

BRYNMAWR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS UPDATE

MAY 2013

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The following are extracts from "Report of Industrial Group" organised by Miss Hilda Jennings for her book on Brynmawr - "A study of a Distressed Area" published about 1934. Hopefully, you will find the extracts as interesting as the writer does.

GARDERRYS IRON WORKS

The Rolling Mills of Messrs Hill and Hopkins were established at Garderrys in 1835 the hill between pierced by a tunnel trough which pig iron was carried in trams drawn by horses to Garderrys where it underwent puddling and rolling by means of charcoal. From Garderrys the finished iron was conveyed to Llanfoist by tranline to canal and thence to Newport. A tram road also ran to Hereford along which iron was conveyed.

In 1907, the rolling mill was dismantled and a new plant erected on Coity side of Blaenavon. This was due to the discovery of coal as a better means of iron making. Probably the advent of the railway at Blaenavon also caused the Garderrys works to decline. Iron ore is now imported from Spain, owing to the fact that it pays commercially. The ore at Blaenavon and Garderrys is of a refractory nature containing a large amount of phosphorous so that the smelting operation is a very costly one and the proportional yield of metal is small.

It is interesting to know that the iron used in making Crumlin Viaduct was obtained from Garderrys Ironworks which came to an end in 1860.

RURAL INDUSTRIES IN THE DISTRICT BETWEEN BRYNMAWR AND ABERGAVENNY

Apart from the penetration of the district to the north east of Brynmawr by industrial undertakings and the exploitation of the natural resources such as limestone, there were at one time a number of small rural industries, among such industries Flannel Making was perhaps the most important. Nearly 50 years ago the old Malt House at Gilwern which had ceased operations was rebuilt and machinery was installed for the manufacture of Welsh flannels. It was worked by a motive power "overshot" water wheel, and a considerable number of skilled weavers were employed by Mr David Thomas who later removed to Clydach.

THE FLANNEL FACTORY AT CLYDACH

This was on the site of the old ironworks (I am informed this was not correct, the site was about ¼ miles from the Ironworks) and at one time after it was taken over by Mr Thomas employed about a dozen men. The making of flannel was abandoned at Clydach about 1910, no doubt owing to the same causes which influenced the weaving industry in other parts of Wales.

Flannel making was also undertaken at Govilon at Tyr Factory Cottage. Both at Gilweern and Clydach the Flannel industry came to an end, efforts were made to use the buildings for other purposes.

Remainder of this article in the September issue

20th February "Slave Wales" Dr Chris Evans

Unfortunately, this lecture didn't take place Dr Evans had to cancel at the last minute leaving us without a lecturer, however our Secretary, Eifion Lloyd Davies filled the bill with his "Scotch Cattle" An excellent choice and excellently delivered, as expressed by all.

20th March "The Hereford Mappa Mundi: an Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Mind" Dr Rosemary Firman.

Though many of our members have visited the Cathedral at Hereford to see the map, the explanation and slides given by Dr Firman made it considerably more interesting and possibly a visit to "The Chained Library" and "The Map" might be a consideration for the future.

The following is an article sent in by Eifion, possibly from 'The Merthyr Express' October 3rd 1895

QUOIT MATCH

The return match between Brynmawr and Hereford City and County Conservative Club was played at Brynmawr on Thursday last, when a capital encounter took place. The weather was gloriously fine, like an Indian Summer and the pitch was in grand condition. The play was followed with great interest by the spectators, of whom there were a goodly few.

The Brynmawr Club was minus Mr. Price. Their Captain, Dr. Edmonston, who is one of the latest additions to the Brynmawr club played in good style. The scores were as follows:-Brynmawr T.W. Bevan 19. J. Charles 21.

Dr Edmonston 21. E.W. Jones 21. W. Gibbs 21. I Cook 12. J. Pearce 21 Total 141. Hereford C and C.C Club: A Neesham 21, H. Mason 15 J Seymour 11, E. Heath 20, W. Roberts 21, H.R. Rogers, 18. H. Preece 5, Total 111 majority of 30 for Brynmawr. After the match the members of the two teams dined together at the Griffin Hotel, when a number of toasts were heartily drunk, a most pleasant time being spent by all.

QUESTION But where was the quoit pitch?

And now, an article sent in by Clifford Hendy.
April 14th 1911, Abergavenny Chronicle

Brynmawr Institute Annual Meeting

The Annual meeting in connection with the members of the Brynmawr Institute was held on Friday evening, at the Carnegie Library, the president, Mr S.H. Cowper Coles, presiding. There were also present: Rev. J.W. Davies (Bailey St., Richard Jones, Gwylim Morgan J.M. Thomas, D.E. Harris, E. Evans, Titus Phillips, T. Bowen, James Davies, T. Harris, Henry Harris, S.H. Padwick, (Treasurer) and Enoch Griffiths.

The statement of accounts submitted showed that a profit of £67. 10s 11d had been made "on the year's working. In his report to the members Mr Griffiths drew attention to the increase in billiard receipts, but pointed out that there had been a decrease in member's fees and hon. member's subscriptions. He expressed the hope that members owing arrears would clear them up as soon as possible and for the future pay their subscriptions throughout the summer months and according to rule in advance AND we all know what the Carnegie Library is now don't we?

17th April 2013 "Deakins is Coming- Bill Treen"

So many times I say "that was the largest audience we have had up to date", but once again it must be said "That was definitely the largest audience we have ever had", it was pleasing to see the number of casual visitors that came along, one or two actually joined the society. Happily, we go from strength to strength.

Bill Treen the lecturer, was born in Barton St., Tewkesbury, where the home of the Annual Mop Fair is held, so Bill was always interested in "fairs" thus he was also, always a "Deakin Fan" when approached he was very pleased to co-operate with Robert Deakin; one of Margaret Deakins' grandsons, to record the history of that great Welsh fairground family.

This was an interesting, friendly evening with a great deal of audience participation and many local memories.

For his services to the showmen and support for the fair, Bill Treen was made an Honorary Life Member of the Showmen's Guild in 2006. Bill Treen's fee for this evening goes to the Children's Charity

REMINDERS

Annual Dinner 27th September 2013
~~at~~ & ~~at~~, Abergavenny - to be confirmed

hamb & flag

Social Evening, Brynmawr Social Club- 4th December 2013. Put these dates in your diary
Literature available shortly.

24th April 2013- Luncheon Club Visit

In a year of umbrellas, mac's and woollen garments we were lucky, at least partly, the wind was strong and it was cold, but fine! Travel wise, we never actually got lost but the 'Sat Nav' had a lot to answer for, fortunately, our driver Brian got the 51 seater out of a few difficult situations, once or twice a bit scary, but nevertheless lovely country lanes. It was a day out and it was great.

The visit to St Illtyd's Church, Llantwit Major was suggested by our secretary Eifion Lloyd Davies, who also arranged, (together with the tea and biscuits,) the guide who informed us, together with other information, that the stone crosses and the artefacts we had hoped to see, were indeed being restored and cleaned. We did see them but not in situ.

Cowbridge made a 'hit', with most of the party suggesting another visit, another time.

The 'Victoria Inn' Sigington was a typical country inn, warm and welcoming, the food hot and plentiful and beautifully cooked, unfortunately, the service on one or two tables was a bit slow, this was reported, they did apologise and were obliging and helpful in every other matter.

On our return journey the old type map was much in evidence and we travelled without problems.

The 'Luncheon Club' trip starts later in the morning to have a nice relaxed day, from the comments received I believe we did and many thanks to you all for your participation, it was for me, eventually - a pleasure. PGJ

Oswestry, Chirk Castle & Gardens

Saturday 8th June 2013. £21.00 entrance included.
National Trust members coach Fare only £14.00.

There are a few coach seats still available, please contact Pearl Jones 01495 310 931 A.S.A.P
The pick up time at Brynmawr is somewhat relaxed and will be 8,50 am.
Toilet stop en-route. Lunch at Oswestry before the visit to Chirk Castle.

It would appear a few of our members have still forgotten to pay their membership fee of £6.00. As a new membership register is in the process of being compiled it would be helpful not to have to change it again in the near future. Thank you

GLASGOW & LOCH LOMOND.

Monday 7th-Friday 11th October 2013
4 nights half board at 3* Erskin Bridge Hotel
all trips included £310 p.p twin/double room
Contact number . 01495 313539 Merrill Caleb