

## Newsletter:

*15th Edition Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020*

**The Story of Britannia Foundry, Pontymister** *by Malcolm Johnson*

*Part 1*



### **Britannia Foundry, Pontymister**

The Britannia Foundry, Pontymister, was built in 1854 alongside the Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company's mainline to Sirhowy and Ebbw Vale. The Foundry was opened by Charles Jordan and John Miles on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1854.

Charles Jordan and Thomas Spittle, owner of the Cambrian Foundry in Newport, carried the first ladle of molten iron. The cupola furnace was blown from a twenty horse-power engine and when in full production was capable of casting up to twenty tons of metal per day.

Guests at the inauguration ceremony included Jordan's Newport staff of one hundred men.

Following the ceremony, Mr. Jordan and about 30 friends adjourned to the Bridge End Inn, Risca, and sat down to a meal provided at the expense of Mr. Jordan.

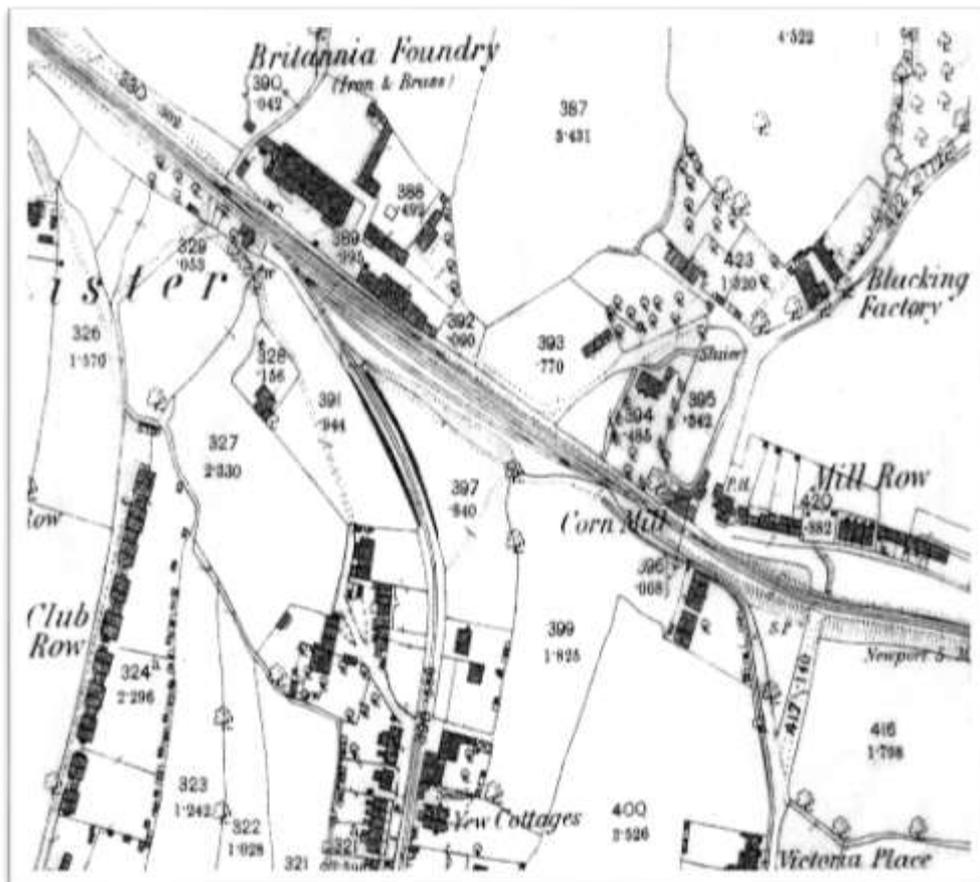
Mr Robothan, the Risca surgeon, prefaced the toast of the evening by observing that he knew Risca when its inhabitants were not more than 500; but now exceeded 2,000 through the efforts of individuals such as Jordan and Miles.

Robothan assured everybody assembled that the present undertaking of Messrs. Jordan and Miles would be equally successful and he had great pleasure proposing "*the health of Mr. Jordan and success to the Britannia Foundry.*"—Mr. Jordan replied, stating that he had commenced this foundry in consequence of his partner (whom he had known for many

ON THE OPENING OF THE BRITANNIA FOUNDRY, BY  
MESSRS. CHARLES JORDAN AND J. MILES.

The foundry stands on the side of the hill, the Newport side of Risca, and is a very compact and substantial building, with engine-house and offices complete, and is capable of casting to the extent of 20 tons per day. The cupole is blasted from a 20-horse power engine, which commenced working on Monday. Messrs. Jordan and Spittle, of Newport, carried the first ladle of molten iron, and threw off the Royal Arms of England, with the name under, of Britannia Foundry, Risca. The whole of Mr. Jordan's staff of men, upwards of 100 in number, being present, and were plentifully regaled with cwrw da. After inauguration of the works, Mr. Jordan and friends adjourned to the Bridge End, where his friends, to the number of 30, sat down to a sumptuous repast, consisting of all the best delicacies of the season, provided at the expense of Mr. Jordan. The cloth having been removed, Mr. Robothan was requested to take the chair, supported by Mr. Cross, of Risca, Mr. Spittle, Messrs. Partridge, Edwards, Jordan, and Miles. The vice-chair was filled by Mr. Blackborow, of Caerleon, supported by Mr. W. Jones, of Caerleon, and a host of that good Welsh name, from Risca. The toast of the evening was proposed by the Chairman, who stated that he had known Risca for many years, when its inhabitants only numbered 500—the good people now exceeding 2000; the increase arising from the perseverance of a few individuals who have developed its resources, and who have been amply rewarded for their exertions, as, he trusted, and, indeed, had no doubt, the present undertaking would be to Mr. C. Jordan and partner. He had great pleasure in proposing the health of Mr. Jordan, and success to the Britannia Foundry.

years, having worked by his side) coming to him and saying he had £200 to begin with, and he determined to support his laudable endeavours. From this springs the Britannia Foundry. Jordan considered that there was room for ten more such foundries to meet local demand. He was to say that if I had the means, I would construct one of the largest locomotive manufactories in this western valley so certain was he of his success.



**Showing site of Britannia Iron and Brass Foundry, Pontymister, adjacent to Western Valley Railway Line. Photo: Risca Museum.**



He concluded his speech by thanking those present and proposing the health of his old friend and former employer, Mr. Cross, of Risca. The health of Messrs. Spittle, Miles, Robothan, Jones, Brookman, Partridge, were proposed.

### **Charles Jordan: - *Jordan and Miles.***

Charles Jordan was born in Broseley, Shropshire, and arrived in Newport having spent his early years working as a puddler in Abersychan and Blaenavon.

He spent a short time working as a foreman in a London Ironworks but was soon to take up an appointment in Rouen, France. His two daughters were born in Rouen in the 1840's. Due to political unrest in France throughout 1848 he was forced to return and find work in Newport.

On his return to Britain, Jordan founded an iron-foundry business in Pillgwenlly, Newport, eventually to be named '**Charles Jordan and Sons: Iron Founders and Engineers**'. The site which he was to develop was formerly held by lease from the Tredegar Wharf Company. At a public auction Jordan agreed to buy the works and site no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1852.

Although initially establishing the new business in a small way, his renowned reputation for quality workmanship was to generate considerable growth in demand for his products and services over the following years.

As an example, he was contracted by Thomas Powell of the Gaer to supply various castings for Powell's collieries throughout south Wales. The contract was for an unprecedented period of one year. Major orders were also received from the Taff Vale Railway Company.

Lot 3—All that extensive Iron Foundry, with the fitting-up shop, large yard, with the Dwelling House, in the occupation of Mr. Charles Jordan, situated at Pillgwenlly, Newport on the bank of the Canal, and connected by a branch road with the Western Valleys Line of Railway leading to the Dock, and affording facilities for the despatch and receipt of goods to any part of the town, or the district of Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire Coal and Iron Works.

This property is held under lease from the Tredegar Wharf Company for a term, of which 52 years are unexpired, at the annual ground rent of £11 17s. 6d., and will be sold subject to an agreement entered into between the said Charles Jordan and Aaron Crosfield, bearing date the 15th day of August, 1850, for 7, 14 or 21 years, wherein the said Charles Jordan agrees to purchase the plant at the sum of £310, on or before the 31st day of December, 1852, and in the mean time to pay interest upon the amount at the rate of 7½ per centum per annum, and £80 for the rent of this lot during the continuance of his term and interest therein.

### **Monmouthshire Merlin, 11<sup>th</sup> July, 1851**

In 1857/58 a memorable assignment for the Newport Foundry was an invitation to cast an iron clock tower destined for Tredegar's Market Square. As the Tredegar Ironworks had no large foundry to handle the necessary size of castings, they were moulded in the Pillgwenlly Foundry under Jordan's supervision, but using Tredegar's cast iron!

James Watson, an engineer at the Tredegar works, was given the task of designing the clock tower and supervising its erection, accompanied by workers from the Newport Foundry. The main structure of the tower was 72 feet high supporting a clock chamber about 6 feet square.

Jordan, throughout his business career, always self-promoted his undisputed skills and achievements. He repeatedly wrote personal letters to the press, which included the Monmouthshire Merlin, challenging unwarranted and unjustified criticism of his company



### **Site of Pillgwenlly Iron Foundry, Newport.**

. In one such public letter he took the unusual step to invite a much respected engineer, Thomas Dyne Steele, to inspect and prepare a professional opinion on the work carried out by Jordan's company to produce a twenty-inch cylinder destined for Risca Colliery and which took only seven weeks to build.

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

(To the Editor of the Monmouthshire Merlin.)

SIR,—Having taken an engine (about 40 horse power) to make for the Risca Coal and Iron Company, in the short space of seven weeks, some of my friends thought I could not make it in the time; others said if I did, it would not be finished in a workmanlike manner: I therefore thought it prudent on my part to employ T. Dyne Steel, Esq., C.E., to examine the engine, and send me in his report upon the same. Enclosed you will find his report. If you will please publish the same in your valuable paper, you will much oblige,

Yours, truly,

CHAS. JORDAN.

Pillgwenlly Iron Foundry, Newport, Mon.,  
May 19th. 1870.

Bank Chambers, Newport, Mon., May 19th, 1870.

DEAR SIR,—In accordance with your request, I have this day examined a new horizontal engine, constructed at your Works at Pillgwenlly, for the Risca Colliery Company, from drawings and specification supplied by Mr. Wm. James, the engineer to that Company. The engine is 20-inch cylinder and three feet stroke, and is intended to work the Struvé ventilator at the Risca Colliery. In my opinion, the work throughout is of a very satisfactory character; the working parts, cylinder covers, &c., &c., are got up bright, in the best manner, and the whole shows very careful finish in details. As it appears that the order for this engine was only given on the 28th March last, little over seven weeks to this day, I consider that the engine is highly creditable to your establishment and its resources. The engine, when I inspected it, was complete, and ready for delivery, in accordance with the specification.

I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

T. DYNE STEEL,  
(For Steel, Rake & Co.)

Mr. Charles Jordan, Pillgwenlly.

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "WESTERN MAIL."

SIR,—Some days since I observed in your valuable paper a statement to the effect that Messrs. Pearce, Richards, and Co., of the Britannia Foundry, had made some of the largest castings ever cast in Newport. This is untrue. I believe they did make a fly-wheel of about 24 tons, but not in one casting, the half being cast on one day and the other half on the next, which makes 12 tons at a cast.

I cast a fly-wheel weighing 30 tons, all in one casting, from one air furnace, for the new blast engine at Tredegar Ironworks; also a beam for the same engine, weighing about 54 tons.

I am quite prepared, at one cast, to make a casting 40 tons weight should any person require it.—Yours obediently,

Pro, CHARLES JORDAN,  
Iron and Brass Founder,

LOUIS N. HAYWARD,

Newport, Mon., June 5, 1871.

Steele's response, again published in a local newspaper was: '*I consider that the engine produced is highly credible to your establishment and its resources.*'

(Thomas Dyne Steel (1822-1898) was a partner in the respected mining engineering company Steel, Rake & Co. and as civil engineer he did a considerable amount of work on behalf of Blaenavon Ironworks.)

For many years Jordan had an all-embracing business connection with Tredegar Ironworks. A letter published in the Hereford Times in 1860 recorded: '*I beg to record a pleasing circumstance that occurred at Tredegar Ironworks on Monday last, viz, the starting of the monster blowing engine which has been for some time in course of erection. The whole beam, with centre gudgeons, distance pieces, parallel motion, &c, weighs upwards of 70 tons the beam was cast by Mr. Charles Jordan, of Newport, Monmouthshire, but so well proportioned that it does not appear anything like the weight.*'

In time, ill health forced Jordan to reduce his workload and he eventually retired having left the business to his sons. He died in May, 1882, aged 72 years.

## NEWPORT.

**DEATH OF A NEWPORT IRONFOUNDER.**—The decease of Mr Charles Jordan, principal of the firm of Chas. Jordan and Sons, ironfounders and engineers, the Pillgwenly Foundry, took place on Saturday afternoon. In many respects the deceased gentleman's career was remarkable. Eminently a self-made man, he commenced life as a journeyman moulder, and after being for some time foreman of extensive works in London, he proceeded to France as foreman contractor. An Oddfellow, he identified himself with his French compatriots, and when the troubles following the flight of Louis Philippe, the citizen king, began, they commissioned him to proceed to England, with the accumulated capital of the lodges, and keep it in safety until quieter times dawned. In the same year the deceased returned from France, he started the foundry at Pillgwenly, which has since grown to such proportions as to employ about 200 workmen. Commencing the establishment when the iron foundry business in Newport was at a very low ebb, the deceased has been styled the father of Newport ironfounders. Many of the largest castings moulded in the district were turned out at his workshops. They also produced the work for the handsome bridge on the Taff Vale Railway at Cardiff. Deceased became a representative of the West Ward in the Town Council, and was instrumental in bringing about a reform in the scavenging of the town. He was also the first, it is stated, to suggest the formation of the Patriotic Fund during the Crimean war. This he did in a letter to the *Zionist*, dated from his foundry, and suggesting that instead of a day to be observed as a day of fasting throughout the kingdom for the termination of the war, a day's wages should be given by every person alike towards a fund for the maintenance of the widows and families of the soldiers who had fallen. During the last 15 months the deceased had suffered from an affection of the heart, but he continued to visit the works occasionally, the last time being about three months since. At the beginning of the present year he took his two sons into the business. He leaves a widow, two sons, and eight daughters, of whom four are unmarried. The funeral, which is to be private, will take place at Lissallor on Wednesday.

### **John Miles: - Jordan and Miles**

John Miles was born in 1820 and lived most of his early life in Llanhilleth with his wife Margaret and their family. Records show that he had previously been in partnership with Richard Budgen at the Union Foundry, Llanhilleth. But this partnership had already been dissolved, by mutual consent, as early as October, 1852.

(Budgen was to spend his final days in Newport Workhouse. He died in December, 1879, aged 78 years.)

Miles was to enter into a new partnership agreement with ironworker Charles Jordan of Newport. Having invested £200 they built the Britannia Foundry at Pontymister. The Foundry opened in August 1854 attended by many local dignitaries'. The event was followed by a 'feast' held in the Bridge End Inn, Risca.

The Partnership with Jordan did not last long and had formally ended by June, 1856. A sale notice was published in a local paper the following July.

TO IRONFOUNDERS AND ENGINEERS.  
**M**ESSRS. CORNELIUS EVANS & SON  
will SELL by PUBLIC AUCTION, on FRIDAY,  
the 4th day of July next, the RISCA IRON FOUNDRY,  
with all the STOCK and TOOLS upon the premises at  
the time of Sale, in one lot, unless previously disposed of  
by private contract, of which due notice will be given.

**I**, CHARLES JORDAN, do HEREBY  
GIVE NOTICE, that the PARTNERSHIP now  
existing between CHARLES JORDAN and JOHN  
MILES, Ironfounders, Risca, will EXPIRE on the  
thirtieth day of June. All debts due to the said firm  
must be paid on or before the tenth day of July next, to  
Mr. William Jones, Clerk to the said Messrs. Jordan and  
Miles; and all persons having any claim are requested to  
send in their accounts to Mr. WILLIAM JONES, on or  
before the first week in July, to be examined and settled.  
Risca Iron Foundry, June, 1856. [446]

It appears that the Britannia Foundry sale was initially unsuccessful, for in March, 1859, the Merlin reported the presence of Charles Jordan combating a fire that had engulfed the pattern and store shop suggesting that he was still actively involved with the works. The article is also headlined 'Fire at Mr Jordan's Foundry'. Fortunately the Foundry was covered by insurance and a successful claim of £195 was made for damage to the property and equipment. The press cutting also refers to the presence of John Miles during the fire. Assuming the accuracy of the report, then a business relationship still existed between the two former partners, Miles and Jordan.

**T**O BE LET, a New and Commodious  
FACTORY, 70 feet long, 22 feet wide, and two  
stories high; with 16 feet water-wheel, taking water on  
the top, with a plentiful supply of water both summer  
and winter.  
There are also TWO COTTAGES attached, with a  
Master or Foreman's HOUSE and large Garden, also a  
large Piece of Ground at back of Factory, that might be  
used as drying ground.  
A railway, canal, and turnpike road passes close by the  
premises.  
To treat for the above premises, be pleased to apply to  
Mr. JOHN MILES, Pontymister Foundry, near Newport,  
Mon. [3693]

**Monmouthshire Merlin, September,  
1862.**

## RISCA.

**FIRE AT MR. JORDAN'S FOUNDRY.**—On Friday morning last, between twelve and one o'clock, and just after the men had left work for the night, a fire was observed blazing in the pattern and store shop of the foundry, near the railway, belonging to Mr Charles Jordan, of Newport. Prompt assistance was rendered by the workmen, who returned at once, some having scarcely reached their homes; and Mr. Jones, station master, Mr. John Miles, founder, and others took an active and leading part in extinguishing the flames, before the roof of the chief building was ignited. Great praise is due to Mr. Challengworth, the foreman, for his intrepidity in getting to a portion where, by great efforts, he succeeded in quenching the flames which were beginning to fasten on the chief roof. But for his daring, the whole of the building might have fallen a prey to the devouring element. The property was insured in the "Lancashire," and the company being telegraphed to on Friday afternoon, their surveyor reached Risca from Manchester on the following morning, and at once proceeded to inspect and thereupon settle the claim for damage, which, on Monday morning, after Mr. Jordan's claim was sent in, was satisfactorily arranged at £195.

Monmouthshire Merlin, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1859.

## THE MONMOUTHSHIRE

### ABERGAVENNY.

**THE LLANELLY FORGE WORKS.**—These works were sold on Tuesday, by Messrs. Barnard, Thomas, and Co., at the Angel hotel, Abergavenny. Mr. John Jayne, of Brynmawr and Tilerry, was the purchaser.

TO IRONMASTERS, MERCHANTS, AND  
FOUNDERS.

**M**ESSRS. BARNARD, THOMAS, & CO.  
have been instructed by the Administrator of  
John Miles deceased, S. T. EVANS, Esq., to SELL BY  
AUCTION, at LLANELLY FORGE, near ABERGAVENNY,  
on WEDNESDAY, December 4th, 1867,  
The Whole of the Stock of PIG and BAR IRON, &c.,

Comprising 394 tons of Saundersfoot, Llynvi, and Bar-  
row Pig Iron, 104 Tons Puddle Blooms; also Char-  
coal Bar Iron and Stamps, Coke Bar Iron, Coke, Char-  
coal, Cinders, Old Brass, New and Old Castings, and a  
quantity of loose Plant and Tools, &c.

Sale to commence at Twelve o'clock.

For further particulars, application to be made to  
THOMAS M. LLEWELLIN, Esq., Solicitor, or S.  
T. EVANS, Esq., Newport; or to the AUCTIONEERS,  
Albion Chambers, Bristol.

Bristol, Nov. 18, 1867.

]11,652

### Monmouthshire Merlin, November, 1867.

(A reference is also made regarding the presence of the foreman Mr. Challingsworth. It was he who successfully quenched the flames which were beginning to ignite the roof. It was the same Challingsworth who was soon to be a senior partner in this same business.)

In his later years Miles had invested heavily in property. In 1862 he advertised an offer 'to let' a new-build factory in Pontymister. Measuring some 70 feet x 22 feet, it included an 'overshot' water-wheel some 16 feet in diameter with a 'plentiful' water supply. Included were two cottages, a foreman's house and a large garden. Reference is made to a piece of ground at the rear of the Factory which could be used as a 'drying ground'. The description of the property may well refer to a 'Blacking Factory'. In this place coal was ground to an extremely fine powder and used for dusting the inside of the moulds prior to casting molten metal.

(The site was eventually purchased by Thomas Budding in March, 1870. The site was again advertised for sale in 1882 but was then converted to a Flannel Factory.)

During the years before his death, Miles purchased the former Llanelly Forge located at the bottom of the Clydach Gorge. Following Miles untimely death the appointed administrator, Sydney Evans, sold the same Forge to John Jayne at a 'knock-down' price.

On the 1st inst, at Pontymister, suddenly, deeply  
regretted, Mr. John Miles, aged 47 years.

John Miles died on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1867 in Pontymister, aged 47 years.

**'End of Part 1....go put the kettle on or top up your glass and read the concluding part next week**

## Cnwc Article by Rob Southall

I think of all the ruined farms on local mountains that Cnwc on the hillside above Cwmcarn village is my favourite. Not just because it is fairly intact not having been bulldozed like nearby Pen-y-Pant or Cwmyr Uchaf which I have previously discussed. Everything about this place is fascinating from its name, its location and how it came to be abandoned right through to its general layout as a ruined sub-medieval farmstead. If I had a desert island ruin it would be Cnwc. Perhaps I should explain why. Firstly its name Cnwc which means a hillock, mound or protuberance is not really Welsh... it is Irish. The word is actually the same as Knock i.e. that place you can fill plastic bottles of holy water from stand pipes –not at Cnwc although it did have a very deep well which is thankfully now filled in. When I first spoke about this place to a resident of Cwmcarn I called it the Knook and was told I probably meant ‘Gnock’ pronounced ‘Gunnock’ and that although it featured on local maps it was a ruin and had burnt down at some point in the past although I was given so many different dates...the 1920s, 1950s and 1960s no one seemed to really know exactly when. Eventually I discovered that it burnt down in the summer of 1945 just after the blackout had ended and the blaze was caused by a clothes horse which caught fire and set the oaken beam above the fireplace alight eventually causing the chimney to collapse.

No one tried to rebuild Cnwc and it was left to fall down and eventually trees were planted all around it. The location of Cnwc must have provided some of the finest views in Wales before the trees were planted as it looks down from the Rhyswg Fach ridge into the lower Nant Carn valley and the Ebbw valley and across to Mynyddislwyn and ‘Windy Ridge’ on the Medart. Finally the main homestead building at Cnwc was a classic Welsh longhouse built sometime between 1600 and 1700 with the living accommodation for a farmer and his family upslope and a cow house downslope with a cross passage which originally served as the entrance for both. At some early date an extension was built which probably created a new kitchen and living area giving the building an overall L shape.

The one odd thing about Cnwc which I haven’t seen anywhere else is that the hall with the large open fireplace, which was the main living room and originally also served as a kitchen, was tiny. There could not have been room to swing a rat when Cnwc was originally constructed –thankfully the extension and other buildings may have made up for that. Cnwc wasn’t only small though it also had very low ceilings, the parlour ceiling was only 5ft 10 and when a very tall man of 6ft 4 in came to live there in the 1920s the flagstone floor had to be lowered nine inches below ground level. That man was later knighted in the 1950s when he became Director General of the Forestry Commission for all of the United Kingdom.

There are many more little stories about this place and I hope I have given you a flavour of Cnwc and it will encourage you to read the full report that accompanies the newsletter. So Cnwc is my desert island ruin and I would love to rebuild it but would I want to live there? That is something I will have to ponder!

## Malcolm's Merlin Musings

Malcolm has selected and had printed numerous interesting snippets from the Merlin, to help raise much needed funds. They are available at the Museum at £3.00 each

Here's a couple to whet your appetite; or better still reaching for your cash (*yes we will still take cash* 😊)



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### RAILWAYS

#### TAFF VALE RAILWAY FROM MERTHYR TO CARDIFF,-

Merthyr Tydfil is the site of iron-works on the most extensive scale, including the two vast establishments of Dowlais and Cyfarthfa, which are little townships in themselves, sprung solely from the iron manufactory, under the spirited direction of Sir John Guest and Co., and the Messrs. Crawshay. Merthyr is situated near the northern boundary of Glamorganshire, at the head of the vale of Taff, celebrated for its rich and thick veins of coal, as well as for its romantic beauty. Its distance from the seaport of Cardiff is about twentyfour miles, and the communication with the port has hitherto been solely by means of the Glamorganshire Canal, which traverses the valley by the assistance of numerous locks, and terminates in a floating harbour, opening into Penarth Roads. This port is now undergoing improvement, on a scale of great magnificence, at the expense of the Marquis of Bute, and promises, in a short time, to furnish accommodations for shipping of large tonnage, unequalled by any in the Bristol Channel. The traffic between these points and the collieries branching out of the Vale of Taff, as proved before the Parliamentary committee, amply justified the application for powers to construct the railway now in progress; it being proved to demonstration that the canal was utterly inefficient for the purpose of transit, and would necessarily become still more unequal to the trade, as it went on actually increasing.

**TAFF VALE RAILWAY;-** It is with pleasure we announce the completion of the Ynys Coed Tunnel, near Nantgarw, which took place at eleven o'clock, on Friday, the 26th of April. The works have been executed under the superintendence of Mr. Richardson, surveyor to the contractors, and Mr. Emmett for George Bush, Esq.' the engineer of the company. It is worthy of remark, the last length, or meeting, 12 feet 6 inches was completed in 97 hours, viz. - the miners commenced on Monday evening at ten, and the masons fixed the key stone by eleven o'clock Friday. It may also be added that no accident even of the most trifling description occurred during the whole progress; although the nature of the ground was quick sands and very precarious. - *Merthyr Guardian*.

#### PONTYPOOL IRON TRADE:-

On Tuesday, the 14th inst., was started for the first time, the new forge erected at Pontnewydd (near this town), by the Pentwyn and Golynos Iron Company. The powerful engine with all its complication of machinery, trains of rolls and hammers, were set in motion in the presence of a large assemblage of spectators, who cheered heartily as the first bar was rolled out; and 'went off' in a manner that reflected the highest credit on the engine manufacturers who erected it. (Messrs. Otway and Winnington, of Staffordshire) and much to the satisfaction and pleasure of those proprietors who were present on the occasion. This large work being so near to the town, promises great advantages to the tradesmen of Pontypool.

**NEWPORT, MONMOUTHSHIRE**

**THE CWMDWS COLLIERY**

TO BE PEREMPTORILY SOLD, BY PUBLIC AUCTION.

At the Westgate Inn, in the town of Newport, on FRIDAY, the Seventh day of June, 1839, at Five o'clock in the Evening, (by order of the Mortgagees for sale).-

THE WHOLE OF THE UNWORKED COAL of the MYNYDDYSLOYNE VEINS, in that very Capital Colliery CWMDWS, situated about twelve miles only from the

**FLOURISHING PORT OF NEWPORT**

Where the coal has the most decided preference over every Competitor.

There are about Twenty-eight Acres of Coal commanded by the present level, subject to very reasonable Galeages, and about 43 $\frac{1}{2}$  Acres of Coal below the Level, which may be easily worked, and are;

**FREE OF GALEAGE**

Subject only in a trifling Royalty to the Lord of the Manor, and a Wayleave of three-halfpence for every 2520 pounds weight of large Coal delivered out of the Colliery.

Also, about ONE HUNDRED TONS of TRAM-PLATES now laid in the Level and Cross Headings.

SEVENTY-TWO UNDERGROUND TRAMS, in good repair.

SIXTY COMPLETE SETS of COLLIERY TOOLS, and a very commodious

BLACKSMITH'S SHOP, furnished with every requisite.

The Cwmdws Colliery is WORKED BY LEVEL.

And affords such an opportunity for the INVESTMENT OF CAPITAL TO

ADVANTAGE as very seldom occurs.

The Coal Trade of Newport is daily increasing in importance; and while the Cwmdws Coal is so justly celebrated for its:

**UNRIVALLED EXCELLENCE OF QUALITY,**

it may be obtained in SUFFICIENT QUANTITY to supply all its multifarious consumers. For further particulars, apply (if by letter, postage paid) to Messrs. PROTHERO and PHILLIPS, Solicitors; or to Mr. John Williams, Auctioneer, Newport.

Dated 24th May, 1839.

# Last week's Quiz

1 *This is the only railway bridge there is on the whole Island, the railway is closed but this bridge remains, Where am I?*

## **The original stone railway - St Sampson's, Guernsey**

A stone 'railway' had existed for some time from the quarries to the Falla stoneworks at St Sampson. This used ordinary carts running on stone block 'rails'. The Germans converted it to a proper railway and built the island's only surviving railway bridge over Rue des Barras near Bordeaux Harbour.



2 *In the latest Rich List, Anders Hedlund is listed as worth £153 million. Exactly where, locally, did he start his company on 1st May 1979?*

It was 30 years ago this Friday that a young and ambitious Anders Hedlund moved from Sweden to establish a gift wrap business in a former **pithead baths at Cross Keys**.

On arrival he found the door to the premises had fallen down, but for the young Swede it made for a perfect desk – complemented by a chair from a nearby skip.

That was May 1, 1979, and over the years Mr Hedlund's opportunism has continued to serve him and the business well.

In its first year, Scandinavian Design achieved sales of £175,000, but more importantly it was in profit (£18,000) having secured contracts with some of the biggest UK retailers.

Today the company, through its holding company International Greetings, operates globally with a turnover of £175m.

When he first arrived in South Wales the energetic Hedlund was no stranger to hard work.

He said: "I was 15 when I started working in the family factory in Sweden on weekends and during holidays to earn a bit of a money."

After completing a degree in business studies aged 21 he suggested to his father that he moved to Hong Kong to set up an office, where the family business imported Christmas products for the Scandinavian market.

Mr Hedlund said: "However, my father said it was too far away and I was too young. So he suggested I took a not so well performing ribbon division in our company over to the UK."

He looked at a number of locations, including those in Liverpool and Ireland, before opting for South Wales.

Mr Hedlund said: "Wales was the best opportunity in terms of good grants, its closeness to London and the promise of a new 5,000 sq ft factory at the Pen-y-fan Industrial Estate near Blackwood.

"Unfortunately the building was delayed and, having products for Christmas, we had to find somewhere else, so I took a short lease at the former pithead baths at Cross Keys".

"I had eight girls working for me and it was the most exciting time of my life. I did the selling, the buying, fixed the machines, was the store boy and loaded up the lorries".

"I had learnt all this from my time working in the family business in Sweden... and I could also pack faster than any of the girls."

By the end of 1979 Scandinavian Design's WDA built factory was ready. Its main product at the time was gift wrap, as well as ribbons and bows.

Mr Hedlund said: "We were the only ones in the UK that were selling gift wrap on rolls, as until then it had only been sold in sheets. Because of that we were able to get orders from the likes of Woolworths, Boots and Debenhams. My co-workers from day one were superb. They were extremely willing, keen and loyal."

In 1981 the company launched the first of what would be many new ventures, with greeting cards company Belgrave Graphics.

"We just expanded after that with a lot of acquisitions, but we also experienced tremendous organic growth."

Its first acquisition was that of London-based gift tags business Gift Decoration. In 1989 the holding company International Greetings was established, by which time it had moved to Penallta Industrial Estate at Ystrad Mynach, where its UK main production facilities still are.

In 1995 former chair of Welsh Water John Elfed Jones joined as chair prior to its flotation on London's Alternative Investment Market. He remained for a decade, before in March retiring as a non-executive director.

Mr Hedlund said: “I learned a tremendous amount from John. His management and people skills were second to none... he is truly a great guy.”

In 2000 International Greetings moved into China, where today it has the bulk of its global workforce of 2,000 plus.

However, it has more than 10 companies all over the world in countries such as Australia, Holland and the US. Despite a number of redundancies recently it still employs 400 in Wales.

Mr Hedlund said: “With the global recession things have been tough and unfortunately we have cut overheads and sadly said goodbye to a lot of people, some of whom had been with us from the start.”

Mr Hedlund handed over his chief executive role to Paul Fineman in 2008, to become deputy chairman.

Mr Hedlund said; “I have 100% trust in Paul and the new team. They will deliver a lot of success for the business in the future. I am still very active in the business I founded 30 years ago. I care passionately and I am very committed to helping Paul and the team.”

Mr Hedlund has a 50% equity stake in International Greetings. His deputy chairman role has allowed him to spend more time with his family’s business interests – which was started by his grandfather Alrik in the 1920s. Mr Hedlund said: “We have 10 companies, including Festive Productions in Cwmbran and well over 1,000 employees”.

The Swede runs his own charity supporting youngsters in the Valleys, called Tomorrow’s Generation. He is also looking to establish a school for dyslexic children in Wales, a condition which, like his father and son, he has.

For any youngsters looking to set up in business he said: “My advice would be to try and do everything yourself with as few overheads as possible. You have to work day and night to be successful, but that is the most exciting bit.”

When I started the business I did everything and that is why we made a profit in the first year, when most companies don’t for a number of years. However, I hardly saw my wife and children for 10-15 years, which is very hard.

There is no question that you have to belief in what you are doing and you have to take risks. If you don’t the competition is so strong that you are not going to be successful.”

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## *This week's Quiz*

- 1 What is on top of the clock that is on top of the lighthouse structure in Roath Park lake?
- 2 When, was this photo taken and what is shown?

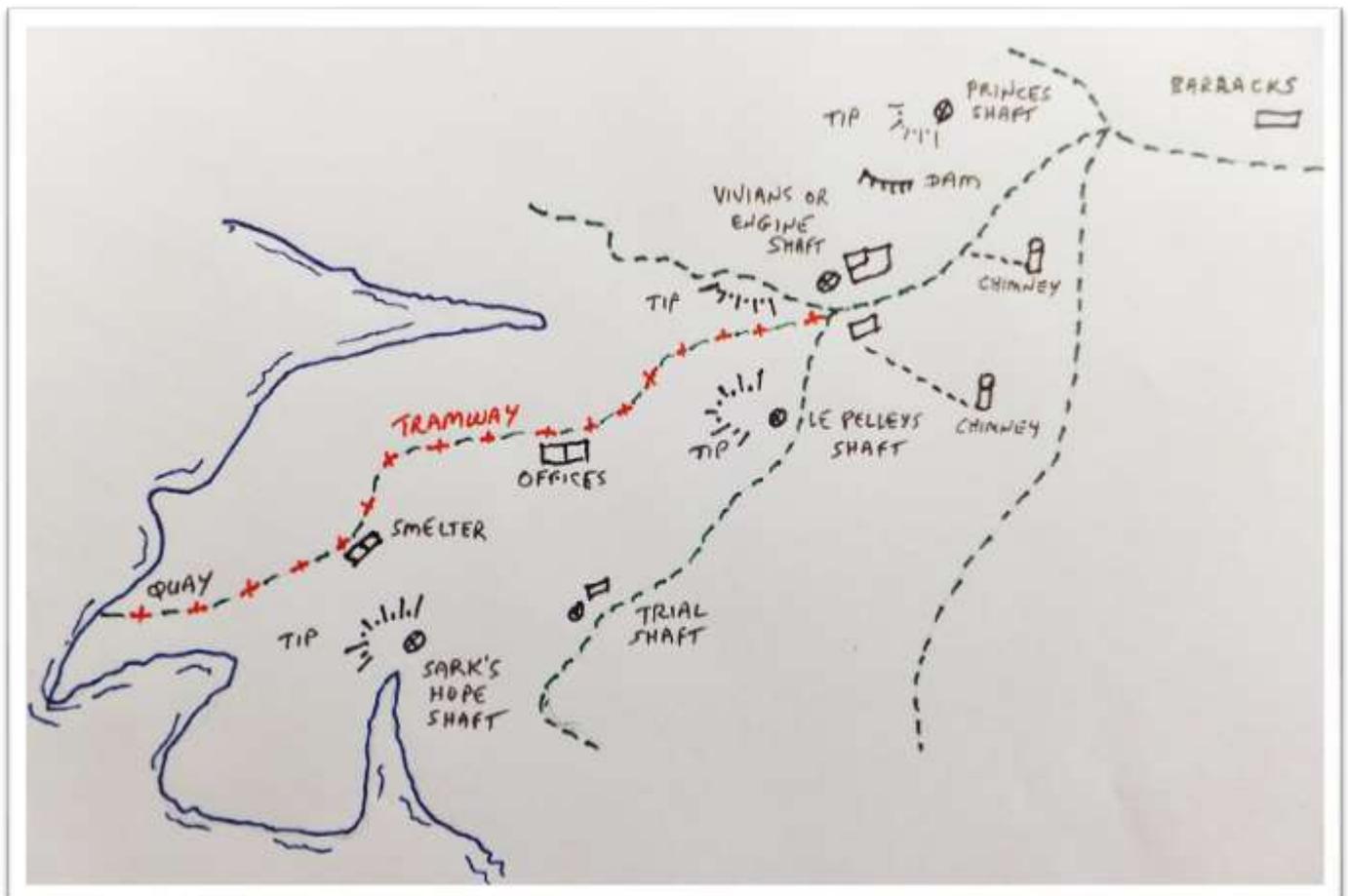
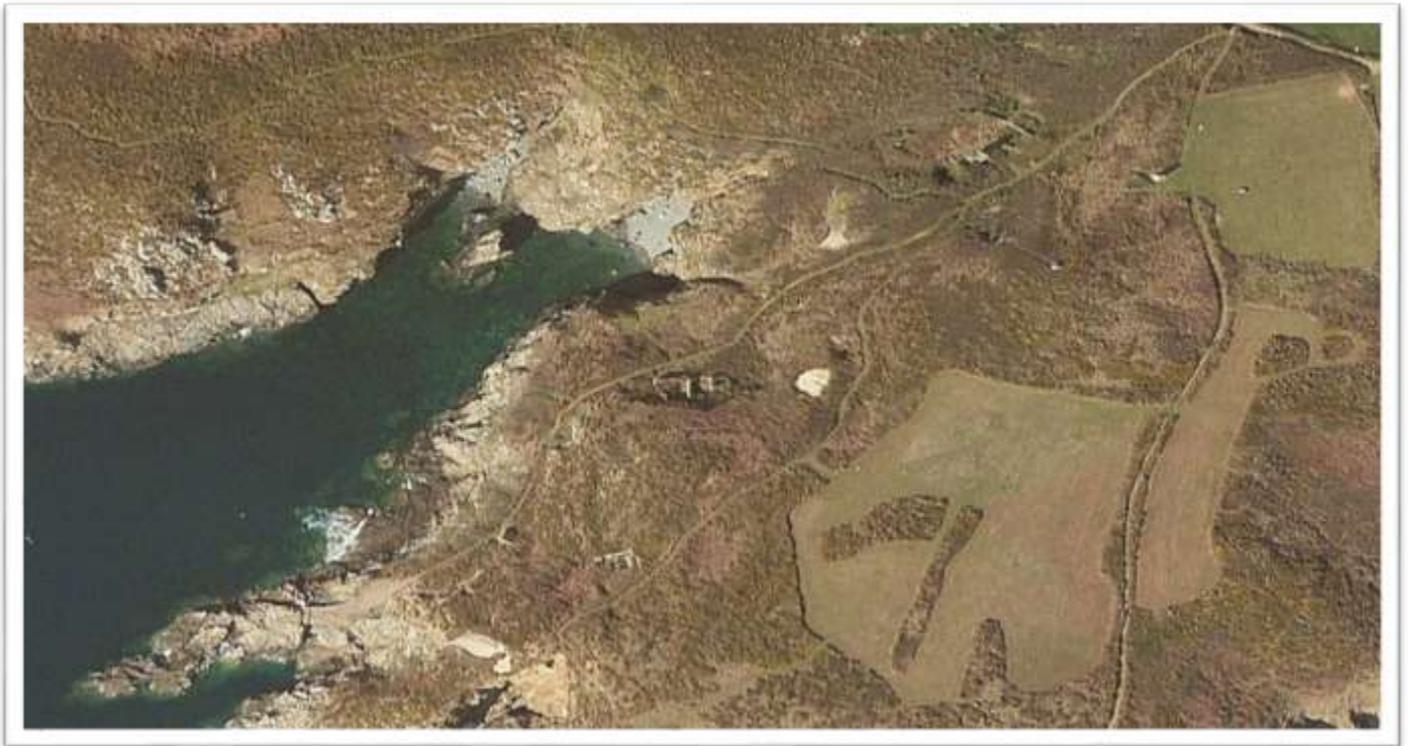


## Jenkins' Jottings.

After last week's Photo Phil is back in the Channel Islands with this precious piece to brighten up your weekend.

### Little Sark Silver Mine

The silver mines operated from 1835 to 1847. As with so many mining ventures, they were quite prosperous initially but soon the costs began to mount as the silver ore was running out.



## The shafts and waste tips

Le Pelley's Shaft is below the chimneys. The Engine Shaft at the engine house was too overgrown to take a worthwhile photo. Two waste tips are visible, from Le Pelley's Shaft and Engine Shaft but there are others around Sark's Hope Shaft, probably less visible in the very dense undergrowth.



## The Engine House Site

The engine house is to the right of the track down to Port Gorey. Vivian's or Engine Shaft is next to it but very overgrown. There are passageways under the site which appear to have been under the winding engine and boiler house. On the other side of the track there are foundations of buildings that could have been the dressing plant with a short tunnel or passage and what appears to be a low bunker but could be the lower end of the flue to the Southern chimney. Sadly the main landmark, the corner of the engine house, was lost in the storms of Spring 2014.





### **The Middle site - the offices and workshops**

Further down on the left of the track towards Port Gorey there are walls and foundations of the assay and Captain's office, a sawpit and a forge. Behind the complex a short adit is hidden in the jungle.



## The Lower site - the smelter and stockpile area

The solid-looking building at Port Gorey was the ore smelter which is next to a flat, embanked area, probably the ore stockpile. A narrow gauge railway ran down to the quayside from the engine house area. Aerial photos show more foundations above this site which are believed to be a trial shaft and possibly a treadwheel.

Full history and photos here :- <http://www.industrialwent.co.uk/wuk23-ch/index.htm#sark>

