



GELLIGAER TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF GELLIGAER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Issue No. 46 July 2020

MESSAGE TO READERS OF GELLIGAER TIMES FROM GHS CHAIR

Hope you are all keeping safe and finding interesting things to keep you occupied as the country gradually moves out of lockdown. In the absence of a newsletter editor, this newsletter, with some news, some advertisements from old newspapers, a collection of items associated with the less savoury side of the history and heritage of Gelligaer parish, and some maps showing changes in north east Gelligaer parish from early nineteenth century onwards, has been prepared by GHS committee. I hope it has something to interest you, and, perhaps, some of you will respond with comments and/or questions, or even indicate that you would like to edit a future issue. If so, please contact chairman@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk or www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk

NEWS

It is unclear when GHS will be able to resume face-to-face meetings. GHS Officers and Committee will continue to review the situation in the light of developments, and post information on GHS website www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk and in future newsletters. BUT, we welcome **YOUR OPINION**. GHS Committee does not want to arrange any meetings only to find that few people feel confident enough to attend and the speaker faces an embarrassingly small audience. So please, **IN THE LIGHT OF THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE, WOULD YOU ATTEND A GHS MEETING IN LLANCAIACH IN SEPTEMBER 2020, AND IN SUBSEQUENT MONTHS?**

In the meantime, thank you for your support for GHS, and you may like to know that <https://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/llancaiachfawr/content/welcome-llancaiach-fawr> Llancaiach Fawr website has been updated and, on 19 July 2020 reads as follows:

COVID-19 Update -- Whilst Llancaiach Fawr Manor house is currently closed, following the update from the First Minister on Friday we can assure you that the Manor will be open to the public just as soon as we are happy that we are able to adhere to the social distancing guidelines and feel it is safe to do so. However, in the meantime we are delighted to confirm that the Cafe and Gift Shop will be re-opening from Thursday 16th July.

In order to keep you safe during your visit, we are introducing a range of measures at Llancaiach Fawr Manor to help adhere to social distancing guidelines and hygiene standards.

- *Our staff have been trained in hygiene and social distancing and provided with the necessary PPE*
- *Where required, there will be two metre markers on the ground to help visitors maintain a safe distance*
- *We have increased site cleaning regimes*
- *There will be screens in place at reception and in the café to separate visitors from staff*
- *Hand sanitisers for staff and visitors will be in use across sites*
- *The café will provide takeaway options or tables on our patio area can be booked by calling 01443 412248*
- *A one way system will be implemented in the exhibition area. We look forward to welcoming you back to Llancaiach Fawr Manor .*

On Facebook, I (Annie Owen) have *liked* Llancaiach Fawr teas menu and some photographs of their new outside furniture, and so, if you are one of my Facebook friends, the pages should appear on your news feed.

GHS Committee, planning an August 2020 issue of *Gelligaer Times* based on the theme **SUMMER**, welcome your contributions -- photographs, memories, drawings or creative writing. We know some of you have beautiful flowers and/or healthy vegetables in your gardens, why not send your photographs? Or maybe, you have scenes from summers past, or a summer poem or prose description (written by yourself or someone else) that you like. And we will welcome your memories of Sunday School trips and/or Club outings, as well as anecdotes from school trips. In fact, anything about SUMMER (even when the sun was not shining).



REMINDERS -- Deadline for submissions for *Gelligaer* volume 27 is **1 August 2020** and for the Diamond Jubilee publication is **31 December 2020**.

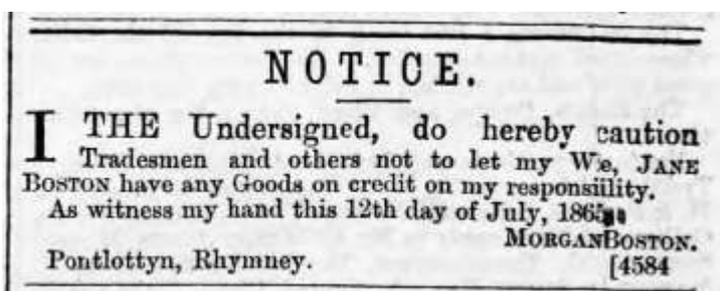
GHS continues to receive a variety of **QUERIES RELATING TO THE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF GELLIGAER PARISH AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS**.

One recent query was about an alabaster memorial tablet in Tabor Chapel, Maesycwmmmer. Many *Gelligaer Times* readers know that Tabor, no longer a place of worship, is in private hands. This link will take you to some pictures of Tabor: <https://www.derelictplaces.co.uk/main/religioussites/37126-tabor-welsh-congregational-chapel-maesycwmmmer-june-2019-a.html#.Xv8Nud7mUm> We leave it to you to form your own opinion.

If you are interested in memorial tablets and the materials of which they are made, you may like to visit <https://museum.wales/curatorial/geology/welsh-stone-forum/newsletters/> in particular, their Newsletter 13, March 2016, pages 10-11, which includes a photograph of the WWI memorial in Trelewis.

SOME ADVERTISEMENTS FROM OLD NEWSPAPERS

Thanks to David Mills for submitting these. *Gelligaer Times* readers can search many more items of local interest on <https://newspapers.library.wales/> .



This announcement by Morgan Boston of Pontlottyn appeared in *Merthyr Telegraph* 15 July 1865 (page 2)

Hysbysiadau yr Enwa I.

AN URGENT CASE.

'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.'

DEAR FRIENDS,—We humbly beg to call your attention to the following facts respecting Brithdir Baptist Chapel near Pontlottyn. The cause commenced very promisingly in 1859, but in a very short time the total stoppage of the collieries in the place rendered it necessary for the inhabitants to abandon their new homes and seek their livelihood elsewhere; and consequently the chapel with £760 debt was left unpaid for. There are now only 30 members of whom there are only 3 adults, and it is hardly necessary to state that it is impossible for such a number to bear the burden, unless they are soon aided the chapel will be a standing reproach to nonconformity. A committee has been called to the rescue, and we propose to do everything in our power to reduce if not clear the debt, so that the little flock may go on in the work of the Lord without anxiety and worry. Will you help us? We shall be exceedingly grateful for any help you may give us in this most worthy cause.

We are dear friends,

Yours in the best of bonds,

Revs. Dd. Griffiths, Moriah, Dowlais; T. Morgans, Caersalem, do.; G. T. Williams, Hebron, do.; D. Davies, Brithdir & Cwmfelin; Messrs. T. N. Evans, Grocer, Rhymni; D. Jones, Blanche St., Dowlais; W. T. Williams, (Gwylm Craig y Tyla), Pontlottyn; T. Davies, Mine Agent, Dowlais; Edmund Lewis Ysgwyddgwyn, Deri; T. J. Evans, Wern Nelson, (late Treharris); J. Owen, Taff Vale House, Merthyr; D. Davies, 3 Glebeland, Merthyr.

This, one of the few English language items in *Seren Cymru*, appeared in the issue of 20 February 1885 (page 5)

In Suburban Homes,



kept clean and dainty spite the dust of the town. Puritan Soap is an ever-welcome guest.

Alike here and in thousands of other happy homes Puritan Soap is welcomed and loved because it is so gentle as not to be tender to the clothes, so pleasant to the hands that use it.

Puritan Soap is gentle because it contains olive oil—sweet olive oil of nature's own giving.

It is the olive oil in Puritan Soap, which saves the clothes from wash-day wear and tear, and makes them, like itself, sweet, pure and fragrant.

That is why so many housewives say quite truly that Puritan Soap saves its cost every wash in the clothes it saves.

Will you order Puritan Soap from your grocer, druggist or chemist? It is sold in several sizes: a one for every need.

PURITAN SOAP
is used in Britain's happiest homes

GOOD HEALTH to the BABE.

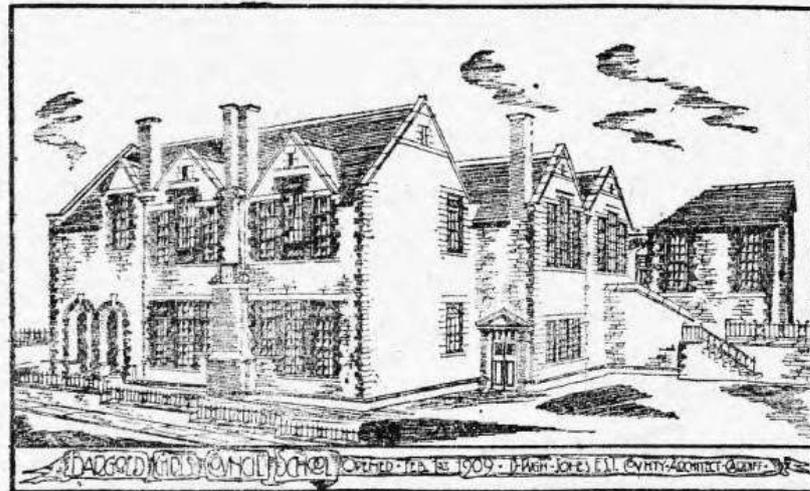
Next to mother's milk—cow's milk is undoubtedly the best for infants, but how few can digest it undiluted! The difficulty is overcome, however, by using Barley Water made from

ROBINSON'S PATENT BARLEY

Hundreds of mothers can testify how splendidly their darlings thrived on milk so diluted, in what good health they kept, and how beautifully firm the flesh.



Send for Booklet:
KEEN, ROBINSON & CO., Ltd.,
LONDON.



BARGOED GIRLS' COUNCIL SCHOOL.

This sketch of a Bargoed school appeared in *Weekly Mail* on 6 February 1909 (page 10) and readers of *Gelligaer Times* will find some amusing points in the report that accompanied it.

Gelligaer Times readers can check *Monmouth Guardian* 17 July 1914 (page 5) for the full report that includes much on the family background and the skills of Chung Ling Soo.

**HENGOED GARDEN VILLAGE,
RHYMNEY VALLEY.**
TO LET, a Limited Number of
WORKMEN'S HOUSES,
RENT, 6/6 to 8/6 per Week.
Also Four Good Shops.
Ampie Employment obtainable in Collieries near by. Convenient for Trains, being close to Hengoed Junction—Rhydney, Great Western, and Brecon & Merthyr Railways.
Healthy Spot. Good Water Supply. 150 Feet above Sea Level.



A large number of the Houses are Semi-detached, all are Up-to-date, fitted with Hot and Cold Baths, and every modern Convenience.

Apply:
At Resident Surveyor's Office, in Village,
MR. E. PHILLIPS,
PERLLETS VILLAGE,
BARGOED.

Or to Mr. TREVOR WILLIAMS, Welsh Garden Cities Office,
2, DUNSMITH PLACE, CARDIFF.

This is from *Monmouth Guardian* 24 September 1915 (page 4) and the same page carries a detailed report on this housing scheme.

"CHUNG LING SOO" AT BARGOED.

NEXT WEEK'S GREAT PROGRAMME.

"Chung Ling Soo" the renowned illusionist in his bewildering display of all his marvellous arts, will visit the New Hall, at Bargoed, next week. Many additions have been made to his extensive programme since he was last in the Rhydney Valley. "The world and its people" being an exceptionally smart turn, and this alone is worth



CHUNG LING SOO, THE MAGICIAN.

SUPPLEMENT --- SOME OF THE LESS SAVOURY ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF GELLIGAER PARISH

This supplement focuses on some of the less savoury aspects of life in the parish of Gelligaer. Many of the examples used are taken from newspapers, easily accessible on <https://newspapers.library.wales/home>, and relate to the nineteenth century.

THE TRELEWIS ELOPEMENT 1885

These newspaper extracts, telling the story of what is described as *The Trelewis Elopement*, are from 1. *South Wales Echo* 9 June 1885 (page 2), 2. *Weekly Mail* 13 June 1885 (page 2) and 3. 4 July 1885

1.

THE TRELEWIS ELOPEMENT.

COMMITTAL OF THE RUANAWYS.

At a special petty-sessions on Monday—before Dr. Llewelyn—Joseph Howells and Elizabeth Lloyd, wife of William Lloyd, Trelewis, near Quaker's Yard, who were captured on board the *Servia* (Cunard Line) off Queenstown, en route for Cleveland, Ohio, were charged with having, on the 27th May, stolen two boxes containing several articles value £6, the property of Wm. Lloyd and Charles Lloyd, brothers. The young Lothario had been lodging with the heroines of his affections during the last nine months, and both thought the western hemisphere would be more congenial to their joint happiness than the rustic neighbourhood of Trelewis. Both prisoners were committed to take their trial at the craster sessions.

3

FIRST COURT.

(Before Mr. R. O. JONES and Mr. GRAHAM DORNFORD.)

A MARRIED WOMAN AND HER LODGER IN TROUBLE.

Joseph Howells, 22, collier, and Elizabeth Lloyd, 32, a married woman, were indicted for stealing a tin box, three table cloths, blankets, and other domestic articles, the property of Charles Lloyd, at Gelligaer, on the 27th of May. Mr. B. Francis Williams, who prosecuted, in alluding to the woman being indicted jointly with the man for stealing property belonging to her husband, pointed out that it was only by recent legislation that a woman could be charged with stealing the property of her husband. It appeared that in this case the male prisoner lodged with the female prisoner and her husband, and the wife and the lodger went off together, taking with them the husband's property. The prosecutor, a labourer at Trelewis, had been married to the woman for thirteen or fourteen years, and up to the 27th of last May the male prisoner had lodged with them for nine months. On that day the prosecutor went away to work as usual, leaving the prisoners in the house, but on returning at six or seven o'clock the next morning he found no one there but his father-in-law, the wife and the lodger having gone away. A search was instituted, property was missed, and the local police were communicated with, resulting in the runaways being arrested at Queenstown, with the missing property in their possession, and having also a pass for New York. The jury found prisoners guilty, and they were each sentenced to six months' imprisonment, with hard labour.

2,

THE RECENT ELOPEMENT AT TRELEWIS.

PRISONERS BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES.

At a special petty-sessions on Monday at Caerphilly (before Dr. J. Llewellyn) Elizabeth Lloyd, the wife of William Lloyd, a labourer, residing at Pengroca-heol, Trelewis, and Joseph Howells, a labourer at Trelewis and a lodger with Lloyd, were brought up in custody charged with feloniously stealing and carrying away two boxes containing blankets, sheets, table-cloths, baskets, &c., to the value of £5 18s., the property of William Lloyd, the husband of the female prisoner. The woman, who was respectably dressed, is about 33 years of age, and by no means of prepossessing appearance, being of a sallow complexion, with dark brown hair, very thickly pitted in the face, and sore eyes. The male prisoner is of a light complexion, and a mere beardless youth of not more than twenty summers.—The Bench committed both prisoners to take their trial at the next Quarter Sessions, to be held at Cardiff during the present month. Bail being refused, both prisoners were removed in custody.

YSTRAD MYNACH, 1894

There may have been some local tittle-tattle in Ystrad Mynach in 1894 after John Price (of the woollen factory in what is now Commercial Street) not only dismissed his brother, Edward, a widower, from work at the factory, but also sent him from the family home. Local tongues probably wagged even more when they heard of Edward's letter to the wife of John Thomas, a weaver living in Brick Row (Commercial Street), telling her that he was in Pontypool, and had found work for both of them in Llanover Factory. Not surprisingly, there were recriminations in the Brick Row home, and Mrs Thomas left on the train to Quaker's Yard, telling her young daughter she was off to Rhondda Valley, and would write to her. When no letter arrived, John Thomas made enquiries and found she had gone to join Edward Price, and they may have moved to Herefordshire. Sources studied to date have not shed any light on their future fates.

A BARGOED BREACH OF PROMISE CASE

GHS is grateful to member David Mills who, during his researches into the history of Wingfield Colliery, found, under this heading, in *South Wales Daily News* 7 April 1876, a report about a case in Monmouthshire Assizes. Sarah Bath, née Bendall, the plaintiff, *claimed damages for the alleged breach of promise to marry* and the defendant, Thomas Williams, *pleaded in denial of the promise*.

The 1871 census return shows Sarah, daughter of coalminer Abraham Bendall and his wife, Harriet, as a 16-year-old dressmaker living in the family home in Brithdir Terrace, Brithdir. She married George Bath, a Tirphil coalminer, in December 1873, but, sadly, he died in January 1874, and she returned to earning a living as a dressmaker before, in July 1874, becoming housekeeper to Thomas Williams.

Thomas Williams, a widowed father of three sons and one daughter, and over twenty years older than Sarah, was a blacksmith, with one of his sons working alongside him, at Wingfield Colliery, a large colliery belonging to Messrs Bevan and Pryce, Bargoed. The fact that his name is so common in the area at the time makes it difficult to identify him with certainty in census returns. Readers will not be surprised to learn that Sarah and Thomas interpreted the relationship that developed between them in different ways.

This is how the report described Sarah's view of their relationship as presented to the court:

After she [Sarah Bath] had been there a month he [Thomas Williams] said she was a very good girl, and he liked her very much. He said he was very glad he had met her, and perhaps she might be his second wife. She said she was very young. He said, "Never mind, there's plenty to keep you like a lady, and you need not go from here as long as you live." He asked her if she liked him, and she said, "Yes, Thomas, I like you very well." He said, "Do you like me well enough to get married?" She said, "Yes." He also said his children liked him very much. He was always asking her to be his wife. One of the boys said he liked her better than he did his father.

And, regarding his financial situation:

He [Thomas Williams] earned £12 a month..... told her [Sarah Bath] many times he was worth £1,500. He said he had an inn called the Bargoed Inn, worth £1,000, but he would not take £2,000 for it. The house he lived in and the one next door, he said, were his own.

By the autumn of 1874, Sarah was pregnant:

After she was in the family way she said he had better take to her at once, and he said he would make her his wife. Her father and mother were sent for, and he asked if they were willing that he should marry her. He said to them. "Me and the poor girl have come to terms, and I'll marry your daughter before the end of April [1875], and I hope you won't think the worse of me." Her father said. "You got her into trouble, and you are the fittest to get her out." Defendant said, "I will; she has done a good job for herself; I'll make a lady of her; I am a man worth £1,500 any minute." He said they would get married at the register office, in Old Tredegar.

Abraham Bendall told the court that he had heard about the promise of marriage before he knew his daughter was pregnant. By early April 1875, both Abraham Bendall and his wife were in conversations with Thomas Williams. Abraham Bendall and solicitor, Mr Dixon, met with Thomas Williams in Old Mill public house, Bargoed, Abraham Bendall said that, on 4 April, Thomas

Williams *said he was glad to see him, as he wished to marry the plaintiff before the end of April*. When Abraham Bendall saw him on 6 April, Thomas Williams *said he was willing to marry the plaintiff, but his children objected*, and he repeated this to Mr Dixon the following day.

When Thomas Williams described his financial position to the court, it appeared to be less secure than what Sarah had believed it to be:

He had a mortgage on the Bargoed Inn. It was a leasehold property. The rent was £50 a year, with the usual deductions. His two cottages were worth £150. His wages were 4s a day when working. He was not working now half time. Did not promise to marry the girl without consulting his children. He let the Bargoed Inn to the Rhymney Company, and they pay him £70 a year. The company let it at £50. Would swear that he never brought home £12 a month, and showed it to the plaintiff, In 1874 he was getting 5s a day, and sometimes 5s 8d. His son worked for the company, and paid for his board.

Never had a farthing in any bank. Never said he had £170 in the bank. Did not say he had a house at Blackwood.

And, regarding his relationship with Sarah Bath he said:

He was not satisfied that he was the father of the plaintiff's child, although he was paying for it.... Did not say he would "make a lady of her," nor that "he would go to live at the Bargoed Inn." His children said that if he married the plaintiff they would leave him.

Thomas Williams also had a somewhat different interpretation of the meeting in Old Mill public house, Bargoed.

The lawyer came, and he [Thomas Williams] refused to sign a paper promising to marry the plaintiff.... they all went to the Old Mill Inn, and there were three quarts of beer produced. He did not pay for any. Refusing to sign the paper, and the lawyer said "I shall issue a writ to-morrow."

In response to Mr Dixon's letter of 11 May to lawyers Messrs Simon and Plews *asking for the fulfilment of the promise to marry, or pay 10s a week for the child*, the lawyers of Thomas Williams *replied that the terms were too extravagant to be noticed.*

Sarah left the house of Thomas Williams in June 1875, and her son, Thomas George Bendall, was born, in Risca, on 29th of that month. In August 1875, the magistrates made an order that Thomas Williams should pay 4s a week towards the child. Thomas Williams got married in November 1875, but the identity of his bride is unclear.

At the end of this case in April 1876 Mr Justice Field summed up and *the jury found for the plaintiff, damages £20.*

WIFE NOT SEEN FOR 23 YEARS.

A strange marriage tangle was unravelled at Bargoed (England) when John Evans, a contractor, was summoned for desertion by Martha Evans, who told the court she married him in 1903, at Ross, and lived with him until he was called up as a reservist at the outbreak of war. She had since learned of his discharge from the army and of his living with another woman.

Evans said this other woman was his wife, whom he married at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1891, and left her the following year to join the army. He thought she was dead, not having seen her for 23 years, and married again. But an old schoolmate some months ago told him of her whereabouts. And he returned to her as his first love and lawful wife.

The bench dismissed the case.

JOHN EVANS OF BARGOED

On 26 January 1918, readers of *The Evening Star* in Boulder, Western Australia, read this report on the matrimonial case of John Evans of Bargoed. While John Evans and his bride of 1891 may have been happy, one wonders how Martha, his bride in 1903, felt.

VANDALISM AT CRAIGFARGOED

On 28 March 1911, this report appeared in *The Telegraph*, a Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, newspaper.

VANDALISM IN A CHURCH.—

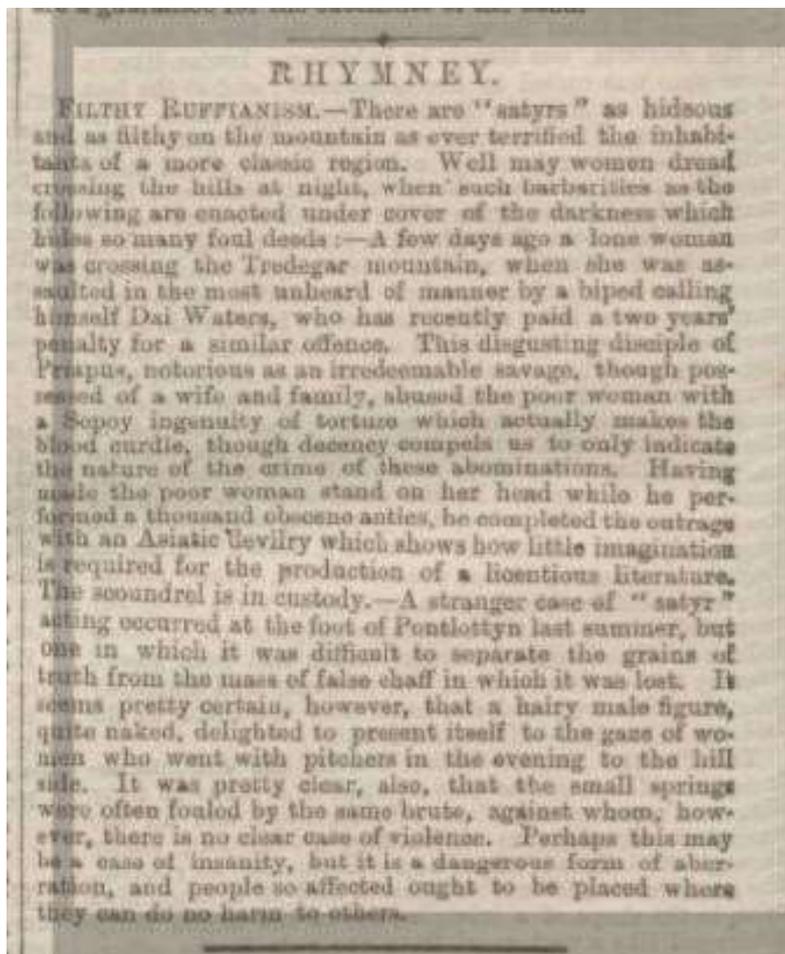
Wilful destruction of an extensive character has been done to the interior of Craigfargoed Chapel, near Bargoed, Rhynney Valley, which dates back to 1797. Old high-backed seats have been hacked to pieces, the rostrum smashed, and a costly grave headstone in the burial ground broken.

FILTHY RUFFIANISM

This extract, under the heading *Rhymney*, is from *Hereford Times*, 6 November 1858 (page 15), and reports on dangers in an area that included north-east Gelligaer.

NOTES:

1. In Greek mythology, the Satyroi (Satyrs) were rustic fertility spirits of the countryside and wilds, and Priapus was a minor rustic fertility god.
2. A sepoy was a professional Indian infantryman, usually armed with a musket, in the armies of the Mughal Empire, and, nineteenth century readers may have associated them with the East India Company.



STEALING COAL

Written by David Mills, this item includes material that he uncovered while researching local coal mining for GHS Diamond Jubilee publication.

During the 19th century when the coal industry started to develop in south Wales, the theft of coal became an almost every day event. The reasons for the thefts were many and varied ranging from being an almost necessity by the poor families to nothing other than sheer greed by some of the coal owners. The sentences imposed by the courts similarly varied from fines or prison with hard labour, to the ultimate sanction of transportation to a penal colony overseas. However, that statement does not apply to coal owners, their remedies against each other were always financial, sometimes supported by injunctions and dealt with by the Civil Courts.

The Monmouthshire Merlin of 10 April 1841 felt the need to make a general announcement about the increasing numbers of committals by the courts for coal stealing. It claimed that by far the greater number of persons committed were *children, many of them of tender years whose daily occupation is plunder*. It claimed that many of the juvenile offenders *were assisted by persons of a riper age*. This comment suggests Fagin-like characters were organising thefts, which puts the crimes into a different league from those who stole coal simply to have a fire in the hearth. The author of the article went on to say *This is indeed a lamentable state of things and one utterly subversive of the morality of the working classes*. It was said that, at the recent assizes, there were no less than nine prisoners tried for the offence of stealing coal, one of whom was

sentenced to transportation. The Judge warned the others that should they appear in court in the future for the same offence, and, if found guilty, they, too, would be transported. Many prisoners found guilty of stealing coal received custodial sentences ranging from one to four weeks, and were often subjected to the additional penalty of hard labour. This meant that the prisoners not only had to endure the privations of the prison cell and a very “harsh” diet but also had to carry out sometimes meaningless tasks such as walking in a treadmill for most of the day; others were required to break stones which could be used to repair roads.

Monmouth Glamorgan and Brecon Gazette 7 March 1840, reported on two females who pleaded guilty to the charge of stealing two hundred weight of coal, the property of Sir John Guest. Guest’s barrister addressed the court saying that it was the object of the prosecutor not to inflict any punishment but to impress upon the public mind that coal could not be stolen with impunity. The Judge addressed the prisoners:

You have both pleaded guilty. As this is the first offence, I hope it will be the last, and the lenity which is now shown will not be lost upon you. The sentence of the court is that you be im-prisoned one calendar month to hard labour.

In March 1841 it was reported that a Richard Sheehan was admitted to bail to take his trial at the ensuing Assizes for stealing **one pennyworth** of coal, the property of the Rock Colliery Company. His case was heard by a local magistrate who, at that time, did not have the power to deal with the offence of stealing coal no matter how small the value of the coal. The present-day value of the coal in this particular case is a mere **37p**. It took nearly ten years for the law to be changed so that a magistrate could deal with the crime of stealing coal as a summary offence.

A somewhat tongue in cheek notice appeared in *Merthyr Telegraph* 1 September 1855 which read: -

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN - We are requested to state that the owner of the Candle House situate on the riverside, near Cae-draw, will leave more large pieces of coal, any weight, in the same place where he left the last if the thief who stole the latter will kindly inform him at what hour it will be convenient to fetch them.

In 1842 an account appeared in *Monmouthshire Merlin* 19 March 1842 headed *A Caution to buyers of stolen coal*. It started by saying *George Dyer, a very little lad, was charged with having stolen a quantity of coal belonging to Thomas Powell*. Thomas Powell became a very rich coal owner and he appears later in this narrative as a perpetrator rather than as a victim of coal theft. Also, see *Thomas Powell, Coal Owner* by Howard G Meyrick *Gelligaer Journal Vol. V* 1968) The Policeman said he had seen the boy take a lump of coal from the last tram and hide it in a hedge. The boy was observed taking the coal to a house. After he was committed to take his trial on the charge of larceny the woman who bought the coal from the boy was brought into court and closely questioned. She was warned by the magistrate that she was subject to the law regarding receiving stolen goods. After the woman said she would never buy stolen coal again and also warn her neighbours not to follow her example the magistrate said *he did not think so well dressed, good looking and respectable a woman would wilfully commit an offence against the laws*. The woman was then dismissed from the court.

In 1897 a report appeared about a court case in the Rhondda valley. Four girls were charged and found guilty of stealing 120lbs coal to the value of eight pennies, the property of Llewellyn Wood. One girl was fined one shilling and the others two shillings and six pence each. The magistrate said that the girls were selling the coal somewhere, and, if the police could discover the purchasers, the bench would know what to do with them. The amounts involved at present day value are, eight pennies = £3.02, one shilling = £4.58, and two shillings and six pence = £11.45.

We now move on to the theft, there can be no other word to describe it despite what may have been said by the perpetrators, of coal on an industrial scale. In fact, the offence of

trespass was also levelled against the perpetrators. In the examples that follow the element of “accidentally” working another man’s coal was used as a partial defence.

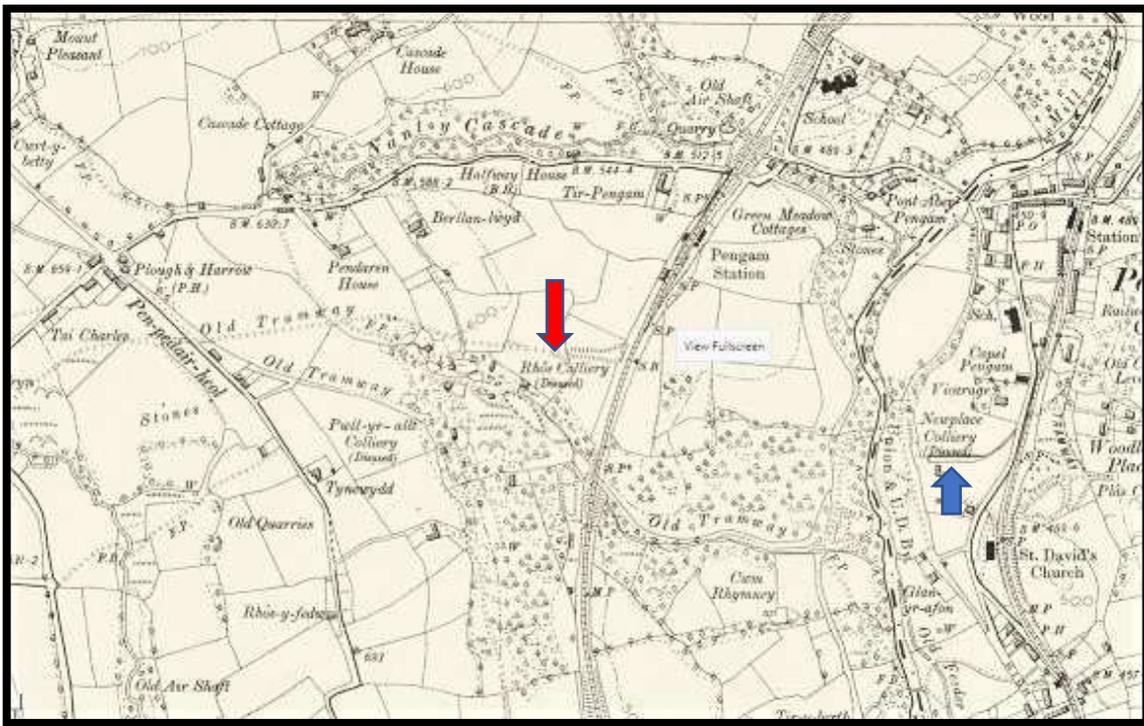
The coal owner and entrepreneur Thomas Powell of The Gaer, Newport, became involved in an acrimonious dispute with Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar House, Newport, who owned large swathes of land containing vast reserves of coal in south east Wales. The dispute eventually ended up as a court case which was heard at the Monmouth Spring Assizes, and reported in the *Monmouthshire Merlin* of 10 April 1841. The report is worth reading in full if only to take on board the plaudits made by the barristers in relation to their respective clients. The barrister representing Sir Charles Morgan, after heaping praise upon his client’s character went on to mention the defendant Thomas Powell. He said he did not wish to say anything disrespectful about him but then commented *putting character and everything out of the question when one man took the property of another wrongfully, reason and justice as well as the law said that the wrong-doer must make compensation.*

The reason behind the dispute arose in 1833 when Thomas Powell leased land from Lord Dynevor and John Hodder Moggridge which became Powell’s Buttery Hatch Colliery (where Ysgol Gufyn Cwm Rhymni, Fleur de Lis, now stands). Powell was unable to work some of the coal seams without having to drive his underground roadways through land belonging to Sir Charles Morgan. Powell believed that he was in a strong bargaining position because if he ceased pumping water out of his colliery the coal seams under Sir Charles’s land became unworkable, Powell attempted to negotiate an agreement with Sir Charles’s land agent Frederick Justice. Those negotiations failed. Frederick Justice had offered terms to Powell which had been reduced to writing. Powell refused to sign and by all accounts his attitude towards Frederick Justice became somewhat offensive.

Powell was not a man to take no for an answer so set about driving his underground roadways without any permission from Sir Charles Morgan. As a consequence, he removed over 6,000 tons of coal belonging to the Tredegar Estate without anyone knowing what was going on; this state of affairs continued for six years. When Powell’s trespass was discovered he sent an account of the coal he had unlawfully removed to the Tredegar Estate, the figures were rejected. This resulted in court proceedings where both parties engaged their own expert witnesses to prove the amount of coal that had been removed (or effectively stolen) by Powell. There was very little Powell could say in his defence other than his books had been available for inspection throughout the period in question and somewhat unbelievably he claimed it was all an accident. The amount of the damages to be awarded to Sir Charles had to be determined by the Jury after listening to the evidence of the expert witnesses. Powell was ordered to pay over £1400, which equates to a value in 2020 of at least £124,000.00. This episode is noted in *Fleur-de-Lys, The Story of Our Village* (Fleur-de-Lys History Society 2006, pp. 10-11).

Monmouthshire Merlin of 4 April 1873 reported on another example of trespassing by coal owners, a dispute between *Williams and others and Prothero and another*. Williams and others were the Williams brothers of Maesruddud near Blackwood who owned the Carn Gethin Coal Company and Prothero and another were Mr Charles Prothero, Clerk of the Peace for the County of Monmouthshire and his brother the Reverend George Prothero, Vicar of Whippingham and Canon of Westminster. They were the sons of the late Thomas Prothero, a Newport solicitor who had owned several collieries. Prothero sometimes worked in partnership with Thomas Powell, both were pioneers in the coal industry; additionally, both were entirely ruthless in their business dealings. The Prothero brothers owned New Place Pit which was situated near the river Rhymney at Pontaberpengam (present day Pengam) in Monmouthshire. The Carn Gethin Coal Company owned New Rhos pit, situated near present day Cascade the other side of the river in the parish of Gelligaer.

The map below shows the locations of the collieries (marked by arrows)



The newspaper account detailed how, prior to 1870, the Prothero brothers (strictly their workmen) had trespassed into the workings of the Williams brothers' New Rhos pit and appropriated a large quantity of coal. The Williams brothers, perhaps somewhat naïvely, believed it was an accident. An agreement was reached whereby the Williams brothers could use the Prothero brothers' pit to get access to their coal seams being worked by the New Rhos Pit and also bring it to the surface via Prothero's pit. All went well until 1872 when the mode of the workings of the Prothero brothers interfered with the workings of the Williams brothers. The damages claimed by Carn Gethin Coal Company (Williams brothers) were £1500. After a short adjournment it was agreed that the court proceedings would be referred to arbitration. The Prothero brothers, despite their somewhat exalted positions in society had inherited their father's ruthlessness in business matters.

The arbitration failed, resulting in a further hearing in a higher court, namely The Court of Exchequer sitting at Westminster. A report on the hearing, appearing in *County Observer and Monmouthshire Central Advertiser* 24 January 1874, gave details of how two collieries, despite being owned by different people, could operate in conjunction with each other. The original agreement was that men and horses working the Rhos Pit could, by using prescribed "headings"¹, have access to the level entrance at Place Pit, thereby letting the men and horses presumably have easier access to the seams of coal being worked at New Rhos Pit. The Prothero brothers refused to allow the Rhos workmen to use a certain heading and further refused to allow their level entrance to be used. They wanted a fresh agreement which detailed which headings could be used. The Williams brothers refused to sign a new agreement. The argument appeared to focus on the fact that since the original "gentlemen's agreement" there had been further headings/roadways constructed by the Prothero brothers which clearly could not have been included in the original deal. The report concluded by saying the barristers were attempting to reach a compromise.

When "Place Colliery" was sold in May 1879 the sale document contained the following

"The Carn Gethin Coal Co. having power reserved to raise Coal through the Place Pit, on payment of 11d. per ton."

Perhaps part of the compromise?

¹ A term used to describe the underground tunnels also described as roadways

THE DEMISE OF RICHARD JONES, ALIAS DICK PUDDING

PROLOGUE

Based on reports in contemporary newspapers, such as *South Wales Daily News* 24 July 1876, *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* 9 July 1870, *Western Mail* 4 July 1870, this sad tale, the demise of Richard Jones, alias Dick Pudding, is told in three acts. Before the tale starts, let me introduce you to the cast and the setting.

Born about 1830, **Richard Jones**, the star of the story, was unmarried, and widely known as Dick Pudding, probably to distinguish him from other local men called Richard Jones.

Other members of the cast will be introduced as the story progresses.

The story is set in **various locations in north east Gelligaer parish**, an area of open moorland scarred by the industrial workings of the previous half century or so. The mining sites, drainage channels and associated workings made it a dangerous area for travellers (on foot or on horseback), especially if alone, after dark, and, even more so, if the senses were dulled by alcohol. (For further description of the area, see *Gelligaer* volume 26 pp 22-28, as well as the range of maps of the area included at the end of this newsletter.)



Some of the dialogue is taken from the newspaper reports, some is the product of artistic licence, and some is omitted to allow readers the opportunity to insert any likely comments.

ACT 1 NORTH EAST GELLIGAER PARISH, JUNE 1859.

Scene i Sunday 12 June, Blaen Rhymney, an old farmhouse, home to employees of Rhymney Iron Company.

Richard Jones, unmarried farm labourer or haulier, aged about 30, puts on his blue neckerchief.

boots and cap, and sets out from his home at Blaen Rhymney.

Scene ii Later on 12 June, Rising Sun Inn (alias Fochriw Inn), Fochriw, a public house near the emerging coal mining community, frequented by, among others, employees in the local collieries of Dowlais Iron Company. David Morgan was the innkeeper at Rising Sun Inn from before the 1861 census until his death, 20 September 1875, and his widow, Susannah, continued there until after the 1901 census was taken.

Richard Jones is drinking in Rising Sun Inn.

An amorous couple, Rees Morgan and the female servant employed at Rising Sun Inn, are outside the back of the inn when Richard Jones leaves the inn later that evening.

Some women going home from chapel saw Richard Jones (in the company of one, or maybe

more, men) heading from Fochriw towards Blaen Rhymney

Richard Jones did not return home.

Rees Morgan did not return to Colly, where he lived with Morgan Thomas.

Scene iii 13 June, the local area, extending beyond Gelligaer parish, into neighbouring parishes of Bedwelly (Monmouthshire), Llangynidr (Breconshire), and Merthyr Tydfil, especially the area around Dowlais.

Rees Morgan, having spent the night at Rising Sun Inn, leaves for home. Family, friends and acquaintances of Richard Jones realise he is missing. A search is mounted.

Groups of men check iron ore and coal workings, drainage channels, and feeder ponds, for any signs of Richard Jones.

During the search, Thomas Jones, brother of Richard Jones, sees Rees Morgan on the mountain.

Rees Morgan finds a blood-stained cap on the mountain. He throws it down and leaves it there.

Searcher 1 *What about searching Tunnel Pit?*

Searcher 2 *Yes, he might have gone there.*

Searcher 1 *Partly sunk it is, I was working on it a while ago. We got down to 80 yards, but then they abandoned it.*

Searcher 2 *Abandoned now, is it? Good place for a suicide.*

Searcher 1 *Yes, abandoned and we covered the mouth of the pit up with sleepers. Heavy they are too, one man wouldn't be able to move one. So I wouldn't go there if I wanted to commit suicide.*

Searcher 2 *And there will be water at the bottom of the sinking now. Would need to be dried out before we can see what is there.*

Mr. Thomas, overman employed by Dowlais Company *It is far too expensive to dry Tunnel Pit for a search.*

Thomas Henry, of Rhymney, searching alone on the summit of Cwmbargoed, spots something: *What is this? Oh! someone's cap. Looks as if it might be Dick Pudding's cap. I will have to ask Thomas, his brother, he would know.*

Thomas Henry takes the cap and goes to find Thomas Jones

Thomas Henry *Hey, Thomas Jones, I found this up on Cwmbargoed. Recognise it?*

Thomas Jones *Yes, that's Richard's cap. Is that all that was there? Any other clues around there?*

Thomas Henry *Nothing else that I could see.*

Scene iv Soon after, at a local railway station.

There is much hustle and bustle, as people, including friends and family of the travellers, crowd on to the railway platform to say good-bye to emigrants bound for America.

Travellers, mainly men, and including colliers Rees Morgan and Henry Williams (both aged about 30), board the train before it steams out of the station taking them on the first leg of their journey to a new life in America.

ACT 2 DOWLAIS IRON COMPANY'S TUNNEL PIT, SUMMER 1870

Scene i, Dowlais Iron Company decides to re-open Tunnel Pit. Several men are working there.

Sinker 1 *This is hard work.*

Sinker 2 *Yes, moving all those sleepers they covered the pit with, heavy they were, even with a few of us to do the lifting. They hadn't been moved for about twelve years. It was hard work, and that was with a few of us all helping to move them. At least we know there won't be anything nasty in the pit, nothing could have got down there. And now, pumping out all this water, and widening the sides before we can start to sink it any deeper.*

Sinker 1 *I reckon the water is about 60 feet deep in this pit.*

Sinker 2 *Not surprising, twelve years covered up, and undisturbed.*

The sinkers carried on with their hard work, pumping out the water and widening the sides, for several days.

Scene ii Friday 1 July, at the now-dry bottom of Tunnel Pit

Sinkers 1 and 2 start to clear away some of the debris that had fallen as they widened the pit, and then, both men let out a scream.

Sinker 1 *Well, what have we got here?*

Sinker 2 *Looks to me as if it is a lot of something that shouldn't be here.*

Sinker 1 *Wish we hadn't found this.*

Sinker 2 *Me too,*

Sinker 1 *Well, we have. So let's see what it is exactly.*

Sinker 2 *Stinks a bit.*

Sinker 1 *Yes, it has been here a while by the look of things.*

Sinker 2 *It is a skeleton. Do you think it is human, or maybe one of those sheep that graze around here fell in before they put the cover on.*

Sinker 1 *I don't think sheep attach a chain and a tram wheel to their bodies before they fall into a hole like this!*

Sinker 2 *What you saying? It is a heavy chain. Do you think someone attached them to a sheep and watched it fall into the pit?*

Sinker 1 *No. I think it is a human skeleton.*

Sinker 2 *Are you sure?*

Sinker 1 *Well count the legs, and draw your own conclusion.*

Sinker 2 *And what are these? Looks like a boot and a blue neckerchief to me. Amazing how it kept its colour down here.*

Sinker 1 *I suppose the depth of water prevented everything from becoming totally decomposed.*

Scene i Saturday 2 July

Inquest, before Mr Overton and a respectable jury, on the skeleton is formally opened.

Matthew Truman (mining engineer) *The tram wheel did not belong to Dowlais Iron Company.*
The inquest is adjourned for inquiries to be made.

Scene iii Wednesday 13 July

The adjourned inquest was opened only to be adjourned again.

And, as there was still no new evidence, that was repeated on Friday 22 July.

ACT 3 **NORTH EAST GELLIGAER, SUMMER 1876**

Scene i 22 June 1876, Mount Pleasant Inn, Pentwyn, where Llewellyn Davies, formerly a local shepherd, had been the innkeeper for a few years.

Rees Morgan walks into Mount Pleasant Inn, Pentwyn.

Margaret Davies (wife of innkeeper, Llewellyn Davies) *Hello stranger, I haven't seen you around here before. I was born in Carmarthenshire, but I've been here for nineteen years, so I know most of the people who live here.*

Rees Morgan *I've been in America for about fourteen years. Now, I'm back in my homeland. I'm travelling around from place to place. I'm on my way to Ystalyfera, but I'm afraid to cross the mountain tonight. You never know what dangers are there. I'd like a room to sleep before I set out again tomorrow.*

There were other people, including Daniel Thomas, a haulier, and Thomas Davies, present in Mount Pleasant who heard Rees Morgan continue talking. Eventually, Rees Morgan turned the conversation to what had happened to Richard Jones.

Rees Morgan *Me and three others (and two of them are still living) know what happened to Richard Jones.*

There was more conversation about the fate of Richard Jones.

Rees Morgan *Richard Jones was murdered because he had driven a cow from a field, and the cow ran into a rough place where she suffered a broken leg.*

Scene ii 30 June 1876 in various locations in Fochriw

Thomas Davies and David Thomas talking to Rees Morgan.

Rees Morgan *Do you remember the murder of Richard Jones, alias Dick Pudding?*

Thomas Davies and David Thomas *No. When was that? What happened? Who murdered him?*

Rees Morgan *It was before I went to America.*

I lodged at a certain place in Blaen-Rhymney, and I went a few days after the murder to the Tunnel pit with a man, and pointed out the marks of the mandril, and that was the mark where they used the mandril to raise one of the planks to throw the body into the pit.

I know why the murder was committed.

A relative (now dead) of the murderers advised me to take what I knew about the murder to my grave.

Scene iii 1 July 1876, Tunnel Pit, then a working pit.

Rees Morgan arrived at Tunnel Pit

Rees Morgan *Is Henry Williams working here?*

Man working at Tunnel Pit *Yes, he is.*

Rees Morgan *I cannot understand how he can work in that pit, because he is connected with the men who killed and threw the body down the pit.*

Scene iv Merthyr Police Court Saturday 22 July 1876

Henry Williams and Rees Morgan, two stalwart colliers, both aged 30-40 years, appeared in Merthyr Police Court charged with murder of Richard Jones.

Henry Williams had recently returned from America while Rees Morgan had recently worked in Gilfach-Rhyd Colliery, near Quakers Yard.

Witnesses, Daniel Thomas and Thomas Davies, were called and recounted Rees Morgan's conversation in Mount Pleasant Inn on 26 June 1876.

Henry Williams was discharged, as there was insufficient evidence to detain him.

Rees Morgan was remanded for a week.

Scene v Merthyr Police Court ? August 1876

Rees Morgan, looking ill and pale, appeared before Merthyr Police Court.

Witnesses Thomas Jones, brother of Richard Jones, and Margaret Davies, wife of the innkeeper of Mount Pleasant Inn, give evidence. Rees Morgan was remanded for a further week,

Scene vi Merthyr Police Court Monday 7 August 1876

Rees Morgan surrendered himself, depositions were read and signed.

Rees Morgan was discharged as there was insufficient evidence to convict him.

EPILOGUE

Unless readers of *Gelligaer Times* can uncover any further information, the circumstances surrounding the demise of Richard Jones, alias Dick Pudding, will remain a mystery, at least for the time being.

**A REMINDER – GHS Committee plans an August 2020 newsletter on the theme of SUMMER.
Please send your contributions on this theme by 18 August.**

**IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS AND/OR QUESTIONS ON THIS NEWSLETTER SUPPLEMENT, OR
HAVE SOME INTERESTING FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHS OR STORIES FOR INCLUSION IN A
FUTURE SUPPLEMENT**

PLEASE CONTACT

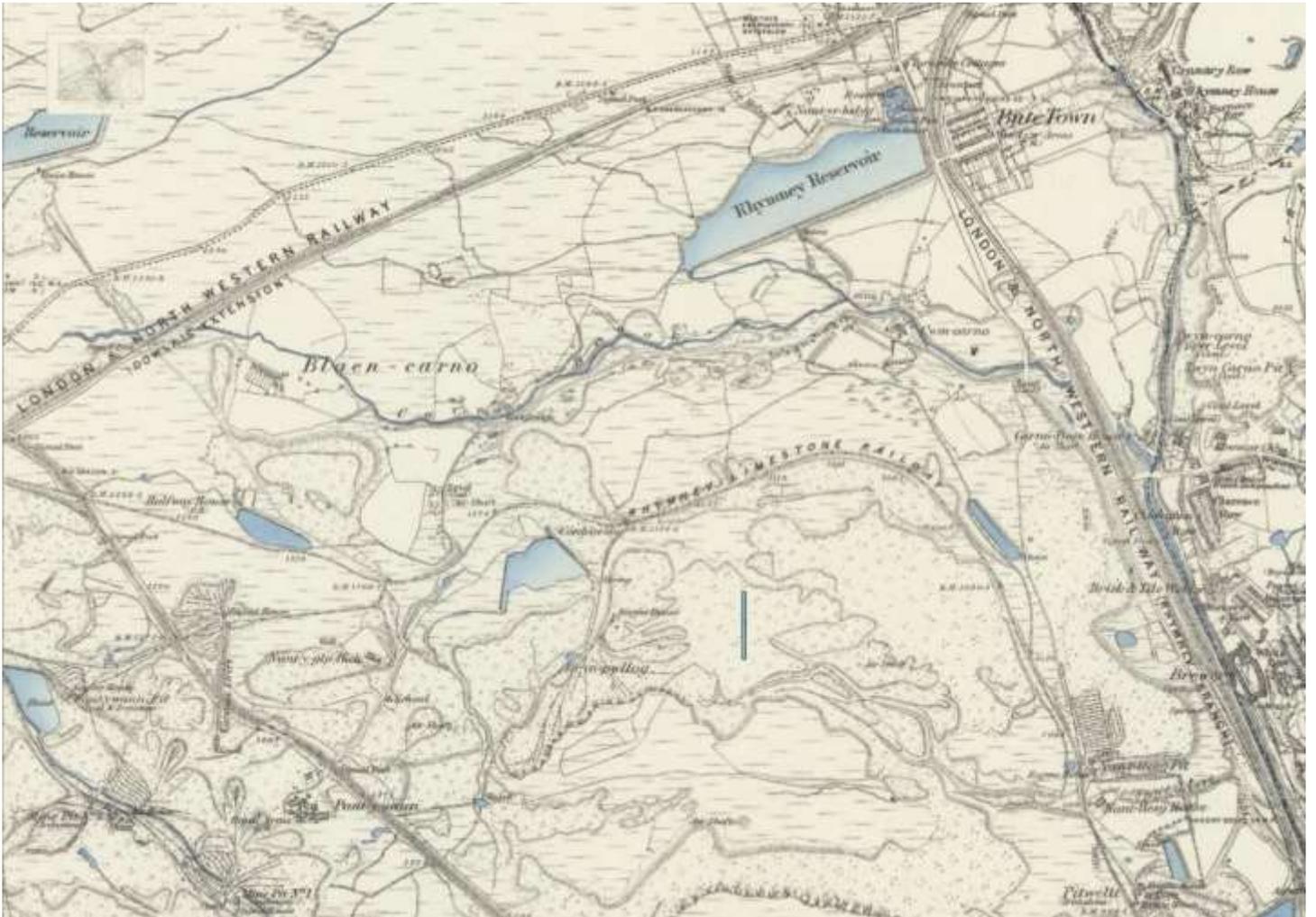
www.gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk or chairmen@gelligaerhistoricalsociety.co.uk

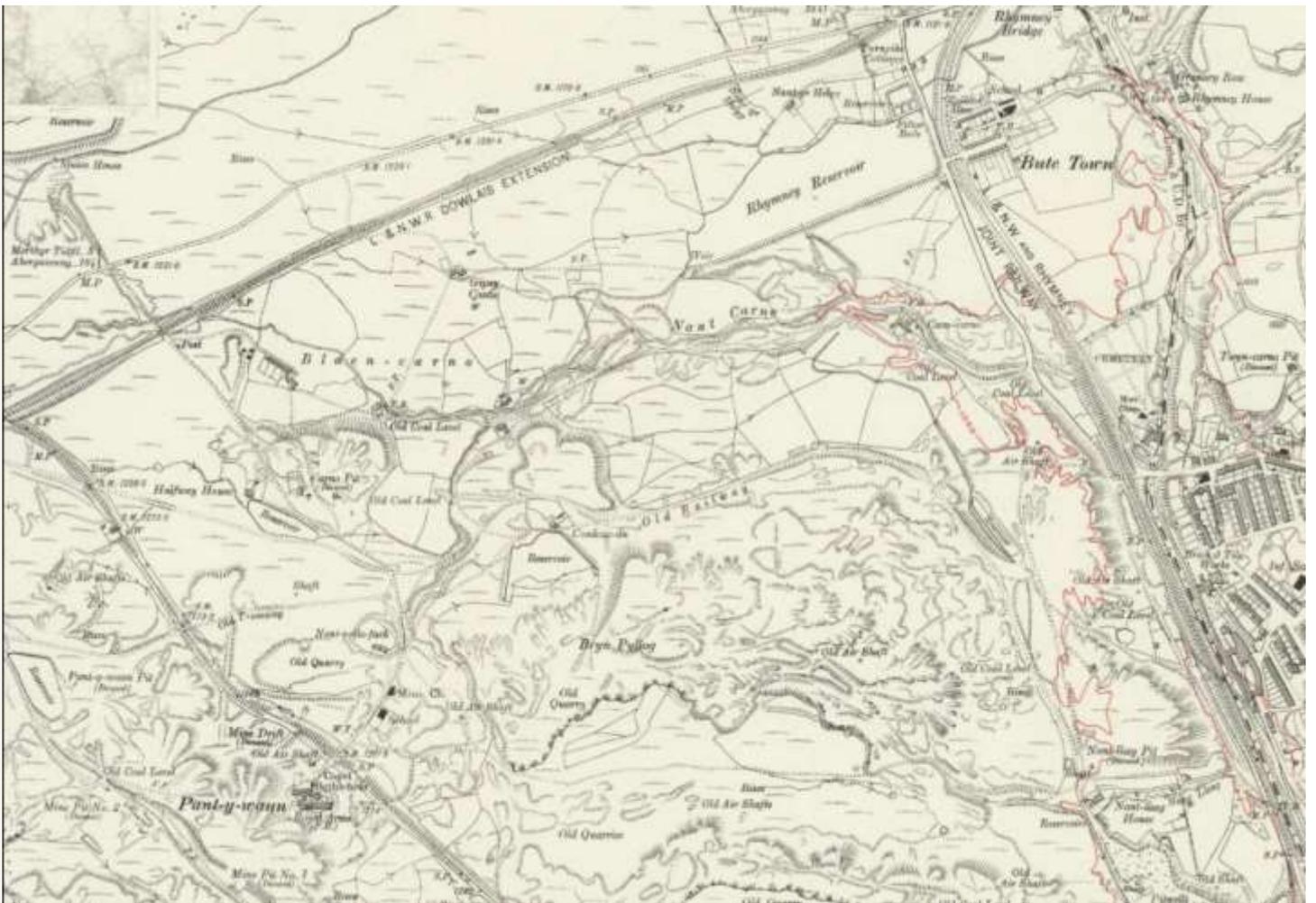
See Over



Above 1841 – Gelligaer Tithe Map

Above: 1889 Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1875-79)





Above: 1922 Ordnance Survey Map (revised 1915)

Below: 1951 Ordnance Survey Map (revised 1948)

