

CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

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HANES

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

ISSUE NUMBER 48

AUTUMN 2009

JOURNEY'S END

The next time you travel from Abercynon to Aberdare in your air-conditioned car, or by train, please recall the following; on a good trip your journey will probably have taken you the same time as it does to digest this article.

When a boy I was in the habit of frequently visiting the Aberdare Valley from the neighbourhood of Cowbridge. With very great difficulty we were able to reach Ty Planca (Navigation House, now Abercynon- Ed.), by "Whisky" (A phaeton gig). We were met here by the tenants with sledge cars having seats made with stuffed sacks of hay. The road commenced by crossing the Taff at Rhyd Y Bingwd and then climbing up the side of Craig Cefn-glas, above where the canal now is; when a certain height had been obtained, down we went to Lletty Twrnwr, (Lletty Turner-Ed.) otherwise Tyr Evan John, from whence the road took the Cynnon side all the way to David John Rees's; and when the river was at all out, (i.e. In flood) this road was impassable-the greater part of it was pitched with huge stones to prevent it being carried away by the floods; during this portion of the progress towards Aberdare we passed the finest grove of oaks then standing in Glamorgan. In this noble grove called Llwyncoedybrain, the property of Mr.Bassett of Llanelay, were at that time a hernery (i.e. heronry), a kitory and a rookery, and I have often reckoned more than fifty salmon-tailed kites soaring and whistling above it. (These grand oaks, some of which were seven tons each, were sold about 35 or 40 years ago to Messrs.Young of Southwark.*) At David John Rees's aforesaid, the road left the Cynnon and passing by the pine end of Troedyrhiwforest farm- house, went through the Aberffrwd Land to Dyffryn, and here the road through the valley terminated. There was no road then through the Dyffryn or Aberaman grounds to the village, except by crossing the river below Dyffryn House, and mounting far up through the Graig isha and Abercwmboi woods, then descending to the Aberaman Mill, and thence through the bed of a brook by Abergwawr and Ynislwyd, entering the village where the Black Lion now stands! The direct road from Dyffryn to Aberdare, ascended, immediately as high as Cefnpennar issa (now a farm owned by Mr.Rees Williams, but at that time part of the extensive Llanishen estates.) - from this house it passed close to Lletty Shenkin, then by Abernant y Groes and Yniscynnon to the Trap, where it entered the village by the Abernant y Wenallt road. The whole of this devious way was covered with fine oaks, and indeed, so was the whole valley Some 90 years ago Mrs.Matthews (sic) of Aberaman, when she went to visit her father at Llanishen, used to be carried in a sort of palanquin, carried by two horses between two long poles, called *Elor-feirch* - a horse bier- and used to this day in the hilly parts of Glamorgan and Breconshire to move furniture and goods from one mountain farm to another.

Your obedient servant,
An Old Mountaineer.

(From a letter published in the Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian 2 July 1853.)

The heading and subject matter of the letter was Roads in the Aberdare Valley up to the year 1790 - Some account of the roads "60 years since." It is believed that the writer, An Old Mountaineer, was John Bruce Pryce of Dyffryn, Aberdare. (The account has been slightly abridged - Editor.)

* Unidentified but possibly shipbuilders.

EVENTS IN ABERDARE ETC. 1762-1794

In 1995 The South Wales Record Society published extracts from the Diaries of William Thomas (1727-1795) for the period 1762-1795. Thomas was a Vale of Glamorgan schoolmaster commonly known as William Thomas, scholar. He was also Clerk to the Commissioner of Taxes in Dinas Powis, a "Surveyor of Land", and had the reputation of being a soothsayer.

His remarkable Diaries commenced in 1750. In 1888 the manuscript was known to have been in the possession of a Dr. Lewis, another Vale of Glamorgan man, and in that year a considerable number of extracts from the Diary were made by David Jones of Wallington. These are now at Cardiff Central Library, and are regarded as a "*detailed and important chronicle of events in Glamorgan at a very interesting period*". The complete Diary became lost after 1880 an event of "great regret."

One of the most remarkable aspects of the diaries is his knowledge, at a period of poor communication, of what was taking place in the County of Glamorgan.

The following entries relate to events in the Cynon Valley.

Happened in June 1762.

(3rd) Was buried in Ystrad Owain Humphrey Mathew, a butcher. He was a base son to the grandfather of the present Edward Mathew Esqr. Of Landough Juxta Cowbridge and Aberaman. He dyed suddenly. He was the 1st instant at Cowbridge and he dyed that night, but not in health since he lost that unjust case of law against Trehearn the butcher. He might be about 65 years of age. He was the father in law of Jane Philip, daughter of William Philip of the Westhouse.

Happened in January 1766.

These few days past came home Lewelin Safay, after the report of his death. Very poor, after he had run away from Lanwonno, where he kept school, by reason he had there a widow with child, mother of several children and easy in the world. and Lewelin's wife alive.

Ca. May 1766.

Three burying at Aberdare each under 30, one was a young maid that killed herself by eating nuts, for she nuted and eated them all day and eated a little supper and in a few hours after she dyed.

November 1766 - was buried in Lantrissent.....the Revd. Mr. Richard Haries, one of the wealthiest clergymen in the County of above 80 years of age.....He was Vicar of Lantrissent and the small churches under that Vicarage vizt.....St. John Baptist's Chapple, Aberdare.....He had much wealth by taking down his house to be repaired at Lantrissent, in gold pieces, and since lived a close life on a great income, only he gave small fees to two curates in serving all them churches..... (An earlier entry in the Diary (May 1764) says Haries was worth "about £600. He had £3,000 in his pockets to come home to pay the debt on his estate".)

Memorials in August 1768.

Was buried in Aberdare, Mr. Jones of Duffryn in do, this four months past, of about 56 years of age. A ruinous sort of a man, who parted with his wife those years past, and mortgaged his estate by vicious living to Rbt. Bruce Esqr. dec'd.

20th. April 1787. Were hanged on Stalling Down (on the outskirts of Cowbridge -Ed.) before the Judges left the town of Cowbridge, William Owens, for the murder of Mary Harries his lover (and the man for killing), and Wm. Owens, or Bowens, as some called him, had been but 16 days in jail. A dismal tragedy, William Owens was about 23 years. (An Aberdare man, See Geoffrey Evans: *A History of St. John's Church, Aberdare* at p.70. - Ed.)

29th. May 1788. Was buried in Aberdare since the 6th. instant. Ed. Wm. Morgan of Gadlais in do. the owner of Lan y lai in St. Nicholas. Very thrifty, wealthy person, of 80 years of age or more. He had two sons, clergymen. One of them is Rector of Porthkerry.

Memorials in July 1788. - In these days at Lanfoist Nr. Abergavenny, Mon., where he now lived Ed. Mathew of Aberaman Esqr. of about 60 years of age, owner of most of Cayra [=Caerau, Ely, Cardiff.]

Memorials in 1790 26 August. - Dy'd at Bath and was there buried, the Revd. Thomas Bruce of Llanblithian (sic) near Cowbridge and Rector of St. Nicholas, from a lingring disease, of about 50 years of age. He had gone to Bath for his health.

THE PARK SCHOOL.

Built in a period of seven months to the design of the local architect, Evan Griffith Jnr., Park School was a British School, built under the auspices of the British and Foreign Schools Society, and the first such school to be built in the parish of Aberdare. The foundation stone was laid on the 13th. March 1848, and it opened seven months later.

Subscribers to the school included Richard Fothergill, H.A. Bruce, Thomas Wayne, Dr. J.L. Roberts, and David Williams (Alaw Goch) of Ynyscynon. Each of these donated £10, and the miners and ironworkers of the district raised a further sum of £120. David Williams also left the school a legacy of £100.

The school was built as a direct result of the publication of the Reports on The State of Education in Wales, 1847. (The Blue Books.)

An "Excellent house and garden" was attached to the school for the use of the teacher who was paid £50 a year for his services. The first headmaster (1848-1851) was Thomas Taylor.

A "Monster Tea Party" was held to raise further funds for the school. This attracted 2,614 participants, who each paid 1/- for admission.

THE SCHOOL LOG BOOKS

The earliest surviving school Log Books date from 1864 (girls' department), 1865 (infants') and 1876 (boys'). Here are some of the more colourful entries from these records.

- The school was decorated, and the children attired in their holiday dress had their likenesses taken on the green in front of the school. Afterwards they paraded the principal streets of the town accompanied by the Committee. The usual tea and cake followed. (The occasion was the annual treat afforded the pupils during the first twenty five years of the school. Ed.)
- November 17th 1865. No school today, owing to the schoolroom being white-washed.
- November 16th. 1868. This being election week, in consequence of the great excitement prevailing in town, have been obliged to give a week's holiday.
- May 10th 1869 (On school attendance). After school gave each teacher a list of children for them to go to, and ascertain whether they had left school, or not.
- July 28th. 1869. Told the children that I shall expect to see them particularly clean and neat tomorrow as we intend joining the procession to open the new public park.
- May 11th. 1887 Owing to the excitement occasioned by the introduction of boats to the public park; found it difficult to get the children in on time.
- June 2nd. 1887. Several children brought notes from parents asking to be allowed to leave early in order to accompany them to Merthyr for the purpose of seeing the Rt. Hon. Wm E. Gladstone.

A number of entries relate to the payment of "School pence* and discipline."

- Several children have not paid their fees. Excuse given "No pay at the tin-works - the manager having run away. How am I to treat these in the fee books?" (n.d.)
- I have repeatedly prohibited the use of corporal punishment by the younger teachers who are accustomed to an unrestrained use of sticks, fists, and a boisterous manner. (n.d.)

* A small weekly sum paid for tuition in elementary schools. Limited to nine pence per week under the 1870 Education Act. In 1891 elementary education was provided free.

(Source: Price W.W., *Park Schools Centenary 1848 - 1948: Its History, Aberdare 1948.*)

YOUR AREA? AN OCCASIONAL ARTICLE. NUMBER 2. TRESALEM OR ROBERTS TOWN

In 1847 there was no Robertstown. The land upon which this community stands then formed part of Gadlys Uchaf farm, a holding of just over 65 acres.

The property had belonged to the Richards family of Blaengwawr and Ty Mawr (The Great House), Aberdare. Gadlys Uchaf, with other properties, was left to Jennet Richards by her father, Richard Richards of Ty Mawr. She married Lewis Roberts, surgeon; a son, James Lewis Roberts, was also a surgeon and prominent in local affairs.

The first public building erected in the area which became known as Robertstown was Salem Independent Chapel built in 1841.

By 1852 "Robertstown" had developed thus: -

"Robert's Town is the name of a collection of sixty or eighty houses built upon a plot of low-lying ground near the river Cynon, being but a few feet above the bed of it. It has been completely severed by tram roads and railways from the rest of the parish, and has no road communication with it, so that no cart can pass from or to it. "Indeed", Mr. Rhys states, "the people are only allowed to go to and from their dwellings by sufferance. A road has been projected, but there is some difficulty still about making it." There is no drainage in this place. The ground being flat, and about a foot below the houses, the refuse from the overflow of privies and other stagnates on the surface. The subsoil is gravel. It is not subject to floods, however, the river having a good channel opposite. Mr. Rhys states, "This is, I believe, a most unhealthy quarter, in the autumn and spring nearly always enveloped in fog and mist". (Report to the General Board of Health.....into the sewerage, drainage.....and sanitary conditions.....of the Parish of Aberdare. 1853.). The bridge connecting Robertstown to the Gadlys at Tudor Terrace was not erected until 1892.

Its principal streets are Wellington Street (named, of course, after the Duke of Wellington who died in 1852), Thomas Street, Philip Street and Bridge Street. A public house, "The Gadlys Arms" was built in 1852, and another in Bridge Street (Great Western Hotel) in 1871, there was also a Belle Vue. The local school (mixed and infants) dates from 1875. The Anglican church of St. John the Evangelist was built in 1890 at a cost of £610. A church hall adjoined.

The reason for its rapid development was the requirement for housing for workmen employed at the nearby Gadlys Iron Works, Ysguborwen Colliery and Gadlys Uchaf Tin Plate Works. The alternative (Welsh) name for Robertstown is Tresalem. A village taking its name from Salem chapel.

Robertstown may long have been the Cinderella of Aberdare as is shown in the following letter that appeared in The Aberdare Times nearly forty years after Rammell's report.

The above place is sorely neglected from a sanitary point of view. We have not a single ashbin, and the roads we have are not worthy of the name - mere heaps of refuse which is deposited here instead of being carried away, interspersed with stagnant pools. The gas-lamps are so few and far between that little service they render. The sanitary condition of the place is both a disgrace and danger to the health of the adjoining town of Aberdare, and a great injustice to the long-suffering residents of Robertstown, who have nursed their mortification most uncomplainingly. Both Captain Roberts (the landowner - Ed.) and the Local Board are most culpable in their neglect. Will not some member of the Board take up the cudgel on our behalf? He will win the gratitude of great numbers of his fellow-men. - A Resident. (Aberdare Times 16 April 1892.)

Plots of building land were leased by the Roberts's for a term of 99 years and carried a typical ground rent of 15/- a year and (something we have never before seen in a Lease) "all the ashes of coal which shall be used or burned on the premises". Presumably this was to be used in road or brick making. The ground rents of the original eighty houses erected there provided the Roberts family with an annual income of some £60, a much greater return than the land would have produced had it remained in agricultural use.

A tin plate works was opened close-by in 1868 which closed in 1928. The Second World War brought further industry to Robertstown when the Cardiff based firm of Curran's opened a Royal Ordnance Factory there manufacturing cartridge cases. In October 1942 it employed 1,200 people.

Members of the Roberts family are buried in St. John's Churchyard and at St. Fagans', Trecynon. The Family vaults in both these locations have unique massive iron slabs over them, upon which large raised letters proclaim **THE ROBERTS'S OF GADLYS**. There are no individual names on either of the vaults. This family obviously considered their wealth and fame sufficient for posterity.

PORTRAITS FROM THE PAST

This article gives brief details of two interesting characters from the past. The first is female, the second male. Gender apart they were disparate people; one was well off, the other not. Their biographies are brief, as sadly very little is known about either. Ironically the first (female) subject would probably have known more about the second than we know today. Both were closely connected with the church. Our portraits are of Martha Thomas and Theophilus Richards.

MARTHA THOMAS (1808-1903) was sexton of the Parish Church of St. John the Baptist. During her lifetime she was better known as “Martha eglwys”, or “Martha black” (she always dressed in this colour). Born Martha Rees at Little Row, Abernant, she moved to some huts near the lower pond, Abernant and became known as “Martha the Ark”, from the name given to the huts where she lived (The Arks). Sometime later she moved to the Gadlys and became the sexton and caretaker of St. John’s, posts she cherished for forty-five years. In 1849 The Vicar, The Revd. John Griffith, had claimed and secured the exclusive right to appoint a sexton. Her duties as sexton included tolling the old bell given to the church by Wm. Mathew of Aberaman in 1637.

Martha always wore Welsh flannel and an apron of bwmbast a gwlan, and carried a large bunch of keys at her waist, which prompted people to liken her to a female St. Peter! Those who remembered her remarked on her hat, which they, described as “hardly Parisian, more bonnet fach, Castell Nedd.” She was unable to read and had but one treasured possession – a black snuffbox, which she constantly used and kept full of “High Dried” or “Queen’s.”

She married and became Martha Thomas. She died on the 27th October 1903 and is buried in the churchyard of St. Fagan’s, Trecynon. She was much respected and loved, and after her death a stained glass window was set up in her memory in the chancel of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin (St. Mair’s), Maesydre. This was the gift of past and (then present) clergy and churchwardens of the Parish Church. It was popularly believed that the window depicted St. Mary in the likeness of Martha Eglwys. When St. Mary’s Church was demolished the window was re-set up in St. Mathew’s, Abernant.

The fact that would most endear her to historians however was her knowledge of the parish churchyard; she could, it was said, identify all the graves and knew the family details of all those buried there. Had she been able to record those facts what a wealth of knowledge we would have. Sadly this information died with her. How much more we wonder, could Martha have told us about the life of our second portrait?

THEOPHILUS RICHARDS. (? 1704-1794) Richards was born Ca. 1704 and was buried on the 6th December 1794 aged 90 years. He is buried in St. John’s churchyard on the north side of the chancel. His tombstone describes him as the “*Eminent Drover of Blaengwawr.*” We know that the stonemason, Hywel Rees, of Vaynor, crafted his tomb, originally a “marvel of fine workmanship”. It cost £30, a vast sum in those days. He was appointed churchwarden in 1743, having been sworn in at the Easter Vestry held on April 15th. of that year.

Although described as of Blaengwawr Farm, Richards owned other property in the parish. One of the earliest records of his ownership of land dates from March 1751, when he granted a Lease of a field called Tir y Neuadd on Gadlys Uchaf farm to Trustees for the building of Hen de Cwrdd Unitarian chapel. He is described as yeoman in this document. Other extant land records show that he was tenant of land in the hamlet of Fforchaman in 1758 (this is not identified but was probably Blaengwawr), he was certainly the Mathew’s tenant at Blaengwawr Farm from 1767 until his death in 1794, and died there. In 1778 he still owned the Freehold of “Tyr y Dadley, now called Gadles Ycha”, and was also tenant of Llesty Lloydon. In 1785 he was the Earl of Plymouth’s tenant at Tir Bach. His activities as a drover would have caused him to make regular journeys across Wales and to important markets at Bristol, the West Country and probably London (Smithfield). In those early days drovers were highly trusted men who acted as unofficial bankers, couriers and sources of news and gossip. Drovers, such as Theophilus Richards, had to be licensed annually and were required to give adequate financial guarantees before such a licence would be granted.

One of his routes would have been Aberdare-Merthyr-Torpantau-Cantref (a drover’s “junction”), - Crickhowell-Abergavenny-Monmouth and thus to England. Other journeys would have taken him to the small ports of Aberthaw, Cardiff and Newport.

“WARNING...YOU BE WATCHED” (SINISTER VISITATIONS AT LLWYDCOED)

In May 1834 “Scotch Cattle” visited mine levels at Llwydcoed that belonged to the Gadlys Iron Company. They smashed mining equipment, destroyed candles, and they scattered miners’ powder far and wide.

Their offence is supposed to have been that some miners had presumed to work there contrary to the regulations of these tyrannical depredators.

Reported in *The Cambrian*, May 1834, and 10th April 1834.

The report of this incident from *The Cambrian*, Wales’s first weekly English-language newspaper, is mentioned briefly in *Cynon Coal* at page 163, where the date of the incident is given erroneously (transposed?) as 1843. The event is both dramatic and unique, and perhaps loses much of its impact amongst the mass of rich material contained in *Cynon Coal*.

The circumstances are however worth retelling, with the inclusion of some further detail and explanation.

The miners were probably iron-ore miners, extracting ore for use in the Gadlys Ironworks, established by Wayne in 1827. We say the incident was unique as Scotch Cattle (In Welsh *Tarw Scotch*.) were only active in an area known as the **Black Domain**. This extended from Rhymney to Abergavenny and from Llangynyidr to Caerphilly. There were various groups of Tarw Scotch, known as herds. There was one at Merthyr Tydfil, and it may well have been this group that carried out the attack at Llwydcoed. The appellation “cattle” came from the frightening costume they wore. The leaders had cattle horns on their heads, and the rank and file wore cloaks of animal skins. Their visits were at midnight, and were intended as a campaign of terror. The herd, led by a leader, called **The Scotch Bull**, christened himself, “Y gelyn pob dychryndod” (The enemy of all fear). Fear and terror were indeed the order of the day, as deep lowing sounds, and the firing of guns heralded their midnight raids. The Cattle also left intimidating notes prior to a raid. e.g. **Warning. Know you Davy Thomas that the bull will come. You know what you done. You be watched. Take notice.** (Such warnings were signed with a crude sketch of a bull’s skull.)

There are various explanations for the name Scotch, the best of which is perhaps an adoption of the verb “to scotch” i.e. to crush, stamp upon, stamp out (S.O.E.D.). cf. The Irish Molly Maguire’s.

Some historians have seen an extension of the activities of Scotch Cattle at Aberdare well into the 1850’s. .

References: J.F. Mear (Editor) *Cynon Coal* at page 163, and R. I. Parry, “Early Industrial Relations in Aberdare.” *Old Aberdare* Vol.3 (1984)

For an interesting and excellent account of Scotch Cattle see Chapter 4, *The Scotch Cattle and their Black Domain* by David.J.V.Jones in *Before Rebecca – Popular Protests in Wales 1793-1835*. (London 1973)

See also E.W.Evans *The Miners of South Wales* U.C.W. Press, Cardiff 1961, and G. Llewellyn Williams “Popular Movements and Disturbances in Glamorgan c.1790-1860.” *Glamorgan County History* Vol.4

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The Post Office and the Telegraph – The arrangements for the telegraph are now complete, as far as the interior of the office is concerned, and they reflect credit on Mr. Morris the post master. There is ample room and convenience for the dispatch of business. A line of wire is being laid from the Abernant station to the post-office and it is expected that everything will be ready for business in the course of a few weeks.

THE WESTERN MAIL 15 JANUARY 1870.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

Readers may have noticed the magnificent solid silver epergne on display at the Cynon Valley Museum.* This was presented to the Revd.Dr.Thomas Price of Calfaria Chapel by the Oddfellows of Wales of which he was Grand Master (Manchester Unity) in 1865-1866.

Friendly Societies (or Box Clubs) go back to 1744 in Wales, and were set up to provide its members with financial support during sickness or infirmity. After the French Revolution and during the early years of the Industrial Revolution their activities were viewed with suspicion as a cover for possible Jacobin, Radical and Trade Union activities. So, after 1793 Friendly Societies had to register with the Courts of Quarter Sessions. Societies formed themselves into Orders and met in Lodges. In industrial areas some Lodges contained as many as 3,000 members. Methodists were forbidden to join. The Lodges usually met monthly for the purpose of collecting and distributing funds, and held annual parades in which members wore regalia and marched with a band to a place of worship. Meetings were often held in the long rooms of public houses and many of you will recall fading signs painted on the wall next to the pub's main door e.g. "R.A.O.B. Trecynon Lodge. Registered Number-----"

There were at least ten early societies in Aberdare. The Vicar of Aberdare (J.W.Wynne Jones) writing in the Parish Magazine in 1882 tells of an old gravestone on the north side of St.John's Church commemorating a person described as the "Founder of a Secret Society" -apparently a Friendly Society. (This memorial has long disappeared.)

The relevant records of the old Court of Quarter Sessions have the following information concerning Aberdare.

1800?	The Aberdare Society (The Masons' Arms.)
1804.	Tradesmen and Others.
1809.	Faithful Friends Society of Women** (Corner House Inn, Llwydcoed)
1811.	Corner House Society. (Corner House Inn, Llwydcoed)
1811.	Aberdare Union (The Black Lion Hotel)
1811.	The Friendly Sisters. (Mount Pleasant Hotel.)
1828.	The Glandare Society (The Boot Hotel.)
1830.	The Hand in Hand Society. (Castle Hotel, Hirwaun.)
1832.	Masons' Arms Friendly Society (Masons' Arms)
1832.	The Female Benefit Society. (No meeting place given)

As the population increased so did the number of societies and the town saw the establishment of familiar Orders, The Oddfellows, Druids, Foresters, Alfreds, Buffaloes, Rechabites, Shepherds and the only specifically Welsh society, The True Ivorites (it promoted the Welsh language.) In Hirwaun in 1842 there were three lodges of Oddfellows, one of Druids, and one Ivorites, together with three female societies*; all said to be of great advantage to the people in cases of sickness or accident, which were very numerous **Children of the Mines in the Cynon Valley.*, Cynon Valley History Society 1987.

Brief Details of the working of a local Society are given in Welsh History Review Vol.12, 1985.

The Ancient Order of Foresters **.

Court Bell, Bush Inn, Aberdare (Est.1859) Age of entry 18-40.

Subscription.

1/7d monthly; Management, 5d monthly. Free member after 1 year. (Half pay after 6 months.)

Benefits.

For 6 months, 10/- per week, next 6 months 5/- a week, remainder 2/5d per week.

Funeral. Member £10, Member's wife £5.

*The Museum also has a colourful display of Regalia Sashes.

** Its object was to insure themselves against sickness, unemployment or funeral expenses

For a list of Friendly Societies in Mountain Ash see William Bevan. *History of Mountain Ash, 1896.*

Part of Trecynon's Windsor Street is named **Foresters Place**. William Williams (Carw Coch) was a prominent figure in this society.

The Grandest Entertainment of the Season.

TEMPERANCE HALL, ABERDARE.

Tuesday, May 6th. 1890.
EDISON'S LATEST

PHONOGRAPH

LECTURE AND DEMONSTRATION BY
C.R.C. STEYILER Esq., of London.

During the evening the Phonograph will,
AMONGST OTHER THINGS REPRODUCE THE
VOICE OF THE
Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone,

Song rendered in London by Professor Dan Price,
R.C.M., the renowned Welsh Baritone &c.

Doors open at 7.30, to commence at 8 o'clock.
ADMISSION 2s. 1s. and 6d.

Tickets may be obtained at the Office of the
Aberdare Times.

OLD ADVERTS NUMBER TWO.

Thomas Edison invented the Phonograph in 1877, and registered his patent on the 19th February 1878. By 1890 the date of this advert taken from *The Aberdare Times*, technology had moved on.

After 1866 there was a great attachment between the people of Wales and Gladstone. Most Welsh homes of the period had either a Staffordshire figure of Gladstone on the mantelpiece or prints of him, or his Welsh wife (Catherine Glynne), on the wall.

"Since 1870 Gladstone had shown an increased awareness of Welsh National characteristics, in church matters, temperance reform and education, more than any other statesman. His views concerning disestablishment had become modified, and he repeatedly spoke on matters concerning Wales. He chose to live in North Wales, and attended the eisteddfod and other Welsh gatherings."

(Kenneth O.Morgan in *Wales in British Politics 1868-1922* pp. 74-75.)

It must therefore have been a great thrill for the people of Aberdare, and other towns, to actually hear the voice of William Ewart Gladstone.

Commenting on the event *The Aberdare Times* wrote, "The lecturer is one of the prime members of Edison's literary staff. To hear the utterance of *The Grand Old Man** is a privilege which but few people have the advantage to enjoy. It will be a matter of great surprise if the hall is not crowded to its utmost capacity" (The hall held 1500 people - Ed.)

* Gladstone was affectionately known as The Grand Old Man (sometimes "G.O.M."), or according to Disraeli, "God's Only Mistake."
For Gladstone see also page 3.

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Hon. Secretary, Alan Abraham, 54, Potter's Field, Trecynon, Aberdare (01685 876353)

Edited by Geoffrey Evans, 5 Plasdraw Place, Aberdare CF44 0NS (01685 871840)

Epost / Email: Gmorganrwg@aol.com

Registered Charity No.51014.

Printed by Dial-A-Print, Mountain Ash, 01443 474822

8/2009