

CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

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www.cynonvalleyhistorysociety.org

HANES



NEWSLETTER OF THE CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY
CYLCHLYTHYR CYMDEITHAS HANES CWM CYNON

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How those curiosities would be quite forgot, did not such idle fellows as I am put them down
(John Aubrey 1626-1697)

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The interesting menu for the Society's 40th anniversary dinner, splendid as it is, cannot match that put before the elite of the district at the *Boot Hotel* on 31 October 1894 on the occasion of the investiture of the High Constable's Badge (See *Hanes* Number 27, Summer 2004), or indeed the banquet held at the same establishment on 4 March 1909 when R. W. Roberts was installed as Worshipful Master of St. David's Lodge of Freemasons. There the festive boards groaned under the weight of,

Oysters
Cawl Cenin Clear Ox-Tail.

Boiled Turbot – Lobster Sauce.
Fried Whitebait.

Kidneys Stewed in Champagne.
Hare, á la poivrade.*

Fore and Hind Quarters Lamb. Mint Sauce.
Roast Sirloin Beef.
Boiled and Roast Turkey.
New Potatoes. Green Peas. Brussels Sprouts.

Roast Guinea Fowl, larded.

St. David's Pudding. Fruit Pies.
Lemon Sponge. Wine Jellies. Trifle.

Cheese Straws. Biscuits. Celery.

Pine Apple. Grapes. Nuts &c.

The wine list consisted of two choices of Hock, two Clarets, two Burgundies and two Champagnes. Old Port was also available at 7/- and 10/- a bottle. (Source: Aberdare Central Library PS1/3/1.)

* a pepper sauce.

STEAM ENGINES MADE TO ORDER.

THE ABERNANT IRON COMPANY

Having established their WORKS at ABERNANT near Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire under the firm of Homfray, Tappendens, and Birch

Beg to inform the public that they are now prepared to cast and fit up STEAM-ENGINES upon any plan, and to make all sorts of castings for collieries, copper works, bridges and other purposes.

JAMES BIRCH, the managing partner flatters himself from the approved quality of the Abernant iron and a long experience as an Engineer and Founder, he shall be able to execute orders for engines and castings of every description for the satisfaction of those who will favour him with their orders, which shall be executed on very reasonable terms, and with the strictest punctuality.

(The Cambrian, February 2 1805)

SHOP TO LET

GLAMORGANSHIRE

To be disposed of immediately. A GOOD RETAIL TRADE in the flourishing village of Aberdare, near Merthyr Tydfil.

The stock consists of GROCERY, LINEN, DRAPERY, HOSIERY, HABERDASHERY &c. &c.

The premises are desirably situated in the centre of the village, are in good repair, and are held for an unexpired term of ten years, at a moderate rent.

The incoming tenant may be accommodated with a few acres of land if wanted, and part of the purchase money for the stock may remain unpaid on giving proper security for the same.

The particulars and a view of the stock and premises, apply to Mr. James Jacob at Aberdare aforesaid or at Llantrissant, Glamorganshire.

(The Cambrian, 15 June 1805)

TIME SHARE

“REVENGE IS SWEET” – Martha Jones was charged by Ann Bradford, both of Mountain Ash, with breaking a window. On being asked how she came to do so, defendant informed the bench that complainant kept an “open house” and was too frequently in the habit of inviting her husband there and by way of revenge she broke the window, adding that if she did so again she would break something else the next time. – The bench informed defendant that she had no right to break the window, and ordered her to pay a fine of 1s. 6d, together with 3s. 6d. the cost of summons or in default 5 days imprisonment, - allowed a week to pay the amount.

(The Aberdare Times, 14 September 1861)

GIFTS TO THE MUSEUM.

On Friday 20 May the writer and his wife spent an enjoyable day in the company of Miss G. Margaret Edwards, the granddaughter of Rees Llewellyn of Bwllfa and Merthyr Dare Steam Collieries (1891) Ltd., one of the major figures in the history of coal mining in the Aberdare Valley.

In her early years, Miss Edwards made many visits to Bwllfa House, Cwmdare. The purpose of her visit that day was to present some family mementos to the Cynon Valley Museum and to visit Bwllfa House and Ty Newydd, Penderyn where her uncle, W. M. Llewellyn had resided and where she often stayed.

Miss Edwards is a daughter of Charles Edwards, a Cardiff solicitor and Rees Llewellyn’s only daughter, Annie Matilda Llewellyn.

The interesting mementos given to the museum by Miss Edwards consisted of an ivory- handled engraved silver trowel presented to Rees Llewellyn when he opened Noddfa Welsh Baptist Chapel (now a private house), Mount Pleasant Street, Trecynon in 1905; the ceremonial key used by W.M. Llewellyn to open the New Welfare Hall (The Coliseum) at Trecynon on 17 September 1938, and two further keys used, one by her mother, during the opening of the Cwmdare Welfare Grounds and Hall, Cwmdare on 1 May 1926.

The keys are ornate and beautifully decorated and are inscribed with details of the events.

Note: A photograph of Bwllfa House and the wedding of Miss Edwards’ parents appear on page 130 of *The Story of Cwmdare* by John F. Mear. A short history of the Llewellyn/Edwards family can also be found there.

BRIEF MEMORIES OF THE SILVER SCREEN.

The first public showing of the Bioscope or moving pictures took place in London in 1896. It was a sensation and the novelty spread rapidly throughout the country. The first exhibition reached Aberdare that same year when **Harvard's Cinematograph** showed animated pictures at **The Empire Theatre**, Rock Grounds in September 1896.

Empire, Aberdare.

"Amongst the many interesting items may be mentioned the cine, the electric photographic sensation showing animated pictures taken from real life.

This novelty is being exhibited for the first time in Aberdare and it is a really marvellous invention. It need hardly be mentioned that it meets with unbounded applause. Mr. Harvard projected animated pictures of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Procession." (Aberdare Times, 6 November 1896.)

In the years that followed, these "electric photographic sensations" were restricted to the fair ground and as items in variety programmes in theatres, and Aberdare welcomed visits from Haggar's Bioscope, Wadbrook's Royal Electrograph, and Dooner's Electrograph.

By 1910 however Haggar had established a purpose built wood and canvass theatre "**The Picture Coliseum**" on ground adjoining the Market Hall, inviting people to *"Enjoy life at Old Haggar's. Twice Nightly at 7 & 9. to see the Pick of the Picture World. For over 16 years has old Haggar catered for your enjoyment. You will do well to remember him when you want to forget life's troubles. A change of pictures every Monday and Thursday. Manager and Lecturer Cyril S.Yorke."* (Aberdare Almanac 1913.)

The town did indeed remember him and the Aberdare Leader later commented:

"Haggar's Coliseum. It is pleasing to see this very popular place of entertainment still doing so well, and yet it is not surprising as on the occasion of our last visit there we were astounded at the magnificent display of the latest and best pictures. Not only were the subjects beyond reproach but the quality was perfect. We had seen pictures at other places, but these were a pleasure to look at, and were without that objectionable flicker that ruins the eyesight. Indeed it is astonishing how our old friend Haggar can give such an entertainment for such a low charge. Of course the show is not a Drury Lane one but it is now well fitted out and cosy" (Aberdare Leader February 1913.)

In 1915 The Empire Theatre, within the Constitutional Club, opened its "*Empire Pictorium*". Aberdare's first purpose built cinema was the *Electric Cinema* (or Aberdare Cinema) in Cardiff Street, next to the Conway Arms, built in 1912.

Films were also being shown at *Poole's Picture Palace* (The Aberaman Hall) in 1912, and the *Trecynon Public Hall* (1913). *The Park Cinema* (Park Picture Palace) opened on 14 March 1913, followed by 'Old Haggar's' New Market Street Cinema (*The Kosy Cinema*) on the 28 August 1915.

Hirwaun had a small but splendid new theatre in November 1916 - *The New Victoria Hall* (later the *Palace*), and Aberdare's *New Theatre and Hippodrome* (the former *Temperance Hall*) started showing films in 1918, and changed its name to *The Palladium*.

The heyday of the cinema was the 1920's-1930's. At the end of this period, in April 1939, Capt.W.E.Willis of Cardiff and Rhondda provided Aberdare with one of the most luxurious cinemas in the whole of South Wales - *The Rex* which stood in a prominent position in the centre of the town. .

IT'S AN ILL WIND.....

HOW THE 1861 GRAND NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD CAME TO BE HELD AT THE MARKET HALL.

2011 is the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the holding of the first National Eisteddfod of the modern era.

A blue plaque affixed to the wall of the Market Hall, Aberdare commemorates that it was the venue of the "inauguration of the union happily effected at Denbigh between the North and South Wales Eisteddfods." But the fact that it was held there was solely the result of a sudden summer storm. The following account is taken from the North Wales Chronicle dated Saturday 24 August 1861.

A spacious marquee, with seats to contain 6,000 people, had been specially erected for the occasion on Hirwaun Common, near the town, at an expense of several hundred pounds.

But on Sunday last, during the prevalence of a strong westerly gale, the noble structure, with the roofing and supports was completely destroyed, and the whole expensive decorations exposed to the merciless storm, which was at its height at about 1.00 o'clock the same day.

The scene of the debris was most discouraging to those who had bestowed so much attention on the building, and their hopes for a time entirely disappeared. However the patriotic spirit of the promoters was not in the least daunted and they at once employed a large force to convey the materials to the Market Hall, where it was decided the meeting should take place.

Vigorous measures were adopted; timber was carted; ladders were hurried to the scene of action; with the greatest promptitude, every workman had his post allotted, and now a most commodious erection, far superior in comfort to the Pavilion, and capable of holding 5,000 has been formed.

Acoustic arrangements were made for the better emission of sound from the platform, and performers as well as audience, especially ladies, congratulated themselves on the changes, both as regards comfort and ability to see and hear all that was going on upon the platform. Its situation, moreover, so close to the railway termini of the Taff Vale and Vale of Neath Railways, as well as its central position in [Aberdare] made the change a source of congratulation to all. The proximity of the Boot Hotel, and the refreshment rooms which were prepared opposite the grand entrance by the landlord, was an additional comfort to strangers, being far more commodious than the temporary erection on the common; indeed, the more convinced we are of the truth that "It is an ill wind that blows no one any good"

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first national Eisteddfod of the modern era the Society had hoped to restore the monument marking the burial place of David Williams (Alaw Goch). This consists of a large Celtic cross which towers over the vault, but unfortunately the monument is too friable to repair. As the inscription on the existing monument is no longer readable thought is being given to the placing of a new unpolished granite memorial stone on the grave.

If the project goes ahead (and it is hoped that it will) the inscription on the new stone will read: *In Memory of David Williams (Alaw Goch) 1809-1863, Poet, Pioneer of the Coal Industry in the Cynon Valley. First Treasurer of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Financial Guarantor of the First Festival of the Modern Age, held at the Market Hall, Aberdare 20-22 August 1861.* (Wording drafted by D.L.D.)

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www.cynonvalleyhistorysociety.org

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