mumbles, in his seventy-third year. Dr. Davies, in company with his son-in-law, Dr. Joyce, and Mrs. Joyce, left the Rhondda on Saturday afternoon for Mumbles for the benefit of his health. A telegram was received at Porth on Monday morning stating that Dr. Davies had been taken seriously ill, and at noon another message was received announcing his death. During the time of the Cymmer explosion, in 1856, he was surgeon at the colliery, and was also surgeon at Tynewydd when the terrible inundation, with all its exciting and pathetic incidents, took place in 1877. Upon that occasion he spent the greater part of a day and night underground waiting to render assistance when it should be required. He was also about the colliery during the whole time of the rescue work and was present when the incarcerated men were liberated, and so carefully nourished.

The rescued miners were laid in the long room of the Tynewydd Hotel, and it was this fact that suggested to Dr. Davies the importance of having a hospital in the district, and he started a movement which eventually culminated in the establishment of the present cottage hospital, of which he continued to be one of the staunchest supporters. He was the first medical man to receive a gold medal by the British Medical Association for bravery exhibited in connection with the Tynewydd disaster, and, in addition, he was the recipient of a gift of plate from the Mansion House Fund. In 1888 he was created a justice of the peace, and was also elected county councillor for the Porth and Cymmer district. He was recently acting as surgeon for the Dinas, Penygraig, Coedcae, Ynyshir, Hafod, and Glamorgan Collieries, and had won the respect of the poorer classes by his kindly consideration and charitableness. He made a point of giving his medical services

free to the indigent and to ministers of religion. Six years ago he was presented with an illuminated address and oil painting of himself by the public of the neighbourhood as a tangible expression of their esteem for him. The motto on his coat-of-arms was "Do your duty, and trust in God."

### **Death of Mr. James Thomas, Ynyshir**

A remarkable character gone - 1877 Tynewydd manager deceased

On Monday night, July 29<sup>th</sup> 1901, the death occurred of Mr. James Thomas, Ynyshir, at Cross Farm, Llarnedarne, near St. Mellon's, at the age of 85. The deceased gentleman, who was the proprietor of the Ynyshir and Standard Collieries, had only been ill for about four months, suffering from pneumonia and bronchitis. Born on the 16th of February, 1811, he commenced life as a door-boy, and ended it as one of the wealthiest colliery magnates in Wales, after practically four score years of incessant and arduous labour. His parents lived at a farm known as "Hen Fryn," which is situated in the parish of Bedwellty (Monmouthshire), and it was in this farm-house James Thomas was born. The circumstances of his father and mother (Thomas John Thomas and Mary Thomas) were humble, and they were compelled to find him work underground at the tender age of six years. As a youth Mr. James Thomas exhibited a mind of peculiar strength and receptive faculties of a somewhat rare order, and though in later life he felt the disadvantage of his scanty learning, he competed successfully with men who had had all the advantages of the tuition afforded by the high-class schools of the country. His chief characteristic early in life was his desire to "get on," and to shoot ahead of those around him, both in reference to the work done and income earned. Although it seemed at the outset that his life was ever to be one of toil and hardship, he persevered, and was never discouraged. While still in his youth it was his custom to walk three miles to work daily, and the time occupied by his work usually extended from four o'clock in the morning until eight or nine o'clock in the evening.

The average earnings of the collier then, notwithstanding the long hours, were only about 3 shillings per day. His experience in all the practical routine of colliery work, from the duties of door-boy to those of coal-hewer made him in course of time the most useful man in the neighbourhood in which he worked and his ability became known throughout South Wales. From 1840 to 1862 he occupied very prominent positions in connection with several collieries both in the Monmouthshire and Rhondda Valleys. But it was in 1850 that he first made his debut, so to speak, as colliery owner. He then entered into partnership with others, and purchased a small colliery situated in the neighbourhood of Porth. His success in connection with this undertaking stimulated him to extend his enterprise in other districts, and in the course of a few years he figured as an

active joint owner of the Tynewydd and Ynysfeio Collieries, which pits were successfully sunk under his direct supervision. Subsequently he turned his attention in the direction of Caerphilly, and opened out a colliery known as Energlyn, where work was provided for several hundreds of workmen.

For a long time past he had ceased to be connected with that colliery, but his name is still a household word in that district. Leaving Caerphilly in 1874, he made Rhondda the field of fresh enterprises, and not withstanding his advancing years, was responsible for sinking the well-known Ynyshir and Standard Collieries, whose coal commands so much attention on the market and from the Admiralty. He reached the coal in these pits at the depth of 375 yards in May 1877, and then he directed his mind to providing comfortable houses for those who would be attracted by the new industries. Mr. Thomas enjoyed the distinction of being the third colliery owner to tap the treasures of the great Rhondda coalfield, the two owners preceding him having been the late Mr. Walter Coffin, of Dinas, and Mr. Insole, of Cymmer. Up to the day of his death he was the oldest South Wales colliery proprietor living. During recent years, he had devoted much of his time to farming, which he felt to be more congenial to his nature in his advanced age than the superintendence of colliery operations, and, as he succeeded in other things, so he succeeded in this, for he could reckon among his holdings several extensive farms, among them being Tynewydd and Ynyshir, in the Rhondda; Glyngwyn, Energlyn, T'ir Gibbon, Tir Merchant, Tir Ewen, in the Caerphilly district; Cross Farm and Ty'n y Park, at Llanedarne; Mill Ditch, at Peterstone and Carnix Farm, in the Vale of Glamorgan; Pye Corner Farm, near Newport; and Pantygwew (Mon).

Being a non-smoker, very abstemious, and exceedingly fond of out-door exercise, his health was always of the best, and prior to 1901 he experienced hardly any illness. He was exceedingly broad-minded in his views, and very straight in his dealings. He was a Congregationalist in religion, but eschewed politics, and took little or no part in public life. His disposition was generous, and one of his recent benefactions was the adding of £108 4s. to the sum (a similar amount) raised by Ynyshir in aid of the "*Western Mail*" Infirmary Fund. The mortal remains of the late Mr. James Thomas were reverently laid to rest in the graveyard attached to Bethel Welsh Congregational Chapel, a quaint little place of worship situated high up on the breezy slopes of Mynyddislwyn, Monmouthshire. The miners employed at the deceased gentleman's collieries attended in large numbers to pay their last tribute of respect to one who had been so kind and considerate an employer, and to extend their sympathy to those who had lost the head of their household. The funeral was by far the largest ever seen in the quiet country district of Mynyddislwyn— the place of his birth and boyhood. It was at Bethel Chapel Graveyard that the deceased's wife, who died 41 years ago, was buried, and in accordance with his wish his body was interred in the same grave. The cortege,

consisting of a hearse and nearly twenty mourning coaches and as many vehicles, left Cross Farm, Llanedarne, at noon and journeyed to Mynyddislwyn, via Caerphilly. At Maescymmer a curious incident occurred which caused some delay. A horse attached to one of the coaches became affected by the intense heat. The driver noticing that there was something the matter with the animal stopped the carriage, and immediately afterwards the animal dropped down on the road. It was not until its head had been bathed with cold water for some minutes that the horse revived sufficiently to continue the journey.

At Tredegar Junction the funeral was joined by 1,500 miners employed at the Ynyshir and Tynewydd collieries, who had travelled over from the Rhondda by two special trains provided for their conveyance by the relatives of the late Mr. Thomas. From the railway station to the chapel the cortege proceeded in the following order, marshalled by Mr. D. Watts Morgan (miners' agent), Alderman Williams, Ynyshir; Messrs. James Thomas, J. Rees, T. Thomas, and others:—Ynyshir and Tynewydd workmen, colliery officials, general public, choir (under the conductorship of Mr. William Thomas), shellibier, and mourners. As the procession moved along the Welsh hymns, "Yn y dyfroedd mawr a'r tonau" and "Daeth yr awr im' ddianc adre" were sung to the tunes of "Alexander" and "Lausanne" respectively. The Rev. D. C. Davies, Congregational minister, Ynyshir, who officiated at the Cross Farm prior to the departure of the funeral, also officiated at the chapel, assisted by the Rev. J. Morgan (CM.), Ynyshir, and the Rev. J. B. Llewelyn, pastor of Bethel Church. In his address, the Rev. Mr. Davies extolled the many virtues possessed by the deceased gentleman, and pointed out that by perseverance and up-rightness Mr. Thomas had lived a most successful and prosperous career. (It is estimated that James left £500,000, about £31.5 million in modern terms.)

### **Another survivor deceased**

On Christmas Eve 1902, Mr. John Thomas, 77, High-street, Cymmer, in the 51st year age —one the small band of miners who were entombed in the Tynewydd Colliery, Porth, in 1877, and who was rescued after many days furnished one of the most thrilling incidents in the history of the coalfield.

### **Death of Mr. Moses Powell, Ynyshir**

The death was announced at his residence, Surgery House, Ynyshir, on Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup> 1904 of Mr. Moses Powell, traffic manager, Standard Collieries, Ynyshir. Deceased, who was one of the entombed miners at the flooding of the



**Gravestone of James Thomas, manager of the Tynwydd Colliery at the time of the inundation.**

Tynewydd Colliery, had been in failing health for many months. He leaves a widow—a sister to Mrs. Thomas, Brynawel, Ynyshir and three children. The deceased had been a zealous member of Aion Baptist Chapel, Ynyshir for many years. Mr. Powell was one of the survivors of the memorable disaster at Tynewydd Colliery on the 11th April, 1877, when a large volume of water suddenly burst into the colliery and 14 men were entombed. After exciting rescue work extending over eight days, on Wednesday, 18th April, knocking was heard, indicating that some of the unfortunate miners were still alive. Mr. Moses Powell, who was then a single man, aged 31, residing at Porth, was one of the five men rescued during the evening of Thursday, April 19th. He was in a very weak condition. Relating his experiences on the ensuing Saturday to a representative of the press, he said he and his butties did their best to keep themselves warm by huddling together in a tram, having no clothes about them. Continuing, he said "Some time afterwards we heard knocking, and that kept up our hearts. We were very thirsty, and the water that was there was very bad. We had not much taste, so we did not take much notice of it. We occupied the time," he added, "in singing and praying, and now and then we dozed." The funeral took place at the Porth Cemetery, and was attended by a large concourse of people. Two other survivors were present at the funeral, viz., Mr. David Jenkins and Mr. David Hughes. Mr. Powell, who was 57 years of age, had occupied the position of traffic manager at Ynyshir Colliery for the last 23 years.

### **The Death of Daniel Thomas - Tynewydd hero deceased**

Of all the rescuers and rescued, Daniel Thomas became the most famous, not only for his actions at Tynewydd that gained him a first class Albert medal, but also what followed. On Jan. 13<sup>th</sup> 1879 64 men and boys died in an explosion at the Dinas Colliery, where once again he played a major part in rescue operations. However, some of the bodies were never recovered and a few years later he became the lease holder and manager of the said colliery. He then made conscious efforts to re-open the levels where many bodies still lay unrecovered and by the time of his death only five remained undiscovered.

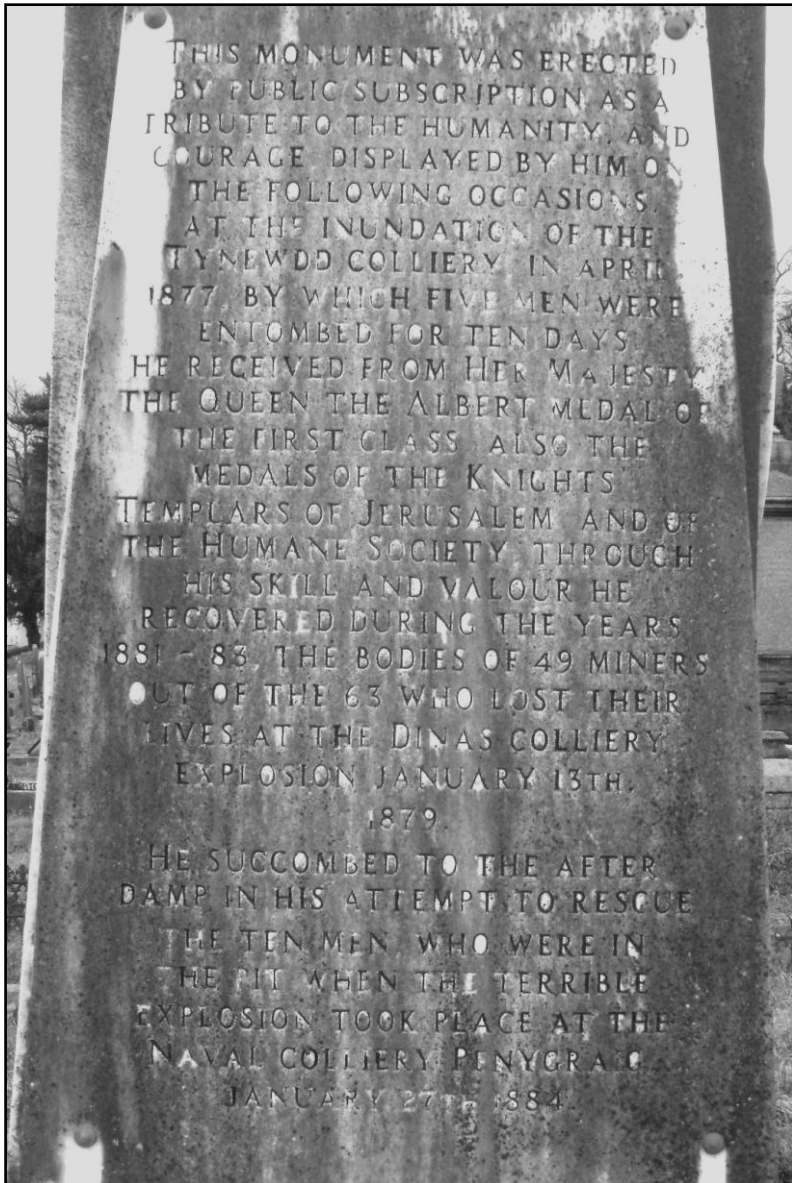
Daniel Thomas met his fate when he was killed on January 27<sup>th</sup> 1884, while attempting to rescue men following the explosion at the Penygraig Colliery. The 1884 newspapers reported: -

"Men, whose blue-scarred faces told of a lifetime spent in the Rhondda mines, wept like little children. A vast throng encircled the pit, and every vantage point





**Daniel Thomas, one of the prominent rescuers**



**Part of the huge memorial to Daniel Thomas erected at the Trealaw Cemetery.**

from which a view of the ascending cage could be obtained, was occupied by a deeply sympathetic multitude. On Sunday morning Mr. Thomas was seen surrounded by his men, standing full of energy on the centre of the same cage, carrying in one hand a short iron bar, and holding between his knees a massive iron sledge, implements that might be necessary below.

He and his brave companions were descending into the midst of the most terrible perils that it is possible for the mind of man to conceive. A few short hours before that the very shaft through which they were about to descend had emitted a most awful hurricane of smoke and fire, and the same thing might happen at any moment, for it was evident by the dense smoke ascending through the upcast that a smoldering fire burnt below. But the heroic men on the cage did not falter, and they descended into the 'jaws of death,' as literally as Britannia's immortal six-hundred on the field of Balaclava. There is an old Welsh proverb which says 'Ymhob gwlad meir glew' (Every country breeds brave men), and one can say that Penygraig and Dinas now, as on former occasions proved that Cambria's sons retain still the ancient heroism of the Cymric race. Shortly after Mr. Daniel Thomas's remains were brought to bank, placed on a bier and was placed on the shoulders of willing men. The remains were placed in the dining room and the canvas was then opened. The features bore the expression of calm repose. Thick dust was in his beard, and his face was begrimed."

Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines, Mr. Wales, gave the following tribute to this man in his official report of this disaster: - "For many years I knew Thomas well and met him under trying and dangerous circumstances and were I to allow the present opportunity to pass without publicly recording my high appreciation of his sound judgment and unselfish acts of bravery on these occasions I would not be discharging my duty to the memory of one whose name will always be dear to me and to the mining population of South Wales."

#### **Another survivor deceased**

On Christmas Eve 1902, Mr. John Thomas, 77, High-street, Cymmer, in the 51st year age —one the small band of miners who were entombed in the Tynewydd Colliery, Porth, in 1877, and who was rescued after many days furnished one of the most thrilling incidents in the history of the coalfield.

Tynewydd rescue - The part played by the late Mr. Henry Abraham  
[By Professor W. Galloway.]

William Galloway, the Assistant Inspector of Mines at the time of the Tynewydd inundation was barely mentioned at the time, and he was never considered for a

reward, and it was probably he that caused the disharmony reported by 'Morien' at the early stages of the rescue attempts, as his blunt Scottish voice severely irritated the Welsh workmen then and in later years. His story remained untold for many years after the event, but on the death of another rescuer, Henry Graham, in 1906, Galloway finally gave his story in the *Weekly Mail*: -

The recent death of Mr. Henry Abraham on May 28<sup>th</sup> 1906, who was awarded the Albert Medal third-class, re-calls to my mind some of the incidents of the earlier of those eventful days, now nearly thirty years ago, during which he played a not unimportant part. As assistant-inspector of mines at that time, I had received notice of the accident by private telegram early in the morning, and repaired to the mine by the first available train. The seam dips at an angle of about 1 in 6. The workings into which the water had burst consisted of a lower level and a higher level, with a block of coal that had been partly worked out lying between them. A few men had been rescued from one of these workings by cutting through a thin barrier of coal; others who had been heard knocking at first were known to have been overtaken by the rising water and drowned; and it was then believed by everyone present, as I ascertained by careful individual inquiry, that all the missing men were assuredly drowned.

Before setting out for the mine I had formed the opinion that if any of the men had taken refuge in stalls extending upwards from the lower towards the higher level they would still be alive, imprisoned in compressed air which would hold back the water in the same way as that contained in a diving-bell. My first action, therefore, on arrival was to examine the plan. I soon discovered one stall, a long way below the surface of the water, which exactly fulfilled the conditions I had imagined. Without divulging my thoughts to him or anyone else, I asked Abraham to take a pick in his hand and accompany me into the workings alone. Arriving at a point just above the stall in question, I found the corner of a pillar projecting up through the water at a distance of between 3ft. and 4ft. from its edge. At my request Abraham knocked the usual miner's signal on the corner, repeating it several times, but rather awkwardly and not very loudly on account of the difficulty he had in stretching over the water. Then we listened, but there was no reply. He knocked a second time, and again a third time, with the same result; but the silence that followed on each occasion was absolutely unbroken except by the escape from time to time of a bubble of air or firedamp driven out from the fissures in the roof or floor by the recently arrived water, which was gradually invading them. "Now," I said, "if you have to go into the water up to your middle, you must knock with all your might; it is practically certain there are living men in the stall below us, and we must have a reply." Setting his feet more securely, and bracing himself for the effort, Abraham knocked again more loudly than before,

and then, as we listened, the well-known sound came back from underneath the water bearing the glad tidings that living men were there.

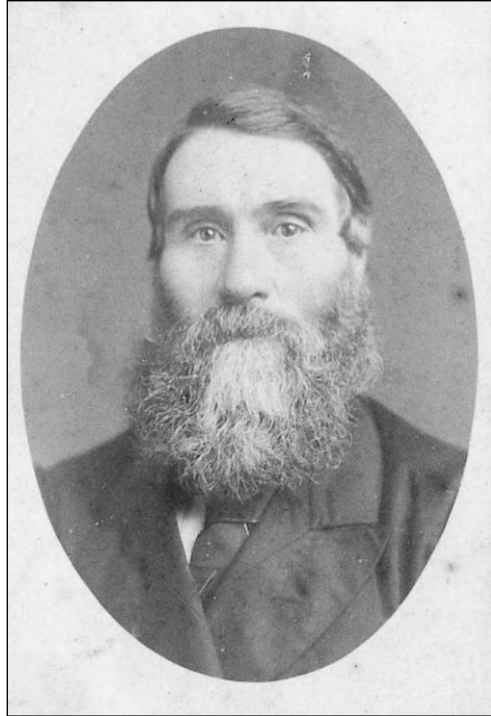
Some of the ten or twelve men who a little later on the same day accompanied Mr. Wales, the chief inspector of mines, and myself to the spot and heard the further knocking and replies, may still remember the incredulity of at least one of their number and the arguments employed to show the impossibility of men existing under the level of the water. Having silenced the dissentients, Mr. Wales remarked to me, "Poor fellows! They are there sure enough, but they will never come out alive." That same night Mr. Hurmann, the traffic manager of the Taff Vale Railway, now general manager of the Bute Docks, placed his telegraph staff and a special locomotive at my disposal, and sent the messages of which I still possess the originals, to the Cardiff Post-office and elsewhere. All night long, also, a squad of twelve mechanics, superintended by Mr. W. G. M'Murtrie, worked in the engine-shops of the Glamorgan Coal Company putting the large special pump which afterwards pumped out the water from the workings between the two levels into a thorough state of repair. In the morning the appliances which effected the rescue began to arrive, together with divers from the Bute Docks and from Liebe and Gorman, the well-known makers of diving dresses, and then began that successful battle for life which constitutes one of the most thrilling episodes in the annals of mining in this or any other country.

### **The end of Tynewydd Colliery - End of famous enterprise**

So what became of the Tynewydd Colliery? The *Cardiff Times* of 9<sup>th</sup> April 1904 reported: - In consequence of the expiration of lease the Tynewydd Colliery is now being dismantled. The lessor is Mr. Llewelyn, of Langstone, Cornwall. The present management of the company is vested in Mr. H. G. Hill, a name well known in commercial circles in South Wales. When in full swing the number employed was 250, but of late years only about 60 men were engaged. The steam coal measures were not developed by the company, and when the house coal was worked out it was decided not to proceed any farther, as the company would not be recompensed for the expense of sinking to the lower seams and providing the necessary plant in the absence of a long lease of life."

The lower seams are at present worked by the Cymmer and Standard Collieries. No further work, therefore, being contemplated at Tynewydd, the management sold the plant, and are now completely dismantling the place. Within the past few weeks the sidings have been taken up and very soon scarcely anything will remain to show the sight of one of the most noted collieries in South Wales. The abandoned pit is in close proximity to the Porth Station of the Taff Vale Railway Company, and negotiations have been going on between the owners of the land

and the railway company for the acquisition of this piece of ground. The result of the negotiations has not transpired, but it is understood that the T.V.R.'s object in purchasing this plot is to secure more siding accommodation. The Pit is one of the oldest in the valley, dating as far back as 50 years ago.



**David Evans 1822-1889**

Born in Carmarthenshire in 1822, David Evans began working in the coal mines of Dowlais, Glamorgan, as a hitcher in his early twenties. A hitcher at that time pushed full trams of coal into the cage. In due course he became a miner, a collier, a timber-man and then, by unanimous vote 'the man best fitted to be a gaffer'. In 1857 he moved to Cwmbach in the Cynon Valley as colliery agent for the Aberdare Coal Company.

Twelve years later David Evans was the recipient of a remarkable 'testimonial', reported in the Aberdare Times of 17 November 1869. It took place in the British School in Cwmbach, for the establishment of which he had fought hard and long and it was 'crowded to excess'. Speakers were limited to 5 minutes each! The first

speaker began 'Goodness always spoke for itself', not a sentiment normally associated with colliery managers. Other speakers, including one who had worked with him for 26 years, described him as 'benevolent and a good master, who would lend a pound to anyone in distress; his word was his bond and he used no bad language. He never allowed men to go into danger and, in his twelve years as manager, no man had died as a result of explosions and there had been no serious accidents.' Amidst loud cheering, he was given a purse of £31.10s. He moved to the Rhondda Valley to work for David Davis and Sons at Ferndale and Bodringallt, Ystradyfodwg and in 1877 was awarded the Albert Medal 2nd Class for his part in the rescue of men trapped by flood water in the Tynewydd Colliery near Porth.

### **The fate of Abraham Dodd**

The story of Tynewydd cannot be concluded without reference to the unfortunate Abraham Dodd. What became of him after his brush with the law in September 1883? By this time disillusioned by the South Wales coal industry and the treatment he had received he may have seen an advertisement in the Welsh Press calling for people to emigrate to Canada to fulfil the general lack of labour in that country. Travelling without his family he arrived in Quebec on the Finnish sailing ship Sarmatian carrying both migrants and regular travellers from the port of Liverpool. The Sarmatian had accommodation for 100-1st, and 850-3rd class passengers. Did Dodd use some of the money presented to him after the Tynewydd disaster and travel first class, or did he travel subsidised by the Canadian Government as a third class passenger?

Arriving at Quebec on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1884 he then travelled to Alberta where he is recorded at Macloed in the (near?) Crowsnest Pass, a coalmining community and when he was settled, in 1885 he sent for his wife and daughter. At some period around 1900 the family got lured by newspaper adverts for coalminers to work in the mines of the little village of Belt, Cascade, in Montana, in the USA, but after a while the whole family returned to Alberta, where Abraham Dodd would spend the rest of his life. Abraham spent the later years of his life as a widower working as a 'Timber Boss\*.' On the 1921 Canadian census it says he is 66 and an unemployed 'Timber Boss' who had not worked for 14 weeks due to illness. On Monday, July 5<sup>th</sup> 1926 Abraham Dodd passed away. the 'Blairmore Enterprise' newspaper of July 15<sup>th</sup> 1926 carried this obituary: -

### **Death of Mr. Abby Dodd**

The sudden death occurred at Hillcrest on Monday afternoon of Mr. Abby Dodd, one of the best known old timers of the Pass district. Mr. Dodd had not been ailing and passed away while resting at the rear of his residence. He was about

seventy-three years of age and a native of Wales, coming to Canada many years ago. Funeral services were held in the Bellevue United church on Tuesday evening, conducted by Rev. W. T. young, of Blairmore and the remains were will laid to rest in Hillcrest cemetery, beside those of his wife, who preceded him about five years ago. Mr. Dodd is survived by one daughter, residing in Vancouver, and had is belongings packed up preparatively to leaving for the coast in a few days to spend the rest of his days there. The singing at the graveside by a number of the deceased's Welsh compatriots was indeed a fitting farewell to a man who in life was extremely fond of music and singing. Thanks are due to the ladies of Bellevue and hillcrest, and Mr. Nat Evans, of Bellevue, upon whom the responsibility of making arrangements for the funeral. Despite the short notice, there was a good attendance of friends from Hillcrest, Blairmore and Coleman.

-----

The history of the United Mineworkers Union of America recorded: - Abraham Dodd, an old miner with no family in the Crowsnest Pass, died of exposure in 1926. The Union immediately stepped in and paid out \$213.40 for his burial. Much like the fraternal organizations, the UMWA (United Mine Workers of America) insisted on compulsory attendance for all members at funerals as a show of support, respect and in this case, a united front. So does that mean Abraham had still been working ? On June 19<sup>th</sup> 1914 189 colliers were killed in an explosion at the Hillcrest Colliery. Was Abraham Dodd involved? We will probably never know.

-----

One criticism of Abraham Dodd after the inundation was that he was not involved a lot before the final break through. But looking at his daughter's birth certificate it is not hard to find out why. The date of birth of Margaret Catherine was April 15<sup>th</sup> 1877, midway through the rescue attempt. Child and baby mortality in the Rhondda valley at this time was very high, so going down to the place of rescue as a new father, in my opinion made it a doubly brave act.

### **A medal at last for Abraham Dodd?**

In December 2010 a local man in the Rhondda, Mr. Graham Williams, 76 years of age, contacted the UK Royal Humane Society asking if it could advise on how he might go about getting the original decision overturned and also commented that, "local people to this day still think Abraham (Abby) Dodd should have received the Albert Medal along with all the other miners who were part of this very brave



action.” However, of course, his efforts were to no avail, even after gaining the support of his local MP.

The *‘Blairmore Enterprise’* a newspaper of Alberta, Canada, on 26 February 1925 quoted this report from the *‘Glamorgan Free Press’* newspaper back in Pontypridd:

-

**Thrilling story retold**  
(From the Glamorgan Free Press)

April, 1925, will bring us the 48<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the thrilling rescue of entombed miners at Tynewydd (Porth). The terrible ordeal of the four men and a young collier boy who were imprisoned in a living tomb of compressed air, which served to hold back a solid wall of water, for ten days, and then were miraculously rescued in a story which will live while coalmining remains.

Many of our younger miners affirm the circumstances to be “impossible,” and, in order to ascertain the facts I interviewed two of the rescuers, who faced death unflinchingly in the fervent hope that they would succeed in boring through the barriers of coal which separated them from their entombed comrades. All of the rescued men are now dead, and out of the band of 30 rescuers but four remain to tell the famous story; three of them live within half a mile of one another – Mr. William Rawlins, 20 York Street, Porth; Mr. Charles Oatridge, 74 Leslie Terrace, Llwynceilyn, Porth, and Mr. Tom Rees, Trehafod – and the fourth, Mr. Abraham Dodd (or “Appy Dodd” as he was more popularly known), now lives in Hillcrest, Alberta, Canada, where he emigrated many years.

The first named three are still active and healthy, fine types of mining pioneers, and as they related their experiences one was profoundly impressed by their spirit, the glint shining in their eyes as they recollected the grim struggle against nature in that dread Wednesday in ’77. Mr. Dodd is also in fine fettle in his Canadian home, so a relative informs me, and many Colonials have been thrilled by his story while a big log burns itself out in the long Canadian winter night.

Mr. Oatridge was reminiscent and explained, how, on the memorable night of April 9<sup>th</sup> 1877, the pent-up water in the old disused Hines pit burst into the workings of the Tynewydd colliery in tremendous volume, and the alarm was instantly raised. The workers on the particular shift began a desperate race for life and, although most of them escaped, five of them – David Jenkins, George Jenkins, David Hughes, Moses Powell and John Thomas – found their retreat cut off, and rushed up a rising heading to the coal face. Death seemed inevitable when they reached the block-end, but, to their amazement, they found that the surging torrent which

followed them up the narrow heading suddenly stopped and formed a “wall,” from floor to roof, behind them. It seems almost incredible, but the men were entombed in a room of compressed air, with a wall of coal in front of them and a wall of water behind them for ten days, until the rescue was effected.

Mr. Charles Oatridge was working on the day of the disaster with his two brothers, Edward and William, and was actually engaged in driving a heading towards the old Hines pit, from which the flood came. Upon later examination, it was found that in Oatridge’s working-place the water had broken through, and it was providential that the three brothers were not also trapped, because they had barely reached home after the day’s work when the alarm was raised that the mine was flooded. Charles Oatridge had noticed water oozing through for a few days before the catastrophe, but on the last day nothing happened to suggest the danger was so near; therefore, no thought was given it. When the alarm was raised three men were known to have lost their lives and others were missing, and on the following morning Charles Oatridge was one of a party of volunteers who drove through a barrier of coal, 11 yards thick, to reach the first lot of men who had been trapped – Thomas Morgan and his two sons William and Richard, Edward Williams and William Casher – their location being gleaned by continuous tapping by the trapped colliers.

The water had now filled the workings at the bottom of the main drift and filled the drift itself to within 14 yards of the top level, and, with the aid of surveyors and guided by the level of the water, which gave them a sense of “distance,” they knew their comrades were in the secondary drift, which lay in the same direction. The method adopted by the rescuers in driving through the barrier was to keep drilling three yards ahead of them in order to preserve a good supporting wall, while at the same time gaining communication with the other side. Eventually, they succeeded in getting a hole through with the drill, and attempted to feed the entombed men, but the air pressure drove everything back. As the air escaped so the wall of water spread itself and the entombed men realized the precious value of the air pressure, which kept back the wall of water behind them. To prevent the air escaping the escaping they filled their caps with small coal, and thus the escape of air was frustrated until the pumps did their work and relieved the pressure of the water behind them and, simultaneously, the air. The rescuers were now able to drive a hole large enough for the smallest of the party, Abraham Dodd, to crawl through and rescue the party of five.

Despite the fact that for ten days the men had been entombed and had subsisted on nothing but water, they were in good spirits, and actually walked up the drift unaided. All had prayed reverently for the deliverance through the terrible ten days, and they also sang the old Welsh Hymn, “Yn y Dyfroedd,” with the everlasting

hope that they would be saved. Messrs. W. Rawlings, Oatridge, Rees, Abby Dodd and others of the rescue party were publicly recognised at a huge gathering of many thousands of people on the Pontypridd common, when Mr. Thomas White, then Lord Mayor of London, acting on behalf of her majesty the Queen, presented them with a Victoria and Albert medal. This was the first occasion on which this medal had been granted for gallantry in life-saving on land.

A watch and chain from members of Parliament, were also handed to these brave men. Large sums of money were also granted the rescuers, and 26 Welsh and two English bibles were presented to them by the British and Foreign Bible Society, suitably inscribed and addressed by the President, the Earl of Shaftesbury. The rescuers were feted and admired by all, and an enterprising pipe manufacturer commenced a vogue in pipes, which was popular for a very long time. The pipe was of the long-stem clay type, with the figure of a miner holding a mandril over his shoulder, as if ready to strike. This pipe was tremendously popular and was called the "Appy Dodd pipe," named after Appy Dodd, who is now alive and hearty in Alberta, and who was the Abraham Dodd referred to earlier in this story.

So the story of Tynewydd is over, but the legend still lives on in the valleys of South Wales.

RESCUERS AND RESCUED.



The rescued are the four men and a boy in centre of front row. Back row (left to right): Dr. Price, Dr. Henry N. Davies, T. Griffiths, Charles Oatridge, Ioan Williams (who died last week at Whitechurch), Isaac Pride, D. Davies (Nyth Bran), D. Minton, Thomas Rees, John Hopkin (Ty'n Cwm), R. Hopkin, T. Thomas, W. Morgan, and "Morien," the Welsh journalist. Front row (left to right): D. Davies (haullier), D. Jenkins, Geo. Jenkins, D. Hughes, Moses Powell, G. Thomas (the rescued party), John Griffiths, W. Rawlings, Thomas Jones (Kendon).

The rescued are the four men and a boy in the centre front row. Back row (Left to Right) Dr. Price, Dr. Henry Naunton Davies, T. Griffiths, Charles Oatridge, Ioan Williams (who died last week at Whitechurch), Isaac pride, D. Davies (Nyth Bran), D. Minton, Thomas Rees, John Hopkins (Ty'n Cwm), R. Hopkin, T. Thomas, W. Morgan & Morien (the Welsh Journalist). Front row (Left to right) D. Davies (Haulier), D. Jenkins, Geo. Jenkins, D. Hughes, Moses Powell, G. Thomas, John Griffiths, W. Rawlings, Thomas Jones (Kendon).



**The unmarked grave of Abraham Dodd in the Hillcrest cemetery, Hillcrest, Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, Canada, after his death on July 5<sup>th</sup> 1926. He was buried next to his wife, who preceded him, 'head to toe' due to lack of room.**

## Some of the mining terms used in this book

**Adit** - Mine entry tunnel driven near horizontally to intersect workings below ground

**Afterdamp** - Noxious gases left after underground explosion

**Brattice cloth** – A kind of sheet for covering ventilation doors; also for directing air-flow into places of working. Formerly made of tarred hessian.

**Face** – The exposed area of a coal bed from which coal is being extracted.

**Gob** - The term applied to that part of the mine from which the coal has been removed and the space more or less filled up with waste. Also, the loose waste in a mine. Also called **goaf**.

**Drift** - A horizontal passage underground. A drift follows the vein, as distinguished from a crosscut that intersects it, or a level or gallery, which may do either.

**Heading** - A vein above a drift. An interior level or airway driven in a mine. In longwall workings, a narrow passage driven upward from a gangway in starting a working in order to give a loose end.

**Stall** - A working place at the coalface where the coal was extracted; in a coalface 100 yards long there would be as many as 20 or 30 stalls, each separated by a pillar of coal left to support the roof.

**Sump** - The bottom of a shaft, or any other place in a mine, that is used as a collecting point for drainage water.

**Water Balance pit** – An early method of powering the cages in a shaft. Each cage (or bucket) was fitted with a tank which could be filled with water when it was at the pit top. A rope or chain from the top of one cage was taken over a large pulley (or sheave) and then similarly connected to the other cage, the rope being of such a length that when one cage was at the top of the pit the other was at the bottom, and visa versa. The pulley was usually fitted with a brake. When it was necessary to raise a tram of

coal to the surface it was placed in the cage / bucket at the bottom and the tank of the topmost cage was filled until it was heavy enough to counter-balance the weight of the loaded tram at the pit bottom, and raise it to the pit top. The water in the descending cage was let out at the pit bottom and had to be pumped back to the surface unless it could drain from the pit by gravity.



**Cottages built for the colliers at the Upper (Old) Cymmer Colliery (or Pwll Hindes). At the rear in this photo is the colliery itself which was later abandoned and in 1877 its workings flooded the Tynewydd Colliery.**



**The Porth Cottage Hospital which was partly built because of the Tynewydd flood and lay directly under where the rescue took place.**





**The site of the Tynewydd Colliery 2016, now the Ponty Newydd Medical Centre and car park, Aberrhondda Rd, Porth**

## Acknowledgements

My thanks once again to David Gwyer of the Pontypridd Museum who has proof read another manuscript for me. Thanks also to Paul O'Brien of the same establishment for help with the cover.

Many thanks as well to Raymond Denham, who tracked down what had become of Abraham Dodd and his family and where he was buried; and also the staff of the Crowsnest Museum, Alberta, Canada, for finding and photographing his grave for me.

A big thanks also to Ceri Thompson, curator of the Big Pit National Coal Museum, for his kind introduction.

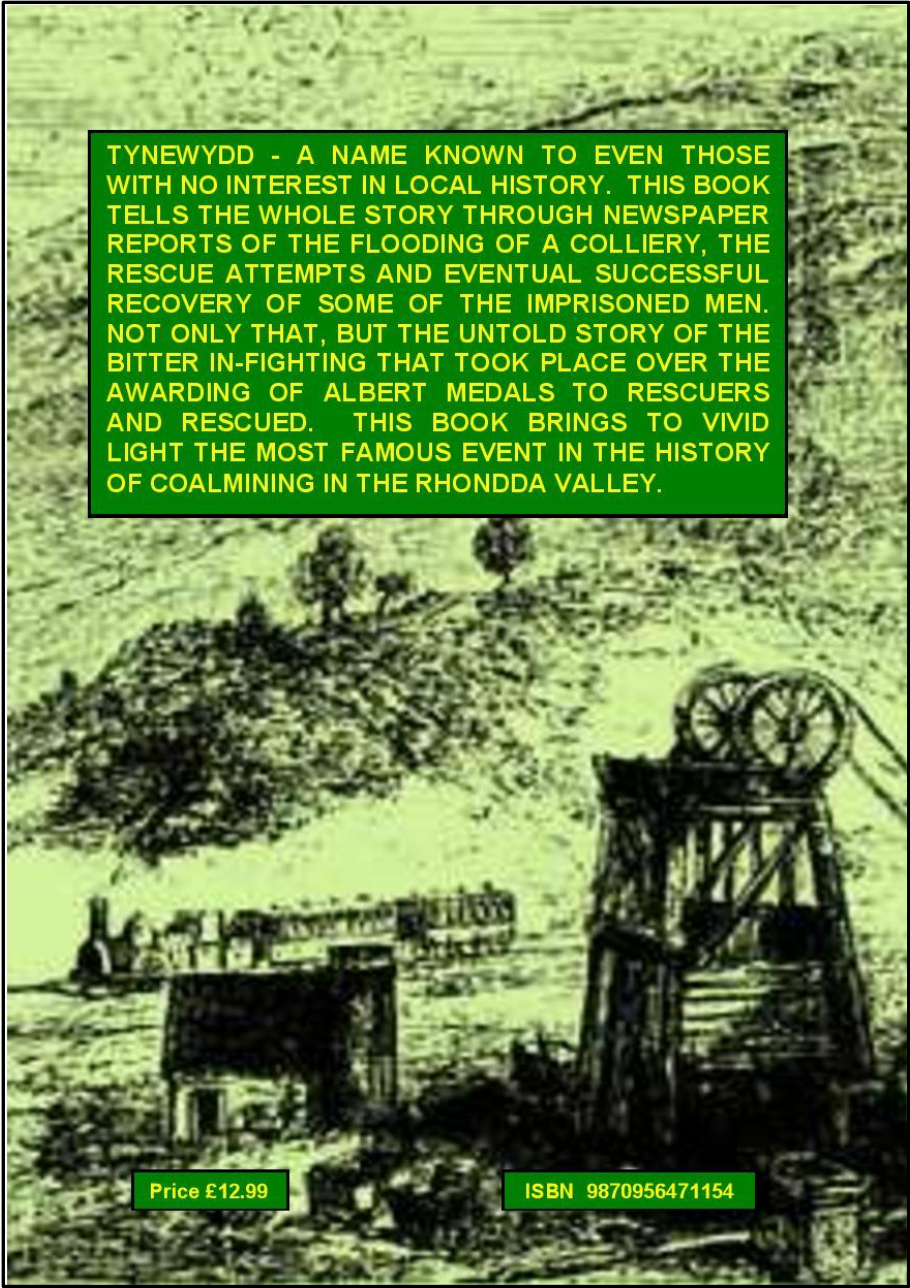
Hi Gareth

Not sure if you are still on this email. I was talking to me granddaughter today about my search for Abraham Dodd and was relating some of the other things that came up after. I have had many conversations with a number of people over the years from the online Ancestry tree. One came up that I though may interest you. One lady asked if Iknew anything about her great grandma Margaret Catherine Dodd (Abraham Dodds daughter) having thought to have something to do with her husbands death.

I checked and she did I hope this comes through. If it does not then I will try another way off passing it on. But basically she shot her husband Fred McRae. And she did it in front of a policeman. I believe she was guilty of manslaughter and must have been released because she went on to marry before she died in 1955. – **Ray Denham 08-11-2021**



**Gareth Harris, author of this book**



TYNEWYDD - A NAME KNOWN TO EVEN THOSE WITH NO INTEREST IN LOCAL HISTORY. THIS BOOK TELLS THE WHOLE STORY THROUGH NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE FLOODING OF A COLLIERY, THE RESCUE ATTEMPTS AND EVENTUAL SUCCESSFUL RECOVERY OF SOME OF THE IMPRISONED MEN. NOT ONLY THAT, BUT THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE BITTER IN-FIGHTING THAT TOOK PLACE OVER THE AWARDED ALBERT MEDALS TO RESCUERS AND RESCUED. THIS BOOK BRINGS TO VIVID LIGHT THE MOST FAMOUS EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF COALMINING IN THE RHONDDA VALLEY.

Price £12.99

ISBN 9870956471154