

ELECTRICITY

By the year 1925 the South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Company had made available at Pontyclun mains electric power generated at Upper Boat. In 1927 this power line, which was carried on wooden poles, was extended to the Borough of Cowbridge. The supply at 1100 volts was carried to a 100 kilowatt transformer situated in the field at the rear of the Town Hall. The first installations were the street lights, a fire alarm bell in the cupola of the Town Hall (not too effective when the wind blew from certain directions) and 26 private houses in the High Street. The electric current was first switched on at Cowbridge on December 12, 1927.

DID YOU KNOW? Water supply

The Mid Glamorgan Water Board was formed in 1921 and in 1926 the Borough of Cowbridge received its first piped water supply.

In very early times drinking was carried by the townspeople from Silver Well in the meadow behind the Bear Field and perhaps in dry seasons from Bowman's Well. Later hand-operated pumps were installed within the Borough, the first two were situated opposite the Bear Inn and beside the site of the present Town Hall.

As the Borough expanded one pump was erected at both East and West villages.

The pump at East Village

was erected in 1765 by Phillip Walton and Oliver Richard at a cost of £13.13s0d and was situated on the pavement opposite the site of the Railway Station.

The original pump in West village was situated on the northern side of the road (the stone work may still be seen beside the road) but this was later closed for drinking purposes owing to contamination and a new pump with a concrete well was erected near the site of the County Police Station.

During periods of drought most of the pumps ran dry and the townspeople had to carry their water from the Town Hall pump.

Gas company

The Cowbridge Gas Company was formed in 1850, some of the original directors being John Llewellyn, Pharmaceutical Chemist, Thomas Rees, Lawyer, and Mr Thomas, Auctioneer; the Company Secretary was Mr Parsons, Grocer of High Street. The Gas Works were constructed on the site of Choice's Court at the Limes in 1851, the first manager being John Jenkins from Bodmin. Owing to the fact that it was expensive, gas lighting and cooking were not in general use in private houses for many years. Gas lighting was installed in St Mary's Church in 1853, in the Town Hall and Justices' Court in 1856, and in the streets about 1855.

Owing to the age of plant and lack of consumers, the affairs of the Cowbridge Gas Company were far from healthy even in the 1920s. In 1931 the directors served notice upon the consumers stating that the Gas Works were to be closed.

WIRELESS

On the November 15, 1922 the original British Broadcasting Company (Corporation in 1927) transmitted the first wireless programme from London, Manchester and Birmingham, this was shortly followed by transmissions from Cardiff.

The first complete wireless set sold in Cowbridge was probably a Fellows one valve set with loud-speaker, sold by Mr Bird at his ironmonger's shop opposite the Town Hall.

Pavilion cinema

The Pavilion Cinema was designed and built by Alderman A T Mills in the year 1924. It was built on the site of the tennis court and Wheelwrights Arms. A fine ballroom was erected on the first floor and this was the scene of many dances and public functions

DID YOU KNOW? Telephone

In the year 1898, E.W. Miles approached the National Telephone Company with a request that the telephone service should be introduced to the town.

He was informed that providing he obtained at least eight subscribers, the company would install telephones at Cowbridge at an annual rental of eight pounds per year for each installation.

He was, unfortunately, only

including the official luncheon given to the Right Hon David Lloyd George when he received the Freedom of the Borough in 1930.

Destroyed by fire April 16, 1942 and not used as a cinema thereafter it is now due to be demolished.

able to obtain seven prospective subscribers within the town; these included Messrs Rees and Gwyn, and Alderman Edward John. Mr Miles then appealed to Mr Thurston Bassett, who lived at Crossways, to make up the complement.

In spite of the fact that his installation entailed a much higher rental, Mr Bassett affably agreed to make up the numbers, and Cowbridge had its first telephone service installed in that same year.

In 1912 the Charter held by the National Telephone Company expired and the GPO took over all local and trunk telephone services.

Cowbridge telephones were converted to automatic working in January 1930, and the automatic exchange is housed in a small building in the West End of the town.

Sewerage scheme

After grants had been made by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Glamorgan County Council, under the Rural Water and Sewerage Act, work was commenced on February 9, 1953, on a public sewer to serve the borough and part of the rural district of Cowbridge, the contractors for the work being Messrs. Davies Middleton and Davies Ltd.

Thirteen thousand yards of public sewer were laid, with a pumping station at Llanblethian and biological filtration plant near the Lake Farm. The system which is on the rising main principle came into use in the latter half of 1955.