

CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

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HANES



NEWSLETTER OF THE CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY
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HANES ON STREETS (No.2): OLD HIGH STREET

Dirty, ugly and unsafe to travel through.

In 1873 **The Aberdare Times** commented *if one part of Aberdare more than another requires demolition and reconstruction it is that part of High Street which clusters around the Farmers' Arms [the area] is a dense nursery of crime and immorality and a traffic danger.*

A few years later the Town Directory (Worrall 1875) described the main streets of Aberdare as wide and clean and pointed out that the old and narrow ones were fast disappearing.

Today High Street hardly exists, except as a thoroughfare; it contains but one retail business (a café) a public house (Wetherspoon's) and a handful of offices. In fact it now has the appearance of a town centre bypass.

In the first half of the nineteenth-century however it was one of the most important streets in Aberdare, vibrant and the area where most needs could be satisfied. The extent of High Street can be seen on the parish tithe map of 1847, and since 1866 extended from the foot of the Gadlys Trip railway bridge to the point where the street entered Commercial Place. (Victoria Square since 1896)

Note: The *Farmers' Arms* was opposite the present entrance to Rock Grounds.

Here follows a list of the trades etc., which were to be found in High Street in 1852.

1 Blacksmith	1 Bookseller and Stationer,
1 Brewer (John Lindsey)	3 Butchers.
1 Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer	1 Carpenter and Joiner*
1 Cutler	1 Grocer and Tea Dealer*
1 Hairdresser	1 Ironmonger and Cutler.
2 Linen and Woollen Drapers.	1 Painter and Glazier.
1 Sadler and Harness maker.	1 Tallow Chandler.
1 Woollen cloth manufacturer**	1 Bookbinder.
1 China, glass and earthenware dealer	1 Miller (John Lindsey). .

The following Public Offices were also located in High Street: the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The Canal Agent, Stamp Duty Office and the Post Office (although the address of the Post Office is given as High Street it was in fact situated at the rear of the Black Lion Hotel.)

There were also nine hotels, inns and public houses in the street: Heathcock, Wellington, Farmers' Arms, Lamb, New Inn, Horse and Groom, Pelican, Swan and Boot and Railway. ***

Source: Scammell & Co's City of Bristol and South Wales Directory. (2/1852)

* Evan Griffiths of Tŷ Mawr. He was the owner of the largest trading establishment at Aberdare during the first half of the 19th century. *Evan Griffiths & Co.* owned boats on the Aberdare canal which conveyed goods and provisions from Cardiff to stock its warehouses and shop premises at Tŷ Mawr. The Griffiths' boats and those of another carrier ran to Cardiff three times a week. The importance of its business declined after the opening of the Aberdare Railway in 1846 and by 1852 the establishment had lost its monopoly.

** The Woollen Mill owned by Margaret David. She also kept the Lamb Inn.

*** The *Boot* until the opening of the Aberdare Railway in 1846.

The population of Aberdare in 1852 was estimated at 16,000 (*Rammell Report October 1852*)

DON'T FORGET THE ROUGH BROWN HOLLANDS.*

**SALE BY AUCTION ON THE PREMISES
OF THE STOCK IN TRADE, FIXTURES AND FITTINGS, TRADE UTENSILS ETC.
THOMAS JOHN, DRAPER, GROCER etc., A BANKRUPT
HIGH STREET, ABERDARE.
On the 13 and 14 June 1855**

Assortment of cassimeres, vestings, velveteens, corduroys, fustians, plush, a few ready mades. Prints, cobourgs, muslins, dresses, delaines and alpacas, drills, diapers, irishes, towels, towelling, damask, huckaback, cheese cloth, Jens, rough brown Hollands*, Linings, Trimmings, Twill, grey and other calicoes. Flannels, surges, domets and bath coatings; sheets, counterpanes; shawls in variety, hats, caps, bonnets, stays, umbrellas, mantles and haberdashery, ribands, lace goods and small wares etc.,
In the grocery stock will be found snuffs, tobacco, spices, teas, coffees, cocoanuts, raisins, currents, sugars, pickles, starch, candles, soap, black-lead, paper cheese, butter, brushes and bacon. Fixtures comprise counters, nest of drawers, shelving, canisters, scales and weights, desks, lamps, looking-glasses, weighing machines etc.

*A Dutch linen fabric used for children's clothing.

Bristol Mercury. 9, June 1855

BREWERY SALE

Mr. Lilly (of Bridgewater) will SELL by AUCTION at the Black Lion Inn, Aberdare on Friday 15 February 1855 at three for four o'clock in the afternoon punctually, subject to such conditions as will be then produced, in one Lot:

All that capital INN AND BREWERY known as **THE HORSE AND GROOM INN** and **THE ROCK BREWERY**; and also the STABLING, SMITH'S SHOP, Four COTTAGES, and about an acre and half of LAND adjoining, situate at ABERDARE aforesaid, and now or late in the respective occupations of Thomas Williams, William Lewis, Richard Davies, Dan Richard, John Rees and Thomas Cotton.

The Horse and Groom Inn is in a good situation for Business, and is well supplied with gas and other fittings, and has been long established. It comprises six rooms on the ground floor, and six beds, together with a commodious and well frequented club or lecture room* extending across the River Dare, which flows through the property; also a carpenter's shop and storeroom at the back of the clubroom.

The Rock Brewery has been recently erected, and is a substantial, well arranged and commodious building, three stories high, and has a fixed steam engine fitted up in a modern style, with coolers, stock-pieces,

improved refrigerators, gas fittings, and all necessary appliances for the business, with a good supply of water; also a store-room, coach-house, and stable adjoining the Brewery.

The stabling is extensive and fully occupied; and the Smith's Shop is a large detached building with stables adjoining. Three of the cottages are situated near the Smith's Shop, each having three rooms; and the other cottage adjoins the Inn, and consists of a shop, sitting-room, offices, and two bedrooms.

The premises are situated in the centre of the improving Market-town of Aberdare, which contain a population of 20,000, and is rapidly increasing. The property will be sold for the residue of three several absolute terms of 99 years each subject to the payment of an aggregate yearly rent of £11.9.10d.

The stock pieces and Brewery utensils (of which an inventory will be provided at the Auction) will be required to be taken by the purchaser at a fair valuation.

Mr. John Jenkins of the Freemason's Tavern, Aberdare, will show the property; and for all further particulars apply to Messrs. Charles H. and Frank James, Solicitors, Merthyr Tydfil and to the Auctioneers at the Mart, Bridgewater.

Bristol Mercury, 26, January 1856.

Note: the Horse and Groom Public house opened in 1835 and closed in 1871. Its address was 11 High Street and it stood in front of Rock Grounds roughly on the site of the present aromatic garden for the blind. *In 1852 the Sir Robert Peel Lodge of the Merthyr District of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows met on the premises.

The Brewery is said to have opened in 1850. In 1871 the Rock Brewery was owned by William Lindsey of 2 Clifton Villas and William Fisher of 29 Canon Street, carrying on business as Tavern Keepers, Brewers and Spirit Merchants at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern, the Rock Brewery and Old Mill Brewery at Aberdare under the style of Lindsey and Fisher (Bankruptcy Proceedings Notice 31 July 1871). In 1873 ownership had passed to Edward Roberts, and in 1880 the business was in the hands of the partnership of Richard Lewis and John Rhys. In the 1890's Rock Brewery was bought by Allsops; in 1921 this company disposed of the plant and some 40 tied houses.

ODDITIES!



A GOOD TIME SIR?

The Revd. Evan Lewis on the building of St.Mair's Welsh Church in 1864 drew attention to the *Blue Boar* in Maesydre*, a public house opposite the site of the new church, saying "It is a terrible nuisance to the respectable neighbourhood"; he added that he believed it was resorted to by women of ill fame.

* Opened in 1861 and now named *The Cambrian*.

OBSTRUCTING THE HIGHWAY

In April 1865 three cheapjacks set up their wares in Commercial Place (Victoria Square) "Not satisfied with the nuisance they occasioned the public, they proceeded to quarrel violently among themselves. They continued for several hours heaping the most foul-mouthed abuse ever heard in a public thoroughfare upon each other. One of the cheap-jacks was later fined ten shillings for obstructing the highway." Sergeant Mathews proved.

HER MAJESTY COMMANDS

THREE CHILDREN AT A BIRTH -The Queen's Bounty. It was stated in the *Western Mail* a fortnight ago that the wife of a haulier at Aberdare had given birth to three children, whom the parents named Ruth, Naomi and Catherine. Dr. Evan Jones kindly wrote to Her Majesty the Queen for the usual bounty given in such cases and yesterday that gentleman received the following communication from Buckingham Palace: - *Major General, Sir*

T. M. Biddulph has received the Queen's Command to forward to Mr. Evan Jones the enclosed post-office order for three pounds, as a donation from Her Majesty to Anne Llewellyn, on whose behalf Mr. Evan Jones applied for Her Majesty's Bounty, in consequence of Mrs. Llewellyn's confinement of three children in one birth. Perhaps Mr. Evan Jones will kindly take care that the poor woman receives her Majesty's gift in safety. The marriage certificate is herewith returned.
Buckingham Palace, London, November 8, 1869.

Western Mail 10, November 1869.

THE SWINDLING "CAPTAIN" AND THE VICAR OF ABERDARE.

A person of gentlemanly exterior and address, who styled himself "Captain Morton" has lately visited Aberdare and duped the new vicar and swindled two respectable tradesmen of £22.

The Rev Canon Jenkins the Vicar of Aberdare, met a gentleman at one of the hotels at Cardiff a few weeks ago, who represented himself to be a captain on his travels through the Principality. The Canon, having been a military chaplain, entered into a friendly conversation with the "Captain" which ended in an invitation to the latter to call at the vicarage when he visited Aberdare.

A few days ago, the Captain drove to the Boot Hotel, Aberdare in a Cardiff cab. Having made arrangements for the accommodation of his man and horse, he made his way to the vicarage. Shortly afterwards both he and the Vicar returned to the hotel, when the Captain said that his friend the Vicar insisted on his staying at the vicarage that night. Taking advantage of the absence of the Vicar from the room he asked the landlord to oblige him with change for a £12 cheque, which was cheerfully granted to the "friend and guest" of the Vicar. Shortly the Vicar joined his quasi friend, and both returned to the vicarage. Next morning the Captain called at the hotel and said he had spent a very agreeable evening at the vicarage, and was lavish in his praises of the excellent qualities of the Vicar. He said that he had given the change he had obtained for the cheque the day before to be distributed by the Vicar among the poor of the place, and asked the landlord to oblige him with change for another cheque of £10.

There not being sufficient change in the till, the boots was sent out to a neighbouring tradesman, who readily exchanged the cheque for gold. The Captain then paid his bill, and ordered his cab and drove over the mountain to Merthyr. He selected the Bush Hotel, and gave orders that the driver should have everything he wanted, and the horse fed, the driver not to have more than four shillings worth of beer a day. He added that he was going to Breconshire, salmon fishing and would not be back until the following day.

Next day came, but no Captain Morton. Another, and yet another day arrived, but no tidings or message of any kind.

"Cabby" was advised to return to Cardiff, and the landlord of the Bush is happy in being let off with feeding the man and horse for some days. By this time the cheques had been presented, and returned with "not known" upon them. They were drawn on the Provincial Bank Co., Cardiff.

The Captain is spoken of as possessing a very captivating and "gentlemanly" manner, slightly built, about five feet eight and apparently near 30 years of age, with dark moustaches and chin shaved.

He wore an instrument over his shoulder and back, as if for a protection for a curvature of the spine.

Western Mail, 3 June, 1870.

John David Jenkins (1828-1876). Cleric and philanthropist. D.D. of Jesus College, Oxford. Chaplain to H.M. forces in Natal 1853-1859. Later the "Railwaymen's Apostle", Vicar of Aberdare 1870-1876. (See further the D.W.B. at page 435.)

PARDON?

Mr. Benson, barrister, was applying for an on licence for the Rhos Wenallt Inn, Abernant at Neath yesterday, and some diversion was caused by Judge Gwilym Williams refusing to listen to the application until Mr. Benson pronounced the name of the house properly.

"Wales Day by Day", Western Mail 6, October 1892.

NEWS: David Leslie Davies and Geoffrey Evans have been elected to serve on the Council of the *Glamorgan History Society* for a term of three years from 8 May 2010.

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