

## Who was Crawshay Bailey and what did he do for us?



On the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 1872, Crawshay Bailey died peacefully at his home in Llanfoist near Abergavenny, (his wife Ann Moore whom he had married in 1850 had died on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1865, she was previously married to William Bailey, Crawshay' brother, who had died in 1834). He had had a son, Crawshay Bailey Jr with Sarah Baker in 1821; he also had a daughter, Jane. Crawshay's final public appearance had been on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, 1870 to lay the foundation stone for the new church built for the Brynmawr congregation. But who was Crawshay Bailey whose name would be recognised around the world, but in Blaenau Gwent only as the owner of the Nant y Glo Iron Works and possibly a very unpleasant master?

Crawshay was not born in Normanton (which is near Wakefield in Yorkshire) as so many thought but in Great Wenham, Suffolk, in 1789. He was the youngest son of John Bailey and his wife Susannah who had lived in Normanton before moving to Great Wenham. He had three sisters and four brothers, one of whom was Joseph Bailey who would be the great, great, great grandfather of Shân "Tiggy" Legge-Bourke. Their mother, Susannah was the sister of Richard Crawshay who became the owner of the Cyfarthfa Iron Works in Merthyr and allegedly, one of the richest men in the world at that time. Legend has it that both Joseph and Crawshay walked from Great Wenham to Merthyr to seek work at the Cyfarthfa works with their uncle. They must have made quite an impression because when Richard Crawshay died he left money to both, which they used to buy The Nant y Glo iron works.

The original works at Nant y Glo was started in 1795 by Hill, Harford & Co. By 1800 due to problems and misunderstanding between the owners the works was at a standstill. Nothing of worth was done until 1811 when it was bought by Joseph Bailey and Matthew Wayne. Matthew Wayne disposed of his share of the business to Joseph Bailey around 1813/4<sup>(4)</sup> and he set up his own iron works, the Gadlys Iron Works at Aberdare. His place at Nant y Glo was taken by Crawshay Bailey and the brothers commenced business under great

difficulties. Joseph was the investor but it was the energy and perseverance of Crawshay Bailey, who acted as manager and undertook the whole charge of the working department that Nantyglo in a few years attained the rank of one of the chief concerns in Monmouthshire. Joseph and Crawshay had made Nant y Glo one of the most important iron works in the country. By 1827 they had seven blast furnaces working and they soon added the Beaufort Iron Works putting their sister's son, William Partridge in charge. Most of the success was due to Crawshay's hard work and the two brothers within a few years had amassed a vast amount of money.

They decided to buy the Aberaman works and Crawshay Bailey moved there to oversee the works; this after twenty five years at Nant y Glo. After a few years though he moved back to Nant y Glo as things seemed to be moving slower at the works than it was when he was there. Around this time he started sharing his time between the three iron works, Nant y Glo, Beaufort and Aberaman. This started to affect his health and he decided to sell the Aberaman works. Later he withdrew from the business for a season leaving others to oversee the remaining two works. After his withdrawal the works appeared to go on so badly that they were almost, if not entirely, stopped and he had again to step in and take up the management of affairs, which he continued until he eventually sold the works to the Blaina Iron Company. He retired to his home at Llanfoist until his death in 1872.

Crawshay, like many of the iron masters of the period had no time for trade unions and the Chartist movement; in fact even today industry bosses have made numerous attempts to make trade union membership difficult.

### **But what did Crawshay Bailey do for us?**

Today many often only think of Crawshay Bailey as a tyrannical Iron master and of course as the man immortalised in the well known rugby song,



“Crawshay Bailey had an engine,” and depending on which version you hear, his sister also makes a cameo appearance. Certainly not suitable for children under the age of 16! Crawshay did in fact own an engine; it was known as The Cymro, (see left)

and it would be used to pull the trams across the Hafod Road to the limestone quarries above Llangattock where there was also an incline down to the canal at Llangattock. Crawshay was able to access the canal there making it cheaper for him to get his product to markets, e.g. limestone for the farming area of the Usk Valley. Pig iron would also be carried across to the incline as well and limestone brought back for the furnaces at Nant y Glo. (*The Nantyglo and Llangattock Railway including the incline was opened on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1830, it had just been completed at an enormous expense by those spirited and liberal individuals Messrs. J. and C. Bailey. The first coal carried along it, amounting to twenty-five tons, was distributed among the poor of the parishes of Llangattock and Crickhowell*) <sup>(3)</sup>. Access to the canal was of prime importance for Crawshay to get his products to the markets and the wharf at Gilwern being the nearest was the obvious place. The company who controlled the canal and wharf at Gilwern would be charging premium price for anyone wanting to load or unload at the wharf; also the Clydach Railroad (not the main railway line; that will come later) that ran down the north side of the Clydach Gorge through Black Rock would also expect payment from anyone using it. This prompted Joseph and Crawshay to build their own tramroad down to the canal but on the south side of the valley and build a wharf at Govilon. This would be cheaper than paying the Gilwern wharf tariffs. Crawshay often boasted that they had constructed Clydach Gorge tramline in twelve months. It paid dividends and paid again much later when it was decided to build a “proper” railway from Abergavenny to Merthyr, the M.T.A. Railway Company whose chairman was Crawshay Bailey. He suggested that they follow the route of his old tramroad and buy the land from him which they did. (KERCHING! went Crawshay’s cash machine). This railway was very important, so much so that Big Pit built a railway from the coal mine to Brynmawr to access the Merthyr & Abergavenny line giving them a way to the important markets in the Midlands and further north. Much later the M.T.A. was taken over by the L & NWR. So it’s Crawshay Bailey we have to thank for the railway from Brynmawr to Abergavenny and of course westwards to Tredegar and Merthyr, opening up the chance for people to travel further to work, giving some people the choice. Railways also opened up visits to the seaside which was to become very important during the industrial growth and it’s him we have to thank for making Brynmawr an important railway centre. The area we now regard as the

Bus Station was once named Bailey Sidings and would often be full of railway wagons and there would be a railway crossing where the pedestrian crossing is now, running up the alley next to “Panache” and along part of Warwick Road. The Railway Inn was so called because it really was next to a railway, (***today it's named Grasshoppers but it's closed and boarded up***).

Crawshay's interest in rail transport extended to all the local railways and he was also a great promoter of other railway enterprise, he was for a time the vice chairman of the Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Co., he promoted and was one of the main backers of the Usk, Coleford and Wye railway, (***see the February News Update for the song composed for the opening***), he was responsible for the first branch line from Aberdare to meet the Taff railway and on to Cardiff. His railway interest was not only in Great Britain, but in the United States and throughout the world. Many of the rails that crossed the Americas that opened up the mid west were cast in Crawshay's Iron Works; he even had a contract to provide coal for their train engines, coal would have been exported to California from Nant y Glô. The entrance to the California coal level is just beyond Ty Mawr Farm. He played a big part in creating the American railways but because of some legislation he could not be paid in cash so he became one of the directors of the company instead.<sup>(1)</sup> Even the U.S.A. owe a lot to Crawshay Bailey. Mr. Bailey, it is true, had amassed for himself a princely fortune, but that fact does not in the least detract from his claim to respect as one of the most influential men in the promotion of the commercial prosperity and success of South Wales<sup>(2)</sup>. He also had a hand in the ports at Newport and was also the chairman of the Penarth port company.<sup>(1)</sup>

Naturally all these improvements in transport were of benefit to the Bailey firm; many were built to get his products to the market but in the end benefitted everybody.

### **That's all very well, but exactly what did Crawshay Bailey do for us?**

The town of Brynmawr owes its existence to Crawshay Bailey; this area of moorland was far enough from the smoke and noise of the iron works yet near enough for those working in Nant y Glo. There's also the added works of the quarries, the limestone was essential for iron manufacturing but also useful as building material. Then there were the “patches” where the coal and iron ore

were dug out of the ground and taken to the iron works. The early houses built by the workers were alongside tramroads that criss-crossed the moorland. Workers were encouraged to build houses for their families and being alongside the tramroads made it easier to walk to work or even get a lift on one of the trams. The more houses that were being built the more people flocked to live away from the grime and noise of the works and quite soon Brynmawr had become a town. (***See past articles on the growth of Brynmawr on the Historical Society website***).

Brynmawr was of course in Breckonshire whilst Nant y Glo was in Monmouthshire and in an attempt to bring the two communities together Crawshay built a church on the border between the two counties but within Nant y Glo. The church was named All Saints but unfortunately for Crawshay, the Brynmawr people thought of it as being a Nant y Glo church, they wanted their own church, not only in Brynmawr but in the diocese of St David. Crawshay Bailey was an Anglican and as mentioned above laid the foundation stone for the Anglican Church at Brynmawr in 1870 and this is what the Brynmawr congregation wanted. (***See article about the Brynmawr Church on the Historical Society website***). Being an Anglican did not deter Crawshay Bailey from supporting the numerous chapels that sprung up in Brynmawr with the influx of mostly Welsh non-conformists. Tabor chapel (situated on Davies Street) for example received a loan from Crawshay Bailey of £100, others of the family also gifted money; Joseph Bailey (£20); C. Bailey (£10); H. Bailey (£2) and from R. Bailey (£1). Tabor also held an open air meeting where ASDA stands today and preachers came from quite a far distance. During the second day there was a very heavy rain, it had been very dry before the assembly was held and this had caused Nant y Glô iron works to stand down for a term due to lack of water to power the bellows etc. Crawshay Bailey believed that it was the Baptist assembly that had brought the rain that filled the ponds and reservoirs that started the works up again. He thanked the Baptists and he was very kind towards them by feeding the horses of those that had travelled from afar. Tabor was not the only chapel to benefit from Crawshay's kindness, according to the Monmouthshire Merlin on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, Crawshay also donated the land on which the Roman Catholic Church was built in 1861. That means all the main religious groups were helped by Crawshay Bailey.

## **OK, so the chapels are fine but what did Crawshay Bailey do for us?**

Joseph and Crawshay Bailey set up two schools for the children of their workers in Nant y Glo, (they also donated land for the British School at Abertillery). One of the Iron works schools in Nant y Glo was at Pentre Clai which is on Farm Road a little further on from the site of the old Hafod y Ddôl School, Pentre Clai stood behind the house named Sunnybank and there were about five cottages in the row. When it says two schools I assume they refer to the boys' school and the girls' school. (See photo right).



*Both departments of the Nantyglo Ironworks School was 60 ft by 20 ft dimensions and were considered good buildings and while the furniture and the boys department was sufficient there was a deficiency in the girls' department. 90 boys and 120 girls were attending school in 1847. Of these 39 boys and 77 girls had attended for less than one year, 27 boys and 16 girls less than two years, 14 boys and 6 girls less than three years, and 5 boys and 9 girls less than four years, and only two boys under five were attending school, 62 boys and 65 girls attending between five and ten, and above ten years, 26 boys and 43 girls. The average attendance of boys was 85 and the girls 105. 12 boys and 15 girls were living more than a mile-and-a-half away from the school. No individual work was given and there were ten monitors in the boys' school and eight monitors and the girls' school.*

*On the whole the Nantyglo schools were badly conducted and the girls were superior to the boys. The Bible was read as a reading exercise and seldom with any attempt at comprehension of its meaning. The commission was amazed to find that the second class thought Ireland was in Africa and that the people in Turkey, Scotland, Spain and Canada were black!*

*In February 1876 the first school managers met and ordered a census of children in the Nantyglo area. From the coalyard in Brynmawr to the King William Nantyglo there were 819 houses containing 1076 children.*

*Of these 492 children attended school and 584 did not. Of those attending school, 365 children went to the Nantyglo school, 19 to Blaina school, 10 to Darenfelen school, 92 to the Brynmawr National School, one to Beaufort, and 16 to a private school. (This information was taken from the **A HISTORY OF NANT-Y-GLO AND BLAINA** by David James).*

The National School (or British School) at Brynmawr was where the bus station now stands (*see article on Early Education in Brynmawr*) and was opened in 1845 and the Bailey Brothers donated freely to the school. The Monmouthshire Merlin reported on the 21st May 1852 in a letter from a David Edwards who as secretary of the Brynmawr British School wrote: (*See photo of where the school was*).



*“...there is a British school, at Brynmawr, towards the erection of which the Messrs. Bailey paid a liberal donation and towards the maintenance of which Joseph Bailey, Esq., M.P., as a private individual, and J. and C. Baileys as a mercantile firm, have regularly paid liberal annual subscriptions...” and he concludes with “...I enter not into the merits of the controversy, touching the relative liberality of the Messrs. Bailey and Mr. T. Brown, as I have great respect for them both, and have found them invariably liberal and generous towards Dissenters”.*

The National School was soon upgraded and the site used was where the original Church stood at the top of Queen Street, (it had been demolished in a gale). Again the Bailey's were in the forefront with Captain C. Bailey and Sir Joseph Bailey giving liberally towards the building fund. The Cardiff Times on the 18th March 1876 reported that: “Sir Joseph Bailey, Bart., M. P., has contributed £25 towards liquidating the debt on the newly-erected National School. Sir Joseph and Lady Bailey have previously contributed very liberally towards the school”. This was the first site of the Brynmawr Church School. So the education of the children of Brynmawr, Nant y Glo and Abertillery owe a huge debt to the Bailey Brothers and family.

## OK, so the church, chapels and schools are covered but what did Crawshay Bailey do for us?

With the growth of the Iron Works and naturally the houses for the workers there was a need for a shop where food, clothing etc could be bought. The Nant y Glo company shop was opened in early 1800s and the building still stands today, one of three surviving from the iron works; the others are Ty Meddyg and a casting house which is at the bottom of the Greyhound Pitch. There are numerous tales about the Company Shop or Tommy Shop or even Truck Shop (they went under different names) and undoubtedly some of them are true. The Nant y Glo Company Shop was run by William Williams or William Williams and Co. as it was. The Bailey, Wayne and Williams (partnership) of the Nant y Glo company shop was dissolved on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1813 as far as Wayne was concerned under William Williams and Co. I assume that Crawshay would have become part of the business when he joined his brother. But it wasn't only the shop that provided food etc as the Bailey brothers also allowed a market to be set up near to what was the Bush Hotel. There was certainly a market on the Market Row in Nant y Glo (hence the name) before 1839 as David Lewis (or King Crispin as he was known) was thrown out of his standing (selling boots and shoes because he was a cobbler by trade) by Crawshay for being the Brynmawr Chartist leader. This market became as important as Abergavenny and Newport market, but it wasn't always so. Monmouthshire Merlin reported on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1852 about Nant y Glo market thus:

*"Strangers entering this place are surprised at the wretched lot of small, dirty, and weather-beaten wooden sheds, that range side by side like a row of worn-out sentry boxes which form the great market of Nantyglo. But improvement is at hand. We are happy to learn that the Messer's Bailey talks of affording us a new and handsome marketplace, which shall be equal to the requirements of the large population frequenting it. Dirty and wretchedly inconvenient as the present sheds are, twenty six butchers and thirty greengrocers regularly attend here for the sale of their goods and they do not bring too large a supply for the great demand of the population, who like good joints, and live well, as they work hard. There can be no doubt, that in so populous and industrious a*

*place, a suitable market will not only be a great boon, but prove a good investment”.*

A reader writing in the Merlin referred to shutting the gates at Nant y Glo market wrote:

*“... a person would naturally infer that Nantyglo market place is something similar to other places of the sort, but far from it having gates, it is not even closed in, pitched, or paved. You may enter it from all places, if not impeded by ashes, dunghills, logs of wood, and indeed every common nuisance. It is true there are a few rude huts or stalls, elevated a little above the mud and dirt, which is knee-deep in rainy weather and in which I have seen patient donkeys, when heavy loaded, sticking fast.*

But a change came as the Merlin reported on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1854 that

*“The inhabitants of this populous district, who have long felt the inconvenience of the wretched sheds which, by a perversion of terms, were called the market-place, have the pleasure to observe fast approaching completion, a fine building near the Bush Hotel, being erected by Mr. Bailey, as a new market. It will be of a sufficiently capacious extent, and will form a pleasing contrast to the unsightly fabric heretofore existing on the ground”.*

The Bailey brothers provided a site for a market for their workers and for anyone else to sell or buy their provisions. When you compare the market today at Abergavenny for example to the Nant y Glo of 1854 which had twenty six butchers and thirty greengrocers you wonder how we manage.

### **So they put up a market but what did Crawshay Bailey do for us?**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1858 the Merlin reported that: “On Monday morning last, a deputation of the different branches of the iron works, waited upon Crawshay Bailey Esq., M.P-, to solicit an advance of wages, in accordance with the notice which they had given a month ago, but the worthy proprietor in reply to their request, stated that he could not comply with their request, considering the present state of the iron market and that if they would leave it to him, he would do so as soon he could possibly afford it”.

According to newspaper reports of the period he was a good employer and he expected all to work according to their ability. On one occasion when the Nant y Glo works was to stop due to a depression in the iron trade and the works were not profitable, he refused to close and said that he'd pay the workers out of his own pocket. He knew the terrible poverty that followed would affect his workers and families. He was repaid quite soon when the price of iron rose to its highest level ever. He was said to be a gentleman who greeted all politely and when asked donated generously to religious movement.

The Monmouthshire Merlin reported on a meeting during which the chairman Mr David Edwards addressed the gathering and said:

*..... At the present time, the people of Brynmawr and Nantyglo are indebted to the firm of Messer's J. and C. Bailey, for many things, which, perhaps, they ought, to have acknowledged publicly sooner. I will only touch upon some of these. First, the uniform regularity with which they have carried on their works for nearly fifty years, during which time there have been many and great fluctuations in the Iron Trade and they have had to produce iron at a loss instead of a profit. Many works were started at that time, which caused many people to come from different parts of the country, with the prospect of employment and good wages, but they were soon cast away with their families when the trade became depressed. But at Nant y Glô, the works were carried on with the greatest regularity, whether the iron was made at a profit or loss and the workmen were constantly employed at a rate of wages, at least, that enabled them to support themselves and families. Secondly, the practice of paying the men regularly, in cash, every month, and allowing them to draw on account every week. Who, for the last forty-four years, ever saw a first Saturday in any month, without every man in Nantyglo being paid in full? More than twenty years ago, it was the uniform practice in all the Iron Works, to carry on the truck system, there was a company shop connected with every work. This was felt to be a grievance—the men Petitioned Parliament—the practice was condemned—it was declared that every man ought to be paid in the current coin of the realm. What did the ironmasters do? Most of them set about evading the law, and they do so regularly and systematically to the present day. Many of the*

*managers of extensive works, who as conservators of public peace, sit in judgment on the men under them and inflict pain and penalties upon them for infringing the law. I say many of them have their Tommy Shops, where you may see daily, a regular machinery in operation, for evading the law. But what did Sir Joseph Bailey and his brother do, when the British Parliament condemned the system? Why, they at once bowed to the law, as they ought to have done; they did away with their shop, and from that day out, paid in cash only. Thirdly, their liberality towards their men and all who come in contact with them. By liberality, I do not mean the giving away of money, only - in this respect we owe them so much; show me the Dissenting chapel to which they have not contributed. But, what I mean by liberality is their liberal policy, in not using their power and influence over the men in a tyrannical way. They call themselves conservatives, but I say they are liberals, if we judge them by their deeds which are the best test. It would have been impossible in some localities, under the withering influences of some ironmasters, for a town, such as Brynmawr, to have existed. The workmen would not have been allowed to build houses for themselves and live in them, on another estate. They would have been provided with houses by those ironmasters, and made to pay fifteen per cent interest for the capital,- in erecting them or they would have been compelled to build on their estate, bound down with clauses in their leases, not to carry out any trade, &c. What did Sir Joseph Bailey and his brother do? They paid the men their money and they took it when they thought proper, doing what they pleased with it, always favouring the most industrious and provident men by .promoting them to be masters of pits and levels.<sup>(5)</sup>*

John Griffith, rector of Merthyr, said of Crawshay Bailey after the funeral:

*He was the last and among the first of our great Iron Kings. He helped to develop this country before an iron rail was ever laid down on it. To the very last moment of his life he gave the whole of his energies to increase its manufacture. From the moment he joined his uncle at Cyfarthfa, a boy of twelve, till he died the other day at Llanfoist House, an aged man of 84, he never left the iron country, nor lost sight once of its steam and smoke. No manors, or parks, or aldermanic honours, or castles, or sea*

*side palaces, ever drew him away from the grime and the soot of the smoky "Welsh Hills."*

*We can't compare life in the 1800s with our lives today with all the various laws we have that did not feature in the 1800s; they did not have the Health and Safety rules which today protect workers, there was no compulsory schooling for children of the working class and children featured strongly in the work place, more often than not with either their father or mother. Children working would bring money to the household and where else would they go and do as both parents often worked. Crawshay Bailey freely employed children with their parents whether in the iron works or in coalmines but it was the choice of the parent whether the children worked with them or not.*

*I say it's about time we put aside the idea that Crawshay was a tyrant when you look at the evidence of what he provided to the people and to the area. When he died his will naturally favoured his family but he also made sure that others from his household were cared for leaving annuities to his housekeeper, butler, and nurse, and legacies to his other servants. It was announced that the funeral would be strictly private, but notwithstanding this notice many hundreds of persons lined the road from Llanfoist House to the Church, and thronged the sacred precincts of the graveyard—not a few of them were old men, long past work, who had made a weary pilgrimage from Brynmawr, Nantyglo, Beaufort and other places, where they had worked for Mr. Bailey for perhaps half a century, in order that they might pay a last mute tribute of respect to their old master<sup>(6)</sup>. Would they have done that if he was thought of as an unpleasant employer?*

*Maybe it would be better to allow the people of the period to give their impressions of Crawshay Bailey. This is taken from a letter to the Monmouthshire Merlin of the 21<sup>st</sup> March, 185&. The writer's name is not printed only identified as AN ELECTOR OF NEWPORT.*

*"I am no political supporter of Mr. Crawshay Bailey, and would be happy to find myself arrayed against him to-morrow, giving my vote for a gentleman to represent these boroughs in Parliament who would support the Government of Lord Palmerston, and give effect to principles that are not dead, but only "sleepeth amongst us." But differing widely*

*from Mr, Crawshay Bailey on the great public questions of the day, I know him, and respect him as a man and a gentleman as one who, having made a large fortune in trade, is proud of the source from which he sprung”*

This is also from the Monmouthshire Merlin dated February 16<sup>th</sup> 1852; again the writer does not give his name only “CANDOUR. Newport”.

*“I trust that your impartiality and fairness will permit me a small space in your paper to allude to Mr. Crawshay Bailey. I have heard severe remarks made upon that gentleman, as to his being disinclined to permit full religious freedom, &c.; but allow me to say, that I am quite sure Mr. Bailey possesses a more noble, a more Christian spirit, than to be influenced by prejudice or bigotry, of an unworthy kind. We need not go far back, to recall the remembrance of the protection he threw around the poor Irish in his neighbourhood, when made the objects of merciless violence, by workmen of a different country, some years ago, at Cwm Celyn and Blaina, when murder was intended, and, I believe, was actually committed in one instance; and might have been perpetrated to a dreadful extent, but for the spirit and humanity of Mr. Bailey. Let people not be carried away with the notion that because a gentleman becomes a candidate for parliament, his good qualities are at once to be forgotten, and every political opponent is warranted to cast imputations upon him. Let us give every man his due. I am fully assured, sir, that where Mr. Bailey is dispassionately judged of, he must be esteemed”.*

### **But what did Crawshay Bailey do?**

We’ve already looked at his interest in the education of the children, the gifts to chapels and churches and his interest in the railway network but Crawshay was also involved in or certainly had fingers in many pies. During his lifetime he was:-

- 1) Elected High Sheriff of Breconshire in 1835.
- 2) In 1850 elected High Sheriff again but this time for the county of Monmouth.
- 3) In 1852 he was elected a member of Parliament for the Newport district of Boroughs.

- 4) He was also Deputy Lieutenant of the counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth
- 5) And Justice of the Peace for the counties of Brecon and Carmarthen.

Crawshay Bailey for a long series of years, exercised a greater influence over the manufacturing and commercial industries of this county than had any man before and it is possible-nay, probable-that it will never be in the power of any one man to attain the influential position, in the county of Monmouth at least, which the late Crawshay Bailey reached and reached, too, by virtue of his own individual exertions. In some respects he may be regarded as having been a fortunate man—fortunate in his opportunity but, beyond that, it is to his indomitable perseverance and his unwearying industry that we must look for the secret of his success. (Editorial in the County Observer and Monmouthshire Central Advertiser, 13th January 1872).

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While I was searching through the newspapers for information about Crawshay I came across quite a few poems and englynions (Welsh strict meter poetry) dedicated to him, often singing his praises. I also found some reports that occasionally criticised him yet tempered the criticism by referring to him as a gentleman. (See examples in the above article). When he died in 1872 there was an invitation to readers of the Pontypool Free Press to submit an elegy to Crawshay Bailey in the form of a poem, I conclude with the winning entry.

**Elegy on the death of Crawshay Bailey,**

Heard ye the mournful sound of Llanfoist Bell  
Tolling for one that's summon'd hence away,  
For one they've borne unto his clay cold cell-  
The grave, to wait the resurrection day ?

Ye sons of industry and toil, now mourn,  
For the great Iron King they have inuru'd  
Pass'd halt his spirit to that unseen bourn  
From whence no traveller has e'er returned.

In by gone days he wisely did command,  
When health and strength sat smiling on his brow,  
And all things prosper'd 'neath his fost'ring hand,  
From mountain bare to the vale's, shelt'ring bough.

No more amid the furnaces' bright glow—  
The forge and mills' incessant, ceaseless sound—  
The busy scenes of Beaufort—Nantyglo—  
His fav'rite haunts, will he again be found.

Their blazing fires he'll ne'er again behold—  
The sound of steam and blast will bear no more—  
No summer heat will feel, or winter's cold;  
His useful reign amongst us now is o'er.

Be mine the task his virtues to proclaim:  
Though oft a rough and stormy path he trod,  
The truthful ever will record his name,  
"An honest man, the noblest work of God."

For half a century of years, or more,  
His worth we may in retrospection trace.  
The halt and aged, truly, now deplore,  
The absence of his well remember'd face.

'Twas he that gave employment to the mass,  
'Till hives of industry from his estate  
Sprang up, and for the providential class  
Did some rich fields of enterprise create.

Earth's mineral properties he did explore,  
In every homestead has his name been heard;  
His name well-known on many a distant shore,  
And which has long become a household word.

Many that knows of his untiring zeal  
Can truthfully his usefulness recount,  
How, in his time, he for the public weal  
Did many a seeming obstacle surmount.

'Twas he that caused a transit to be made  
From these black hills unto the vales below  
Through his activity, it was, that trade  
Enriched the neighbourhood of Nantyglo.

No dingles, rocks, or cataracts could e'er  
Daunt him whatever in his pathway stood,  
By skill and energy, combin'd with care,  
He all surmounted for the public good.

In wealth and power. mind and spirit, strong;  
Intrepid, bold, and fearless too, was he  
Right would he countenance, nor harbour wrong,  
If on the seat of justice he should be.

Let no one censure, if through care and toil  
His labours did a rich ripe harvest yield  
'Twas chiefly from the produce of the soil  
So widely spread in the commercial field.

But now there float upon the airy breeze  
Sounds softly murmuring as 'twere in sadness;  
For the great spirit that has pass'd the seas  
Of life, to where is heard each note of gladness.

Even grim death, who doth stout hearts appal,  
He fearless met, and firmly bore the pain  
He was a man; take him for all in all,  
We shall not look upon his like again.

Calmly he sleepeth in his narrow bed—  
Beneath the tomb his mortal body lay  
Peace to the slumber of his weary head,  
And to his spirit, tranquil rest for aye.

Nor would we call him back unto this life,  
Ah, no such thoughts we from our minds must banish,  
Heaven hath no future—sorrow, grief and strife  
Pass not its portals, there for aye they vanish.

Yet shall he live 'till streamlets cease to flow  
In rippling echoes through the live-long day;  
Gwent, and Morganwg too, will join I trow,  
To chant the burthen of my mournful lay.

And should we tread again the church-yard's gloom,  
With fresh cull'd flowers from, the neighbouring glade  
We'll deck the hallow'd spot, where stands the tomb  
That consecrates departed Crawshay's shade.

Round which may laurel flourish evergreen,  
And with the weeping willow, too, combine  
And friendly tongues proclaim what he has been,  
In graceful accents, bending o'er his shrine.

God rest his spirit in the better land-  
That land where trouble, sin, and sorrow cease  
For there alone, amidst a heavenly band,  
Doth reign eternal happiness and peace.

And now, departed worth, adieu to thee  
To thee a lasting and a long farewell:  
'Till death shall call us to eternity,  
Within our hearts thy memory shall dwell.

**Iago Ffynonau at Nant y Glo iron Works, June 1872.**

To give you an idea of the wealth that Crawshay Bailey accumulated then take a look at his will noted in The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan Monmouth... on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1872. Crawshay may well have died as wealthy as his brother Joseph who left £4,000,000, (in today's money it would be around £455,297,344+). If you wish to calculate what each person was given, work of a rough estimate of £100 in 1872 would be worth approximately £11.400 today.

The will of Mr. Crawshay Bailey, formerly M.P. for Monmouth, who died at his residence, Llanfoist- House, Monmouthshire, on January 9<sup>th</sup> last, aged 82, was proved in London on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst., by the executors and trustees, his son Crawshay Bailey, his great nephew William Bailey Partridge, and John Berry Walford. To the two last-named he leaves each a legacy of £200 for their trouble. The personalty (personal property) was sworn under £160,000. The will is dated April 27, 1867, with four codicils, 1870-1-2. The testator bequeaths to his nephew, John Crawshay Bailey, son of his late brother Sir Joseph Russell Bailey, M.P., a legacy of £4,000. He has left annuities to his three great nieces, and many legacies to other relatives and friends; also annuities to his housekeeper, butler, and nurse, and legacies to his other servants. He leaves the interest of £15,000 to his daughter Jane for her life, and after her decease to her children. All bequests are to be free of duty. The testator disposes of his interest in ironworks at Monmouth and Brecon, and his business in Liverpool and other places as follows, viz. All his shares as ironmaster and iron- merchant carried on at Nantyglo and at Beaufort under

the style of J. and C. Bailey, and at Liverpool by the style of Bailey, Brothers, and Co., he leaves to his two nephews, William Latham Bailey and Henry Bailey, in equal shares to his great nephew, William Bailey Partridge, he leaves all his Varteg ironworks, and mines of coal, iron, and other minerals, subject to certain charges. His estates in the counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan, Carmarthen, Brecknock, Hereford, Surrey, Essex, Middlesex, and elsewhere, he leaves to his son, Crawshay Bailey, whom he appoints residuary legatee. The probate was extracted by Messrs. Capes and Chadwick, of Doctors'-commons.

#### **Sources**

- (1) 16th February 1872 Seren Cymru
  - (2) County Observer and Monmouthshire Central Advertiser
  - (3) Monmouthshire Merlin, December 1830.
  - (4) Thanks to Graham George for information
  - (5) Monmouthshire Merlin. 19th January 1855
  - (6) Monmouthshire Merlin. 19th January 1855
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