

# CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

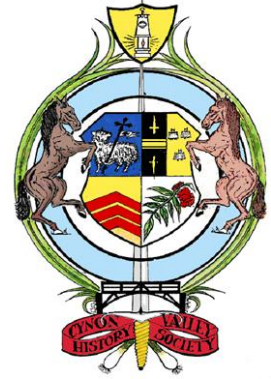
## CYMDEITHAS HANES CWM CYNON

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# HANES

NEWSLETTER OF THE CYNON VALLEY HISTORY SOCIETY  
CYLCHLYTHYR CYMDEITHAS HANES CWM CYNON

ISSUE NUMBER 60

AUTUMN 2012

## SIXTIETH EDITION OF HANES

Yet another milestone is reached with the publication of this the sixtieth edition of the Society's quarterly Newsletter *Hanes* of which the current Editor has produced thirty-six.

As 2012 is the year in which both the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games were held a large part of this issue will be devoted to a miscellany of sporting activities which have taken place in the Cynon valley over the centuries. Some of the events recorded can hardly be described as *sporting*, and would certainly not qualify as suitable for the Olympic Games.

Editor

## ABERDARE PARISH AT PLAY

... Other amusements in these quiet centuries [1500-1800] were hawking, hunting (boar, fox and hare), fishing, racing (horse and foot), and archery. Bare-fist fighting and ball-games also figured among the sports of the day. In Llanwynno, Christmas morning was recognised as the day for a squirrel hunt... In 1734, William Thomas of Llanwynno was accused of stealing five gaffletts [spurs used in cock-fighting].

Source: Thomas Evans, *The History of Miskin Higher*. p.43

See below for the continuation of cockfighting at Llanwynno in 1880.

AND FOR THOSE PREPARED TO TRAVEL.

**24 to 27 June:** *These four days Horse Races and feet Races on the Stalling Down. [Nr. Cowbridge] Much people gathered there from all parts, and a great Cockmatch in Cowbridge. Much noise and riots and several maimed, as William Hary of the Bovil has a rib or two broken.*

Diary of William Thomas for 1767

## BALL COURTS.

1840 There was a Ball Court at Green fach, it stood on the site now occupied by Siloa Chapel and belonged to a public house called *The King's Head*. [This hostelry, which was kept by Richard Roberts in 1840, is not mentioned in Richard Arnold's list of pubs in *Old Aberdare* Vol.2. Ed.]

*A hundred years ago, there was not much to be said for a man in the parish of Aberdare unless he was a good fighter, a runner, ball-player, or a follower of cock-fighting etc.*

Thomas Dafydd Llewelyn: *History of the Parish of Aberdare* (1853) in O.A., Vol. 2, pp. 53-54

## HIRWAUN COMMON WAS A RENOWNED VENUE FOR FOOT RACING.

### PEDESTRIANISM

*Will o'Wain* and the Welsh Bantam to run three miles, for sixty sovereigns a side at Hirwaun Common, Aberdare.

*The Era*, June 4, 1843.

FOOT RACE — On Saturday last a race was run on Hirwaun Common, Nr. Merthyr, between Robert Williams alias the *Llantrisant Boy*, and William Jones alias *Pontrhydyfen*, for 60l aside, the distance being three miles, which was won by the former, and accomplished by both parties within 16 minutes, to the great surprise of thousands of persons who had collected upon the occasion, some from 20 or 30 miles distance. It is said that from 2000l to 3000l changed hands upon the occasion. Bets were principally in favour of the *Llantrisant Boy*, and so confident were his friends, that many of them made bets of 5 to 1 in his favour. It is admitted that this is the best race which has been seen on Hirwaun Common for the last fifty years; and so tight was the match, that it is rumoured the parties are preparing for another trial.

*Bristol Mercury*, June 17, 1843.

November 1, 1843. Samuel Evans beat *Milgir Gwrhyd* of Aberdare on Hirwaun Common, Aberdare in a mile run for 20 sovereigns a side.

*The Era*, January 28, 1844.

Matches to Come.

January 5: W. Robinson and R. Meredith of Aberdare. 200 yards, the former giving 10 yards start for 25 sovereigns aside.

*The Era*, January 4, 1846.

### CRICKET IN THE EARLY DAYS (ca. 1854)

There was a cricket club formed in the town, of which I was a member. We used to play in a meadow nearly opposite Ynyscynon, and it was at this club that I made the acquaintance of the late Judge Gwilym Williams and his brother Gomer, as well as two members of the Blaengwawr family, Lewis and Fred Davies. I have no recollection of any football being played at the time.

Source: D.T. Alexander, *Glamorgan Reminiscences*.

### More Foot Racing on Hirwaun Common.

This practice is becoming too common, and a nuisance to everybody having to go over the road from Aberdare to Hirwaun. Large crowds of young men are brought together to witness the running. The practice leads to gambling, fighting, drinking, and all sorts of demoralisation. The police have had instructions to put a stop to these gatherings, and to arrest any who may be seen running on the public highway.

*The Western Mail*, May 12, 1870.

## THE FERNDALE TWO AND ABORTED COCKING AT LLANWONNO

Acting on information received six stalwart police officers dressed in civilian clothes travelled on foot to Llanwonno in the hope of apprehending a group of men who were about to engage in cockfighting.

It was raining and windy and on reaching Llanwonno the officers climbed the churchyard wall and concealed themselves in the church porch. They observed the suspects entering the adjacent pub and it became clear to the officers that the event would not be held out doors on account of the bad weather. The policemen then entered the pub and discovered that the "sporting gents" had forcibly taken possession of the "long room" to fight the cocks.

The landlady described the gang as "*the ugliest lot of blackguards that ever came here*".

The six constables entered the long room and there saw some twelve cocks armed and spurred and ready for action. As no fighting had started however the police were unable to make any arrests. Frustrated, the sporting gents went down into the bar and beer flowed freely. An enforcement of two more constables from Ferndale arrived and were left to keep watch whilst the six policemen returned to the Rhondda Valley. Due to the watchful presence of the "Ferndale Two" the evening's sport was prudently abandoned.

Source: *South Wales Daily News*, February, 1880.

The public house would have been the *Bryn Ffynon*. [Ed.]

## THE [LATE] EARLY BIRD.

Col. Gray, when out shooting on Friday on the estate of Messrs. Nixon & Co. at Fforest Farm [Mountain Ash] killed a splendid woodcock. This is an exceedingly early appearance for this bird [and an unfortunate one - Ed.], and may be taken as a sign of severe weather.

*Western Mail*, October 8, 1881.

## COCKING AT ABERDARE

In 1885, the *York Herald* informed readers that Cock-fighting on a scale of some magnitude is reported from the mining district of Aberdare. The main was for £10 a side between supporters of cock-pits at Aberdare and Pontypridd, the fight taking place on the mountain in the presence of a large attendance of spectators. After the fight, four men were arrested in a cab by the police, who found them in possession of two dead birds and one in a dying condition.

*York Herald*, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1885.

Note: A fine 17C circular thatched roofed cock-pit can be seen at the National History Museum at St. Fagans. It originally stood at the rear of the *Hawk and Buckle Inn*, Denbigh. [Ed.]

## FATAL RESULT OF A PRIZE FIGHT

A prize fight took place a few days ago on a hill at Mountain Ash, and one of the combatants, a man named John Hopkins, died on Tuesday morning from the injuries he received. His opponent, John Collier, will be charged before the Aberdare Magistrates with Manslaughter.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 12, April, 1890.

Four years later there was a similar incident at Aberdare (See below)

## PONY RACE AT ABERDARE

A pony trotting race, which excited much interest in sporting circles, came off on Thursday on Hirwaun Common, Aberdare, between Mr. David Griffiths' *Cymro*, and *Miss Morris*, owned by Mr. Clay, Merthyr for £70 a-side. *Cymro* was made favourite 2 to 1 being betted in her favour. The result justified the backer's confidence, for *Cymro* came in an easy victor.

*Western Mail*, October 7, 1892.

## CYCLE RACING

The town achieved international fame in sport in 1893 when seventeen-year-old Jimmy Michael of Aberaman won one of the principal English cycle events, the Surrey Hundred, at Aberdare Park.

Source: Sport in Aberdare in the *Official Souvenir Programme* of Aberdare's Big Week held November 2-8, 1920.

## A FATAL GLOVE FIGHT.

On Thursday David Rees, a blacksmith, and Thomas Robert Edwards, a collier, both of Aberaman, fought with gloves at *Patsy Perkins' Boxing Saloon* at Aberdare. After several rounds Edwards was knocked over the ropes, and died almost immediately from a fractured skull. The police arrested Rees, and his brother, Henry Rees, together with Patsy Perkins and a number of backers and others who were in the Saloon.

*The Weekly Standard and Express, May 19, 1894.*

*'The total termination of the boxing contests at Aberdare will probably put a stop to public exhibitions of the noble art in that town, although the events have been very numerous during the present year. Many prominent supporters of the ring quietly glided away in solemn silence when the police appeared, and were in a state of fearful anxiety until Saturday, lest they might be called as witnesses before the Magistrates or the Coroner.'*

*Wales Day by Day, The Western Mail, May 21, 1894.*

NOTES: The Boxing Saloon was a temporary affair set up in the old slaughter house in Market Street. The fight was for £10 a side. The contestants wore 5-ounce gloves. In all a total of 18 persons were arrested, and charges of Manslaughter were brought. Nonconformists in the town attempted to recommence old battles with the Established Church going back to 1847 by claiming that David Rees had picked up his boxing skills in the Aberdare Church Men's Club. This was denied by the Anglican authorities. [Ed.]

## SPORTS AND PASTIMES IN ABERDARE (1896) (From the Aberdare Almanac)

### **Aberaman Star Cycling Club.**

Headquarters: Lamb and Flag Hotel. Captain: Mr. A. Linton.

### **Aberdare United Cycling Club.**

Gloucester Arms.

### **Aberdare Lawn Tennis Club. (Formed in 1897)**

Grounds near the GWR Station.

President, Lord Aberdare.

Match days: Thursdays and Saturdays.

### **Aberdare Cricket Club.**

President: Lord Aberdare.

Teams First X1 and Second X1.

### **St. David's (Presbyterian) Cricket Club.**

### **Aberdare Rugby Football Club.**

Headquarters: Queen's Hotel. Colours: Oxford and Cambridge Blue, vertical stripes.

President: D.A.Thomas Esq., M.P.

Had a Thursday Team, Second XV and a Saturday Team.

**Young Men's Friendly Society Football Club.**

President: Rev. H.R. Johnson.

**White Rose Football Club.**

**Cwmbach Rovers Association Football Club.**

Headquarters: White Horse Inn.

**Aberaman (St. Margaret's) Association Football Club.**

Headquarters: Swan Hotel.

President: Rev. H.W. Jenkins.

**Aberdare Chess Club.**

President: Rees Williams, Brynhyfryd.

Met at Black Lion Hotel.

**Source: *Aberdare Almanac*, 1896.**

**NEW VICE PRESIDENTS**

Readers will have noticed from the heading of this issue that the Society has appointed two new Vice Presidents. Both are well known and have served the Society faithfully over a very long period; both have been Chairmen and acted in other capacities.

Until recently Mr Elfed Bowen was the Society's very successful Sales Officer ensuring that our titles were well advertised and stocked by libraries, museums, book shops and newsagents over a wide area of the county. Elfed has contributed to *Old Aberdare*, was Chairman in 1992-1993 and again in 2001-2002, and has been a committee member for very many years.

Hywel Vaughan was Chairman in 1994-1995 when he was responsible for setting up a commemorative stone in High Street, Aberdare recording the fact that James James (Iago ap Ieuan), the composer of the Welsh National Anthem, once lived in the town. That same year he organised the complete restoration of his grave in the cemetery. Although born at Aberdare, Hywel moved to Newport at an early age, and now lives in Raglan from where, until very recently, he regularly drove to Aberdare in all weathers to attend Committee and the Society's regular monthly meetings.

**LETTER FROM A GRATEFUL DISCHARGED BANKRUPT.**

Bankruptcy amongst tradesmen in Aberdare in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was commonplace, but many managed to bounce back.

An Aberdare bankrupt whose Certificate was recently granted, having requested that it be forwarded to him sent the following acknowledgement: *'Sir, I thank you for send my stificate. I send you 6 stamp for have a glass of Jin. Yours etc.....'*

***Huddersfield Chronicle*, 27, July, 1861.**

**EVANS'S ART REPOSITORY** (next door to the Bute Arms, Aberdare). Picture Dealer. General Decorator, etc. **FIVE THOUSAND PIECES** of Paper Hangings, of the newest designs from 4d per piece.

**PHOTOGRAPHY: GENTLEMEN'S SEATS PHOTOGRAPHED** or **PORTRAITS** taken at their own **RESIDENCES. (1858 Advert)**

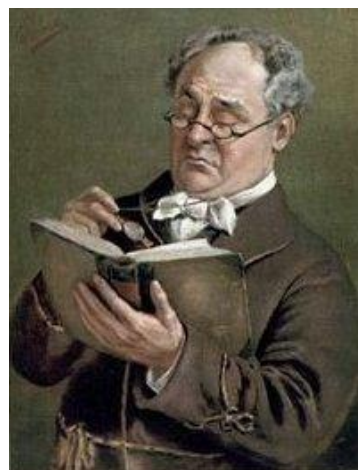


## YOU ASK US: NUMBER 1

We occasionally receive enquiries concerning aspects of the history of the town and intend to publish these as a regular feature of the Journal. Readers are therefore invited to submit any *Notes and Queries* they have to the Editor who will, with the assistance of local experts, attempt to answer these.

Q. The name *Compton House* appears in prominent raised lettering on a building in Victoria Square. What did this signify?

A. *Compton House*, 5 Commercial Place (later Victoria Square), was for the best part of a hundred years the town's leading drapery shop. The name can be traced back to 1865 when the business was owned by William Sarvis, linen and woollen draper, hosier, haberdasher, milliner etc. By 1871, Sarvis had removed to larger premises at 1, Cardiff Street, and Compton House was at that date in the ownership of David Williams, a Bridgend man. From ca 1871 onwards the establishment was carried on by three generations of the Williams family, Messrs. David, Illtyd and Mansel Williams. Drapery shops in the Victorian and Edwardian eras were large undertakings and a glance at the Census returns reveal that *Compton House* was no exception. In 1891, for instance, the premises was occupied by the proprietor David Williams, his wife Mary Anne and seven of their children; also 'living in', as was the custom, was a staff of 15, and two domestic servants. The shop employed 14 draper's assistants and 1 milliner. The eldest of the assistants was 40 and the youngest 14 (two of this age). A lot of the clothing and hats would have been made to order on the premises, and a shop of this quality would have catered for the up market 'carriage trade'.



### **There were ten in the bed and the little one said....**

The monthly meeting of the Aberdare Board of Health was informed of an over-crowded lodging house at 16 Bank Street, Aberdare. The facts were that John Coleman, labourer, allowed 12 persons to occupy four small rooms which contained 5 beds. There were two lodgers in one bed in one room, in another room were 3 men lodgers in one bed, and in a third were a man, wife and child in one bed. The fourth room was occupied by Coleman, his wife and one child, and a woman in another bed in the same room.

*Western Mail, 31<sup>st</sup>, December, 1869*

### CORRECTION

In *Hanes* 59 it was stated that Princess Victoria became Empress of Germany in 1858 on her marriage to Prince Frederick William of Prussia. She did not however succeed to the title of *Her Imperial and Royal Majesty the German Empress, Queen of Prussia* until March 1888 on the death of King William I of Prussia. The source of the item was *The High Constables of Aberdare* which was written in 1894. This states "... January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1858 on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Royal to the late Emperor Frederick of Germany, rustic sports and other rejoicings were held in the town..." A classic case of the blind leading the blind! The error was brought to our notice by Mr. Gareth Thomas.

# GUN SHOTS AT ABERDARE



(A Contemporary sketch of C.B. Stanton)

There are many passing references to an incident in which an Aberdare labourer named Charles Butt Stanton was sentenced to six months hard labour for allegedly firing a revolver into a crowd during a demonstration at the time of the 1893 Hauliers Strike. *Hanes* has recently come across an interesting illustrated account of the final hearing at the Glamorgan Assizes of the charge against Stanton of *feloniously and maliciously shooting at a policeman*, this is reproduced below. The incident took place near the brickyard at Aberaman. (*Western Mail*, 1, December 1893.)

## THE ABERDARE SHOOTING CASE.

### SENTENCE ON THE PRISONER.

At the autumn assizes for the county of Glamorgan, held at the Cardiff Town-hall on Thursday, before Mr. Justice Henn-Collins, Charles Butt Stanton, 21, a labourer, surrendered to his bail charged with



THE PRISONER.

feloniously and maliciously shooting at Inspector Samuel Rutter, with intent to do him grievous bodily harm, at Aberdare, on August 24 last. Mr. S. T. Evans, M.P., appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. Arthur Lewis (instructed by Mr. J. W. Evans, Aberdare) defended.—Evidence



Inspector Rutter: I heard the bullet whizz by my head.

was given by the inspector to the effect that the affair occurred during the recent colliers' strike. Some strikers were marching from Aberdare to Mountain Ash for the purpose of preventing some hauliers working, but the police came on the scene and stopped the march. Prisoner was



The Jury retire to consider the verdict.

him more than at anyone else. They were only a few yards apart, and the night was not very dark.—For the defence Mr. Lewis urged that there was no evidence of intent to injure Inspector Rutter—that there was no evidence to go before a jury; but his Lordship ruled that there was.—Mr. Lewis then submitted that there was no intent, and that if there had been the prisoner could easily



Mr. Arthur Lewis: I beseech you on behalf of the prisoner.

amongst the crowd, and, drawing a revolver, he fired, and the whizz of the bullet was heard by the inspector and Police-constable Nott as it passed near their heads. Prisoner was arrested, and on being searched a revolver, containing a discharged cartridge and blank cartridges, were found upon him. The inspector could not say that prisoner aimed at



Judge (to prisoner): You have been found guilty of a very serious offence.

have injured one of the police-officers. Mr. Lewis further contended that the revolver was fired in the air, and was simply a piece of bravado to frighten the police.—His Lordship summed up, and the jury returned a verdict of guilty.—His Lordship, addressing the prisoner, said he had been found guilty on a very grave charge. Though he had not been in trouble before, the offence was bound to be marked by a substantial sentence.—Prisoner would have to undergo six months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Stanton was born at Aberaman in 1873. A footman, miner and docker. Later a militant miners' leader, and MP for Merthyr and Aberdare, 1915-1922. [Ed.]



## LEST WE FORGET

Now that the old Aberdare Hospital has closed, we should recall aspects of its immeasurable value to the community in its early days. It was paid for by mainly by Powell Duffryn and other local colliery companies, and maintained by miners' weekly contributions and the general public. A short general history of the hospital and its genesis appears in Vol. 9 *Old Aberdare* (2003).

Opened in July 1917 it was destroyed by fire in September 1929. Restored, remodelled and enlarged it was formally re-opened by HRH the Duchess of Kent (later Queen Elizabeth and the Queen Mother) on 25 April 1933.

The first extension to the hospital, a Children's Ward, was opened in 1927 and named *The Charles Kenshole Memorial Ward*, in recognition of his benefaction and great services to the hospital.

Its subsequent development included a Maternity Ward, the gift of the coal owner Alderman William Morgan Llewellyn J.P. of Ty Newydd, Hirwaun. Dedicated to the memory of his mother, Elizabeth Llewellyn of Bwllfa House, the ward was opened in 1938; it cost £3,000 to build and equip, and in 1942, Mr. Llewellyn gave the hospital a further sum of £1,000 for its internal and external maintenance and to provide flower gardens on the south side of the ward. In 1942 there were 156 births in the ward. The maternity ward received a bequest of a further sum of £1,000 under the provisions of W.M. Llewellyn's will.



### April 1938. The Opening of the Elizabeth Llewellyn Maternity Ward.

Above left Alderman W.M. Llewellyn performing the opening ceremony. The group photograph (right) shows (left to right), Matron (Ms. Richards), W.M. Llewellyn (centre), Mrs. Charles E. Edwards (née Llewellyn) and right, the High Constable. (Dr. Gwilym Pearce, Abercynon).

Photograph: Mrs. Ann Hall. The decorative key used in the opening ceremony has been donated by the family to the Cynon Valley Museum.

## THE FARM.

The Aberdare Hospital had its own farm which provided patients with fresh milk, eggs and poultry, and later sold surplus produce for the benefit of the hospital. The enterprise started around 1924 when the hospital came into possession of the whole of the land on the south side of Abernant Park. This was in part the gift of Charles Kenshole, Chairman of the Hospital Board, who had purchased 12½ acres of the Park from the Bute Estate, the remainder having been given by the Marquis of Bute and Powell Duffryn.

The farm kept a fine herd of Ayrshire cattle, and in 1937 had an income of £1131. 5. 6d; its total sales that year realised £746.9.6d. A separate farm account was published annually.

Source: *Annual Reports, Aberdare and District General Hospital, 1936-1942.*

The community of Aberdare has probably never had more unity than in its support for the District Hospital. Subscriptions and donations were made on a regular basis by the majority of the local



collieries, its employees, the trades of the area, other organizations, churches, chapels and the public at large; each district of the town had voluntary collectors who annually raised funds for the hospital's work by means of door-to-door visits.

This community spirit was manifest in 1942 when the hospital held its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On a designated day 'Hospital Sunday', July 19<sup>th</sup>, various organisations, public bodies and the general public marched to the hospital grounds to attend a Service of Thanksgiving. There, an impressive open-air service was conducted by the vicar of Aberdare and other ministers before an assembly estimated at 6,000. This event was followed by a Fete held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August which raised £641.2. 8d. The Fete, a Celebrity concert held at the Rex Cinema and other donations realized a total sum of £847.12.7d that Silver Jubilee year.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME.

The earliest known public timepiece in Aberdare is the sundial on the south wall of the chancel of St. John's Church. This instrument may date from the eighteenth-century.

During that period many of the more affluent landowners and farmers probably possessed long-case clocks. Certainly, you would have expected to find these in the rooms of Dyffryn and Aberaman houses, and gold watches of the best quality in the pockets of the owners of those properties.

Other farmers and agricultural labourers would have had to rely upon the natural phenomenon of sunrise and sunset to regulate their day.

After 1637 if you lived within hearing distance of the parish church its new bell, the gift of the Mathew family of Aberaman, would remind you of the set times of the morning mass, matins and evensong. In some parts of Wales in the 1770s clock clubs were established. Its members each paid a regular subscription, every meeting raising a sufficient sum to buy a long-case clock. A lottery would then be held for a clock, and every member could be certain that he would receive his clock within two years. A tax was levied on the possession of clocks and watches from 1797-8.

In the industrial period, the iron-works and collieries would have had steam whistles to sound notice of shifts. The railway companies employed "Knockers-up", to walk the streets and tap the bedroom windows of the houses of their employees using long poles to wake them in time to reach work. There were a number of clockmakers in business in the village from 1852 onwards (see below), and some displayed the time in the windows of their shops.

With the coming of the local railways (1846 and 1851), the movement of passenger and goods trains would give indication of times. We learn from *Hanes No.18* (Winter 1999) that "*The invention of the electric telegraph made it possible to transmit time signals instantaneously to all parts of the country, and by 1852 GMT (also known as Railway Time) was in use on all railways whence it spread to all towns and villages*". (cf. below)

Four years after the opening of St.Elvan's Church in 1853, a subscription fund was opened to provide Aberdare with a public clock on its tower, and a peal of bells. People, of all classes, contributed to this.

In 1861 **The Cardiff Times** announced, "*The dial and hands are now in Aberdare. People will no longer be distracted by the variation in time given by the Vale of Neath Station, and the Taff Vale, which seldom correspond. Most people set their watches with the favourite in Mr. Sherborne's shop.*" Mr. Sherborne, a local clockmaker and the organist at St.Elvan's, was instrumental in setting up the clock and bells fund, and he also supervised the fitting of the clock.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1862, **The Aberdare Times** recorded "*The new clock is now going, and the public can rejoice in the possession of a public time-marker*"

By the end of the century, certainly by the 1880s, mass production had made it possible for everyone to own a watch. In 1892, for instance, Morris Jacob of Aberdare was advertising Geneva Watches from 7s.6d.

A number of the valley's public buildings, town halls, schools and clubs such as the Constitutional Club had public clocks. Several valley war memorials (Hirwaun, Penrhiwceiber and Abercynon) incorporated clocks.

Some people however were still experiencing difficulty with time as late as 1927 as the following news item shows. *"Since the installation of the clock on the Plough Square by the Council for the purpose of checking the time of arrival and departure of tram-cars, it has become quite an institution with the inhabitants of the district, who regard it as the town clock of Aberaman. Unfortunately during the last few days, the clock has been on strike, and refuses to strike, with the result that hundreds of workers who used to compare their watches with it when on their way to work have been disappointed. When the Council sets about repairing it will they at the same time please adjust one of the electric lights which hang above, so that the light may shine on the face of the clock?"*

**The Aberdare Leader, 31<sup>st</sup> December 1927**

#### **ABERDARE CLOCK ETC. MAKERS.**

Thomas Evans, Cardiff Road. (1852-1880)  
William Probert, Gadlys (1852)  
J. Sherborne, Commercial Terrace. (1852-1861)  
Bernard Heitzman, Commercial Street (1852)  
Felix Eschle, 12 Commercial Street. (1865-1880)  
Thomas & Son, 44 Commercial Street (1865)  
Richard Jones, (Clocks) 35 Canon St. (1875)

George Rombach, 13 Canon St., later Dean Street (1875-1880)  
Charles Schwerer, 18 Commercial Street. (1875-1880)  
(This firm was acquired by the still extant Alfred Lea, circa 1895 making it the oldest surviving Aberdare business.)  
George Strickland, Foresters' Terrace. (1875)  
David Thomas, 44 Commercial St. (1880)

## **WHY ALLENSTOWN?**

The name Allenstown no longer appears in the commercial street atlas of Mountain Ash, although Caegarw and Newtown do. (Valleys West Street Atlas, *Streetezee Town Plans Ltd.*)

In the nineteenth century, an old Pembrokeshire family named Allen acquired land in the Abercynon-Mountain Ash area.

The Estate consisted of *"The farms and lands known as Forest Isha, Forest Uchaf, Maerdy Bach, Lletty*



*Turner, Cwmcynon and Pontcynon lying in a ring fence (and) having an area of one thousand and forty eight acres or thereabouts situate in the Parish of Llanwonno near the town of Mountain Ash in the County of Glamorgan included in the lease of Messrs. John Nixon and others dated 17<sup>th</sup> May 1871 for a term as to part of 99 years from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1856 and as to the remaining part of 99 years from the 30<sup>th</sup> day of September 1856"*

These properties were acquired by Henry Seymour Allen of Cresselly, Kilgetty in the County of Pembrokeshire who died on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1928.

On his death, the estate passed to his great niece Auriol Joan Bartlett Allen of Cresselly. She married a David Harrison and the parties changed their name to Harrison-Allen.

Thus in Mountain Ash we have the district of Allenstown, Allen Street, Seymour Street, as well as the Allen's Arms Hotel and the Cresselly Arms.

In 1858, N. B. Allen was Worshipful Master of St. David's Lodge of Freemasons at Aberdare.

H. Seymour Allen, J.P., was a President of the 1905 National Eisteddfod of Wales held at Mountain Ash.

**Source: Abstract of the Title of Mrs A.J.B. Harrison-Allen to properties in Phillip Street, Mountain Ash.**

Photograph: Henry Seymour Allen.

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