

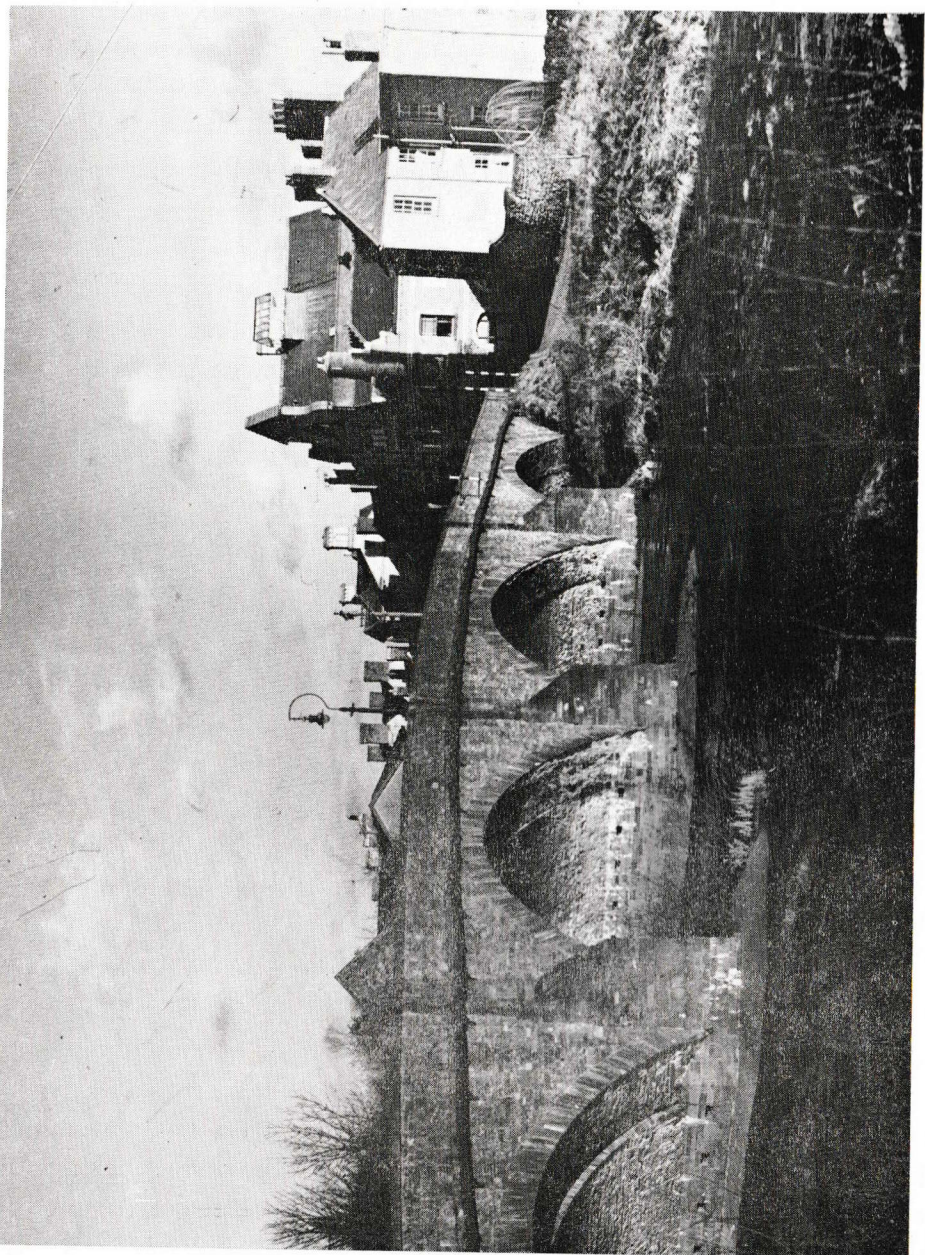
PRESENTING MONMOUTHSHIRE

THE JOURNAL OF
MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL HISTORY COUNCIL

No. 27 (Vol. II, No. 7)

THREE SHILLINGS





(South Wales Arans)

USK BRIDGE

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D. L. JONES, O.B.E.

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PRESENTING MONMOUTHSHIRE

No. 27 (Vol. II, No. 7)

SPRING 1969

D. L. JONES, O.B.E.

MOST members of the Local History Council will have heard with regret of the retirement of D. L. Jones, who has been Secretary to the Council since its inception in 1954. In fact the Council would probably not have been formed if it had not been for his interest and the support of the Rural Community Council. Many of our local history societies also owe their existence to his initiative, determination and power of persuasion when it has been necessary to cajole local authorities to call an exploratory meeting or a hesitant, would-be secretary that he or she was the only possible and eminently right person for the honour.

That D.L. should have such a love of the history of this county is the more surprising when it is realised he is not a native of it, that his roots are in West Wales and it was not until 1928 that he commenced what has become his life's work in this county.

Few people know the extent of his interests and in any activity connected with life in rural Monmouthshire D.L. is certainly to be found, advising and leading, whilst his interest in the amateur drama movement and in social work amongst the elderly occupies much of his time. Much has been written about D.L. by these other organisations but we, in the Local History Council, will miss his counsel in our meetings, his willingness to perform duties which others shirked (who will not remember the amiable master of ceremonies and toastmaster at our more convivial functions ?) and his ability to open the proverbial closed door.

In his retirement we hope we shall still see much of him for his interests have been too genuine to be artificially curtailed and we offer our best wishes to him and to his wife and hope that he will now find time to indulge his hobbies and to use the historian's "stout pair of boots" of which he frequently spoke.

W.H.B.

A NEW MONMOUTHSHIRE PROJECT FOR THE BOYS OF LATYMER UPPER SCHOOL

IN 1967 the boys of Latymer Upper School, King Street, London, W.6, undertook a study of the Monmouthshire/Brecon Canal. Extracts of their accounts of the project appeared in *Presenting Monmouthshire*, No. 24. Their leader, Mr. Keith Underwood, now writes: "It seems a long time since I last wrote in connection with our very enjoyable Canal project, and I do want to keep in touch since we are frequently in the County.

You undoubtedly read of our further exploits last year when we began making an "epic" film about Owain Glyndwr at Grosmont. At the moment we have reached the stage where the film is cut and stored ready for editing, a slow and difficult business but well worthwhile. Filming has almost ended save for credits etc., and we shall shortly be starting on the sound track. Eventually, when it is all ready, we shall show it to the villagers of Grosmont and perhaps elsewhere in the County, though of course we shall have to consider the cost of such a tour since we have already exceeded our budget.

The story really concerns Owain and his English adversary, Harry of Monmouth, and we are trying to contrast the two characters.

After the interest shown by your readers in our first project, I thought they would be equally desirous of learning of our new Monmouthshire exercise".

POOR LAW HISTORY IN MONMOUTHSHIRE SINCE 1834

BY D. B. HUGHES, M.A. (Wales)

THE FORMATION OF THE UNIONS

(Mr. D. B. Hughes, Principal Lecturer in History at Caerleon College of Education, has written a dissertation of considerable length on the education of pauper children in Monmouthshire from the time of the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834 until 1929 when, by the Local Government Act, County Councils and County Boroughs received the duties, powers and assets of the Poor Law Unions brought into existence by the 1834 Act.

The first chapter of Mr. Hughes's work entitled "The Formation of the Unions" appears here. It is hoped to publish the remaining chapters in later issues of the Journal.—Ed.)

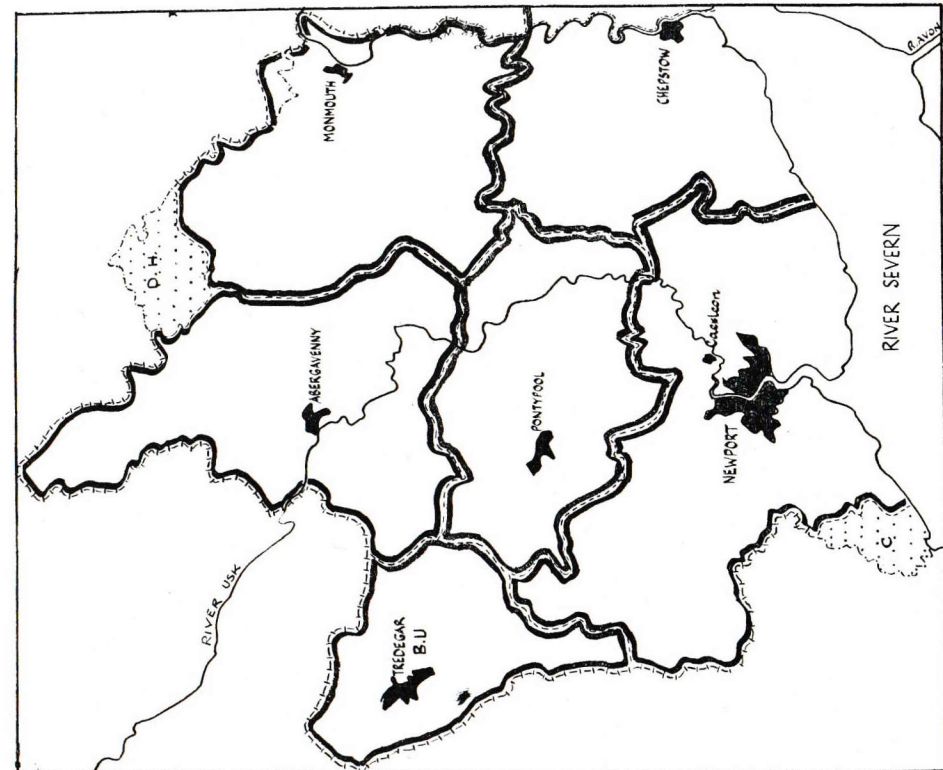
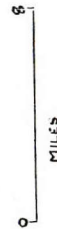
The problem of poverty was not unknown before the period under review. The medieval world offered certain remedies for it and the Elizabethan legislation prescribed others. But no century, prior to the eighteenth, had to contend with the relief of poverty against the same bewildering background of industrial and agrarian change. The Berkshire magistrates who met at Speenhamland on the outskirts of Newbury little thought that they would be introducing a system of poor relief which would obtain until the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. In 1795 they agreed to supplement the wages of the needy poor with

KEY

	Union Boundary
	Union and County Boundary
	County Boundary, not forming part of Union Boundary
	Areas of Monmouthshire outside the County's Union
	Cardiff Union
	Dore, Hereford
	Union Workhouse
	Workhouse of Bedwellty Union Industrial School

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 Workhouse of Bedwellty Union
 Industrial School

SCALE



THE POOR LAW UNIONS IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

allowances from the poor rate, such allowances varying with the price of bread and size of family. What was a temporary and local expedient, became a permanent system operating with varying degrees of inefficiency and corruption from county to county.

A study of the existing system in Monmouthshire before the implementation of the 1834 legislation is made difficult by the lack of original material. There exists certain material relating to the borough of Newport in the Vestry Minute Books and the Overseers' Accounts, but for the rest of the county no such documents exist.* One has to rely on correspondence between the clerks of the Guardians and the Poor Law Commissioners, and on the minute books after the unions were formed in 1836. A tidying up process is reflected in the Guardians' deliberations and from this one may build a picture of what could well have existed before 1836.

The Newport Vestry Minute Books and Overseers' Accounts give evidence of a ramshackle, haphazard system: vestry meetings were held in private dwelling houses and inns, the overseers were unreliable and paid officials and regular inspection of accounts were arranged very tardily.¹ The work undertaken by such organisation was the distribution of outdoor relief, some grudging attention to the needs of pauper children and the provision of poorhouses.² These sources show that pauper children were lodged from a very early date with other paupers. In August 1789 the overseers were to "provide Two shirts and other necessaries toward *cloathing* the three children under the care of Ann Matthews (widow)". A whole family was lodged with Joan Williams, a widow in Mill Street in 1800 (May 19th). A girl was placed in a house in 1805, the recipient "to cloath, Keep and Maintain from the present Date till she shall attain to the Age of fourteen years". These unfortunates were also apprenticed to trades people. In 1776 (May 15th) it was agreed that the "two sons of Late Thos. Jones cord winder be putt apprentices as the Law *directs* and they are to be cloath'd with one hat each, one pair of shoes each, one outside and one inside garment, 2 shirts, 2 prs of stockings, 2 Handkerchiefs with other necessaries for each person as above". In 1791 "a poor child of the town" was apprenticed to a hoop maker in Caerleon; several other cases are recorded. Before the children were apprenticed they were "inspected and examined whether they are fit to be placed out Apprentices" (1799 Dec.) and by 1801 (May 29th) the problem had so grown that the overseers were instructed to prepare a list of poor children in receipt of relief "as are eligible to be put out parish apprentices". These, then, were the pauper children under the control of the parish who received maintenance and some sort of industrial instruction outside the poorhouse. The sort of moral atmosphere into which they came into contact was highly dubious, for the overseers in 1794 (Sept. 15th) were instructed to inspect houses "suspected of harbouring men or women of *Ill Fame* to cause such persons to be brought before the magistrate to prove their settlement".³

* In view of certain recent accessions to the County Record Office, this statement is no longer true. But it is unlikely that the material in these documents would substantially modify the general picture.

The condition of pauper children worsens the further one penetrates the interior of the poorhouses themselves. That there were poorhouses in existence scattered throughout the parishes of the county is clear from the Minute Books of the Guardians of the various unions. In the Newport union certain parishes, independently responsible for the relief of poverty prior to the new act, applied for permission to the Board of Guardians to sell certain properties, the proceeds from such sale to be credited to their accounts with the treasurer of the union. The rate-payers of Bassaleg in 1838 and those of Rogerstone, Bedwas and Mynnyddislwyn in 1839 wished to sell certain poorhouses.⁴ George Clive, the Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, who visited Monmouthshire in June 1836 described the state of such houses: "In only one or two of these houses is there any attempt at a dietary or employment in none, classification, in the generality every kind of abuse. In Monythusloine (Mynyddislwyn) poorhouse the contractor keeps a shop; different families have apartments in the house; the whole is filthy to the last degree. In one room was a woman who has had nine bastard children, the last confessedly born in the house; and from the time she has been resident there doubtless many more".⁵ It is likely that the contractor mentioned was one Roberts, who after being made Relieving Officer for the northern district of the union (in which Mynnyddislwyn lay) was required by the Board of Guardians to give up his beer shop.⁶ He did so, but continued to be the cause of many complaints and was dismissed by the Guardians in December 1841. Clive went on to describe the Newport poorhouse: "The system is much the same in the Newport poorhouse, though no shop is kept; the inmates going in and out for work or pleasure; the whole being enlivened by a lunatic in rags who was running about where he pleased".⁷ From a study of the Minute Books of the unions in the period 1836—1838, a similar pattern emerges for the rest of the county; ignorance, corruption, inefficiency, child neglect—all are marked and more pronounced the further one studies the rural parishes. The Newport system may have been haphazard; in most other parts of the county it was almost non-existent.

In the Abergavenny union a committee of the Guardians was appointed in 1836 (June 23rd) to make the existing poorhouses efficient. These existed in the parishes of Aberystwith, Bedwellty and in Abergavenny itself. A John Reynolds who combined the duties of Relieving Officer for the Abergavenny district with Superintendent of the Abergavenny poorhouse in 1836, was dismissed in 1843 for complete mismanagement of the new work-house when it was built. Either the increased task was too difficult or his inefficiency was now more obvious. Children were always a burden; sometimes they were passed from Abergavenny to the more industrial parish of Bedwellty in the hope of work being found or of their being apprenticed out of the poorhouse.⁸

The Chepstow union likewise contained poorhouses. The "Monmouthshire Merlin" advertised for tenders for supplies to the "various poor houses" in 1837.⁹ They contained children, for when scarlet fever broke out in the Mathern poorhouse in 1838, it was resolved that the children were to be moved to the Chepstow poorhouse.¹⁰

The Monmouth union was criticised by Clive in the Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission : "In many cases I find the overseers entirely ignorant of the concerns of the parish. In Skeafrieth (Skenfrieth in the Monmouth union) the wife and servants of the overseer did not know that he was in office". He continued : "Mr. Harper Assistant overseer for Dixton (also in the Monmouth union) and contractor for Llantilio Cresseny states 'the effect of the old law upon the labouring classes here has been very bad. When they received their relief as they generally did in money it was in nine cases out of ten spent in the beer shops !'".¹¹

In the Pontypool union there were poorhouses in Goytre, Panteg and Pontypool. The Goytre parish wished to withdraw entirely from the new system, arguing that the poor of the parish were contented and happy and that the curate attended to their religious instruction. The reply of the Poor Law Commission on June 30th 1836 was that this was quite contrary to the law, and Clive, writing from Cardiff in the July, explained that, "the stuff from the recusant parish Goytree proceeded from an ass of a navy captain not even a rate payer" but who had exercised some influence over the overseer.¹² The Panteg poorhouse had an unsatisfactory history, certain parishes being instructed by the Guardians to terminate contracts with the keeper Ann Davies, "in consequence of the conduct" of this woman ; her conduct is not specified.¹³ The man Bowyer, who succeeded her in the August was also the Relieving Officer for Panteg and, after a series of complaints, was dismissed from the office of Relieving Officer in April 1842.¹⁴

In view of the haphazard, inefficient and corrupt manner in which the pre 1834 poor law operated in Monmouthshire, statistics relating to the number of pauper children are unreliable and almost non-existent, as they are for any other class of pauper relieved. The Commissioners complained in their First Annual Report of 1835 : "A considerable number of the present parish officers being unlettered men, their Returns are, as might be expected, extensively defective".¹⁵ Yet from Clive's description of poorhouses, from the mention of certain cases scattered throughout the Newport Vestry Minute Books and from the earlier records of the Boards of Guardians, one suspects the pathetic existence of an increasing number of orphans, illegitimates, and deserted children, whose only education under such conditions was a positive encouragement to join the pauper host as its youngest recruits. The effect of the system upon them is described in the Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission 1838 : "They rarely remained long with their employer, but returned to the workhouse which, so far from being to them an object of dislike, was regarded as their home and which they looked forward to as the ultimate asylum of their old age".¹⁶

The 1834 legislation was designed to extinguish the Speenhamland system and to remedy such defects as described in Monmouthshire. A central authority consisting of three commissioners and a paid secretary was set up by the Act and, throughout the country, parishes were grouped into unions, each union to come under the control of Boards of Guardians consisting of ex officio and elected members.¹⁷

In Monmouthshire five unions were formed in 1836 ; Abergavenny (April 27th), Chepstow (April 10th), Monmouth (June 5th), Newport (July 5th) and Pontypool (April 24th).¹⁸ In the May of 1848, Graves the Poor Law Inspector met the Abergavenny Board of Guardians "on the subject of the revision of the union and lengthened discussion arose on the expediency of separating the parishes of Aberystruth and Bedwellty from the rest of the union". In spite of the unanimous rejection of this plan by the Guardians, the extraction from the Abergavenny union of these two very populous parishes was effected and the Bedwellty union thereby made in February 1849.¹⁹ The Commissioners described the manner in which they created the unions : "The limits of the unions which we have found most convenient are those of a circle, taking a market town as centre and comprehending those surrounding parishes whose inhabitants are accustomed to resort to in the same market. This arrangement had been found highly convenient for the weekly attendance of the parish officers and some portion of the guardians".²⁰

A total reading of the Guardians' minute books and other local sources²¹ clearly indicates an interplay between the socio-economic background and the several Boards ; each union came to possess a distinctive personality which in turn affected its treatment of pauper children.

The Abergavenny union, especially after its division in 1849, led a placid existence, undisturbed by Chartist riots, largely unaffected by cholera outbreaks and remained quietly indifferent to the question of instructing its children.²² Chepstow, formerly an important port, became the centre of a union whose records became lively from an educational point of view only when negotiations began with the local School Board in 1880.²³ The Monmouth union, like the Abergavenny union displayed a certain rustic inertia, rejecting the idea of a separate industrial school in 1848 and stubbornly refusing to appoint a male instructor until 1863.²⁴

Newport, Pontypool and Bedwellty may be regarded as the industrial unions. The town of Newport was plagued by Irish immigrants as well as attracting the malcontents of the Welsh Valleys.²⁵ The Pontypool union was disturbed by the Chartist riots and also witnessed the troubled growth of new industry.²⁶ The Bedwellty union was always especially sensitive to the industrial fluctuations which lay at the source of its financial crisis in 1926.²⁷ The workhouse itself was embedded in a socially pathological area and the Guardians seemed unable to derive benefit from the fourteen years' history of the other established union workhouses.

These, then, were the six unions in Monmouthshire, each with its own chequered history. In the years before the formation of School Boards and County Councils and Boroughs, these unions discharged some of the duties of a local education authority, because a duty was laid upon them to provide instruction for pauper children.

¹ Newport Vestry Minute Books. M.160. 352.9. 1773-96 and 1799-1812: Entries for April 8th 1790, May 2nd 1801, March 15th 1810.

² Newport Overseers' Accounts f M.160. 352.1. 1709-1801.

- ³ Newport Vestry Minute Book; dates specified.
⁴ Minute Books. CSWBG. Newport Union. Dec. 15th 1838, Feb. 6th 1839, July 13th 1839, Nov. 23rd 1839.
⁵ Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission 1836 Appendix "B".
⁶ Minute Books, Newport Union. Aug. 13th 1836.
⁷ Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission 1836. Appendix "B".
⁸ Minute Books, Abergavenny Union, entires for August 4th 1836, July 21st 1836, May 4th 1843, Sept. 18th 1836.
⁹ "Monmouthshire Merlin" (in Newport Borough Library) Sept. 15th 1837.
¹⁰ Minute Books. Cepstow Union. April 14th 1838.
¹¹ Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission 1836.
¹² Correspondence from Unions to the Poor Law Commission. Public Record Office. M.H.12. 8152.
¹³ Minute Books, Pontypool Union, July 30th 1836.
¹⁴ Minute Books, Pontypool Union, April 28th 1842.
¹⁵ First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission 1835, p. 43.
¹⁶ Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission 1838, p. 89.
¹⁷ 4 & 5 William IV cap. 76.
¹⁸ Union Averages 1854-96. Monmouthshire County Record Office.
¹⁹ Union Averages 1854-1896. February 24th 1849.
²⁰ First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commission, 1835, p.19.
²¹ This is a highly compressed paragraph: the "inter-play" is a theme in itself as is also a study of disputed elections to the Boards of Guardians with their related policy changes.
²² Minute Books, Abergavenny Union. February 4th 1841.
²³ Minute Books, Chepstow Union. September 11th 1880.
²⁴ Minute Books, Monmouth Union. October 25th 1848, February 4th 1863.
²⁵ Minute Books, Newport Union. June 23rd and December 15th 1849. March 20th 1847.
²⁶ Minute Books, Pontypool Union. February 18th 1841, Williams, D. 1950. A History of Modern Wales. London. Murray. (Chapter 15). Pritchard, A. J. 1957. Griffithstown, Pontypool. Griffin Press.
²⁷ Minute Books, Bedwellty Union. 1926-7. August 22nd 1854. September 13th 1866.

THE University College, Cardiff, Department of Extra-Mural Studies is organising the eighth Aberystwyth Summer School in Local History and Industrial Archaeology from 18th to 23rd August, 1969. Interested readers should get into immediate touch with the Director, Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, 40 Park Place, Cardiff.

A very limited number of back numbers of "Presenting Monmouthshire" is available on application to the Secretary.

THE Local History Council is indebted to Mr. R. Nichols of Pontypool through whose untiring efforts the circulation of PRESENTING MONMOUTHSHIRE has been greatly increased in the Eastern Valley of Monmouthshire.

An Extract from :

INDUSTRIAL CHANGES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN TWENTIETH CENTURY MONMOUTHSHIRE

BY H. J. JAMES

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (continued from No. 26)

(Writing from the British Embassy, Bonn, Mr. R. Hanbury-Tenison comments on a matter of fact in the extract from Mr. James's work in No. 26 as follows:

"I hope Mr. James will not take it amiss if I correct one statement in his most interesting article in your Autumn issue—No. 26. The Richard Hanbury who invited Edward Allgood (the 'father' of Pontypool Japan) to come to Pontypool, lived in the time of King Charles II and was the great-grand-nephew of the Richard Hanbury who founded the Pontypool ironworks in the sixteenth century".—Editor).

Old Ironworks and Forges

From the sixteenth century onwards there are references to scattered ironworks in South Wales, quite a few in Monmouthshire. Mr. Arthur Clarke, in his Story of Monmouthshire, refers to forges that were in existence since the year 1425. It reads as follows :

"Pontypool claims to be the home of the Welsh iron industry and can point to continuous existence of forges in the town since the year 1452, when David Graunt and his cousin Jevan, both described as being of 'Trevthin', were stated to be engaged in the manufacture of iron in the neighbourhood of Pontypool.

They operated small bloomery forges on the banks of the Afon Lwyd and from the nature of their occupation were known as Gof (i.e. smith). Later changed to Gough and used as a surname".

Another old forge, sometimes said to be one of the oldest in the county and probably South Wales, was the Monmouth Forge which John Lloyd, author of an early history of Old South Wales Ironworks, was inclined to think was built even before the New Wear Forge which it is known was erected as far back as 1684. This old iron forge is referred to in an old book which John Lloyd refers to as "Bamforth's" Old Account Book ; from it he quotes that :

"... there had been a wear across the Wye at this point time out of mind, and also an iron forge standing near the same, but that the wear had been thrown down by rioters, coming from Herefordshire and the Forest of Dean in 1587 or 1588". Continuing, he says, "Mr. George White of the Monmouth Forge obtained a lease from the Earl of Kent and proceeded with one, Anthony Grub, in 1684, to erect a forge or iron mill on the old foundation.

The works were erected and successfully carried on for many years by Mr. George White or Father White as he was known".

In 1695, when the Wye and Luggs Navigation Act was passed these works were described in an old paper as follows "... the forge is one of the best in England, having two hammers, and three Chaferies or Fineries, which can work in the driest time of summer".

The Trostre Forge is also considered one of the oldest in the county. It was placed on the Usk, at a convenient spot to obtain the water power of the full stream of the Usk. It was part of the family property of the Fludyer family. It has been recorded that though the old corn mill and weir, lower down the river at Trostre, formerly belonging to the Priory of Usk, and subsequently the Fludyer family, intercepted with its cruives or boxes most of the salmon ascending the Usk, quite a few reached the forge weir.

Yet another old forge of ancient date was the Llangrwyney Forge situated on the double-headed Grwyney brook, which rises in the Black Mountains on the borders of Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, and flows into the Usk on its left bank, a mile or two below Crickhowell.

The forge was undoubtedly placed on the stream for its abundant water power, and the store of wood for charcoal in the neighbourhood, the forge owners becoming good customers of the country gentlemen for their smaller and otherwise unsaleable wood.

Walter Watkins is the first recorded owner of this old forge and, while working here, he also built little kilns in Ebbw Vale where, in a somewhat primitive way, smelt iron ore for working into bars and merchant iron at his Llangrwyney forge. To him is generally accredited the founding of the Ebbw Vale iron industry.

There also existed in the seventeenth century an old furnace in the Sirhowy Valley a few miles below Tredegar, known as Pontygwaith yr Haiarn. The Powell brothers in their history of Tredegar quote a noted Welsh historian, the Rev. R. Ellis (Cynddelw) as follows :

“ . . . many years ago the traditions of the old inhabitants fixed the earliest date of working there as at the close of the seventeenth century, probably about 1690. It was from here that in after time the furnaces of Llanelly (Brecs.), and the small works at Brecon, were supplied by iron ore. The impression is that the works were carried on in a primitive way until about 1738, when two gentlemen from Brittany came upon the scene and erected the furnace. It was blown by hand bellows, and charcoal was the fuel used. The smelted iron was manufactured into saucepans, kettles, and small agricultural implements. The size and form of the furnace resembled a limekiln. It appears to have paid its way for a few years until in 1745, the two gentlemen returned to their home in Brittany”.

The ironstone used at this old furnace at one period was supplied from the levels, and, in all probability, from “patches” at Nantybwhc and further west at Bryn Oer in Rhymney.

At this early date there were mineral activities also taking place on the southern crop, in the Machen area. The exact date of the starting of the Machen forges is uncertain but there are references to them in the old registers relating to the parish of Machen. The earliest of these are dated 1684 and 1698, which records that a Phillip and Richard Cosslett were workers in iron in the parish at that time.

These old furnaces in Elizabethan times were dotted over the country, for Dud Dudley in his *Metallum Martes* published in 1615, the 12th

year of James I, says there were three hundred blast furnaces in the whole of the country, Wales being named as using charcoal fuel.

Many attempts were then being made to substitute coal for wood, and several patents were granted, but none succeeded until Dudley, in 1619, manufactured three tons of iron per furnace per week.

The furnaces at this time were very small, two to three tons per day of iron been produced, and were only practicable in situations which had an abundant supply of water. They have been described as about eight or nine feet high, and generally built against or into a hillside, in order that the charges could be wheeled direct in barrows to the top and near a stream or river, so that the bellows could be worked by means of a water-wheel.

Water and wood together with ironstone were thus, up to the middle of the eighteenth century, the deciding factors in the location of the widely dispersed ironworks of Great Britain. In Monmouthshire, this is indicated by the wording of a poster advertising, in 1821, the sale of the Tintern Abbey Works. It reads as follows :

*“ . . . a stream of water ; the River Wye affording water carriage to and from all parts of England . . . unlimited and undisturbed supply of charcoal attached to the works and at command from other sources. Lancashire ore brought to the spot by water. Experienced workmen attached to their native spot are in abundance at reasonable wages”.

The Substitute of Coal for Charcoal for Iron Smelting

The iron industry was encountering difficulties in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and the shortage of fuel began driving the English ironmasters to woodland districts where charcoal burners could supply their needs.

The future was regarded with some apprehension ; the industry was giving signs of decline. Although many attempts were made in the seventeenth century to find a substitute for charcoal, they met with no practical success. Early in the eighteenth century, however, Abraham Darby of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, discovered that a suitable fuel could be obtained by coking coal. The process made slow progress elsewhere partly because it depended on the coking quality of the coal used.

It was against this background that developments along the northern outcrop began, starting in the Merthyr area and extending eastwards as far as Blaenafon, a distance of about twenty miles. While every credit should be given to the energy and resource displayed by the pioneers, it must be stressed that they were able to take advantage of favourable conditions. There was the coking process which they introduced from Shropshire, bringing iron and coal into relation, itself a major revolution in industrial development. Along the north-eastern edge of the South Wales Coalfield there was easy access to abundant quantities of ironstone, coal and limestone. With the adoption of Henry Cort's new method of “puddling”, by which it was possible to produce malleable iron, and, the installation of Boulton and

* (The Cyfarthfa Deeds . . . MSS., Box X National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.)

Watt steam engines, it was soon possible to increase both the quality and the quantity of output.

The demand for iron products at first was for war purposes and then followed the rapidly growing industries of Lancashire, the Midlands and elsewhere, which soon increased their demand for iron products. By 1815 South Wales was contributing about one-third of the total production of iron in the United Kingdom.

Development of Ironworks

The Origin in the Merthyr Locality

The early ironmasters on the northern fringe of the coalfield were helped considerably in their ventures by the exceedingly favourable leases they obtained.

The first furnace to be built in the area was that of Dowlais, the Dowlais Co. having acquired rights to much of the common or waste land of Pantywaun and Toryvan, adjoining the Dowlais brook and east of the River Taff and precisely where river first crosses the coal-measures. The rights were obtained for less than £70 and a furnace was erected in 1757. The company was, therefore, the first to develop the dormant resources of the northern outcrop and to initiate the movement of capital and labour, which was to transform completely the physical, economic and cultural landscape of the region from Merthyr Tydfil to Abergavenny.

The second works to be established was that at Cyfarthfa, where Anthony Bacon of London and William Brownrigg of Whitehaven, Cumberland, had in 1765, obtained from Lord Talbot and Michael Richards, the lease of approximately 4,000 acres of virgin mineral land on the west side of the Taff, for 99 years at a fixed rent of £100 per year. Again the site was near the point where the Taff first begins to cross the coal measures.

The Plymouth property south-west of the Dowlais Companies land on the east side of the Taff and again on the coal measures, was first leased, in 1763, to Isaac Wilkinson and John Guest for 99 years, at a yearly rent of £60, but apparently the partners did not overcome the difficulty of obtaining possession of the lands as long leasehold tenants, and so assigned in 1778, all their interests to Anthony Bacon of Cyfarthfa, who erected the first Plymouth furnace. On Bacon's death in 1786, the works were leased to Richard Hill for 15 years, the rent being £650 plus a further £268 7s. rental towards leaseholders. Thus was started the famous Hill Plymouth Company.

By 1765, the ironmasters concerned with the first three enterprises in the Merthyr locality had acquired the greater part of the more accessible mineral bearing land in the Upper Taff Valley, where the rivers began to cross the coal measures, while the Dowlais Company had also the mineral rights of much land in the Rhymney Valley, in Monmouthshire.

The fourth enterprise in the Taff Valley started in 1784 when Francis Homfrey, of Worcester, who had leased in 1782 a cannon boring mill, air furnace and forges for 50 years from Anthony Bacon, the lease having a proviso that Homfrey would not set up any blast furnace without Bacon's consent. However, Homfrey disposed of this lease in

1784 to a Mr. Tanner of Monmouth, and he in turn to Richard Crawshay.

Thus, Homfrey was free to erect a new ironworks. Accordingly, in 1784, his two sons, Jeremiah and Samuel, took a lease of ore under Pwllwhead at a royalty of 1/- per ton, the coal having been leased to Guest of Dowlais. This area was on the banks of the Dowlais stream, between the Dowlais works and the Taff. Further small properties were obtained and the building of the Penydarren Works began, while in 1786 a lease of veins of coal on the left bank of the Dowlais stream was obtained from the Dowlais Company.

These four companies, Dowlais, Cyfarthfa, Plymouth, and Penydarren had therefore, by 1786, practically all the mineral rights in the upper Taff Valley on the exposed coal measures. Part of the Rhymney Valley was also leased to members of the Dowlais Company, and works had also been established in the upper parts of the Sirhowy and Ebbw Fawr valleys.

Extension of Ironworks Development into Monmouthshire

In the next fourteen years, to the year 1800, ironworks became established in the remaining valleys which commenced on the northern outcrop, at Sirhowy, Tredegar, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale, Nantyglo, Clydach and Blaenafon. In less than thirty years after the first lease was granted to the Dowlais Company, six ironworks were established in the valley heads, as follows :

Sirhowy in the Sirhowy Valley in 1789.

Tredegar in the Sirhowy Valley in 1789.

Beaufort in the Ebbw Fawr Valley in 1779.

Ebbw Vale in the Ebbw Fawr Valley in 1789.

Nantyglo in the Ebbw Fach Valley in 1795.

Blaenafon in the Eastern Valley in 1789.

They were sited near to the south flowing streams where they begin their journey across the coal measures.

The extension of the development into Monmouthshire appears to indicate that the first works in the Merthyr locality had achieved success in the use of the new fuel, coal, while the application of steam for bellows, first used by Wilkinson in 1776, and the demand for iron for war and other purposes, were further incentives to development.

Monmouthshire's first erection along the northern crop was at Beaufort, for in the year 1779 Mr. Edward Kendall of Drayton, Shropshire, in partnership with other relatives, leased land for 99 years from the Duke of Beaufort, in the parishes of Llangattock and Llanelly (Brecs.), and in the upper Ebbw Fawr Valley they set up ironworks, and called the place Beaufort. In 1798, a second furnace was built, and soon afterwards a forge. At capacity some 250 men were employed ; an average of 300 tons of ore was recovered weekly from the "patches" which was smelted and pig iron produced.

It was the custom at these works to produce what was called half-blooms, which were sold to Mr. Butler, of Rochester Mill, and there, according to Jones in his Breconshire History, worked into tinplate iron, and a good trade was carried on.

Beaufort Works at a later date were bought by the Crawshay brothers of Nantyglo and worked as one concern with the Nantyglo Works.

The next ironworks to develop was at Sirhowy, where in 1789, J. Sealey and B. Hudson, grocers, teamen and partners of London, T. Atkinson, merchant, Skipton, and W. Barrow, grocer and teaman, London, leased land in the upper Sirhowy Valley for 40 years at a yearly rent of £134 9s. Mr. Atkinson's brother-in-law joined him from Westmoreland, and eventually the works were transferred to Mr. Monkhouse and a Mr. Fothergill, from the Forest of Dean. Under their management the works prospered and extended. A larger furnace was erected in 1797 with an engine from Staffordshire installed to "assist" the water-wheel. These contrivances together with two large hand bellows enabled the rate of production of each furnace to be increased to 15 to 20 tons per week.

They also started mining operations and very soon the population increased rapidly.

It has been previously mentioned that iron smelting was started in a primitive way in Ebbw Vale in 1786 by Walter Watkins of Llan-grwyney. Not until J. Homfrey came upon the scene in 1789, however, did any degree of development take place. Homfrey, when Watkins retired in 1791, entered into partnership with Harford, Partridge & Co., merchant bankers of Bristol, for the purpose of making pig iron at a "certain furnace and works called Ebbw Vale". Thus the Ebbw Vale works became established in 1791, approximately a mile below the Beaufort works and near the outcrop. In this connection John Lloyd quotes an old agreement between Jeremiah Homfrey and Messrs. Harford, Partridge & Co., dated the 21st April 1791, which, in the light of the present day activities at Ebbw Vale, Llanwern and Panteg, makes interesting reading. It reads thus :

On the 21st April, 1791, between Jeremiah Homfrey of the one part, and Messrs. Harford, Partridge & Co. of the other part, whereby it was agreed :

"That the parties should enter into Co-partnership and joint dealings in the making of pig iron at a certain furnace and works, called Ebbw Vale, in the parish of Aberstruth, and carrying on the business of Ironmasters there, and that Jeremiah Homfrey was to have one-third share, and the Messrs. Harford, Partridge & Co. to have two-thirds share.

That the said Jeremiah Homfrey should, out of his share of the profits, with his present advance, make one-third of the capital of £7,000, and shall not withdraw any sum meantime from the concern, except his salary. The shares to be as follows:

Jeremiah Homfrey	2,333 6s. 8d.
Harford, Partridge & Co.	4,666 13s. 4d.
	<u>£7,000 0s. 0d.</u>

also, that Jeremiah Homfrey should reside on the premises in the house where he now does, taking upon himself the superintendance of the works, at a salary of £100 a year, with the privilege of a house and firing, and in lieu of other charges, such

as treating people who may come on business, and the buying and keeping of horses, cows, and all other charges, a further sum of £50 per annum to continue unless he is sooner called to management of Penydarren Works by the death of his brother, Mr. Samuel Homfrey. If he thinks prudent at any time to quit the superintendance, the salary as managing partner shall then cease, and that the said Jeremiah Homfrey should be treasurer and cashier until otherwise agreed".

This partnership was carried on until 1796, when it was dissolved and Messrs. Harford, Partridge & Co., who also were interested in the Nantyglo Works at this time, and other works near Machen, carried on. They sunk their first coal pit early in the nineteenth century, and purchased the Sirhowy blast furnaces and collieries in 1818. It was also somewhere about this time that the forge and mills at Ebbw Vale were built, and by 1830 three blast furnaces and mills were in operation, and considerable trade done in bar iron.

In 1829 rails were rolled in the works for the famous Stockton and Darlington Railway.

Messrs. Harford failed as a business concern at Ebbw Vale in 1842 and the works were carried on by trustees until 1844.

In 1844 the works were bought by Messrs. Darby, the partners being Abraham Darby, Alfred Darby, Henry Dickenson, Francis Tothill, Thomas Brown, Joseph Robinson, trading as the Ebbw Vale Company, with Mr. Thomas Brown acting as managing partner. The Darbys were the owners of the famous works at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, and the partners in the Ebbw Vale Company were all Shropshire men.

Victoria works and collieries were bought by the Ebbw Vale Company in 1848, consisting of four blast furnaces, forges and mills. These works were some two miles south of Ebbw Vale and had been started in 1836 by a joint stock company who held a lease from Sir Benjamin Hall, who had come into the Abercarn property as a present from his father-in-law, Richard Crawshay of Cyfarthfa. The company failed and the works reverted to Sir Benjamin Hall who sold them to the Ebbw Vale Company.

Abersychan Works, consisting of six blast furnaces, collieries and forges and mills, were bought by the Ebbw Vale Company in 1852, and in 1855, collieries in Pontypool with three blast furnaces and three tin-plate works.

In 1864 they sold the works and a new company, the Ebbw Vale Steel, Iron and Coal Company came into being who operated these works until the 1930s, when they were taken over by the present owners, Messrs. Richard Thomas and Baldwin.

The Blaenafon Works started in 1789 in the Afon Lwyd Valley, where the river crosses the coal seams. The Blaenafon property was obtained by a lease dated 30th November 1789 from the Earl of Abergavenny to Thomas Hill, T. Hopkins and Benjamin Pratt, who traded as Hill & Co. The property consisted of the mines and minerals of about 12,000 acres of mountainous land in the parishes of Aberstruth, Trevethin, Llanhilleth, Goytre, Llanover, Llanfoist and Llanwenarth. It was popularly known as "Lord Abergavenny's hill

country". The lease was for 21 years at a yearly rental of £1,300 and no royalties. This is significant because it indicates that landlords were becoming aware of the mineral value of their land ; in the 24 years since 1765, when Anthony Bacon secured a lease of 4,000 acres from Lord Talbot of virgin mineral land in the Taff Valley around Merthyr for a fixed rent of £100 per year.

This too, surely, leaves no doubt as to the success attained by the enterprises in the intervening years.

In the formation of the Monmouthshire Canal to Pontnewynydd, and the extension of the tram-road up the eastern valley to the works at Blaenafon, all the partners gave large moneyed assistance together with Mr. Edward Kendall of the Beaufort Company, who was made chairman of the canal company.

In the year 1802 Blaenafon sent down to Newport by canal, 1,091 tons of iron, which by 1810 had increased to 12,254 tons.

The special value of the Blaenafon ore had, as previously mentioned, been appreciated by Richard Hanbury over 230 years earlier, and its reputation was established. It is worthy of note, however, that native ore was worked at Blaenafon by cold blast at one furnace later than any other part of Wales. Also in this connection relating to iron smelting of this period, the words of Mushet, one of the ablest metallurgists of the day, must be recorded, for he said that " . . . at Blaenafon for months together furnaces have been known to carry double the weight of 'mine' of the coke consumed, while some of the other good quality coals of South and North Wales carry a weight of ironstone from 50 to 75 per cent more than the weight of the coke".

When the Blaenafon Company had a forge at Garnddyris they made a tramroad and inclined plane down the steep side of the Bloreng Mountain, delivering the iron manufactured at this forge on the Brecon and Abergavenny Canal wharf at Llanfoist.

The company was made a public company of shareholders in 1836/7.

The vast tract of land granted the Blaenafon partners, consisting of some 12,000 acres, was more than they required for the development of the Blaenafon works so they proceeded to detach the Nantyglo portion, and to this end they invited the assistance of Harford, Partridge & Co., merchant bankers of Bristol, who became their partners in a new venture at Nantyglo.

The Nantyglo works were completed by 1795, consisting of two furnaces, several forges and the necessary buildings and machinery for the smelting and forging of iron. They never worked successfully under this management, due it seems, to disagreements between the Blaenafon partners and the Bristol firm, and by the year 1811, when Joseph Bailey and Matthew Wayne arrived on the scene, they were ready to sub-let them.

Joseph and Crawshay Bailey were the nephews of Richard Crawshay of Cyfarthfa fame, the sons of his sister. They were both trained in early iron smelting and the administration of, for that day, a large and extensive ironworks. On the death of his uncle, with the money he left him and with the purpose of finding new worlds to conquer and, possibly fired with the ambition to own a works of his own, Joseph,

accompanied by one of his uncle's agents, Matthew Wayne, they found their way across the mountains from Merthyr to Nantyglo, at an opportune time to make an offer to lease the works from Hill & Co.

Under the management of the Bailey brothers the ironworks flourished and continued to operate successfully until the year 1871, when they were sold to the Nantyglo & Blaina Ironworks Co. Ltd., for £300,000.

These works had been brought to such a point of profitability by the Baileys that they were able by 1833 to buy the adjoining works and collieries of Edward Kendall & Co. at Beaufort for £45,000.

Nantyglo and Beaufort were worked as one concern from that year forward ; pig iron from both sets of furnaces was rolled into rails at Nantyglo for the home and American markets. From a modest start in 1811 by sending down 77 tons of iron to Newport via the Monmouthshire Canal, they were able by 1840, to send down over 26,000 tons from Nantyglo and 10,500 tons from Beaufort by the same route.

Just as the Blaenafon partners found their 12,000 acres too big for their own use, so did Edward Kendall & Co. at Beaufort, and in 1800 sublet the Llanelli portion of their lease to Edward Frere and Thomas Cooke who proceeded to erect works in the Clydach Valley. Thus, the Clydach ironworks was founded.

We now find by the early years of the nineteenth century, the northern crop of the coalfield dotted with ironworks and activities in ore ("mine"), coal and limestone getting, for, in addition to the foregoing, works had started at Tredegar and Rhymney. The rate of development may be gauged from the following table, which shows a steady increase in iron output, in the number of furnaces and in the quantity transported by the canals and tramroads. These achievements were brought about despite topographical and climatic difficulties and of a dual system of transport.

Works	1796		1811		1825		Sent by Canal. Tons
	Furn-aces	Output Tons	Furn-aces	Sent by Canal. Tons	Furn-aces	Output Tons	
Bute & Rhymney	—	—	2	—	3	7,020	—
Tredegar	—	—	4	6,643	5	14,300	11,012
Ebbw Vale & Sirhowy	2	2,327	4	2,633	6	14,820	10,325
Beaufort	1	1,660	2	3,910	4	8,320	7,091
Nantyglo	—	—	2	77	5	16,900	16,536
Clydach	1	1,625	2	872	2	5,720	3,748
Blaenafon	3	4,318	5	12,337	5	14,560	9,043
Blaina	—	—	—	—	3	2,400	—
Coalbrookvale	—	—	—	—	2	5,200	—
TOTAL	7	9,930	21	26,472	35	89,240	57,755

Source: Scrivenor, Yearly Ouputs from Ironworks in Monmouthshire, with Tonnages sent by Canal, 1796/1825.

The tonnage of iron exported from the ports of Cardiff and Newport for the years, 1795-1796-1800-1801-1845 is shown in the following table :

	CARDIFF to Bridgwater tons	to Bristol tons	NEWPORT to Bridgwater tons	TOTAL tons
1795.	48	6	22	28
1796.	193½	1,020	988	2,008
1800.	1,852½	6,370	1,084	7,454
1801.	2,705	9,100	7,631	16,731
1845.	222,491	N.A.	N.A.	216,704

Source: Scrivenor's Iron Trade.

The progress over the years from 1802 to 1840 is shown in the following table of iron sent down the Monmouthshire Canal.

Tonnage of Iron Sent Down the Monmouthshire Canal 1801/1840.

According to Scrivenor's Iron Trade.

Year	Blaen- afon	Garndd- yryis	Nant-y- glo	Beau- fort	Cly- dach	Ebbw Vale	Tred- egar	TOTAL
1802	1,091	[nil.	nil.	nil.	nil.	nil.	nil.	1,091
3	2,079	nil.	nil.	1,612	447	1,653	nil.	5,791
4	8,490	[nil.	nil.	2,950	1,266	2,890	nil.	15,596
5	7,262	[nil.	nil.	4,605	1,455	1,012	956	15,290
6	6,594	nil.	nil.	3,989	1,599	3,252	3,124	18,558
7	6,042	nil.	nil.	3,947	1,196	2,209	4,138	17,532
8	7,163	nil.	nil.	4,004	963	1,553	5,529	19,212
9	9,848	nil.	nil.	3,566	1,336	786	9,105	24,641
1810	12,254	nil.	nil.	3,948	1,372	2,758	7,696	28,028
1	12,337	nil.	77	3,910	872	2,633	6,643	26,472
2	14,579	nil.	1,168	3,995	1,774	4,468	7,862	34,026
3	13,562	nil.	1,855	3,204	2,174	5,939	7,597	34,331
4	12,248	nil.	2,292	3,146	1,472	4,752	9,131	33,041
5	14,002	nil.	4,684	3,767	2,999	4,953	9,225	39,630
6	11,773	nil.	6,160	3,164	2,658	2,949	7,499	34,203
7	11,082	2,247	7,242	2,104	3,162	3,123	10,350	39,310
8	8,771	5,097	7,235	2,100	3,947	2,476	8,258	37,884
9	6,776	4,427	7,934	2,124	3,778	1,907	7,140	34,086
1820	9,423	2,769	8,826	3,132	3,397	3,605	8,211	39,363
1	8,973	2,838	10,460	2,962	3,876	6,041	9,923	45,073
2	5,831	3,476	10,906	3,786	4,225	5,960	8,102	42,286
3	10,745	4,370	12,723	4,269	3,651	8,613	9,903	54,274
4	11,265	4,517	15,134	5,347	3,617	10,101	11,444	61,425
5	9,043	4,218	16,536	7,091	3,748	10,325	11,012	61,973
6	8,059	2,145	11,512	6,028	3,660	10,297	10,962	52,663
7	8,255	2,446	18,059	5,914	4,107	14,403	13,837	67,021
8	9,766	2,645	19,032	5,701	5,183	15,479	14,341	72,147
9	10,124	2,242	17,433	6,896	6,967	16,959	13,349	73,970
1830	9,937	3,654	17,115	5,065	6,771	18,133	12,303	72,978
1	9,708	4,133	17,866	5,150	—	18,778	13,340	68,975
2	8,986	1,837	21,333	6,052	6,542	19,740	13,304	77,794
3	8,285	3,600	21,007	2,257	7,252	19,226	12,323	73,950
4	8,406	2,214	22,594	5,255	6,261	20,228	12,858	77,816
5	9,023	4,286	24,597	9,808	7,618	25,392	13,909	94,633
6	7,606	4,257	25,384	12,976	7,640	23,120	12,133	95,116
7	7,757	6,251	23,981	14,567	7,081	22,475	12,640	94,752
8	9,857	8,074	25,263	11,145	9,283	23,579	15,526	102,727
9	1,280	5,718	24,945	10,903	9,606	25,342	14,861	92,655
1840	1,269	7,347	26,662	10,505	10,038	24,199	15,288	95,308
Total	339,551	94,808	430,015	200,944	152,993	393,488	363,822	1,975,621

An Extract from :

DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD PASSENGER TRANSPORT IN NEWPORT AND MONMOUTHSHIRE

(continued from No. 26)

By E. A. THOMAS

NEWPORT

IN 1917, the population of Newport was 91,323 and their transport needs were provided by a system of electric tramways, which operated from Pillgwenlly to the borough boundaries on Caerleon Road and Chepstow Road, between Malpas Road and Risca Road borough boundaries and between the General Post Office and Lysaght's Works, Corporation Road.

The length of tramways was 7.32 miles double track, and 1.23 miles single track of steel grooved rails of 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge. The width of double track was 12 ft. 5 in. and single track 7 ft. 8½ in. The tramway track was laid in the middle of the road on a concrete bed, with granite or wood setts between the rails and an 18 in. margin on each side of the double or single track. The motive power for the tramcars was obtained from overhead trolley wires suspended 18 to 25 ft. above each track; the electric current generated at a power station, being conducted from the trolley wire to the tramcar motor by a swivelled trolley boom fixed on top of the tramcar.

Thirty tramcars with Westinghouse electric equipment and bodywork by George Milne, Ltd., were purchased at a cost of £14,424 10s., when the electric tramways superseded the horse tramways on Caerleon Road, Chepstow Road, Corporation Road and Pillgwenlly in April, 1903. An additional ten cars, fitted with special air and magnetic brakes, were bought when Stow Hill route was opened twelve months later. Three more of the same type car were put in service in 1909, to bring the total number of cars to 43. There was also a car specially adapted and used only for track repairs.

All the tramcars were open topped double deckers with seating for 55 persons—22 in the lower deck and 33 on the upper deck. In the lower deck, the seats were simple longitudinal wooden seats and on the upper deck, there were double garden seats on each side of a centre gangway. The upper deck seats were fitted with a hinged flap, so arranged that during wet weather, the passenger could reverse the seat to have the dry side uppermost.

The first world war, which in 1917 was in its third year created employment for large numbers of women on munitions work and the problem of transporting these women to and from the munitions factory at Alexandra Docks had become very acute. To ease the problem, it was suggested that trailers be attached to the tramcars, but the General Manager (Mr. N. J. Young) and the Borough Electrical and Tramways Engineer (Mr. A. Nichols Moore) were not in favour of the suggestion. In a joint report, they indicated that the electric motor on the tramcar was not powerful enough to haul a trailer, and the tram termini were unsuitable for shunting which would be necessary when

reversing the car for the return journey to town. The report also pointed out that it would be difficult to purchase the trailers owing to war conditions.

However, the position was eased when six top-covered double deck tramcars were bought from London County Council for £3,480 in September, 1917. The price included dismantling the trams in London and rail delivery to Newport, where they were immediately re-assembled and put in daily service between Clarence Place and Pillgwenlly. Each of these cars provided seating accommodation for 60 passengers and were the first top-covered trams to be used in Newport.

On the 3rd December, 1917, an extension of the tramways from Pillgwenlly terminus at the bottom of Commercial Road to Alexandra Docks entrance gates was opened. This extension, which consisted of a double line of tramways over a distance of three furlongs and cost £14,975, enabled people employed at Alexandra Docks to travel by electric tramcar from town to the Dock Gates. Previously, these people had to walk from the tram terminus at Pillgwenlly to the Dock Gates and here they were able to board a steam railway train which was specially provided to take them to their places of employment on the Docks.

The construction of this extension along Alexandra Road had been delayed for some years, because the Great Western Railway would not give permission for tram lines to be laid on the Pill Gates railway crossing, and it was only after representations had been made by the Ministry of Munitions at an Enquiry at Newport on 1st June, 1917, that the railway company gave permission on patriotic grounds, so it was stated.

This was the last extension to tramways in Newport, but in October, 1918, the Admiralty requested that an extension be laid from the Corporation Road tram terminus to Channel Dry Docks, to provide transport for people on essential ship repair work. The Admiralty suggested that in view of the urgency and as an economy, a single line tramway should be laid on wooden sleepers along one side of the road. However, as this work did not rank for Government grant, Newport Corporation recommended that owners of works along this part of Corporation Road be asked to contribute a share to the cost of providing the service. Agreement could not be reached on this, and after studying a report on the comparative cost of supplying the service by electric tram, trolleybus or motor bus, the Electricity and Tramways Committee decided to abandon the scheme.

Six years later, a request was received from Newport Trades Council for a service of motor buses to run to the Channel Dry Docks, but the service was not introduced until March 1925, when it was arranged to provide a bus to run a journey between Lysaght's Works and Channel Dry Docks, morning and evening at a fare of one penny each way. The receipts were low, but the service was maintained until June, 1926, when it was withdrawn owing to slackness of work following the General Strike. The service was re-introduced in January 1929, with an increased fare of 1½d. each way. Buses now run to the Channel Dry Docks as an extension of the Docks and Corporation Road route.

The period of depression following the end of the first world war, caused a drop in the number of passengers carried on the trams and in 1921 owing to a coal strike and a Government order to conserve coal stocks, all tram services were reduced by 25 per cent. The times of last journeys from the Westage Centre, Mondays to Fridays, was also altered from 11.0 p.m. to 9.30 p.m., and the employees' working day was reduced from eight hours to six hours. These reductions lasted until the early part of 1922, when the tram services and the working day, were restored to normal.

In August, 1921, the last of the females engaged during the 1914-18 war, was dismissed. These women, who had replaced male tram drivers and conductors called for military service, worked a 60-hour week (10 hours per day) and it is recorded that the women rendered excellent service to the community in helping to maintain an essential public utility during the war years.

Towards the end of 1921, four 8-wheeled double deck top-covered tramcars were purchased from Brush Engineering and Equipment Co., Ltd. The four cars were delivered by rail to the Commercial Road/George Street railway crossing, where they were transferred onto the tram lines and driven to the Power Station, Corporation Road. They were a great improvement on the open-topped tramcars, having a glass covered vestibule at each end, garden type seats on the upper and lower saloons, and their increased carrying capacity (80 seated and 40 standing passengers) was very beneficial in providing additional travel facilities for residents on the new housing estate at Somerton on the Chepstow Road route. Four more 55-seater covered top double deck tramcars of similar design to the 8-wheeled cars, were purchased and put in service in February, 1922. These cars were the last addition to the fleet and brought the total number of trams to 58 (including the tram used for repair work). The railway bridge crossing Chepstow Road, near Harrow Road, had to be raised before the new tramcars could run on this route, and the roadway underneath the railway bridge crossing Corporation Road, near Kelvedon Street, had to be lowered for the same reason.

The question whether or not trams should run in Newport on Sundays, was raised on seven occasions between July, 1903 and May, 1928. Opposition to Sunday trams had come from all denominations of the clergy, the Trades Council and the tramway employees. In a letter to the Tramways Manager, the employees expressed their determination not to work on the Sabbath; they contended that there was no need for a tram service on this day and claimed the same privilege as other people who worked six days and rested on the seventh. The men made a special appeal to members of trade unions and local churches to support them in their effort to observe Sunday as a day of rest. All opposition to Sunday trams was defeated as the result of poll of rate-payers on the 20th May, 1922, when 12,731 voted in favour of a Sunday tram service and 5,232 against—a majority of 7,490.

The first Sunday tram service operated on 28th May, 1922 and on this day there was an eight-minute frequency on all routes from 2.0 p.m. to 10.0 p.m. The wage bill for the 66 tramway employees on duty was approximately £44 and the amount collected in fares was £210.

It was a welcome innovation for the people of Newport to be able to enjoy a tram ride on Sundays. They ensured the success of the venture by increased social calls, visits to the parks for band concerts or a ride on the upper deck of a tramcar to take a walk in the country, viewing places of interest en-route to the tram terminus.

A decrease in tramway revenue during the latter part of 1922 and the early part of the following year, was attributed by the Tramways Manager, to a reduction in the passengers travelling on the trams since the private bus companies had been allowed to extend their services from the borough boundary to the centre of the town.

In October, 1923, the Tramways Manager reported on the desirability of operating motor omnibuses in the residential parts of Newport not already served by trams. He recommended that in accordance with powers given under the Newport Corporation Act, 1914, consideration should be given to the introduction of two motor omnibus services : (1) between Bridge Street and Edward VII Avenue and (2) between Clarence Place and Christchurch Road borough boundary.

Six months elapsed before these services were introduced, the service between Clarence Place and Gibbs Road commencing on the 7th April, 1924 and the service between Bridge Street and Edward VII Avenue, five days later.

Six 20-seater 4-wheeled solid tyred Karrier motor omnibuses were purchased for these two services at a cost of £4,906 16s. The buses were adapted for one-man operation and owing to the hilly nature of the routes over which they would operate, sprags with the requisite operational gear, were fitted at an additional cost of £87.

During the first three weeks of operation, receipts from the Gibbs Road service were 13.6d. per mile and 8.9d. per mile from the service to Edward VII Avenue. The Sunday service to Edward VII Avenue was discontinued after a few weeks owing to lack of patronage.

On 1st August, 1925 a through service ran between Gibbs Road and Edward VII Avenue and an extension to Allt-yr-yn Avenue was opened on 16th November, 1925. This extension was withdrawn on the 22nd August, 1927. It was given a further trial two months later, but was again withdrawn on 21st January, 1928.

An extension to Cefn was started on 19th December, 1927 and was discontinued after three weeks, owing to competition from privately owned bus services.

The Gibbs Road service was extended to Christchurch Church on 10th August, 1929.

In August, 1924, it was proposed to include in the Newport Corporation Act, 1925, powers to operate motor bus services to Abersychan via Malpas ; Newport to Crumlin, Newport to Abertillery and for special trips to the Lighthouse, St. Brides, Peterstone, Wye Valley and Symonds Yat. Unfortunately, the local authorities responsible for issuing hackney carriage licenses in the areas the proposed services would operate, were not in favour of the scheme. Consequently, it was decided to abandon the scheme and restrict the sphere of operation of motor bus services to within the borough and three miles beyond, thus conforming to the authority given in the Newport Corporation Act, 1914.

A service from Clarence Place to Liswerry via Livingstone Place and Balmoral Road was introduced on 15th September, 1924 and with the commencement of this service, five of the fleet of six buses were in service Mondays to Fridays and on Saturdays the six were in service. This meant that there were no spare vehicles to cover breakdowns or special journeys and, therefore, it was decided to buy two 29-seater Karrier saloon motor buses. The Liswerry service terminated at Moorland Avenue and on 1st November, 1925, the town terminal point was extended to Skinner Street. In February, 1946, the service was extended over the railway crossing to provide improved transport facilities for people living on the Alway Housing Estate.

The Newport to Caerleon (Angel Hotel) bus service commenced on 25th March, 1926 ; the Goldcliff service on 22nd May, 1926 and New House on 23rd February, 1927. The route to Llanfrechfa (Gate Inn) was opened on 24th August, 1927. All these services used Skinner Street as the town terminal point until January, 1937, when Caerleon and Llanfrechfa terminus was transferred to Corn Street and Goldcliff and New House to Caxton Place.

When the Royal Agricultural Show was held at Tredegar Park in July, 1927, a special service of motor buses, including a new 6-wheeled saloon bus on hire from Karrier Motor Co., was operated from Skinner Street. The fare was 6d. each way. The service was well supported and earned a revenue of 30.427d. per mile, which was considerably above the average revenue per mile received from ordinary bus services in Newport. A service of private coaches operated from the railway station to the Show.

In August, 1925, the Electricity and Tramways Committee discussed a proposal to widen Malpas Road and in view of the heavy cost to be incurred in re-instating the tram track, consideration was given to a motor omnibus service superseding the tramways on this road. The matter was again considered two years later and it was decided to recommend that a motor bus service be operated between Pillmawr Road, Malpas and Cardiff Road (Maesglas). Ten 36-seater Leyland saloon vehicles were purchased and the service commenced on 1st February, 1928, thus providing a bus service for the residents of Malpas and the Graig Park Housing Estate and for people living on the Newport Corporation housing estate at Maesglas. On the 10th September, 1934, the service was extended into Tredegar Park, where a special turning circle had been constructed for use during the summer months only. An extension from Pillmawr Road to Malpas Court commenced on 29th December, 1946, to cater for people living on the two Newport Corporation housing estates at Malpas.

The General Strike which commenced on 4th May, 1926, caused all tram and bus services in Newport to be suspended on that day and the following day. From the 6th May until the 13th May, when the strike ended, a skeleton service of trams and buses manned by a few traffic employees who had remained at work and civilian volunteers, operated daily except Sunday, between 8.0 a.m. and 7.0 p.m. Normal services were not resumed until the 18th May, and the General Manager estimated that £4,000 revenue was lost as a result of the strike.

VILLAGE SOCIAL LIFE IN MONMOUTHSHIRE SEVENTY YEARS AGO

BY H. S. SWINNERTON

THE following account of village social life refers in the main to the hamlet of Llandevaud for the ecclesiastical parish did not enjoy village status seventy years ago.

By modern standards the social activities recorded in this essay may seem primitive but they were certainly useful, educational, entertaining and contributed to the happy contented life of the rural district at a time when people had to make their own amusement.

The centre of the social life was essentially the Church and the Church School.

The secular celebration of Christmas was marked by the activities of the "Christmas Lads" and a Parochial Social Evening centred round a Christmas Tree in the School on the evening of Boxing Day.

The "Christmas Lads" were a party of local young men who, equipped with grotesque masks (to avoid identity) and arrayed in equally grotesque costumes serenaded the householders giving a very original programme of carols, comic songs and step dances accompanied by mouth organs and bones or clappers.

Proceeds went to augment the "Lads'" meagre wages, and assure for them a happy Christmas.

On Boxing night every parishioner was invited to the social evening and Christmas Tree in the School, free of charge, the whole cost being borne by the Vicar. Seated round the tree the proceedings opened with carols sung by the entire company accompanied by the Church organist on the piano. Each person was provided (free) with a ticket bearing a number which corresponded with a number placed in a hat.

Presents consisted of a remarkable collection of tea pots, cups, and saucers, frying pans, trumpets, dolls, books, crackers and oranges.

The Vicar would hold up a frying pan and proceed to eulogize its many uses stressing its particular value to the newly-married housewife.

One of the youngest children present would then take a number out of the hat and the person holding the ticket bearing the corresponding number became the owner of the frying pan ; by the end of the evening everyone present had a prize of varying value according to the luck of the ballot. When the last prize had been claimed, the Vicar contributed his annual song, an ancient ballad describing the tragic death of King William II (Rufus) in the New Forest, the first lines of which ran as follows :

"Nine hundred years ago sir, as I have heard men say,
The King rode through the forest a Royal stag to slay;
Still in the forest where he was slain they love the tale to tell,
How, instead of a Royal stag that day, the King of England
fell".

Having then given a noble lead the good man called for volunteers to sing, recite or contribute any item to the entertainment, for which prizes were offered. Offers were very slow at first, but became more numerous as the time to "go home" approached obviously with the

idea of prolonging the proceedings. However, eventually "Three Cheers" for the Vicar were called for and lustily accorded followed by "God save the Queen", a hurried exit being accomplished by several members of the audience to reach "The Local" before closing time.

Seventy years ago the postman was a *Persona Grata* performing many duties not directly associated with his calling. Leaving Caerleon Post Office on foot he proceeded up Belmont Hill to join the Roman Road to Catsash, thence on to Llanbedr and along the Chepstow turn pike road (as it was still called in those days) to his destination at Brook House, Llandevaud, which he reached between 9.0 and 10.0 a.m. having served all houses right and left of his route, which in several cases necessitated diversions of many hundreds of yards. At the end of his morning delivery the postman was entitled to rest in a hut provided by the Post Master General and fitted with a stove, table and chair, until 5.0 p.m. when he was due to start the return journey to Caerleon. No calls to make or letter boxes to clear this time but a whistle (supplied by the Post Master General) to blow as he passed each house so that the inhabitants could bring out any letters which they wished to send. Stamps could be purchased from the good man and parcels weighed on a spring balance carried in his bag, so that there could be no mistake in the amount of postage due. Several people in these days were unable to read or write and so the good postman not only delivered their letters but read and wrote the replies ! As stated above the postman was entitled to rest in his hut from the time he completed his delivery until he started his collection, approximately seven hours, but in summer he was often found helping with the harvest and at other times working as a labourer on a building site. One of these stalwarts carried on this strenuous routine for some thirty years and lived to be over ninety. Although he did not use a bicycle on his round (it was probably forbidden by the Post Office) he arrived with one one morning winning the admiration of all the young men and some old ones as well. The machine was known officially as a "Safety" and nick-named a "Boneshaker". It was of massive construction with two wheels the same size, as opposed to its predecessor, the "Penny Farthing", and fitted with broad solid tyres. Demonstrations in riding this mammoth were free and lessons in attaining equilibrium 6d. each. In a very short time the Vicar mastered the art and became an enthusiast of this new and novel means of locomotion having purchased the machine from the postman paying for it with a golden sovereign.

It is a modern fallacy that "Night School" classes are of recent origin, for a successful series was held in Llandevaud seventy years ago under the official title of "Evening Continuation Classes", classes where people over school age could continue their education. Providing a sufficient number of students availed themselves of this opportunity, a generous government grant was available. The lecturers were the Headmaster of the local Church School and the Vicar, who had himself been a headmaster prior to ordination. Arithmetic, Botany, Physiology and Chemistry were among the subjects taught and students favourably impressed Her Majesty's Inspector who paid two visits to the classes during the first series. The village carpenter

remarked that he had no idea that he was so ignorant until he attended the continuation classes.

During the winter months "Pleasant Evenings" were held in the school from 7.30 p.m. until 10.0 p.m. at fortnightly intervals, admission 3d. The programme was very varied and unconventional. Usually the proceedings were opened by a number of vocalists, musicians and elocutionists from Newport conveyed by a horse-drawn wagonette to Llandeudov.

An attempt was always made to foster local talent, and volunteers from the audience were encouraged to demonstrate their skill. This resulted in melodious selections, mouth organ solos and a rendering of "Bones", this latter performance consisted of clappers made of beef rib bones and played by both hands simultaneously. The exponent of this art was a young Dane who lived with the village carpenter whilst learning the trade. Unfortunately for the "Pleasant Evenings", on completing his apprenticeship this talented young man returned to his native Denmark.

A "Spelling Bee" was another feature of these winter entertainments. This was a competition to determine the best speller, small money prizes being offered to the person who spelled most words correctly.

There was always a danger of the Newport artists failing to turn up, the most common cause being weather conditions, snow and frost rendering horse transport impossible. On such occasions the magic lantern came into its own. Pictures of local celebrities, past events and highlights of history such as the General Gordon relief expedition were projected on to a large screen by a paraffin oil-lighted lantern, operated by the village schoolmaster who also provided a vocal commentary.

An outstanding event was the introduction of the newly-invented gramophone to a "Pleasant Evening".

The machine consisted of a drum rotated by clock-work, over which the cylindrical wax records fitted, but the outstanding feature of the instrument was the horn or trumpet. This was of gigantic proportions, four or five feet long, the small end connected to the "Voice Box" and the large end jutting out in the direction of the audience, supported on an iron stand. The repertoire contained such favourites as "Dolly Grey" and "Break the news to Mother" introduced by an American voice always concluding with the formula, "Edison Bell Record". The apparatus was owned and operated by a local charcoal burner who worked in Wentwood.

Probably the oldest social service in Llandeudov seventy years ago was the Club, or, to give it its full title, the "Harmonious Benevolent Society". The Club was formed in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign when the agricultural labourers' wages averaged 17/- per week! However, there were some "perks"—free milk, mid-day meal in the farm kitchen, a tied-cottage at a nominal rent of 2/- or 3/- per week and the privilege of gleaning after the hand reapers. In spite of these conditions many succeeded in bringing up families of five, six or more children. However, there was no National Health Service so the doctor, who came on horse-back from Caerleon, had to be paid and eventually funeral expenses met. It was just these two items which the

Club provided and nothing more, no sick pay or unemployment benefit but it was done for 4d. per week. Contributions were payable monthly at the Club's headquarters, The Rising Sun Inn on Club night when the treasurer attended to receive the payments. Club membership was approximately 200 and every three years was said to "break up", that is to say that all money remaining in the funds was drawn out and shared equally between the members. The Club then started again from scratch.

Every Whit Monday was observed as "Club Feast Day," when all members assembled at the Rising Sun Inn at 9.30 a.m. Each wore his ribbons of red, white and blue over the right shoulder and under the left arm with a rosette over the heart, and carried a "Club Stick" which consisted of a rod six feet long painted red, white and blue with a highly polished brass head representing the Rising Sun.

After roll call all members formed up in procession and led by the Club's banner and a colliers' band from the mining valleys of Monmouthshire, proceeded to the vicarage where they were received by the Vicar who, having presented the treasurer with a donation to the Club funds, took his place under the banner and led the procession to the Church.

It was a Club rule that every member must attend the Church parade, but members who did not belong to the Church of England were not compelled to enter the building, but they had to remain in the Churchyard to answer the roll call at the conclusion. Attendance after Church was no longer compulsory but the procession reformed and proceeded to Langstone Rectory to serenade the Rector there, and collect a contribution to Club funds, also to be refreshed with some excellent and very potent cider for which the Rector was famous. Arriving back at headquarters, "The Rising Sun Inn", the annual feast prepared by the landlord at 2s. 6d. a head was served in a large marquee erected in the near-by field.

The menu—barons of beef, choice of vegetables and plum pudding eaten to the strains of the band which had to wait until a late hour for their well-earned lunch. In the early days of the Club, amusement was provided by a coconut shy, an aunt sally and a sweet stall. The older male members enjoyed a game of quoits in a quiet corner of the field whilst the teenagers of both sexes played a time-honoured game of kiss-in-the-ring. These rural pastimes perhaps deserve a little detailed explanation. Aunt Sally was a female figure with a wooden head secured to a stake driven into the ground. A short clay pipe, known as a "nose warmer", fitted into a hole where Auntie's mouth should be and nestled securely under the wooden nose. The three shies a 1d. were executed not with balls, but sticks 8 inches long and 1½ inches thick, the object being to smash the pipe and so win 6d., no easy matter for the wooden nose provided an excellent shield.

Quoits were bright steel rings with bevelled edges which normally reposed on pegs over the mantelpiece in the bar, but on this one auspicious day were brought out for play. Wooden pegs were driven into the ground about the length of a cricket pitch apart and the teams standing at each end endeavoured to pitch the quoit on to their opponents' peg, or as near as possible.

Kiss-in-the-ring as its name denotes consisted of a large ring made by any number of players with a smaller ring in the middle consisting of six males. The two rings began to rotate in opposite directions singing :

There was a farmer had a dog,
His name was Bobby Bingo,
B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O, B-I-N-G-O
His name was Bobby Bingo.

At the conclusion of the chant the six males in the inner ring selected six females from the large ring and gracefully kissed them. The six favoured girls then took the place of the males in the centre and the operation was repeated until darkness brought the outdoor festivities to a close, but the indoor celebrations went on until "stop tap" at 10.0 p.m. The banner-bearers were granted half a gallon of ale each at the expense of the Club which had to be consumed according to custom, and the strains of "The Farmer's Boy" were heard swelling from the bar long after the band had departed.

After seventy years of useful work the Club succumbed to Lloyd George's National Health Insurance Act of 1912.

It is perhaps a remarkable coincidence that the original workman's contribution to National Insurance was 4d per week, the same as that of the "Harmonious Benevolent Society".

The School which was the centre of all social activities in the parish was founded, built and endowed in the year 1846 by the Rev. Lewis Jones, Perpetual Curate of Llandevaud at that time. The building was of stone, heated by two huge fire-grates (one of which still survives after 140 years !) sited at either end of the one large class-room. The School being Church property, the catechism and scripture received a good deal of time and attention both from the Headmaster and the Vicar who exercised his right to personally instil religious knowledge into the young brains. The annual scripture exam. was regarded with both awe and anticipation as it always entailed a half-holiday, following the morning ordeal. On a murky November day the Diocesan Inspector of Religious Knowledge, himself a Clerk in Holy Orders, would arrive at the school having journeyed from Newport in a horse-drawn cab.

Having been greeted by all standing to attention, (following a secret sign made by the headmaster) a hymn was sung and prayer offered by the Vicar. Now, the right atmosphere having been created, the examination began. "Who was the first person Jesus spoke to when He was on the cross ?" A forest of hands go up and one is selected by the Diocesan Inspector. "Please Sir, God". "No". A look of utter dejection on the faces of all shared by the Vicar and Headmaster but dejection was soon superseded by incomprehension as the Diocesan Inspector proceeded to explain that Jesus from the cross first spoke to His Father in Heaven ! No wonder that Llandevaud Church School for several years failed to reach a reasonably high standard in Religious Knowledge. However, the Rector of Langstone, one of the school managers, discovered by accident the remedy. He invited the Diocesan Inspector to lunch, after which the good man returned to Newport to write his report, and Llandevaud Church School was class "Excellent"

in Religious Knowledge. Next year and each successive year the same procedure was adopted with the same happy result.

In the early years of the 20th century horticultural shows were very popular. One of the first to be held in South Monmouthshire was known as "The Penhow and District Horticultural Society" but most of the meetings and several exhibitions were held in Llandevaud. The schedule was very comprehensive including classes for all kinds of fruit and vegetables, dressed poultry and butter. The competition for the best dish of boiled potatoes proved very attractive to the ladies as there was no domestic section in the early shows. "Show Day" in late July was a great social occasion. A band was always in attendance, Newport Town Band, Newport Tramways Band and Newport Post Office Band all contributed to the festivities over the years. Rustic sports occupied most of the afternoon and a cricket match between two local parishes was played and a tug-of-war pulled with great vigour. On one occasion a certain team became immovable until someone noticed that the end man on the rope had taken it round a convenient apple tree ! But the social activities of the Horticultural Society were not confined to show day. Expenses were heavy and money had to be raised during the winter months. With this end in view social evenings and dances were held in the school, but perhaps the most successful money-making and certainly the most popular was the glee party. This party was organised, trained and conducted by the village carpenter and attained a very high level of efficiency. They gave several concerts in their home parishes and were in much demand throughout the neighbourhood.

These notes record very briefly how seventy years ago the inhabitants of the rural areas provided and paid for their own amenities and amusements. It has been said with great truth that half the amusement and satisfaction came from the organising and preparation which united friends and neighbours in a way that no welfare state can ever hope to attain.

Names in Welsh survive in the parish of Llanddewi. On the way to Llanddewi Court we passed Coed-y-Gwaelod, Pentwyn, Cwm Ysgubor Hen, Cae Twmpkin and Cwm Bwrwch.

At Castell-y-Bwch the housewife took the apple-tart from the oven, prised open the lid of pastry and inserted some half-pound of butter and half-pound of Demerara sugar, so that apple juice, sugar, butter should all fuse together. (Arthur Machen)

I don't think I should go well in the Oxford of to-day. It is emphatically "modern" ; and I abhor, loathe, and spit upon "modern" prose, poetry, art, architecture, and music. (Arthur Machen, 1937)

IN SEARCH OF THE FORGOTTEN STEPS

BY RICHARD J. BARBER

It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that people took any real interest in scenery, but during the age of "Romantic Tourism" many prominent people of that time began in earnest to explore and write about the wonders and wildness of the country scene.

The lower Wye Valley was visited and praised by many famous people, including William Wordsworth who made several journeys to the area, his most famous being in 1798 when he was inspired by the sylvan Wye to write his famous "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey". Visitors to the valley in those times journeyed down the river by boat from Monmouth, or up the river in sailing ships, and later in steamers from Chepstow and Bristol.

People nowadays "do" the Wye Valley by visiting Tintern Abbey and Chepstow Castle, casting quick glances at the twisting river as they pass through the thickly wooded valley along the A.466. But the first tourists came to see Piercefield which at that time was the home of Valentine Morris who was undoubtedly the first person to attempt to commercialise the area. In 1753 he began to lay out the grounds of his estate with ten named views: The Pleasant View, The Alcove, The Grotto, The Double View, The Great Beech Tree, The Giant's Cave, The Top of the Hill, Lovers' Leap, The Temple and The Wyndcliff. The grounds were open to the public two days a week and visitors were escorted at a small charge by the resident guide around the viewpoints.

Piercefield estate is now the site of Chepstow Race Course, and little is to be found of the old mansion and even less of the sites of these viewpoints. I have read many old books on this area describing these panoramic viewpoints in great detail, but to the majority of writers the Wyndcliff was the most popular excursion. It was Fosbroke in the eighteenth century who commented—"What a Cathedral is among Churches, Wyndcliff is among Prospects". Louisa Twamley who visited the Wyndcliff in 1838 recorded that the easiest ascent, which also conceals the unexpected view until the last minute, commences near Piercefield and winds up through the woods to emerge suddenly from a screen of trees on to a platform of rock. She descended from the summit by means of steps either formed naturally by projecting rocks or cut by human effort. Black's Guide Book published in 1900 numbered the steps at 365. The journey finished at Moss cottage where refreshments could be enjoyed, although 6d. (in those days!) had to be paid for entrance or exit to the road. A rustic table was an attractive feature of this retreat. It was made from the immense section of a walnut tree taken from the grounds of Chepstow castle.

Clark's "History of Monmouthshire" published in 1869 supplied me with a further point of interest. On the descent of the cliff he claimed that the tourist passed through a chasm in the rock called the Giant's cave. As caving is a strong interest of mine this information gave me extra incentive to investigate the 365 steps as soon as possible.



(W. T. Barber)

VALE OF TINTERN—FROM WYNDCLIFF

The site of Moss Cottage was easily found. It had been demolished about eight years ago as it had become a trap for vermin and disease. A rough track leads up to the spot from A.466, at Grid Ref. ; O.S. 528973, and a pile of rubble and some steps leading to a wooden gateway indicated the site of the old thatched tea house. Walking through the woods in a straight line, I presently found an overgrown track fenced by a single strand of rusty wire strung between trees and decaying posts. After about 100 yards I realised that I had found the right route, for in front of me was the first of the 365 steps.

Ahead, through the trees the mysterious steps led upwards covered thickly in autumn leaves, and edged with soft green moss. Twisting around boulders of mossy limestone, the carefully constructed steps continued, now in definite flights. Impressed, I passed through a miniature Grand Canyon and then with the cliff looming steeply above, the steps could be seen winding through a chaos of fallen boulders and ivy-festooned trees. At this point it seemed incredible that it would be possible to ascend such a cliff via a man-made staircase. I had to proceed with care for the steps were often loose and inclined to be very slippery—it seemed like a journey into the very heart of Africa—perhaps to a lost ancient city. A grey squirrel slid silently along a branch above my head as if it emphasised my thoughts. Huge chunks of limestone patterned with ornate designs fashioned by water over thousands of years reminded me that the Wye was responsible for cutting this deep gorge through the hills as it pursued its course southwards to join the Severn.

Continuing around “airy” corners and through further Grand Canyons, the steps steepened. In places I could pick out man-made stone walls supporting the narrow pathway which now took a zig-zag route across the face of the cliff. On turning a right-angle corner I was able to appreciate the height already attained, and the fine view of the Wye through the trees.

A steep ascent now led to a large rocky platform which was strewn with the remains of an old bridge designed to give access to the top of a short overhanging cliff . . . an obvious impossibility to the ingenious step builder. However, the bulk of the bridge was still intact and a sturdy iron rail provided a safe handhold. Once on the structure I realised that it was really quite sound and probably a comparatively recent improvement to the track. Below I spotted a little cave entrance partially hidden by the rotting timbers of the old bridge. It seemed feasible that this was the entrance to the Giant’s Cave, but on investigation it proved to be blocked after ten feet. But later in the day during my descent of the steps I veered slightly off the path about 50 feet below this point and found an overgrown but high entrance to a large chamber which possibly once connected with the upper hole to provide the passage through the rock as mentioned in the old guide book.

Reaching the top of the bridge, I found that this was also the top of the cliff for the path now led along the cliff edge to arrive at the look-out about 100 yards away. This in itself is a fine piece of stone work, taking the form of a semi-circular box with an upper deck and a lower deck reached by stone stairs. Perched on the very brink of the precipice the construction is more than 800 feet above the river.

One could write an article on the view alone, but this has been described so often elsewhere that I will not attempt such a task. Some early travellers fired pistol shots in order to listen to the echo, claiming to be conducting experiments of a scientific nature. But surely the only way to appreciate such a scene is to sit in solitude and feast your eyes on a view which never appears the same twice and, if you have reached this point via the 365 steps, the view is surely a just reward for your efforts.

REDBROOK TINPLATE WORKS

THE LAST OF AN ERA

BY TOM GREY-DAVIES

THE last of the old type tinplate plants to work in Britain. Specialising on a brand of very thin tinplates the Redbrook tinplate plant continued to work long after all others of its kind had succumbed to the all conquering march of the giant strip mills.

An interesting link with the past when one remembers it was from the haematite iron ore mined near Redbrook that the first tinplates were made at Pontypool in the seventeenth century.

A BREAK WITH TRADITION

THE Redbrook works of the Redbrook Tinplate Co. closed down early in December 1961. Situated on the banks of the Wye, a few miles down river from Monmouth, the works are set amidst some of the most beautiful scenery in Britain, most adequately described by the poet GRAY as the “delight of the eyes and seat of pleasure.” With the passing of the Redbrook tinplate plant, the association of metallurgical industry with this world-famous beauty spot which has existed for thousands of years will come to an end.

The metal-working Celts, who settled in Britain from 450 B.C. onward, arrived rather later in this area, but there is little doubt that the extensive deposits of brown haematite iron ores to be found on the Gloucestershire side of the river Wye were known, and used, long before the Romans came to these shores. There remains ample evidence that the Romans mined and worked iron in the area during their occupation of this Island, Redbrook forming part of the Forest of Dean which, twice in our history, has been the greatest iron producing centre in Britain.

At Redbrook itself, a great deal of industrial and metallurgical history has been made, and this private and far-sighted little company, by extremely wise management and keen craftsmanship, defied the all-conquering strip mill and survived as an extremely active hand-mill tinplate-producing unit long after similar plants in Britain and most probably Europe, or even the world, have been forced to close their doors.

Redbrook has, in the long distant past, been famous in another branch of metallurgical history ; a copper smelting works was in active production on this spot during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the copper ore being mined in Cornwall, shipped to Chepstow, and most probably transferred to Redbrook by the famous Wye "trows." Historians of that day inform us that the copper smelting plant was "managed by Swedes, and other foreigners." Interesting links with this era are still to be found at Redbrook, and on the banks of the adjacent Wye. Much, if not all, of the slag produced during the smelting of the copper ore was cast into rough shaped bricks, and these can still be seen built into the walls surrounding the present tinsplate plant. Large quantities of these "bricks" were exported to Bristol, down the Wye, via Chepstow, and are still to be seen built into the walls of old buildings in that famous old city. An old Custom House survives a little lower down the river from Redbrook.

During the demolition of old cottages adjacent to the tinsplate works token coins bearing the mark of the Company of Copper Miners in England were found, and are now in a Bristol Museum.

Copper smelting ceased at Redbrook before the end of the eighteenth century, and the iron industry again came to the fore.

In 1762, Redbrook blast furnace and two iron forges at Lydbrook (birthplace of the great Richard Thomas and Baldwins Co.) were leased to RICHARD REYNOLDS, JOHN PARTRIDGE (Senior) and JOHN PARTRIDGE (Junior) for 21 years. Members of the Reynolds family were later associated with iron and tinsplate works at Carmarthen, Margam and Pontrhydyfen. The name Partridge still exists in Partridge, Jones & John Paton Ltd., once a subsidiary of Richard Thomas and Baldwins Ltd.

During the year 1771, MESSRS. TOWNSHEND and WOOD erected at Lower Redbrook, a tinsplate works on the site sold to them by the Governor and Company of Copper Miners in England, who, in 1720, had taken a lease of the works. This works was, at one time, operated by the same DAVID TANNER who owned works at Tintern, Pontypool and Lydbrook.

THE REV. ARCHDEACON WM. COXE, in his *Tour through Monmouthshire* (1801), mentioned "About two miles from Monmouth a small stream called Redbrook—where some iron and tinworks give animation of the romantic scenery", and in an appendix he gives the shipments of tinsplates from Chepstow (then a flourishing port), as follows :

1791-3		Nil		
1794	22 tons	10 cwt.	1 qr.	0 lb.
1795	27 tons	5 cwt.	2 qr.	14 lb.
1796	43 tons	0 cwt.	0 qr.	0 lb.

Another interesting feature emphasizing the go-ahead spirit of the Redbrook management, which has persisted throughout the years, was the early installation of a steam engine to drive the tinsplate rolls, which must have been the first application of steam to this branch of metal manufacture.

Drawings in the Boulton and Watt collection, dated 1798-1799, of "Lower Redbrook Tinn Mills," shows two pairs of rolls ; one drawing

illustrates drive by waterwheel, and the other by steam engine. The rolls were 14 in. diameter, by 18 in. long.

The steam engine drive was installed and the old water-wheel removed ; its original site and accompanying sluice is still clearly visible.

Famous brands of tinsplate from this plant were the Coke "Redbrook," brand, and the Charcoal L. R. B. brand.

During the early nineteenth century, trading conditions were not easy, and the works were often idle, but after being taken over by the present company, a period of much greater prosperity ensued. The Redbrook Tinsplate Co. was registered in July 1883 with £13,000 capital, which was subsequently increased to £43,000. After visiting the Redbrook plant during the nineteenth century, THOMAS TAYLOR devised and eventually published his famous work *Gauges at a Glance*, a standard reference book to be found in every tinsplate plant in Britain and, most probably, the world.

The excellence of the quality of tinsplate produced at Redbrook attracted orders from near and far, and the company purchased the Tynewydd tinsplate works, near Newport, Mon., where, in 1904, the first electrically driven hot tinsplate mill in the world was installed. Such was their satisfaction with the new power unit that the cold rolling mills were adapted for electrical drive in 1906.

The company also erected a tinsplate stamping works adjoining the Tynewydd works, where MR. W. T. HORTON, now managing director, evolved during the 1914-1918 war a new process for the inside lacquering of shells.

The Tynewydd tinsplate mills closed down in October 1957, but the Redbrook plant and the tin stamping works, now being expanded, carried on.

It is known that MUSHET, the famous pioneering metallurgist, working in close collaboration with SIR HENRY BESSEMER, quite often used the Redbrook mills to roll his experimental steel test pieces. During this century, the Hortons, an old Monmouthshire family, have taken a prominent part in the technical development and operation of the Redbrook plant. MR. W. T. HORTON, MR. S. HORTON as general manager and director of the Redbrook plant, and another brother, MR. RAY HORTON, well known in East Wales engineering circles, acts as engineering consultant.

The old steam drive has been removed and a remarkably smooth working B.T.H. electric drive installed at Redbrook. The steam boilers have been removed, and the pickling plant, a notoriously heavy user of steam in old tinsplate plants, converted to operation by compressed air.

Consumption of coal at Redbrook was negligible. A speciality of the Redbrook tinworks for many years has been the production of very thin tinsplate, known in the trade as "Taggers." These plates are rolled in the hot state in packs down to as thin as 0.0025 in., a seemingly impossible task for a hand mill, but "Taggers" were a regular production feature, their main use being for hermetically sealed tinsplate containers or cans.

During a visit to the plant, the writer saw large stacks of tinplate packed ready for dispatch to Bombay, Calcutta, Colombo, and a number of other countries. Records of orders were seen to be delivered to Finland, Sweden, Denmark, S. Africa, Rhodesia, Uganda, Sudan, Greece and Egypt. One interesting old record was of tinplates to be delivered to Mecca, the plates to be shipped to Medina and thereon transported overland by camel to Mecca. The packages to be wrapped in canvas to prevent chafing or cutting the camels, during their overland journey.

The tinning machines had been adapted by the management for the tinning of the extra thin "Taggers," the essential feature of these pots being unique to the Redbrook plant, and not conforming to the generally known tinning units in comparable plants. The adjacent Wye valley railway served the Redbrook plant with its one freight train per day, passenger traffic having ceased for some years. It is possible that the termination of operations at Redbrook will herald the absolute end for the picturesquely situated railway line.

The company at one time owned the two hotels in the village, and still possess a large area of land on the Wye banks, no doubt a very valuable asset if the site and buildings are offered for sale.

Such a combination of industry and glorious countryside is unique in Britain, and it would give great pleasure to many if some branch of our vast metallurgical industry came to Redbrook and maintained an association which has existed for so very long a time.

THE EISTEDDFOD OF GWERNYGLEPPA, A.D. 1350

In the time of Edward III, the Eisteddfod of Gwernygleppa was held, under the patronage of Ifor Hael; and to it came the three brothers of Marchwiall, in Maelor (that is to say, Ednyfedd, Madog Benfras, and Llywelyn Llogell); and Llywelyn ab Gwilym, of Dolcoch, in Ceredigion. The three brothers of Marchwiall, and with them Dafydd ab Gwilym, had been scholars in bardism under this Llywelyn ab Gwilym, at Gwernygleppa, the Court of Ifor Hael, in Maes-aleg (Bassaleg). It was at this Eisteddfod that the Cywydd was admitted to chair competition, and Dafydd ab Gwilym won it by force of genius and purity of Welsh diction; and Dafydd was invested with the designation of "Dafydd of Glamorgan"; but in Gwynedd he was called "Bardd Ifor Hael".

Some vestiges of this celebrated mansion (Gwernygleppa) still remain. It was here Dafydd ab Gwilym spent most of his days; and every slope, and glen, and woodland thereabout is converted by his presence and by his song into classic ground.

(from SILURIANA (1959) by David Lloyd Isaac).

The Kneeling-stone tomb at Llangattock-nigh-Usk is inscribed "Vive Ut Vivas" (Live so that you may live) and records the burial of John Howell of Llanwenarth in 1774. Knees of a mourner would fit into the stone while he prayed for the soul of the departed.

Close to the font in the Church of Llangattock-nigh-Usk is the massive slab commemorating "David the Warrior". The interlaced cross, the axe and part of the inscription are still visible.

Before 1842 Mr. John Bushby Nichols came from Westbury-on-Severn to Church House, Christchurch, to start a school there, preparing boys and girls for the Oxford and Cambridge entrance examinations.

1957 saw a wondrous springtime. We were picking bluebells in mid-March, and the giant cherry-trees in Clomendy Wood were in full bloom on April 1st; milk-flowers edged the Sor brook and periwinkles peeped out from barn-walls.

There is little change in Cwmyoy since 1682, when Tom Price was buried there. See his memorial:

"Thomas Price he takes his nap
In our common mother lap
Waiting to heare the Bridegroom say
Awake my dear and come away".

Church and inn were actually joined at Catsash. The church was dedicated to St. Curig and services were held by the Rector of Langstone who travelled from his down-hill home by pony. The Decorated window still visible indicates that the church was at least three centuries older than the inn which is dated 1604.

"The road at Llanelen is hollow. It passes over the cellar of the old Hanbury Inn, which Lady Llanover converted into a temperance house. She renamed it 'Y Seren Gobaith'—the Star of Hope".

Near the old bridge at Llanelen Lord Herbert of Cherbury saved his servant Richard Griffiths who, while "travelling from St. Gillians (St. Julians) to Abergavenny was caught in the strong waters of the Husk".

500 feet above sea-level, Poet's Castle (Castell Pridydd) was named after Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams of Coldbrook, whose lampoons enlivened personal and national relations two centuries ago.

The road from the demolished Kemeys Inferior church is displayed at the Welsh National Museum in Cardiff. The head and trunk are original, but the arms, fitted by mortices and tenons to the trunk, were added in the reign of Queen Mary.

East and South windows of All Saints, the demolished church of Kemeys Inferior, were saved by Mr. Ian Burge, and used in the restoration of his splendid home on the hillside above the church.

"Began", the old house on the bank of the Rhymney, was originally "Begansley"—Beauchamp's Lea—celebrating the marriage of Edward Kemeys and Elizabeth Beauchamp.

HOW THE CHARTISTS SPOILED NEWPORT FAIR

(Mr. Clifford L. Tucker has drawn attention to Chapter VIII of *Seventy Years a Showman*, by Lord George Sanger (first published in 1910) in which there is a child's eye-witness account of the 1839 (not 1834 as stated in the text) Chartists' march on Newport. This account is reproduced by kind permission of the publishers, Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., Bedford Street, W.C.2.—Ed.).

WINTER over, we prepared once more for our business on the road as showmen, and May-day, 1834, found us, as usual, at the opening fair of the season, at Reading, with our peep-show and roundabout. This year father resolved to go farther afield, and we made our way from one fair to another, till we eventually found ourselves in South Wales.

Here, again, new ground was to give us new adventures—to introduce us to scenes that were to be fixed indelibly upon my memory.

We arrived at Newport, in Monmouthshire, in time for the fair annually held on Whit Thursday, hoping for good business, as the gathering was always a large one, well attended by the miners, who were reputed to be free with their money. Very little of it, however, was to come to us, or, indeed, to any of the showmen on this occasion, excitement of quite another kind being provided for the town, much to our dismay.

After we had reached Newport, the night before the fair, and got our pitch, father, as usual, went out to get his glass of ale with the other folk, and to learn what was doing. He came back, looking terribly worried and upset, and mother said, "James, I can see something is wrong. What is it?"

"Everything! Everything, my dear!" was his reply. Then, as we children listened openmouthed, he told her that the Chartists had picked the fair day for a great demonstration. From thirty to forty thousand miners, he had been told, were coming into the town next morning, and, it was feared, would wreck and pillage the place. In any case, it was certain that the fair would be spoiled, and that all chances of our making a little money out of it were at an end. It was a dreadful situation for us, and I remember, as if it were only yesterday, how mother burst into tears, and we little ones cried with her in sympathy.

"What will become of us, James? What will become of us?" said poor mother. "We must make the best of it," said father, "and trust Providence to pull us through. Now, you children, say your prayers and get to bed, for we must be moving very early to get out of this."

Prayers were said—earnest prayers, too, I can assure you—asking for help and safety for the poor showman and his family, and then we all turned in, though we did not sleep much, so full were we of fear of what the morrow might bring to us.

Soon after dawn father roused us all to assist in packing up our show, which was pitched in the old cattle market, and very soon our

booth, from which we had hoped so much, was down, and our effects were being stowed in the wagon. All round us showmen were similarly engaged in preparing for flight, so great was the dread inspired by the miners, whose roughness and brutality were at that time proverbial. When all was ready, off we started to get out of the town, which we children veritably believed was about to be destroyed. Indeed, nobody foresaw what a farcical finish this "terrible attack" of the Chartists on Newport would result in. So we trembled as we went helter-skelter up the road, our fears being mightily increased by what we saw when we got near the Westgate Hotel, the old pillars of which, by the way, still bear witness of what occurred on that momentous Whitsuntide fair day.

Just as we reached the hotel, we saw perhaps a hundred men coming down the long hill into the town. As they came into view gangs of roughs began to pour through the alley-ways from the dock-side to join the Chartist procession, shouting and swearing in a way that made us quake with fear.

Father hurried on our wagon as fast as he could, but when we got about a mile from the town we saw a tremendous crowd of people coming down the road, and there was nothing for it but to pull up close to the roadside to let them pass, and to pray that they might be peaceable in their passage.

They were the Chartist colliers, whose coming we had so dreaded, and I doubt if it is possible for any of you who read this to conceive our feelings as they drew near. If they attacked our wagon and broke it up it meant utter hopeless ruin to us; moreover, there was the awful fear of personal outrage and even murder at their hands. So we sat and waited, and trembled.

On they came, many of them half drunk, yelling, swearing, and waving great cudgels, a terrifying mass of men. It was estimated afterwards that they numbered about thirty thousand, and I should think that for quite two hours they were tramping by our caravan. Perhaps we were too insignificant for their attention. Anyhow, beyond flinging an occasional volley of oaths at us, we were not interfered with. But it was not until the main body had passed that we drew our breaths freely, and father put down the loaded blunderbuss that, with grim determination to protect his family and property at all costs, he had taken up when the crowd first came into view.

Some little while after the colliers had gone by we heard the sound of firing in the direction of the town. Father got out an old spy-glass he possessed, to see if he could view anything of what was going on. Presently he said, "Into the wagon, all of you! Shut up all the windows and the door. Here they come back again!"

They did come. At a much faster pace than they had gone down the hill they raced back again and very soon were passing our wagon in thousands. This time they were in such a hurry that they did not even stop to swear at us. From what was now and again muttered by them, mother said it was evident that the soldiers were after them, and they were afraid of being shot. But we saw no soldiers, only the hurrying crowd, and when that had passed the road lay quiet and peace-

ful, the only objects on it being the caravans, dotted here and there by the hedge-side, of show-folk, who, like ourselves, had fled the town, and had drawn up to let the mob go by.

We learned later that the soldiers, who had so frightened and awed the desperate crowd from whom such violence was expected, were only twenty-four in number. This little army was stationed in the Westgate Hotel, and possessed exactly three rounds of ball cartridge.

When the invading Chartists reached the great space in front of the famous old coaching-house they began their threatened campaign of destruction by breaking the windows with stones, having filled their pockets with the latter as they came down the roads. No response being made to their attack, they grew bolder, and presently a number of the colliers made a rush for the hotel gates, with the intention of battering them down, so that they could loot the cellars of the liquor they contained.

Then they got a check. As the first of the crowd reached the big doors the soldiers, who were posted at windows in the wings commanding the entrance, opened fire. Crash ! went twenty-four muskets, and down fell two of the leaders of the crowd. The mob was staggered, and before the rioters could recover another volley was poured into them, and more men fell.

That was quite sufficient for the gallant invaders ; and, stricken with panic, they turned and fled out of the town, as I have described, their movements being hastened by a rumour, quite an unfounded one, that the cavalry were coming. As a matter of fact, there were no soldiers, save the twenty-four posted at the Westgate Hotel, within ten miles of the town; and these twenty-four, as I have said, had only three rounds of ball cartridge. Had the mob been aware of these facts the result might have been very different. But they did not know it. So twenty-four men drove away twenty-four thousand. Newport remained unlooted, and the great Chartist demonstration fizzled out.

All the same, it made an excellent subject for my father's peep-show. We very soon had a fancy picture of "The riots at Newport, with an exact delineation," as our patter had it, "of the desperate attack on the Westgate Hotel, the firing on the crowd by the soldiers, and the flight of the mob." I pattered this so often afterwards at the various small fairs and country feasts we visited that the occurrence remains one of my most vivid memories.

In addition to the Newport riots we later added the trial of Frost, Williams, and Jones, the Chartist leaders, to our peep-show. They were sentenced for treason-felony to the old punishment of hanging, drawing, and quartering, but the sentence was, of course, never carried out, and they escaped with various terms of imprisonment.

Father tried to explain to us what the Chartists sought to obtain and what the Charter was from which they took their name. At the time, however, I knew little about it, though I could patter volubly enough about the riots and the trial. But I have since lived to see nearly everything granted in the way of liberty that the Chartists then asked for, with none of the evil results that people in the old days so freely prophesied would follow.