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Editorial

LOCAL history is a subject which offers a fascinating variety of topics and a fund of inexhaustible knowledge not only to the professional historian, but also to every member of the community.

This magazine is an attempt to stimulate interest in Local History; to encourage you to take a greater and deeper interest in the life of your village, your community and your county; to inspire you to find out what motives, fears and desires actuated our predecessors. A bill of sale, a receipt, Church and Chapel records, an old jug, a wood carving, in fact, many things which seem to have no significant value, might help to give us a more accurate picture of the past, its religious character, its social structure and economic life.

Should you feel like starting explorations or investigations on your own, the County Archivist, County Curator, the County Librarian and the Local History Committee of the Carmarthenshire Community Council will be pleased to help you with advice, books, records, manuscripts, etc.

I should like to express my sincere thanks to the authors of the articles published in this booklet. They responded willingly to the appeal of the Local History Committee of the Community Council and, as proof of their passionate love of this subject, they have given their services free of charge.

I am also indebted to Mr. Iorwerth Howells, Director of Education; Mr. Gwyn I. Thomas, Deputy Director of Education for the County, and Mr. Elwyn Samuel, Secretary of the Carmarthenshire Community Council, for their invaluable assistance. Others to whom thanks are due are the Members of the Editorial Board; together with Mrs. G. Henry, Gorslas; Mrs. D. Bowen, Maesybont; Mrs. Treharn, Cross Hands; Mr. T. D. Jones, Penygroes; Mr. T. Bidcombe, Carmel; Mr. Stephens, Cross Hands; and Mr. G. Thomas, Cross Hands.

F. J. MORGAN.

HISTORY OF THE Mynydd Mawr

by

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RESearch into the history of one's local area will immediately prove its value to the historian, in that invariably the area is a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic development of the whole country. This is particularly true of my own area, Mynydd Mawr, and the surrounding area which constituted the medieval division of Cantref Bychan, situated to the east of the river Towy in the county of Carmarthenshire.

Like the remainder of Wales, the historical development of this area has been extensively controlled by geography, and the history of my own village of Cross Hands well illustrates this tendency. The name (Cross Hands) is probably derived from the custom of handing over custody of prisoners, with their hands bound together, who were transported from the gaol of Carmarthen to the one in Swansea. Furthermore, Cross Hands, at the peak time of the stage coach, was probably an important place on account of its inn, where horses could be changed and the travellers could have a meal. Today, this village is a focus point for two important roads: the A476 from Llandeilo to Llanelli, and the A48 linking Fishguard and Milford Haven with Swansea and Cardiff.

The presence of coal measures in the area led to its immense industrialism, and this was also of social significance in that a conglomeration of people from various sources were brought together. This influx of foreign traditions naturally made an impact on the native population, though by today inter-marriage has naturally led to a fusion of external and native elements. Other geographical factors, such as the large number of streams, for example the Gwendraeth Fawr, Gwendraeth Fach, and Gwili, high rainfall of over 50 inches, and the temperate climate of cool summers and mild winters, has enabled mixed farming to be a profitable occupation. Therefore, in contrast to the traditional concept of a mining village in the Rhondda Valley, farms may be observed in the Gwendraeth Valley side by side with the coal tips! The significance of this is that the area has been enabled to retain, despite the presence of coal mines and other industrial enterprises, its essen-

tial rural character, and this is indicated by the fact that the vast majority of the population is Welsh in speech and custom.

Another indication of this fusion of the rural and industrial is that today one may ascend a peak, like Y Graig, of the plateau of Mynydd Mawr, and on its wooded slopes experience a sensation of unparalleled peace and tranquillity. Yet, when the peak is reached, one is reminded of the surroundings by the panorama of industrialism, with a whole succession of coal mines extending along the Gwendraeth Valley from Cross Hands to Carway, that is presented before one's eyes. This combination of industrial and rural development means that the study of my area is even more significant than that of many other areas, for two distinct patterns of development, one sudden and revolutionary, and the other evolutionary in character, are indicated in a comparatively limited space.

Furthermore, it may be even said that the geological structure of the region has controlled the pattern of settlement. There are fertile old red sandstone soils in the Gwendraeth Fach valley, which lies to the west of Mynydd Mawr, and the ensuing rich pastures have resulted in dairy and stock farming being carried on. The dairy produce is consumed in the industrial Gwendraeth Fawr valley, and the livestock is disposed of in the weekly mart at Carmarthen. Thus, the Gwendraeth Fach valley is a region of scattered farms and small villages, namely Porthyrhyd, Llangyndeyrn, Pontantwn, and Llandyfaelog. The uplands lying between the Gwendraeth Fach and Gwendraeth Fawr rivers form the Mynydd-y-Garreg-Mynydd Cerrig range, on whose northern slopes deposits of carboniferous limestone are to be found. As a result, limestone is burned into lime at Crwbin and limestone is quarried for road material at Maes Dulais, near Drefach. On the southern slopes are to be found measures of millstone grit, for road metalling.

However, in the Gwendraeth Fawr valley, passing through the Mynydd Mawr itself, there are rich seams of anthracite coal, the finest in the world, and for which there is constantly an immense demand, and this coal can easily be exported via the ports of Burry Port and Llanelly. An inevitable result of the expansion of the coal industry was the establishment of large villages around the coal mines, as at Penygroes, Cross Hands, Tumble, Cwmmawr, Pontyberem, Ponthenry and Trimsaran, and this is yet another illustration of geological factors controlling human settlement in the Mynydd Mawr and its neighbourhood.

On the other hand, a geographical factor has motivated against the historic development of the area, and this factor

is its bleak and barren topography. The area consists of highlands, rising gradually in the direction of Banc-y-llyn, which is over 800 feet above sea level. An early reference to it was by Edward Llwyd, who, in 1696, stated: "Mynydd Mawr, a common about 2 miles long." In 1811, following the enclosure Act of 1807, 5,080 acres of the Mynydd Mawr were enclosed in the parishes of Llannon, Llanarthney, Llandybie and Llanfihangel-Aberbythich. Little is known of the areas prior to these dates because of the nature of the lands, for the exposed surface was far from being attractive to settlers. On the contrary, the fertility and shelter of the Towy and Loughor valleys have constantly attracted settlers, and so for the early history of Cantref Bychan, one must look to the neighbourhood of Mynydd Mawr rather than to Mynydd Mawr itself.

Anthropologists affirm that man first appeared on the earth after the retreat of the ice sheets of the Pleistocene Ice Age. With the increasing warmth of the climate, life was possible, but yet it was still impossible for man to live constantly in the open air. Thus, Paleolithic man lived in caves, and settlement at this time was confined to areas where rocks of carboniferous limestone, which enabled caves to be formed naturally by water erosion, were to be found. There is certain evidence available which supports the theory that Paleolithic man dwelt in the area between Kidwelly and the Black Mountains, and the two most notable discoveries are those of Craig-Derwyddion, which is between Pentregwenlais and Carmel, and at a cave which was discovered on a steep cliff on which Carreg Cennen Castle was built.

In 1813, during excavation of the cave at Craig-Derwyddion, ten skeletons were found, seven of which lay side by side at the entrance, but the other three were further inside the cave, though at right angles to the seven. One of the skulls was sent by Lord Dynevor to the Oxford University Museum, and in 1878 Professor Rolliston stated that the other skeletons had been buried beneath tons of rubble, and that the cost of recovering them was far too expensive. In the cave at Carreg Cennen, a layer of bones was found below the stalagmite, and these contained some human bones which probably indicate two children and two older persons. However, there is some doubt as to whether this discovery was of Paleolithic origin.

There are no traces at all of the Mesolithic Age in the neighbourhood, but there are many definite remains of the Neolithic Age. From the year 3,000 B.C. onwards, a distinct civilization spread from the Eastern Mediterranean to Western Europe, probably searching for precious metals, and this new movement reached Wales via the western sea route from

Spain and Gaul. One of the characteristics of this age was the use of stone for making stone tools and implements, and these tools were then polished to make them more efficient. In all, about nine or ten relics have been found in the whole country. Another feature of the age was the building of great stone monuments or megaliths as either chambered tombs, stone circles or standing stones (meini hirion). There are no remains of a chambered tomb in the area, but many indications of the two other classes have been discovered.

An example of a megalith or stone circle is Banc-y-naw-carreg, now completely destroyed, and this was situated between Capel Hendre and Cwmgwili, about three miles north east of Cross Hands. In 1696, Edward Llwyd mentioned "Y Deg Karreg ar y Mynydd Mawr," and described them as being "so many stones pitched on ends in regular order." The name "Banc-y-naw-carreg" is derived from the time that there were nine stones in the circle, but an examination in 1914 indicated that only five stones then remained in a consecutive order. Another examination the following year revealed that the remaining stones had been lifted up, and the visiting Commissioner found holes for 14 stones in a circle about sixty yards in diameter. Many customs associated with this place have become firmly entrenched in the folk lore of the area. One of these was the custom for young people to assemble there on the Sunday preceding mid-summer and then attempt to count the stones, which was considered an impossible task. The importance of mid-summer in this custom suggests a link with sun worshipping customs in Stonehenge at mid-summer, and the significance of mid-summer day with the Druids is also related to the local customs at Banc-y-naw-carreg. The most important Megalithic remains in Carmarthenshire, however, were the Meini-hirion or standing stones, and these may have acted as sepulchral monuments like the stones inscribed with Latin and Ogham at a later period. There are two Meini-hirion in the vicinity of Mynydd Mawr, and these are the Bryn Maen pillar stone on Bryn Maen farm, Llannon, which, being fifteen feet tall, is one of the tallest in the county, and the Bryn-rhyd stone at Llanedy.

The Neolithic Age was followed by the Bronze Age, which was characterised by their distinctive beaker or drinking cup. Of the two beakers that have been found in Carmarthenshire, one was discovered at Corsydre in 1930. A flat axe which can be attributed to the Early Bronze Age, was discovered at the Capel Quarry, Gorslas, and as a cave existed at this quarry until recently, one may assume that it probably housed a Beaker Age family.

There are only faint traces of the Roman occupation in the area, and what does exist is mainly concentrated in the parish of Llandybie, which lies to the north-east of the Mynydd Mawr. There is evidence here of contact and intercourse between the Romans and the people of the district. At the end of the 18th century, Roman coins were found at Carreg Cennen, and coins were also found near Llandyfan, in a quarry and limestone cave. The coins found at Carreg Cennen belonged to the lower Empire, and the others, found near Llandyfan, bore the image of Maximianus (286-305 A.D.). In 1888, when Derwydd was being reconstructed, several pieces of Roman pottery, mosaic and glass were unearthed. In addition, it is possible that the road from Llandeilo to Llandybie was of Roman origin, probably leading to Neath (Nidum), through which the main southern road led from Caerleon to Carmarthen. Evidence of Roman roads have been even found nearer towards the Mynydd Mawr. A certain Mr. S. O'Dwyer has claimed that a Roman road ran from Pensarn, near Carmarthen, to Trecastle, in Breconshire, and according to Mr. O'Dwyer, this runs through Porthyrhyd, in the Gwendraeth Fach valley, and then Penrhiwgoch on the Mynydd Mawr. Another road that is reputed to be Roman in origin is the one that runs from Forest, near Pontardulais, to Llannon, via Ceubryn road and Penllwyngweudr, and thence across Mynydd Sylen to Pontyberem, and from here to Kidwelly and Maridunum (Carmarthen).

The Roman occupation came to an end during the fourth century, and it is in this period that the growth of the Christian Church may be observed. Again, in the search for evidence, one must go to the neighbourhood of the Mynydd Mawr, and in this case to the older parishes of Llanarthney and Llandybie. This was the age of the Dewi, Teilo, Cadog, and Padarn cults, and the influence of David is illustrated by dedications to him, though at a later date it must be admitted, at Bettws in the Llandybie parish, Capel Dewi in Llanarthney parish, and Llannon in Llannon parish. However, the dominating influence in this area was of Brychan Brycheiniog, of Irish Goidelic descent, who had carved out a kingdom for himself in Brecknockshire. One historian, Theophilus Jones, maintains that the lordship of Brycheiniog extended at this time to Llangadog and even Llandybie, but the general gloom which surrounds these well-named Dark Ages prevents us from obtaining a clear picture of this period.

However, it is true that Tybie, to whom the church of Llandybie has been dedicated, was one of Brychan's daughters, Brychan, in his attempt to extend his influence and power, met severe opposition, and in a battle Tybie was slain. The

legend then continues by stating that the present church of Llandybie now stands where Tybie was slain. The well of Tybie is another memorial to her name, and this well was a noted place in the past, as these lines by Job indicate:—

“Ei gras wasgarodd hyd wawr ei diodde
Fel sawr pereiddfwyn rhoslwyn mewn drysle:
I rin y Groes, ei rhan gre’—mewn drygfyd,
Y tystiau bywyd Santes Tybie
Eithr lle bu gwaedli’r dirion—Dybie
(O gyff y wiwne)—gwel acw’i ‘Ffynon’.”

In addition, although Professor Rees has claimed that the church of Llanarthney was dedicated to David, it is more probable that the “Arthney” was a corruption of Arthen, who was the fourth son of Brychan Brycheiniog.

In the Middle Ages, the Mynydd Mawr and the area to the north of it constituted the Hundred of Cantref Bychan, which, together with Cantref Mawr, and Cantref Eginog, formed the kingdom of Ystrad Tywi. During the reign of the Lord Rhys and when Henry II asserted his authority in England, Cantref Bychan reverted to Norman rule, and in the 12th century, this Hundred, being claimed by both Llandaff and St. Davids, was a centre of dispute between the two dioceses. Towards the end of the 12th century, Cantref Bychan was ruled by the able young prince, Maredudd, but he was slain at Kidwelly by the Normans in 1201. There followed a period of confusion with various descendants of Rhys claiming the territory. In 1277, the commote of Iscennen fell under the control of the Norman Pain de Cadwrcis from Kidwelly, and in 1283 it was given to John Gifford, though later it fell into the hands of the Crown. It may be said safely that Iscennen corresponds to the area which today represents Mynydd Mawr and its vicinity. From 1289 to 1308, Iscennen was governed by Ustus and the Chamberlain of Carmarthen, but during the revolt of Gifford the commote was forfeited to the Crown, and then transferred to Hugh Dispenser.

Ultimately, Iscennen became a part of the Duchy of Lancaster. During this period of Norman ascendancy, “the motte and bailey” castle was a recognised feature of the landscape, and it is believed that such a castle, or a mound and ditch, can be seen today at Tir-y-dail, in the southern part of Llandybie parish. This is referred to by Edward Llwyd, who referred to it as “Ty’n-y-dail, enw Ty wrth Grug a chlawdd o gwmpas iddo e’”. There are other names within the area which remind the local historian of old fortresses and fortifications. There are three fields on the farm Gelligweirdy, outside Llandybie, which bear the names “Castell ucha, isa, a bach.” In addition, at Castell Rhynyll, which stands today

about two miles to the north of Cross Hands on the main road to Llandeilo,” remains of an old mound still exist, and this denotes the presence of an old castle. The castle of Carreg Cennen, magnificently built on a steep slope, lies within the parish of Llandybie, and many bitter struggles were fought here between the Normans and the Welsh.

For evidence of religious life within the area during the Middle Ages, one must again turn to the old parish of Llandybie. It is believed that the first church was founded by Tybie, but, naturally, there is no evidence to corroborate the theory, as all churches of this period were built of wood. It is believed that the present church is on another site to the first one. Many old churches in Carmarthenshire owe their location to a pre-Christian religion, with the church being situated within a circle of stones which were considered sacred. It is probable that Llandybie Church corresponded to this pattern, and its churchyard was circular before its later extension. There are also traces of chapels of ease, associated with the Anglican church, in the area. The chapel at Llandyfan was of great renown in the Middle Ages, and this was probably on account of its well, which was reputed to have medicinal properties.

A chapel was also believed to have been situated near Ffynon Gwenlais, in the parish of Llanfihangel-Aberbythich, and this was referred to by Edward Llwyd as “Gwenlaih springs at Capel Gwenlaih.” The oldest reference to Llandybie Church is the one in the Calendar of Church Rolls, when, in the 12th year of his reign, Edward I allowed Thomas, the Bishop of St. Davids, to appoint a priest for the church of “Llandegeu,” but this right later reverted to the King. In 1288, Pope Nicholas IV bestowed the tithes of many parishes, including that of Llandybie, to Edward I for six years towards the cost of financing a military expedition to Palestine for the Crusades. According to the rate valuation of 1291, the living of “Llandybyeu” was worth £4.6.8d., and in 1306, David Martin, Bishop of St. Davids, transferred the living of Llandybie to the service of the resident clergy at St. Davids. In the accounts of John Emlett, the clerk at St. Davids in 1541, he records that he receives £5, “Pro Firma ecclae de Llandebea” and that he paid 6s 8d “for a bebyll (Bible) to Llandebea.”

Little is known of social life in the parish of Llandybie in the late Middle Ages, and what is known is derived from records of the Court of Star Chamber. This indicates that much illegal work was carried on, with each man being a law unto himself, and the strongest then, naturally, having his own

way. Many examples of persons attacking another are revealed, and in the year 1577 Rhys ap John of Llandybie complained that a William David and Henry ap Powell assaulted him when hunting in Parc-yr-Hun, which stands today in modern Ammanford. These records also describe the noble families of the period, centred at the mansion of Derwydd. During the Civil War they were Royalist supporters and suffered exceedingly on account of this, with Sir Henry Vaughan of Derwydd losing his wealth and property. It is probable that Oliver Cromwell passed through the area on his way to Pembrokeshire, and even today the inhabitants of Llandybie take pride in the tradition that he stayed at Derwydd and the Plas of Llandybie.

Before the Enclosure Act of 1807, most of the Mynydd Mawr was common land attached to the manors of Golden Grove and Llannon, and it was customary for all people dwelling in the manorial districts to graze their animals on the common. Thus, the farmers that lived in the valleys of the Gwili, Gwendraeth Fawr, and Gwendraeth Fach, drove their cattle up to the common during the summer, returning to the valley shelters during the winter. The common was accessible via Mountain gates (Llidiartau), and these gates were located in a rough circle surrounding the Mynydd Mawr. The main gates were called: "Llidiartau Dugoed, Mawr, Rhosydwyr, Rhydymaerdy, Jaci Thoms Shon, Waunwen, Twll-y-lladron, Blyne, Rhydybiswel, Felinfach, Hendre, Colier, Cilrhedyn, Llances, Y Glyn, Pentregwenlais, William Thomos Hopkin, and Hendrefas. In the vicinity of the Mynydd Mawr there were many farms in existence in the 18th century, situated where the soil was fertile, and in the centre of Mynydd Mawr, around modern day Gorslas, there were some good grazing spots, especially at Cwmcerrig, Gorsgoch, Gorsddu, Brynyfuwch, Castell y Rhigyll and Bancyllyn.

Thus, Gorslas square became a meeting place for farmers who grazed their cattle on the six grazing spots. Today, six roads lead from Gorslas square, and these follow the direction of the original six paths. At the meeting point of the six paths, a fold (ffald) was set up, and stray cattle were driven to this fold. On a certain day, usually Dydd Gwyl Ifan yr Haf, a search was made for stray cattle on the common, and these, having been driven into the fold, could then be claimed by their owners for a small payment. If a beast was unclaimed for more than a week, it would be taken to Golden Grove Manor, and if unclaimed there within a year it would become the property of the Lord of the Manor. Another fold was situated at Rhysymaerdy, Cefneithin, and even today the cottage near the bridge is called "Ty'r

Ffald," and the third fold was at Rhydygwiall, near Llyn llech Owain, and this again is called "Ty'r Ffald." The meeting place for the paths was soon realised to be a convenient spot for effecting transactions such as buying and selling of cattle and horses. Certain days were appointed for these transactions, and these appointed days developed into fair days, with amusements catered for the dealers and their families. In time the cattle fair was replaced by the fun fair, which is still held twice a year at Gorslas. The pattern of rural life in the 18th century in the Mynydd Mawr is well summed up by the late Gladwin Henry, an eminent local historian:

"a desolate uninviting common of Gors and moorland, devoid of human life except during the brief activities of the few seeking summer pasturage for their cattle, yet surrounded by prosperous farms with rich grazing fields and well tilled soil, where life moved on quietly through each succeeding year, completely unaware of the transformation that was soon to take place."

Despite the impact of the enclosure movements and the Industrial Revolution, the development of the farms on the borders of the Mynydd Mawr continued on its slow, gradual, evolutionary lines throughout the 19th century, and well into the 20th, and this means that old customs, which by now have become extinct, still survive in the memories of the people. Many of the older people of the area recall many adventures connected with romance, such as throwing stones at a girl's window in order to attract her attention, and the girl would then probably open the door and secretly entertain her guest while her parents were still asleep. The sending of Valentine cards on February 14th was a firmly entrenched custom, and the Valentine that I have seen consisted of a sheet of paper, skilfully cut out into a striking design, with the following verse inscribed in the centre:

"Men often promise constancy
But many broken vows there be,
And marry damsels do declare
Men's oaths are only formed of air,
A bubble that a breath will break
Yet I incline your word I take
Trusting that it is your design
To act with honour Valentine.

February 14th, 1825.

With regard to marriage, a careful count was kept of the gifts presented, and so when a couple were about to be married, their family would send out Bidding Papers to all their acquaintances who were then requested to give a present to the couple and thereby settle their debts with the families concerned. Another indication of love was the sending of love spoons, which indicated a high degree of skill, and people in the area today remember a twig of the birch tree being used when proposing marriage. A twig of this tree was sent to the selected lady, and if she wished to accept, she sent back an identical twig. In addition, communal spirit was strong at this time and evidence is available of a society of tradesmen and inhabitants of the parish of Llanfihangel-Aberbythich being formed with meetings to be held at the Temple Bar Inn.

At the beginning of the 19th century there was a change in the pattern of agricultural life in the area and this was almost completely due to the enclosure movement. Agricultural implements were late in being introduced into this area and in the 18th century, as in other parts of West Wales, sledges were the most common forms of transport. Thus, the impact of the agrarian revolution on the Mynydd Mawr was almost entirely due to the enclosure movement. After the Enclosure Act of 1811, the Mynydd Mawr was sold and divided up. Before this sale, there were only two houses on the common, namely Banc-y-ddreinen and Ty'r Cerrig, but soon afterwards Thornhill Palace was built by a certain Covert. Then Meadows House was built by a Bontcoch, and Greenhill by a Thomas Michael. Other houses, the majority small ones, were built, and as the land was sub-divided their number increased. The presence of names today in the village of Cwmgwili like "Cwm-lottau" and "Lottau bach" have a close connection with enclosures and Thornhill Palace, for "lottau" is a reference to plots of land leased out by the owner of Thornhill to various individuals and the only condition was that one-tenth of the produce should be returned to the owner of Thornhill. The mansion at Golden Grove, on the edge of the Mynydd Mawr, is also worthy of note, in that it was on this estate that the enclosures were first introduced in Carmarthenshire.

The Enclosure Act of 1811 meant a deterioration in the living standards of small farms. Before this Act the small farmers could take their cattle up to the Mynydd Mawr, a common, for pasturage in the summer months. With the Enclosure Act, however, the farms no longer enjoyed this privilege, so they had to reduce the numbers of their livestock. In addition, the working of the Turnpike Trusts adversely affected local inhabitants, with a rate of £5 being collected in Llandybie in 1735.

The Turnpike system was then brought into use with trusts, and this had the right to erect toll gates, where payments were levied for the upkeep and construction of roads. To meet the interest, debts contracted, many toll gates were constructed and these were oppressive to the farmers, who had to fetch coal for fuel and lime as fertiliser.

These two factors, combined with further contributions demanded from the New Poor Law, 1834, and the Tithe Commutation Act, resulted in there being immense poverty in the countryside in the early years of the 19th Century, and a reaction against this poverty manifested itself in the Rebecca Riots in West Wales. The first attack was on the toll gates at Efailwen, near Whitland in 1839, and the peak was reached in 1843. Every raid followed the same pattern with the rioters wearing women's gowns and caps, with their faces blackened, and under the leadership of a person whom they called Rebecca. This title was probably derived from the verse in Genesis XXIV, which reads:—

"And they blessed Rebekah and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be then the mother of thousands of millions and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them."

And this was used as an instrument to deceive the ignorant in an attempt to convince them of a Biblical justification for their actions.

Though many leading men associated with the Rebecca Movement played an important part on the Mynydd Mawr, including Shoni Sgubor Fawr, and Dai'r Cantwr, the leader in this area was John Hughes of Ty isaf Farm, Tumble. He had joined the movement as the result of a personal experience, for he had once had to pay 1/8d. in tolls on a load of lime that had only cost 8d at Garn Bica. It was only natural that the rioters should play an important and active part in the Mynydd Mawr area, for there were many tollgates and bars in the area.

There were bars at Porthyrhyd, Drefach, Treventy, Cross Hands, Castellrhingyll and Maesybont, and gates at Llanddarog, Porthyrhyd, Foelgastell, Tumble and Llannon, while farmers on the Mynydd Mawr had to pay tolls at the Llandybie toll gate while bringing back lime from Garn Bica. In 1843 the gates at Llanddarog, Porthyrhyd and Llannon were severely

attacked and the gate and bar at Porthyrhyd were attacked three times within one month, with the result that the toll house was completely destroyed. The local smithy was also destroyed, as the smith, a special constable, had openly boasted that, singlehanded, he could beat off any 15 of the Rebeccaites. The parish constable, Evan Thomas, who was known as "Llew Porthyrhyd," was dragged from his bed on one occasion and forced to start the destruction of the gate. The Treventy toll gate house was also destroyed after the owner had refused to contribute thirty shillings.

However, the movement lacked the unity which was so essential for complete success, for though many, especially the leaders, were solely concerned with securing the social justice which they felt they were entitled to, there were many involved in the movement who were only attracted by the excitement and adventure which they could attain in the various raids. This hot-headed element effected unofficial raids, and one of these was on the farm of Gellyglyd, Cwmgwily, where they stole a large sum of money. Another unofficial attack was made on Gelliwernen, Llannon, with shots fired through the windows and the fruit trees in the orchard were cut down. In September, 1843, the Mynydd Mawr "Beca" made an attack on the Pontardulais Gate, and though they succeeded in destroying the gate, they were prevented from doing any further damage by the Dragoons and the Glamorganshire Constabulary, who had received prior information of this attack.

John Hughes was captured and sentenced at the Swansea Assizes to twenty years transportation, and Shoni Sguborfawr, who had escaped, was captured at the Tumbledown Dick, that is, the inn at Tumble, and he was transported for life at Carmarthen Assizes. On September 13th, 1843, an important meeting was held at Llyn-llech-Owain on the Mynydd Mawr, and one of those who addressed the meeting was Job Davies, Pentregwenlais, who recited the following englyn:

"O na welwn i waelod—da obaith
A diben ar trallod;
Codi Arf wedi darfod,
A breiniau dyn bron a dod."

Between 3,000 and 4,000 attended this meeting, which decided to send a petition to the Queen, and whose proceedings were publicised by a reporter of "The Times", who was

present. This constant agitation resulted in an Act being passed in 1844. This stipulated that only a limited number of gates should be set up, and in the Mynydd Mawr, only two gates were to be established, and these were at Bryndu and Castellrhingyll. Thus the Rebecca Rioters, though their violence may be criticised, did succeed on the Mynydd Mawr in their attempt to limit the numbers of toll gates.

The progress of the enclosure movement on the Mynydd Mawr led to an increase in the demand for lime for fertilising the land and whitewashing the buildings. The geological structure of the land considerably facilitated the development of the industry in the area. A belt of limestone extended from Llandybie to Kidwelly, and one observes that a flourishing lime industry soon developed in the Llandybie area. There was a tremendous demand for lime in 19th century Wales, and farmers came from even Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire to fetch lime from Llandybie. At the end of the 19th century, lime from Llandybie was exported to Africa, via the port of Swansea for the purpose of purifying sugar. Though this trade was lost in the first world war, the limestone industry is still a predominant feature in the parish of Llandybie today, for it produces lime for the land, limestone for road metalling and for flux in the steel furnaces of the South Wales Coalfield's steelworks.

Of even greater importance in my area is the coal industry, which has a long history. First evidence of coalmining was by Leland, who reported in 1536 that coal was obtained from the Gwendraeth Valley. The next evidence that is available is George Bromly's statement in 1609 that: "Wee saye that there are coles founde wrought and digged in the said common called Mynith Mawre," and it is also believed that Earl Carberry of Golden Grove, in 1689 started mining operations at Brynyfuwch, which today stands near the village of Penygroes.

Coalmining was essentially a summer occupation, with all workings following the slope of the seam, and there was always an outlet for water drainage purposes. After the venture at Brynyfuwch in 1689, the outcrops were constantly worked, and the next important event was when William Evans of Aberlash, Llandybie, having taken out leases on the rights of Lord Cawdor of Kidwelly and the Lord Bishop of St. Davids, who was Lord of the Manor at Llanlluan, opened a colliery in Cross Hands at the end of the 18th century. He was soon faced with difficulties and formed with Sir William Paxton of Middleton Hall, a partnership which lasted until the death of William Evans, when the lease ended. In 1796, Alexander Raby came

into possession of a smelting furnace in Llanelly, and in 1802 the Government allowed him to run a train road from Llanelly to Castell-y-Garreg, near Gorslas, probably with the aim of obtaining limestone for his smelting furnace. This was the first railway in the county, known as the Carmarthenshire Railway. Wooden trams were drawn by horses along wooden rails and stone sleepers with the journey from Gorslas to Llanelly taking a full day. The stone sleepers are to be found today in the field opposite Waunddewi in Cross Hands, and there are indications of this past railroad at Cwmmwyn, the terminus of the railroad near the square of Gorslas.

Raby found iron ore, and at Banc-y-llyn, he found silica sand, both of which would be used in his smelting industry, and which could be easily transported by rail down the Gwendraeth Valley to Llanelly. Coal was also carried on this railroad and carried by horse and cart along the road from Cefneithin to Garreg Holtt, from Cwm-y-Glo, which is situated between Cefneithin and Cross Hands. The horse and cart cut up this road so badly that the name Heol-y-baw can be seen to be justified. Thus the Mynydd Mawr was important at this time for supplying raw materials to the smelting industry at Llanelly.

It is known that collieries were operated at Cross Hands between 1824 and 1830 under the ownership of Colonel Wray and Norton. Colonel Wray took out a lease after the death of William Evans, but having worked Cross Hands and Cwmmoch for many years, and at a loss, he gave up. The mine was then taken over by David Davies of Llannon and John George of Rhydymerdry. The mine was opened at a lower level and the coal sent by railway to Llanelly, and later by the canal which had been built between Cwmmawr and Pembrey. This canal carried much traffic and it has a close link with the Mynydd Mawr in that its feeder was the reservoir constructed at "Cae Pown", Cross Hands. Also, this canal carried lime and coal from the Mynydd Mawr to the docks at Pembrey. The next person to take over the Earl's rights at Cross Hands was Charles Henry Norton, from a highly respected family in Carmarthen, and he also owned Gilfach Colliery in Caerbyn, which only remained in operation until 1881. He was the son of Dr. Norton, Thornhill Palace, and though himself the owner of Nantglas and Bryngwili mansions, he lost everything and eventually died in the workhouse.

Other collieries were opened in the immediate vicinity of Cross Hands and one of these was the old Gorsgoch Colliery, and there were also brickworks at Gorsgoch, which is indic-

ated by the fact that even today bricks with that name may be found in the neighbourhood. In 1882 Gwaith Caemawr was opened at Penygroes, but it remained in existence for only two years. In 1884 a new slant was opened at Castellrhingyll and this slant, later, under the ownership of a Mr. Dobelle from Birkenhead, developed into the Rock Castle Colliery, which though flourishing at first, became unprofitable to work and it closed in 1893.

In the same year the Mynydd Mawr Railway was opened between Llanelly and Tumble, and later, extended to Cross Hands, it became the medium for transporting coal from the Mynydd Mawr to Llanelly. The Great Mountain Colliery was opened at Tumble in 1887, and Tumble soon grew into a large mining village, centred around the colliery, which is still flourishing. A new exploitation of old workings in the vicinity of Penygroes resulted in the formation of the Emlyn Colliery, which, together with the Emlyn No. 2, of 1924, became known as the Emlyn Collieries. They were immensely successful, and equipped with modern machinery, pit-head baths, a canteen, and an experimental laboratory, became renowned as a model of satisfying working conditions.

Unfortunately, however, the colliery closed down as a result of a dispute in the family of the owner. At Blaenhirwaun, a mile from Cross Hands, Colonel Netherbridge opened up a colliery, and after Sir Sidney Byass of Port Talbot had been the owner, the colliery came under the ownership of the Simpson and Rogers firm, and it now entered a highly successful period. For a variety of reasons, but due to the fall in demand in particular, many of the smaller collieries had to close down, and, today, though traces of small works may be observed, coal production on the Mynydd Mawr is confined to the collieries at Cross Hands, Blaenhirwaun and Great Mountain Tumble. Even today these three pits are doomed to closure, and only remain open until Cynheidre, further down the Gwendraeth Valley, will be fully developed. However, though now declining, the coalmining industry has made an immense contribution to the community life on the Mynydd Mawr.

First of all, one may state that the coal industry was responsible for extensive settlement within the area, and in this way it combined with developments in agricultural life. The Enclosure Act of 1811 led to an increase in the population on the Mynydd Mawr, and this population found difficulty in eking out a living on this fertile territory.

The dissatisfaction of the inhabitants with the prevailing poverty of the Mynydd Mawr manifested itself in the Rebecca Riots. It was this surplus population, consisting of the younger sons of farmers, and tradesmen who had no hope of inheriting their father's property, which fostered the development of industrialism within the area by providing a labour force that, for the sake of survival, had to glean a living from the valuable raw materials to be found within the area. However, once the coalmining industry had been established, an influx from other areas may be observed and with their coming, the traditions of other areas in Wales from now on make their slight, though significant imprint on the local tradition. The impact of these "dynion dwad" is indicated by the nicknames in the village of Cross Hands, even today of men like Tom Jones Cynwil, Ianto Aberdar, David Evans Llangeithio, and Tommy Evans Coginan. These "dynion dwad" have gradually been accepted into the social and religious life of the community, so that, by today, in the chapel which I attend, five out of the nine deacons are of foreign "origin" and this pattern is to be found in other chapels of the area.

Equally important as this social impact was the political one. The fact that, with the coming of industrialism, men had to work in appalling conditions, led to a cry for social justice, and this inevitably brought men and master, who were already finding difficulty in running the mines as successful ventures, into conflict. In addition, as in other industrial areas, the miners were constantly in close contact with their fellow workers, and so, being political dynamite, they could be easily roused into fury. This was indicated in the Great Strike of 1926 with processions marching to Llanelly, and tales are recited today of the manager of the Great Mountain Colliery having to hide from the wrath of the angry, starving miners. Such incidents naturally fostered a strong Radical spirit. At first, this radical spirit was closely connected with chapel-going, and in the mining village of Tumble, all the members of the Independent Labour Party were prominent chapel members. Indeed, their religious convictions were so strong that, after a dispute in the chapel, the I.L.P. members all left Ebenezer Methodist Chapel, and built their own chapel of Llain-y-delyn. At this time by the beginning of the First World War, the Union Leaders were the chapel leaders, and these preached moderation to their fellow members. However, in 1923, the Amalgamated Anthracite Collieries Ltd. was formed, and this soon gained control over all the mines in the area.

The old paternal influence in the area was replaced by an alien, impersonal organisation, and so the fairly harmonious relations between man and master came to an end. Henceforth,

relations gradually deteriorated, and the climax was reached in the 1926 General Strike. The industrialised Mynydd Mawr came to be recognised as a Labour stronghold, giving firm support to Mr. James Griffiths, its Member of Parliament. However, the rural part on the westward fringes of the area, mainly concentrated in the parishes of Llanarthney and Llanfihangel—Aberbythich remained Liberal in its political outlook.

The other factor, apart from industrialism, which has played an important part in contributing to the social and political development of the area, was religion, and its influence, though perhaps diminishing a little now, is still strong on the Mynydd Mawr. Today, the main denominations represented in the area, are the Churches of Wales, Baptists, Independents, Calvinistic Methodists and Apostolic Churches. Naturally, the Church in Wales (that is, the Anglican Church prior to 1811) possesses the longest history, and the mediaeval development of the church at Llandybie, the oldest in the area, has been noted earlier. This Church, and similarly the parish churches at Llannon, Llanfihangel-Aberbythich, and Llanarthney, played a dominating part in the social life of the villages, and have continued to do so even to this day, and Nonconformist sects have failed to make an impressive challenge to them within the villages. In these villages the parish church has remained the focus of social life in a rural pattern of living that has changed little throughout the ages. On the Mynydd Mawr itself the Church has faced sterner challenge from the Nonconformists. St. Lleian Church, Gorslas, was erected at a cost of £1,200 and consecrated on April 15th, 1879. This has a burial ground of about an acre in extent, and it also has a beautiful vicarage, towards the erection of which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners made a grant of £1,500 in 1880. The other churches in the immediate vicinity are Eglwys Dewi Sant in Tumble and the St. Anne's Church in Cross Hands. These churches do not possess a long history and this is indicated by the fact that only last year the St. Anne's Church was given the right to consecrate marriages. Though in the past these have not enjoyed the same impact on village life, by today, they are extremely flourishing and St. Anne's is probably the only church in Cross Hands which can boast of increasing attendances at its Sunday School. This is an indication of the changing way of life in the village, for services in both languages attract a small but significant influx of English-speaking people, who have recently come into the new housing estates to live.

However, the **Nonconformists** have made the greatest contribution to and impact upon community life in the Mynydd

Mawr and its immediate vicinity. The oldest of these that settled in the area was the Independent Church, which today, with the large chapels at Bethesda, Tumble, Bethania, Upper Tumble, Tabernacle, Cefneithin, and Capel Sgwar and Mynydd Seion in Penygroes, commands the greatest religious following in the area. The history of this sect in the neighbourhood extends back to the Puritanism of the seventeenth century. In 1644 a petition was presented to the House of Commons by Hugh Grundy, of Llangydeyrne, requesting the displacement of Sir Henry Vaughan from the "Committee for examining Scandalous Ministers" as he had placed "six scandalous ministers, no preachers" to serve in "six parish churches with several chapels in Carmarthenshire."

Old Puritan meeting-places were located in the parish of Llannon, and from 1661 onwards many inhabitants of the parishes of Llandeilo, Llanedi, Llandybie, and Llannon were Puritans. In 1782 the chapel of Gellimanwydd (which today is better known as the Christian Temple, Ammanford) was opened, and it is known that the early congregations included people from Pentwyn on the Mynydd Mawr. In 1925, an Independent Chapel was opened at Penygroes, and the pioneers were William Jenkins, Glan-lash, his son Thomas Jenkins, and William Jones, Rhyd, who were all members at Gellimanwydd. The first minister was Thomas Jenkins, and his friend Rees Rees, though his parents were staunch Methodists, also became an Independent minister. On the Mynydd Mawr itself, the development of Industrialism naturally resulted in the erections of large Independent Chapels at Bethesda, Tumble, in Bethania, Upper Tumble in 1785 and Tabernacle, Cefneithin, in 1876 (the two latter also, incidentally, served the industrial village of Cross Hands) and these chapels still attract large congregations today.

The Baptist church was also quick to seize the opportunity of erecting chapels on the rapidly industrialised Mynydd Mawr, and so Bethel and Tabor were built in Tumble and Cross Hands respectively. The earliest church of this denomination in the whole neighbourhood was at Llandyfan, near Llandybie, in 1787. The first baptism was in the following year in a small fountain nearby. In 1793 two diverging sects, the Arminians and Calvinists had emerged within the Baptist Church, and by 1800 there was intense discontent in Llandyfan. Before long the Baptists moved into the village of Llandybie, leaving their chapel to the Unitarians, but in 1838 it was taken over by the Established Church and services are even held there today. Another Baptist Church was established at Saron, in the vicinity of the Mynydd Mawr, and its establishment

followed a large public meeting held at Llyn-llech-Owain, addressed by the Rev. Thomas Morris of Penrhiwgoch. The chapel was opened in 1814, and the first minister was the Rev. William Michael of Drefach. In 1896 a Baptist Chapel was opened at Calfaria, Penygroes, and its minister Job Herbert, who served at the Chapel for nearly fifty years, was a dominating personality in the area. To cater for the rapidly increasing growth of Cross Hands as a mining village, Tabor was opened in 1872. This chapel again had succeeded in maintaining its early strength, and, under the leadership of such famous characters in the village as John Roberts y Gof, and Tom Lewis y Baker, its energy and vitality was lately displayed by the reconstruction of the chapel, and the building of a magnificent new vestry.

A significant feature of the three denominations already mentioned is that the Church was largely successful in the peaceful setting of the countryside, while the Baptists and Independents succeeded mainly in the industrial areas. However, the Methodist Revival was a movement which was able to be successful in both rural and industrial areas, and this is manifested by its development on the Mynydd Mawr and its neighbourhood. There were chapels in the area in the early eighteenth century, but these had sunk into a slough of inactivity and despondency. It was in this setting that the Methodist Revival made its impact and the activity of Methodist leaders in this area was extremely intense. Llanlluan was particularly noted, for it was one of the five churches visited monthly by the famed Daniel Rowlands of Llangeithio. On Sacramental Sunday, Llanlluan was the goal of thousands of people. The Rev. Peter Williams, the first commentator of the Welsh Bible, was married here in 1748, and he preached at the chapel in 1796. The first Methodist cause, apart from Llanlluan, in the vicinity of the Mynydd Mawr, was at Capel Hendre, and this can be traced to the conversion of John Thomas Owens, an ancestor of mine, when listening to a sermon given at Llannon by the Rev. William Davies of Neath. He received permission to hold a "seiat" in his home at Tyllwyd, Cwmgwily, and this was the centre of the Methodist religion in the area until Capel Hendre was built in 1812. One of John Thomas Owens' disciples was his farm hand, Thomas Jones, who having married his master's daughter, became a preacher, and he is renowned for his constant attendance at the Cyfarfod Misol, and Sasiwn. He was then buried at Capel Hendre, and near him lies Dafydd Morris, also a preacher, and he is noted for his preaching abilities and the fact that he published the works of William Williams, Pantycelyn, in cheap booklets.

As a result of their endeavours, the chapel at Capel Hendre, received a high status, and it was responsible for founding Caersalem, Tycroes, in 1875, Gibeia Cwmgwili in 1899, and Jerusalem, Penygroes, in 1879.

Of even greater fame than Capel Hendre is the Methodist Chapel at Pentwyn, which stands on a hill, a quarter of a mile from Cross Hands, facing the main road to Pontardulais. John Thomas Owens, together with Jacko Dafydd, Pentwyn, and Jacko, Rhos, was responsible in founding a Sunday School in the Pentwyn farmhouse. This Sunday School is still talked of in the area and many references are made to the "Class of Blockheads" with the father of the late J. W. Jones as its teacher. In 1849 the schoolhouse was extended and a balcony was built. In 1903 the old chapel was pulled down and a new and beautiful chapel was erected; a chapel that has often been described as one of the most beautiful chapels in Wales. The cost amounted to £1,200 and it was eventually paid by 1908. Many of the most important Methodist preachers have been connected with Pentwyn, and these include John Evans, Llwynfortune, David Griffiths, Uantylly, Edwards Jones, William Jones, Aberdulais, W. Beynon Jones and Victor Griffiths. Another interesting factor concerned with Pentwyn is the association of the family of John Thomas Owens or Shon Llwyd with the chapel. His son, John Owens, was a deacon at Pentwyn, and similarly, his son and then the latter's son, both also called John Owens. The development of the coal industry attracted the Methodist cause to open a chapel there, and John Owens, a Pentwyn deacon, the descendant of Shon Llwyd, combined with others, and especially Robert Evans, to open a chapel—Bethel, in 1906. The number of members was 78, but by today the number is in the proximity of 200. Like other chapels and churches in the area, it leads a vigorous active life, and in 1953 the Association (Sasiwn) of South Wales, held its conference at Bethel.

At first, as in other areas of Wales, religion and education were closely connected, and plenty of evidence is available indicating that Gruffydd Jones, with his Circulating Schools was particularly active in the immediate vicinity of the Mynydd Mawr, and especially in the parishes of Llandybie and Llanarthney. On October 2nd, 1736, in a letter to Madam Bevan, he stated:—

"I had a very agreeable journey to Llanlluan Chapel and back again. I took a couple of the clergy I met there two or three miles with me in my return for the sake of talking together, and are to meet again next Wednesday night at Carmarthen, to converse a little more together."

It is evident from other letters that Gruffydd Jones constantly visited Llanlluan, and in another letter he stated:

"Give me an account of the schools in Llandeilo and Llandybie. Bridget Bevan took tremendous interest in the parish of Llandybie, probably on account of her connections with the Derwydd family."

According to the "Welsh Piety" there were schools in Llandybie during 1738-9, and here is a list of the circulating schools held within the parish of Llandybie and the number of scholars at each school:—

1738-9	1740-1	1741-2
Llandybie: 54	Pantllyn: 54	Llandybie: 70
1744-5	1751-2	1755-6
Llandybie: 51	Llandyfaen Chapel: 39	Llandybie: 62
1756-7	1758-9	1759-60
Bleunau: 52	Llandybie: 65	Bleunau: 62
1761-2	1763	1764-5
Caerbryn: 58	Llandybie: 73	Llandybie Night School: 15

It is also known that between the years 1740-42, a Circulating School was opened at Llanfihangel-Aberbythich (Golden Grove).

By the second half of the 18th century the circulating school movement had begun to fade, and there was danger of the neighbourhood falling back into its former state of ignorance and illiteracy. The Sunday Schools came into prominence now, and, according to the "Cambrian Newspaper," Sunday Schools were started in the parishes of Llandybie and Llanarthney in 1807. Sunday Schools were held in the parish churches, but it was in the Nonconformist chapels, and especially in the recently established Calvinistic Methodist chapels, that the Sunday School movement was most successful.

Adults attended these Sunday Schools, as well as children. Difficult passages in the morning's sermon were analysed, and controversial Biblical questions were heatedly debated. At Capel Hendre, where the Methodist Chapel

was established in 1812, 86 members attended the Sunday School, and at Pentwyn a Sunday School was held in the farm house for many years before the erection of a schoolhouse in 1812.

At this schoolhouse, a daily school was held for the remainder of the week. This Academy soon became renowned as a centre of learning. An illustration of its fame is that Richard Price of Llangeinor, in Glamorganshire, was educated there. He later became one of the leading radicals in the county at the time of the French Revolution, which he wholeheartedly supported, and he also greatly influenced the framers of the Declaration of Independence in America.

As a result of a Government Inquiry's report on education in Wales in 1847, more schools were established and in 1848 a day school was established in Llandybie. The purpose of the school was to educate "children and adults, or children alone, of the labouring, manufacturing or other poorer classes in the parish of Llandybie."

This school was run in conjunction with the National Society, religious instruction was under the control of the vicar and the staff had to be members of the English Church. In 1856, day schools were established in Llanarthney and Gorslas, and it was at these schools, and at Penygroes, which was opened in 1872, after the Education Act of 1870, that the inhabitants of the Mynydd Mawr were educated. Another school was opened in Bryndu, Llannon, and many tales are recited today of the inhabitants of Cross Hands having to walk three miles to the Board School at Bryndu. At these schools the Welsh language did not enjoy the same status as English within the school premises. The older people of Cross Hands remember vividly the strict discipline enforced on the pupils and the importance of politeness and courtesy were strictly stressed.

The schoolmaster most particularly associated with this strict discipline was D. M. Jenkins of Llechyfedach School, Upper Tumble, opened in 1891. A school in the village of Cross Hands was not opened until 1926 and a Senior Centre was added to it after the last war. Grammar School education for the children of the Mynydd Mawr is provided at the Gwendraeth Valley Grammar School opened in 1925, and prior to this date, children seeking this education had to travel to Llanelly or Llandeilo. An interesting feature concerned with the transport of children to Llandeilo was that they had travelled by Taylor's bus, and incidents galore are recounted of its eventful journeys.

Today, the Mynydd Mawr is a hive of activity, an industrial centre with its three mines at Great Mountain, Tumble,

Blaenhirwaun, and Cross Hands. The miners form the majority of the inhabitants, but a balance is kept in the community by the presence of a large number of farmers, on the one hand, and various kinds of professional men and workers engaged in light industries. The latter, plus miners having to travel away for work, are to be seen, particularly at Penygroes, where the local colliery has long since closed down. It was believed that this closure would have an adverse effect on community life, but the flourishing religious and social life proves the theory to be false.

This is a trend which will probably continue at the other mining villages with the mines destined to close when Cynheidre colliery opens, and prompts one not to despair that when the collieries close the villages of Tumble and Cross Hands will become "ghost towns." Such a description of village life today could not be further from the truth. The main interest of the people is rugby football, with intense rivalry between teams of Cefneithin, Pontyberem and Tumble. A fine tradition in the area may be observed in the fine arts, and the main instrument to further these cultural interests is the Mynydd Mawr Council of the Arts, which has presented musical works like "Cavaleria Rusticana" and "Hansel and Gretel" and historical plays like "Corn Beca", written by the local author, Gwynne Evans. Choral singing is also popular, and community singing concerts are often held in a local chapel. At these concerts, noted local artistes take part and these include the celebrated Jac and Wil, whose songs, partly sentimental and partly religious, are extremely popular in the whole county, as indicated by the high sales of their records.

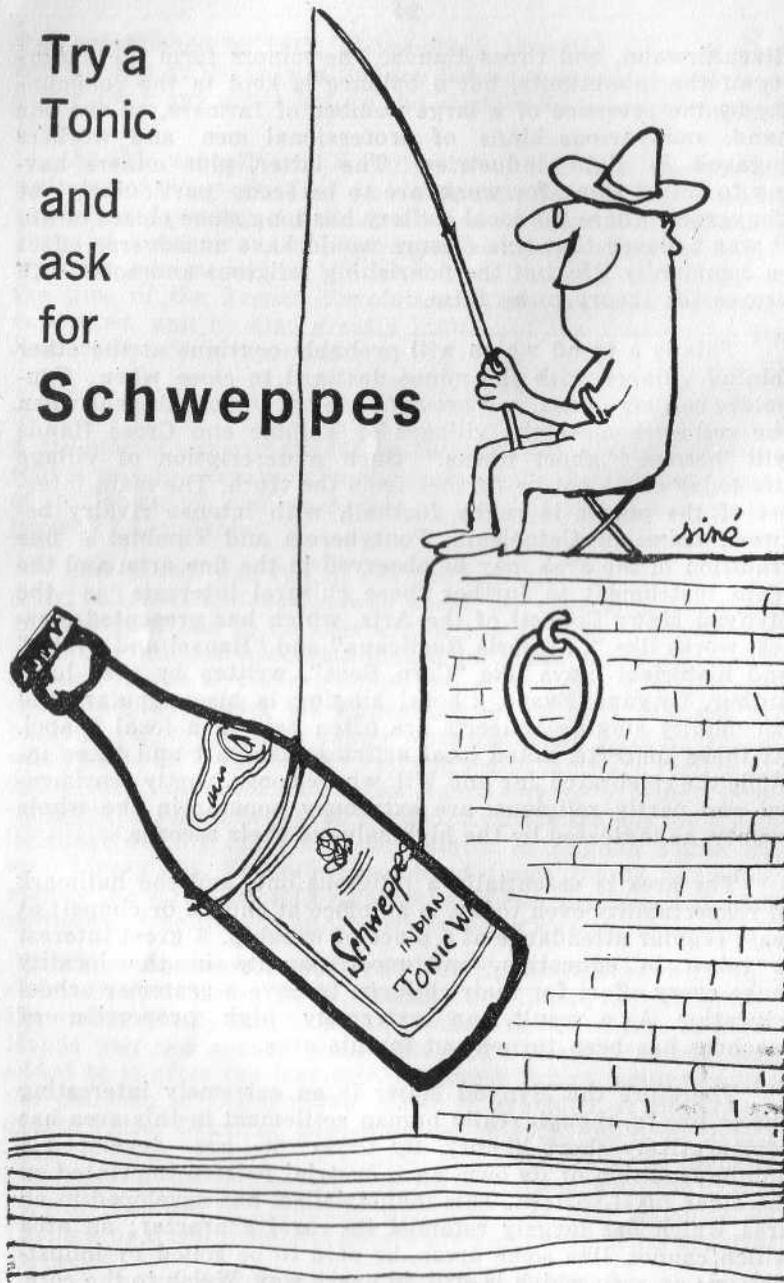
The area is essentially a religious one, and the hallmark of respectability even today, is an office at church or chapel; at least regular attendance at a place of worship. A great interest is taken in education, and most parents in the locality make every effort for their children to have a grammar school education. As a result, an extremely high proportion of teachers has been turned out in this area.

Therefore the Mynydd Mawr is an extremely interesting one to live in, though really human settlement in this area has comparatively short history. By today it has developed a unique tradition of its own, an industrial pattern imprinted on the older rural pattern. This industrialism has developed in an area which has largely retained its rural character; an area which cannot, like some areas, be said to be soiled by industrialism; an area which is still, in every way, Welsh to the core, and an area which it is my pleasure to live in and my privilege to attempt writing its history.

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Loitering in Guildhall Square, Carmarthen

by

T. J. EVANS, M.B.E.

THIS revered spot in the centre of the ancient borough of Carmarthen is alive with historic associations. Not far off is Nott Square, and the castle gateway, linked directly with the martyrdom of Dr. Robert Ferrar, Lord Bishop of St. Davids, on the 30th day of March, 1555. Close at hand is St. Mary Street—connected with the ancient church of St. Mary, and tradition has it that near this site stood Oliver Cromwell as he watched the burning of the Castle of Carmarthen. He was at that time on his way to Pembrokeshire around 1648-1649.

Yes, Guildhall Square itself 'lives' with history. It was here on the day before the official opening of the Assize Court that the ordinary people of the county gathered in great numbers to ventilate their views on grave national issues. The custom had grown with a regular practice spread over many generations. Here it was that David Peter of Heol Awst Meeting House and Principal of the Presbyterian College, and Rees Gibbon of the Tabernacle, who was the Principal of the Titus Lewis Academy, and Joshua Watkins of Penuel, led in a great crusade which substantially influenced the people of West Wales to agitate in favour of the Reform Act of 1832. It was here, too, that Rees Gibbon launched a campaign which spread throughout Wales like a prairie fire, in support of the Act of Parliament which sanctioned the solemnisation of marriages in Dissenting Meeting Houses. Great meetings were held in Guildhall Square, Carmarthen, agitating for the passing of the Ballot Act. Processions of enthusiastic supporters reached the town from many outstanding districts and there was a deep religious fervour in the demand that voters should exercise their choice within the privacy of the Ballot.

There was a well known Eating House in Guildhall Square, kept by a familiar John Lewis, whose daughter was the mother of Eliza Carmarthen—the well-known poetess—and it was known as the Old Bull, and here the leaders of the Whigs met in secret for Committee Meetings and here they initiated and organised their election campaigns.

The Cavaliers, as the Tories were known during the early Restoration Period, met in the Red Lion Tavern, just off Guildhall Square in Red Lion Yard.

When Election Day arrived (before the operation of the Ballot Act), those entitled to vote, by open voting, journeyed to Carmarthen by early morning by gambo and on foot, and the gentry came on horseback, and in turn each of the voters presented themselves in Guildhall Square to openly record their choice. Great care was taken to prevent any riot, although political feeling was very high and the workmen and tenants were carefully watched by their masters, who inspired them according to their own particular political persuasion. The Cavaliers and the Whigs were kept under ordered discipline. The Cavaliers wore "Red" Rosettes, and the Whigs wore "Blue" Rosettes and these colours have still persisted up to modern times relating to the Tories who wear **Red**, and the Liberals who wear **Blue**. For general convenience and to prevent any risk of disorder, the Cavaliers assembled in the road now known as Red Street and the Whigs similarly assembled in Blue Street. In turn, each stepped out into Guildhall Square to record their votes as their names were called.

Guildhall Square had a well-known tavern, known by that name. A Mr. Joseph Reid, a radical and a Nonconformist, was the proprietor, and this was the meeting centre of Morgan John Rhys, the great reformer around 1794. He left for America to gain adequate freedom to extend his crusade for liberty and fraternity. He was the author of the well-known hymn "Heded yr Efyngyl hyfryd". Morgan John Rhys became a prominent figure in the United States. One of his chief supporters in Carmarthen was Joshua Watkins, who later kept a Printers' Shop in Priory Street, where many telling pamphlets were published and he became an evangelist of wide repute throughout the whole of West Wales.

Where Barclays Bank now stands was the establishment of "Lewis Commerce House"—and his shop extended into Red Street. Here, around 1827, Henry Richard of Tregaron, was an apprentice. He was none other than the famous Member of Parliament for Merthyr Tydfil, and the "Apostle of Peace", whose reputation was honoured in many lands. It may be of interest to note that Caradoc Evans was also a shop assistant at Commerce House.

Just around the corner, in Red Street, is the present "Juvenile Employment Centre". This was the actual building where the Calvinistic Baptists met from 1782 to 1812 under

the leadership of the great Titus Lewis, and when his congregation left for the Tabernacle Chapel in 1812, the building became the centre of worship by the Unitarians and later by the Quakers—and this building stood within the civic borough of Carmarthen—a splendid token of the tolerance and sense of religious freedom of the City Fathers.

At the upper end of Guildhall Square is Hall Street—the old home of “Seren Cymru”, and nearby were the first offices of the Carmarthen Rural District Council, and just across the roadway was the house where Brinley Richards, the great Welsh musician who composed “God Bless the Prince of Wales”, was born in 1817.

Many changes have come with the passing years—the old shops of Guildhall Square, each dominated by men of differing personality, are stories that belong to a period that is fast disappearing, and their tale must be recorded in a later chapter. What romantic happenings the balcony of the Shire Hall could relate; Mayors, one after the other, have appeared in Guildhall Square in their scarlet robes and chains of office on their way to their annual Civic Services. Judges of the High Court in the course of the changing years have been trumpeted on their arrival in Guildhall Square, Carmarthen. Yes! And so many other events leap to the mind, but space now forbids further elaboration.

This beloved old town, honoured by centuries of noble tradition may yet see many changes, but beware that “ye remove not the ancient landmarks which your fathers have set before you.”

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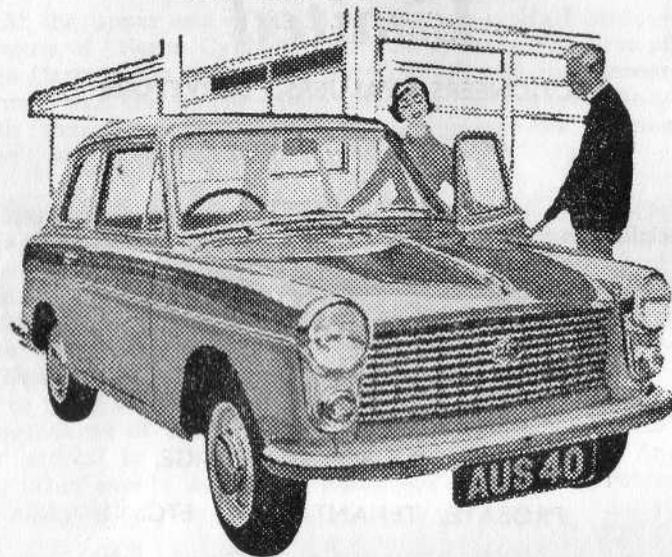
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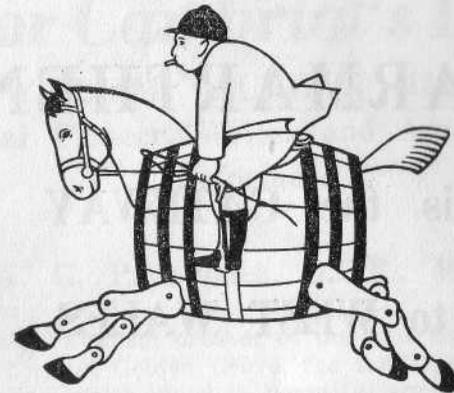
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CARMARTHEN

Poor Cambriol's Lord

SIR WILLIAM VAUGHAN (1577-1641).
Colonial Pioneer, Writer and Agricultural
Reformer

by

A. G. Prys-Jones, O.B.E., M.A.

SIR William Vaughan, brother of the first Earl of Carbery, was born at Golden Grove, the family seat—the early Tudor Mansion which stood in beautiful surroundings in the Vale of Tywi, south of Llangathen. This was demolished in 1827 and replaced by a Gothic-styled residence after the first Earl of Cawdor had inherited the Vaughan Estates.

The story of the wealthy and influential Vaughans, who dominated Carmarthenshire political life during the 17th century will be given in another article.

William Vaughan, the most eccentric, original, far-sighted and idealistic of them all, was a graduate of Jesus College, Oxford, where he studied classics and law. Later he travelled extensively abroad, visiting France, Italy and Austria. For a time he was a student at the University of Vienna, where he obtained the degree of Doctor of Laws. He was an able classical scholar and also took much interest in the study of agricultural methods and medicine. Like many well educated men of his time he wrote in Latin as well as English. One of his books, entitled "Golden Grove", was a sort of commentary on current moral, economic, political and literary matters. It contains numerous quotations from classical, mediaeval and contemporary writers, together with severe criticism of the evils of his times.

Amongst other things, he denounced stage plays as being foolish and wicked! Another book was called "The Golden Fleece". Much of this was written during his stay in Newfoundland. It advocated colonisation as a remedy for the backwardness of agriculture and the lack of commercial enterprise which he thought he saw everywhere. Interesting information about Newfoundland, is also given in this rambling volume. For both of these books he used the pen name "Orpheus Junior . . . Alias Will Vaughan". A further work was a Latin poem which he wrote to celebrate the marriage of Charles I. His

writings are curious and wandering in style. They include allegories of a fantastic nature. But embedded among his mountains of words are many acute observations and much wise advice.

Squire of Tor-y-coed.

Vaughan married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of David ap Robert, Llangyndeyrn, and settled there at Tor-y-coed, a home which he quaintly spelled "Terra-Coed".

He was thoughtful and philosophic in temperament, and there is a strong strain of religious feeling in his writings. In 1608 his house was struck by lightning. He had a very narrow escape from death, but his wife was killed. On another occasion his life was preserved when he might easily have died by accident. These escapes affected him deeply. So much so, that he came to believe that his life had been saved by God for some special purpose. At times he appears to have suffered from a mild form of religious mania.

Agricultural Decay and Too Many Law Suits.

William Vaughan was greatly disturbed by the poverty and the lack of agricultural enterprise which prevailed in his county and country. In one of three volumes of "Golden Grove" he wrote: "Nowadays, yeomanry is decayed, hospitalitie gone to wracke and husbandrie almost quite fallen". For this sad state of the countryside he blames the greed and ruthlessness of landlords and land speculators. These people, he said, were not content with the revenues their predecessors received, nor satisfied that they were able to "live like swinish epicures at their ease". They did no good at all for their country. Instead they left no ground for tenants to till, enclosing "many thousands of acres within one hedge. The husbandmen are thrust out of their own, or else, by deceit, constrained to sell all they have".

He also deplored the increase in legal cases. When tenants went to law to defend their rights, as they did so often, they were made still poorer by crippling expenses and the waste of time involved in attending courts. Corrupt officials and tyrannical courts of law increased their misery. "Nowadays," he wrote, "we reare up two-legged asses which doe nothing but wrangle in law, the one with the other. By this meanes we consume our precious time not to be redeemed. By this ungracious brood we become so impoverished".

If law-suits were done away with, he said, men would be able to get on with their farming "diligently at home, fall to

small enclosures, plant orchards, marle their lands and not scratch the earth with weak Heyfers or Steeres. They might then keepe strong oxen to plough withall, which now they are enforced to sell for their Lawiers' use".

He added that the food resources of rural Wales were so meagre in proportion to the population that thousands died annually of famine. He knew, he wrote, of a parish where a hundred people had failed to survive during each of the past few years, mainly owing to lack of food, fire and proper clothing. He pointed out, too, that although Wales possessed much more sea-board than Devonshire, and a far greater extent of land, the inhabitants of that county were immensely superior to those of Wales in shipping and trading.

Colonisation the Remedy.

One can imagine the growth of Sir William Vaughan's conviction of his destiny. His life had been miraculously spared to become a Welsh Moses, leading some of his own people out of agricultural poverty, depression and bondage into a new land of milk, honey and freedom.

His remedy for the deplorable conditions which he described so vividly was colonisation. In his enthusiasm, he saw himself as the inspired founder of another Wales overseas.

Here he could put into practice his ideals of fair dealings and friendly co-operation between landlord and tenants, and find scope for his progressive ideas of agricultural planning and methods. Under his guidance and direction he hoped to "leave this monument to posterity, that a Cambro-Briton hath founded a new Cambriol, where he made the deaf to hear and the woods to move."

A New Wales.

The promise of a "New England" already existed in John Smith's re-settlement of Virginia in 1607, and the real New England colonies were soon to be established by the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620. Vaughan's friend, Sir William Alexander, was planning to set up a "New Scotland" in Nova Scotia, now the most easterly mainland province of Canada. So why not a "New Wales"?

But where was this to be founded? Vaughan considered St. Helena, the Bermudas, Virginia and other places. Finally, he decided upon Newfoundland. At the time there seemed to be sound reasons for this choice. It was the "next land to Ireland"

and with fair winds and good weather, could be reached in a fortnight. This reduced the cost of transporting emigrants to 10s. a head, as opposed to £5 for the Virginia passage. More important still, earlier pioneers in Newfoundland had brought back most favourable reports of the island's fertility and of its vast resources of timber and potential mineral wealth. Moreover, the native Indians were few and by no means hostile. There were also possibilities of developing a fur trade. Additionally, the great fishing grounds of the Grand Banks lay close at hand. It was a basic part of Vaughan's plan that agriculture, fishing, lumbering and the development of small industries should be integrated and worked at by the colonists according to seasonal changes.

Cambriol.

In 1616 Sir William obtained a sub-grant of land from the "Company of Adventurers to Newfoundland". This was a commercial enterprise headed by Sir Francis Bacon, to whom James I had granted authority to colonise the island. Vaughan's territory lay on the south coast of the curiously-shaped eastern part of Newfoundland. It included Cape Race. Naming this area Cambriol as a compliment to his native land, he felt certain that here was the new country "reserved by God for us Britons". John Guy of Bristol, himself a Newfoundland pioneer, had hailed the venture in verse:—

"New Cambriol's planter, sprung from Golden Grove,
Old Cambria's soil up to the skies doth raise,
For which let Fame crown him with sacred bays".

In 1617 Sir William sent a number of Welsh colonists of both sexes to Cambriol, at his own expense. He had intended to sail with them to settle permanently there. But ill-health prevented him from leaving Wales. During 1617 he met Sir Richard Whitbourne, a man of considerable experience in colonisation, and offered him the governorship of Cambriol. Whitbourne accepted, and in 1618 he departed to Newfoundland with another group of emigrants. Two ships undertook the voyage, one carrying the settlers, the other engaged on a fishing expedition, but also conveying stores and equipment needed by the colonists. Unfortunately the fishing vessel was waylaid by one of Raleigh's captains who had turned pirate. The loss of this ship and its cargo was a severe blow.

When Sir Richard and his newcomers arrived, they found that the original settlers had made very poor progress. Little had been achieved in any direction. The new Governor, in fact,

decided that the earlier emigrants had been thoroughly lazy and shown much lack of pioneering initiative. So he sent all but six of them home again.

This loss of manpower compelled Vaughan to hand over the northern part of Cambriol to Lords Falkland and Baltimore, two other pioneers who agreed to look after it until things improved. In 1622 Vaughan himself sailed to the colony with more settlers and supplies. During the three or four years he stayed there it appears that he spent more time in writing "The Golden Fleece" and other works than in galvanising his colonists into hard work. He returned to England to arrange for the publication of these books, and went back again to Cambriol in 1628.

The Colony's Troubles.

In fairness to the colonists, it must be said that they had to face persistent enemies who wantonly destroyed much of their property, and so wrecked their chances of prosperity. These were pirates, corsairs and privateers who preyed on the islanders. Perhaps worst of all were the ruthless French and other fishermen of the Grand Banks, who hated the settlers because of their encroachment upon their waters. Canada was in the hands of the French. Crops and buildings were set on fire, trees mutilated, havens blocked and fish-drying sheds broken up.

In 1626 Sir William reported that the damage done in pillage and destruction amounted to £40,000 and that, in addition, his colonists had lost a hundred pieces of cannon.

A further blow was the Arctic winter of 1628, though the Cambriol people did not suffer as severely from cold and scurvy as Lord Baltimore's settlers further north. But Sir William was still undaunted. He returned to England in 1630 to settle his own financial affairs. He wrote, that for all he could see, he would have to rely upon his own resources to support Cambriol until the colony "be better strengthened". At the same time he made great efforts to persuade his brother-in-law, Sir Henry Salusbury of Denbigh, with "some gentlemen of North Wales" to join him in Newfoundland where, he said, they would be greeted with open arms. But though he made them grants of land there, not one Squire responded to his call.

A further instance of Sir William's far-sightedness is to be found in the medical handbook which he published in 1630. This was entitled "Newlander's Cure". It contained inform-

ation and advice designed for colonists on the preservation of health, with curious prescriptions for sea-sickness, scurvy and numerous other ailments. This book makes him a pioneer also in the adaptation of medical knowledge, such as it was then, to the special needs of emigrants.

The Welsh atmosphere of Cambriol is clearly indicated in its title, together with other place names like Vaughan's Cove, Golden Grove, Cardiff, Pembroke, Cardigan, Carmarthen and Brecon. These names appear on John Mason's map of Newfoundland published about 1622.

End of an Enterprise.

It is uncertain whether Sir William returned to the colony after 1630. In view of the persistent depredations of pirates and the fierce antagonism of the men of the French fishing fleets, it was becoming more and more difficult to establish Cambriol as a self-supporting concern. The founder's resources no doubt were becoming severely strained, and he appears to have had no financial backing from any of his fellow countrymen. Finally, the gallant pioneer, now approaching sixty years of age, had to abandon his cherished dream of a prosperous New Wales some time between 1630 and 1637.

In 1637 the Privy Council was officially informed that the efforts of pioneers like Sir William, Lord Baltimore and other "men, ingenious and of excellent parts," had failed. A new monopoly over the whole island was granted to another Newfoundland adventurer, Sir David Kirke, though trouble with the fishermen and the pirates continued throughout the 17th century.

It would be difficult to find a nobler tribute to Sir William Vaughan than that written by Dr. E. Roland Williams: "Whatever Vaughan's shortcomings—and they were many—at least the crime of the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin is not to be laid to his charge. He spared no pains or sacrifices in his attempt to realise his ambition, and his devotion to his ideal burns with a clear light through the mists and fumes of those eccentricities and absurdities which were also part of his character. . . . Before Vaughan had been laid to rest in the little church in the valley of Llangydeyrn in August, 1641, the silent, primaevial wilderness was already erasing, slowly, but relentlessly, all the signs of his strivings and sacrifices".

On the island itself, the Welsh place-names have long disappeared, and apart from the name "Newfoundland," which,

some years ago, at any rate, denoted a farm or two in the lower Tywi Valley, there is no memorial left of this courageous pioneer. He was a man whom Carmarthenshire should be proud to honour.

Perhaps the strangeness of coincidence has seldom been more curiously illustrated than in the following events. In 1928 and 1929 two aerial pioneers flew across the Atlantic. The second was a woman, Amelia Earhart. Both started from Trepassey Bay in Vaughan's old Cambriol, and both came to Carmarthenshire waters and soil respectively within nine miles of Llangydeyrn where the body of the pioneering knight of Tor-y-coed had lain for nearly three centuries.

Moreover, in 1952, Golden Grove, with its fine home farm of some 250 acres, became the Golden Grove Farm Institute under the control of the Carmarthenshire Education Authority. Here students of both sexes from several South Wales counties, attend to study the science of agriculture.

Perhaps no one would have rejoiced more at this last turn in the wheel of time than Sir William Vaughan. That his ancestral surroundings should have become a scientific training ground for young farmers would greatly have commended itself to one who wrote so bitterly about the deplorable condition of agriculture, the tyranny of landlords and the sad decay of rural life in the Wales of his period.

[NOTE: For much of the information included in this article I am indebted to Dr. E. Roland Williams' account of Sir William Vaughan in his "Elizabethan Wales".]

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Some References to the Cattle Drovers and Carmarthen

by

E. O. JAMES, B.Sc.

PRIOR to the development of important industries, Wales' chief produce lay in the breeding of stock and large numbers of cattle in particular were annually driven along famous routes to the prominent English fairs, to be purchased by English farmers, and thereafter fattened either in yards and buildings in autumn and winter, or on good pastures during summer. West Wales produced an appreciable portion of these cattle and Carmarthen county, particularly the northern half, has noteworthy connections with the famous fairs at which stock were sold, and in the presence of many noted porthmyn or dealers who purchased the stock and drove them to their destination beyond Offa's Dyke.

O ffeiriau Sir Benfro da mawrion i gyd
A'u cyrnau gan mwyaf yn llathen o hyd
O Hwylfordd, Treletert a Narberth rhai brâf
O Crymmych, Maenclochog a Thy-gwyn a'r Dâf.
O Lanarth, o Lambed, Ffair Rhos a Thalsarn,
O Ledrod, Llandalis y delent yn garn.
O Ffeiriau Llanbyther, Penuwch a Chross Inn
Da duon, da gleision ac ambell un gwyn.
O Ffeiriau Caerfyrddin da perton ac îr
Ac ambell f'swynog o waelod y Sir.
Doi da Castell-Newydd a Chynwil i'r lan
At dda Dyffryn Tywi i gyd i'r un man.

The following figures for the counties of south and west Wales provide a good indication of the comparative production possibilities for the early years of the last century, when as many as 30,000 cattle were driven from the area along prominent routes, some of which in Carmarthenshire are still recorded.

County	Farmers	Farm Workers	Total
Carmarthen	4817	5854	10671
Pembroke	5088	4457	9545
Glamorgan	2957	5058	8015
Cardigan	3072	3610	6682

Many a "Ridgeway" followed the tops of the lower hills and clumps of trees on these higher grounds, planted as landmarks or "signposts" for the dealers and their drover assistants still remain to mark the east-bound routes, or the vicinity of a night's resting place.

A large number of fairs were held at well-known centres throughout the county, thus facilitating the movement of stock to the fairground. Many interesting references, such as the following place names provide proof of the connections with English destinations: Piccadilly Square (Llanboidy); Charing Cross (Llandeilo); Llundain and Llundain Fach (Llanelly and Caio); Temple Bar (numerous); Rhiw Sais; Pont i'r Sais (Conwil Elfed); Smithfield (Llanybyther); Glanrhyd Saeson; Traveller's Rest; Half Way, as well as Bow Street, Chancery, Hyde Park, etc., within short distance of the county border.

Numerous inns bear names which provide proof of connection with the droving trade and appropriate names—many within the county—such as Drover's Arms, Drover's Halt, Drover's Rest, Jolly Drover, Black Ox are retained. One inn at Stockbridge in Hampshire is called "Drover's House" and bears the following inscription on the front wall:—"Gwair Tymherus, Porfa flasus, Cwrw da, Gwâe Cysurus"—proof that these inns catered well for drover and stock.

The fairs were held from late summer to early autumn or during the late spring or early summer months. Llanddarog Fair, for instance, was called "Ffair Gwsberis"—and was held on the Monday nearest to May 23rd. Gooseberries are, at that time, in season, and the fair accordingly derived its name.

Cattle driven during the fall of the year were purchased by the arable farmers of the East and South East to be fattened indoors on the available arable crops, whilst those purchased in spring and early summer were mostly fattened on the best fattening pastures of the Midlands and South.

In the village of Cilycwm, one finds an above ground, cobbled, man-made water course, running along one side of the roadway, to provide water for the cattle collected on the other side of the road on fair days when large numbers of local cattle were collected in the village.

Before commencing the long journey over rough and open roads the beasts that were not already shod prior to being used for farm tillage, were attended by competent blacksmiths. The animals were collected in fields or paddocks set for the purpose and names such as Cwmpedol, Y Bedolfa, Cae Pedoli, Alltygof, Pantyporthmon, etc., are reminders of such centres.

Wedi'r ffair mi welaf dyrfa
 O fystechi mewn cae porfa
 Ger Pont Twrch, ac i'w pedoli
 At y gwaith yr eir o ddifri.
 Deio Hendy Cwrdd 'Sgerdawe
 Ydyw'r cyntaf un i ddechre.
 Cydio wna ynghorn y bustach,
 A rhed ganddo gam ymhellach
 Fe rydd dro i'r corn yn sydyn
 A'r anifael syrth fel plentyn.
 Gyda rhaff daw arall atto,
 I glymu'r pedwar coes rhag cicio.
 Naw'r mae off y gof a'r offer
 Yn pedoli ar ei gyfer
 A chyn hir y bustach ola
 Sydd a'i bedol yn y borfa.

The smiths made a large number of light "Cues" and nails which were at hand for immediate use on the beasts, which were fallen and held on the ground by the specialist strong men or "cwypwyr" and the usual fee was 10d per beast for a complete set of fixed shoes.

Records show a wide range of prices for the three to four year old beasts, varying from as low as £3 to a reasonable figure of £11 per head. The prices depended on the quality of beast, the number available and particularly on the probable supply of fodder and grass in the fattening areas. If grass was poor or in short supply due to climatic conditions, the prices paid by the English farmers were naturally low.

At Abergwili Fair in October, 1843, the following prices were recorded:—

	£	s	d
2 Beasts—Jones, Penrallt	8	17	0
3 Beasts—Davies, Derlwyn	12	15	0
3 Beasts—Williams, Tyllwyd	14	0	0
1 Beast —Johns, Coedhirion	5	15	6
2 Beasts—Bowen, Llanblewog	10	10	0
7 Beasts — Hafodwen	32	11	6

The two breeds available were the native Welsh Black or Castlemartins and the White Faced Cattle from the Breconshire Borders, which of course were the fore-runners of the present day Hereford.

"Gwartheg du a choch a brithion
 A chroen crin a phennau gwynion".

The herd, numbering anything up to 150 or more, was driven an average of 12-15 miles each day over the open countryside or in long files where enclosures had made the roadway narrow. Coachroads were avoided as much as possible owing to the danger of loosening shoes and the inevitable tolls demanded at frequent gateways. Carmarthenshire has much to record in the events that led to the eventual removal of these tollgates.

Prominent rivers were forded at suitable places, and names such as Hereford (Henffordd), Oxford (Rhydychen), Walford (Welsh Ford), Cowbridge, Haverfordwest, Glanrhyd-saeson, etc., are appropriate references to such fording spots. The night was spent at well-known inns or taverns, to which reference has previously been made, the cattle congregated into a suitable paddock under the vigilance of the drovers, whilst the porthmyn or dealers slept in the hostelry.

The porthmon was a capitalist in a small way, and handled what, in his day, was a large sum of money. His business was large and his capital requirements for purchases and driving correspondingly extensive. The transactions were a feature of droving life and eventually led to the establishment of drovers' banks to facilitate payment. Two of the most prominent in the county were Banc y Ddafad Ddu (The Black Sheep Bank) prominent as the Aberystwyth and Tregaron Bank—and the more noted Bank yr Eidon Du—the Black Ox Bank founded by Dafydd Jones y Black Ox in Llandoverly. This was taken over early in this century by Messrs Lloyds Bank, and until the last war their cheques for the area from Llandoverly to Ammanford bore the once familiar Black Ox print on the top left corner. Now discarded, may this again be reinstated to commemorate the early banking pioneers in that district.

The drovers were usually paid 3s. daily and a bonus of 6s given them after the cattle were sold at the famous fairs, at Smithfield, Barnet, Harley Bush etc. Many young lads, prior to making terms for service on farms, made it a recognised demand that they be allowed to make one journey with the drovers to "see the world" and also to enhance their meagre

payments. In many instances women acted as drovers, or through their agency, found occupation in London and elsewhere. A plaque on the vestry wall in Pumpsaint records such a person, Jane Evans, Tyn-y-Waun, Caio, who eventually accompanied Florence Nightingale on her wonderful work during the Crimean War.

The porthmyn in the majority of instances were trustworthy individuals, although an occasional less honest one prompted satirical poems from Twm o'r Nant, and likewise Vicar Pritchard to thus write in his "Canwyll y Cymru":

Os 'd'wyt borthmon delia'n onest
Tal yn gywir am a gefaist.
Cadw d'air, na thor d'addewid
Gwell nag aur mewn côd yw credid.

On the other hand it is known that some losses of stock were suffered by the drovers. Names such as Cwm Lladron and Ffordd y Lladron within the county reflect on dangers and losses that might be incurred.

The trade in geese was also interesting. These were purchased and prepared for their long journeys by first walking them over pitch or tar and then over fine sand. When the feet became dry and hard they were then ready to be driven without injury over the considerable distance to their destination in the Midlands and the Eastern counties. A field called "Maesgwyddau" near Llanllwni was thus used. Large flocks could be seen in late summer and early autumn along the usual routes feeding on the grass and stubble through which they passed. "Gurnos" is a reference to "Gyry ar hyd y nos" for they were often driven by night as well as during the day.

One of the main streets in Carmarthen was once called Heol y Gwyddau (Goose Lane) and likewise other towns on the route towards the Black Mountains have streets similarly named. The lower part of the township of Laugharne is known as Gosport, and quite near the Quay in Carmarthen are the ruins of a house similarly named Gosport. These are really a mis-spelling of Goose-port, and are reminders of the sea-faring trade from Laugharne and Carmarthen when loads were shipped to the West and South of England, in many cases to be unloaded in the Gosport harbour of Hampshire. Again, famous fairs at places such as Nottingham and elsewhere are still known as "Goose Fair".

One cannot end without reference to another noted Dafydd Jones who commenced his livelihood as a drover. Dafydd Jones of Caio, after many years in this worthy trade, became a noted

preacher and hymn writer and it is noteworthy that many of his hymns contain a reference to his droving journeys. For example:—

"Fe'm dwg i'r lleodd da,
Lle tyf y porfa Nefol."
"Arglwydd, arwain fi'n dy law
Na ad fi grwydro yma a thraw".
"Os af o'm ffordd yn ffol
Efe yn ol a'm geilw".
"Pererin wyf i ar fy nhaith
"A'm ffordd yn faith a phell".

He settled in a small farm which he named Llundain Fach near Esgerdawe, and named the brook alongside "Y Tafwys" (The Thames).

When railways became available during the latter half of the last century, the need for driving herds to their ultimate destinations then came to an end and with their advent, there ceased an interesting and important era, for the drovers were responsible for far more than mere trade in stock. They brought news and purchases to South Wales. Travellers accompanied them in safety and their return to the homeland brought about meetings and "Noson Lawen" when events were discussed and described in poem and song. They first brought fruit trees to Wales and their effect on everyday life was noteworthy and important.

They were the Crusaders of old, and pioneers like:
"Dic Shon Dafydd aeth i Lundain
A'i drwyn o fewn llathen i gynffon llo."

Many settled in large Midland farms and there is, even today, a distinct Welsh community in many English areas as a result.

But modern transport ended their interesting connections.
"Cyn i'r trên wareiddio'r dyffryn
Nac i'w sgrêch ddeffroi y cwm,
Cyn i'r gwthio, gwaeddi, a churo'r
Anifeiliaid wrth eu trocio,
Dyna'r adeg magwyd porthmyn
Ffel eu bri yn Ffaldybrenin,
Plwyf Llanerwys ac hefyd Cayo,
I redeg iddynt 'radeg honno".

His task was then accomplished. His travels were not wanted any more and thus:

" 'Nol blino treiglo pob tref
Teg edrych tuag adref".

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SOME FACETS OF CARMARTHENSHIRE HISTORY

by

EYNON LLOYD HUGHES, F.R.S.A.

CARMARTHENSHIRE is the largest county in Wales, with an area of 588,472 acres. The county is divided into 13 local authorities. There are four boroughs—Kidwelly, Carmarthen, Llandovery and Llanely. The oldest borough is Kidwelly, and the “baby” of the family is Llanely, which was made a borough in 1913. There are five urban districts: Ammanford, Burry Port, Cwmamman, Llandeilo and Newcastle Emlyn, and the four Rural Districts are Carmarthen, Llandeilo, Llanely and Newcastle Emlyn. The county is further divided into 63 parishes, the largest of which is Llandeilo Fawr, with an area of a little over 26,000 acres, whilst the smallest is that of Whitland, with an area of a little over 900 acres. Strange as it may seem, there is a Parish within the County, containing well over 700 acres, but without a church, chapel, school, shop, Post Office, village, or even public house. This is Llandingat-Without, near Llandovery.

The distance round the county is 168 miles, just about the same distance as it is from Carmarthen to Sheffield. The Borough, Urban, District and Rural District Councils are mainly responsible for housing, collecting the rates, drainage, sewerage, water and public health, whilst the County Council looks after the roads, education, child welfare, etc., and spend some of the money that the Boroughs, Urban District and Rural District authorities collect in rates. The parish councils also have powers delegated to them in connection with burial grounds, rights of way, public footpaths and the lighting of streets in rural areas.

Carmarthen Borough possesses an interesting history. As seen from the map, Carmarthen Borough extends westwards nearly as far as the Grand Stand on the St. Clears road, Abergwili Bridge to the East, and nearly as far as Bronwydd Arms to the North, whilst the River Towy forms the southern boundary, as far as Pwntan Farm. The lowest part of the Borough is 15 feet above sea level, and the highest, Penlan Hill, which is 510 feet above sea level.

The Chief Citizen of the Borough is the Mayor, who is elected yearly. By a Charter granted by George II, he is Admiral of the Port of Carmarthen; he has another very great honour, which is also held by the Lord Mayor of London, and two other Mayors in the British Isles, namely that on ceremonial occasions, such as going to Church on Christmas Day, the Sword of State is carried before him, sheathed if the country is at peace and naked if at war.

One of the great men of Carmarthen was General Nott, the son of a one-time landlord of the Ivy Bush Inn in King Street, where now stands the Lyric Cinema. On his inn sign were these words: “Come in, eat, drink, be merry and pay Nott”. After a very distinguished army career Nott settled down in Carmarthen to enjoy a substantial pension granted by the Government. He died in 1845 and is buried in St. Peter's Church.

Two other famous men who resided for a while in King Street were Sir Richard Steele and Stephen Hughes. Sir Richard married Prue Scurlock of Tygwyn, Llangunnon, who, after a rather hectic life, was buried in Westminster Abbey. Sir Richard Steele is buried in St. Peter's Church, where a brass tablet commemorates him. Stephen Hughes, “Apostol Sir Gaerfyrddin” was the son of a former Mayor of Carmarthen. He entered the Church, but was ejected from his living during the Restoration Period. He founded a number of Nonconformist Chapels in Carmarthenshire, one of which was Lammas Street Congregational Chapel, of which he was the first minister. A famous poet born in Carmarthen was Sir Lewis Morris, known as “The Knight of Penybryn”. He was a great friend of Wordsworth and Tennyson, who visited Penybryn. On the wall opposite Woolworth's, in Hall Street, is a tablet to the memory of a famous musician born in that street, namely Brinley Richards, who composed “God Bless the Prince of Wales”. A little higher up in Nott Square, at the foot of Nott's monument is a tablet to the memory of Bishop Ferrar, burnt at the stake on the 31st March, 1555 for refusing to renounce his Protestant beliefs during the famous Marian persecution.

In St. Peter's Street is a barber's shop, which was built by Nash, the Architect of Buckingham Palace and Regent Street, London. Nash's house in Carmarthen still stands, facing the school canteen of Pentrepoeth and known today as Green Gables. Some time ago it was scheduled as a house of historic interest.

David Charles, the great hymnologist, composer of “O Fryniau Caersalem” and many other well-known hymns, lived

in Carmarthen where he kept the Ropeworks in Priory Street. One Saturday morning in March, 1821, the Ropeworks were burnt down. There was no insurance and he lost everything. The following Sunday he was preaching in Talley, and on the way there he composed the well-known hymn, "Rhagluniaeth Fawr y Nef mor rhyfedd yw".

The street names of Carmarthen are of great historical interest. Lammas Street derives its name from Loaf-Mass and Blue Street—formerly known as Golden Grove Street—and Red Street derive their names from the two political Parties which had their respective "kennels" in these streets. Barn Road is so called because a Tithe Barn stood there in the days when the vicar claimed the "Degwm." In St. Cathrine Street stood St. Cathrine's Chapel, a site now occupied by Jones and Davies' Garage. Pentrepoeth or Pentre'r Porth was one of the gates to the town. A well-known landmark is the Old Oak in Priory Street, with which is associated the famous saying, "When Merlin's Oak shall tumble down, so will then Carmarthen Town." However, this old oak, according to a well-known expert, had nothing to do with Merlin, but was planted by one of the Headmasters of the Grammar School to commemorate the accession of Charles II to the throne on May 19th, 1659.

Leaving Carmarthen we proceed towards Abergwili and in the distance we see the spire of Abergwili Church, the stone which caps it being the stone to which Bishop Ferrar was tied at the stake in Carmarthen in 1555. Another Bishop of St. Davids who lived in Abergwili was Bishop Laud, who became Archbishop Laud, and was beheaded on Tower Hill during the reign of Charles I. He remembered the poor of Abergwili in his will.

Richard Davies, Bishop of St. Davids, who translated parts of the New Testament at Abergwili, was buried in the Chancel of the Church. Abergwili was famous for its school, which was moved to Brecon, where it still flourishes, during the reign of Henry VIII.

After passing Abergwili we come to Merlin's Hill, where tradition states he still sleeps. Part of the rock is hewn out in the form of a chair and it was said that it was from here that he uttered his prophecies. There is also a "Wishing Well" on the side of the hill. It was the custom, about 50 years ago for the children of Abergwili Parish to visit Merlin's Hill on Easter Monday to play games, etc. It was called, "Y Gamp".

Further on, at White Mill, during the latter part of the last century, there lived here a well-known character called "Annelyn" or Bardd y Felin Wen. A book was published of his works, but only a few copies have survived. A specimen of his muse runs as follows—"Dau beth sydd bert, Wheel Whilber a Prince Albert". He was a weaver by trade and his book is called "Y Bellen Fraith". Across the river Towy stands the cottage of Waundewi, near Capel Dewi, where Dafydd Sior Jones was born, composer of "Bydd Myrdd o Rhyfeddodau". He was buried in Llanarthney Churchyard where his tomb can be seen. After passing White Mill, the next landmark of any note is Paxton's Tower, also known as Nelson's Tower or Paxton's Folly, for it has been suggested that it was built as a "spite" so that he could look down on the people of Carmarthen with "scorn" after he lost the great "Eat and Swill Election" of 1802. In this election he fought James Williams of Edwinsford and it cost him £15,690. The voting lasted 11 days and polling took place at Llandeilo Churchyard. Despite the fact that he lost, the election cost him over £15 per vote. Here is an extract of the actual expenses incurred:—

11,070 Breakfasts, 36,901 dinners, 25,275 gallons of beer, 11,068 bottles of Whiskey, 8,879 bottles of Port, 460 bottles of Sherry; 509 Bottles of Cider; £786 9s 0d for ribbons.

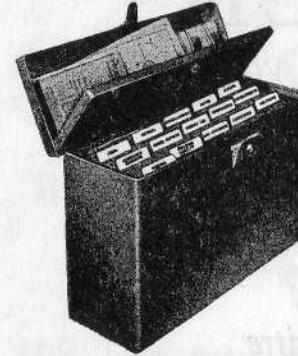
On the other side of Paxton's Tower stands the ruins of Dryslwyn Castle, and here, during a siege, part of the castle wall fell on the invaders and a number of soldiers were buried alive by the fall. At Broad Oak a battle took place between the Normans and the Welsh, and despite the fact that the Welsh won, there were heavy losses on both sides. On the Ordnance Sheet the names of some of the fields where the fighting took place, such as Cae'r Dial, Cae'r Gwaed, Cae'r Tranc, Cae'r Wylofen etc., can be seen. From Broad Oak we can reach Llanfynydd, birthplace of Morgan Rhys, one of Carmarthenshire's greatest hymnologists, composer of "Beth sydd i mi yn y Byd". Across the river is Golden Grove, taken over recently by the Carmarthenshire County Council as a farm institute. It was here that Jeremy Taylor fled during the Civil War, and wrote the immortal books, "Holy Living", and "Holy Dying". Before we cross the bridge we pass Aberglasney, birthplace of John Dyer, the poet, who sang the fame of Grongar Hill. Not far from Llandeilo we pass within easy reach of Nantrhibo . . . the Bewitched Brook, which has its source in a well in Dynevor Park. This well rises and falls twice every twenty four hours. Near Nantrhibo stands the modern castle of Dynevor, the old castle being a mile to the south of the new one. The castle was the seat of the former Princes of South Wales, Llandeilo's

ancient church, dedicated to St. Teilo, has its contents scheduled as Ancient Monuments. Quite near the church stood the Six Bells, a former public house, but now a garage where Twm o'r Nant (Thomas Edwards) lived when he kept the toll gate at Ffairfach. Across the bridge, which is one of the largest single-span bridges in Britain, can be seen two rivers flowing in the same field, but in opposite directions, the Towy and Cennen. High up above the bridge stands Penlan Park, presented to the people of Llandeilo by a farmer, Lord Dynevor. Charles Wesley entered the following comment in his diary, "July 12th, 1777, dined at Llandeilo; took a walk in the park of Mr. Rhys, the most beautiful park I have ever seen".

Limitations of space make it impossible to include the other numerous historical associations that distinguish Carmarthenshire. In this brief article, an effort has been made to indicate the extent and variety of the historic treasures that lie around us.

Additional copies of this publication may be obtained from the Secretary, Carmarthenshire Community Council, 16a, Guildhall Square, Carmarthen.

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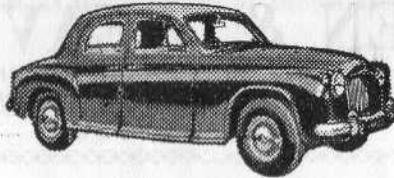
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