

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

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SIDELIGHTS ON POLITICS

LLOYD GEORGE AT ABERDARE.

Chancellor with a hidden agenda.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd George) arrived by motor-car at Aberdare on Wednesday night, and for a few days he will be the guest of Sir William Thomas Lewis, Bart., at the Mardy. To-day Mr Lloyd George under Sir William's guidance, will make a tour of the mining valleys, and will probably descend one of the pits. He will be accompanied by Sir Robert Chalmers, KCB, Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue; Mr C F Masterman, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board; Mr W H Clark (private secretary), and Mr R Lumley, all of whom arrived in the district last Wednesday night.

What the exact object of the visit to the Welsh coalfield is cannot be stated yet, for the simple reason that it is not known except to Mr Lloyd George and Sir William. It is believed that the Chancellor is in search of fresh sources of revenue.

Aberdare people are keenly interested in the visit, and small crowds assembled in the main streets on Wednesday afternoon in the hope of catching a glimpse of the Chancellor. It was seven o'clock when Mr Lloyd George arrived from North Wales, via Llanidloes and Brecon, and motored straight to the Mardy. A pressing request has been sent to the Chancellor from the Liberal Club of Aberdare to honour them with a visit; but Mr Lloyd George has written stating that the visit was purely a private one.

Aberdare Leader, June 5th, 1909.

SUFFRAGETTE-BAITING

BLOATERS, RATS AND SUFFRAGETTES.

UPROARIOUS MEETING AT ABERDARE. LADIES PELTED WITH MISSILES.

Mrs Mackworth of Caerleon (daughter of Mr D A Thomas MP), and Miss Kenny, [*sic*], the well-known advocate of Woman Suffrage, having been

announced to address a meeting on 'Woman Suffrage' at the Memorial Hall, Aberdare on Thursday last, a large crowd had assembled long before the time of commencing, although admission was by ticket. It was evident that a large section of the audience was bent on breaking up the meeting, for a number of youths and men were armed with bells, trumpets and whistles, which they used with a vengeance during the time of waiting for the speakers. Snatches of comic songs were sung, and revised versions of music hall ditties which found favour in the Boar War were heard. Cries of 'Drink Sarso' [a local temperance beverage] and 'Has anybody here seen Kenny?' [Kelly in the original music hall song] were frequently launched forth. A favourite parody was 'We'll hang old Kenny on a sour apple tree,' which was sung with gusto to the accompaniment of cat-calls, cock-crows, trumpet blasts, and whistling. Cheers for Asquith, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill were called for, and heartily given.

The arrival of Mrs Mackworth, Miss Kenny, and Mrs D M Richards, a member of the Board of Guardians, was the signal for increased shouting and terrific booing. Mrs Richards took the chair, but owing to the great interruption, it was long before she was able to make herself heard. Eventually she took advantage of a slight lull in the din to say that she thought that only the Cardiff students could behave in that way. They knew that she had for many years worked for the rights of women, although she did not wish to associate herself with the tactics of the violent suffragettes. That being Mrs Mackworth's first visit to Aberdare, she implored upon the crowd to give her a hearing.

Mrs Mackworth who was received with a renewed outburst of booing and bell-ringing, said it gave her pleasure to come to Aberdare on the invitation of the Aberdare Liberal Club (Cries of 'No.')

She made an earnest appeal to Liberals to help women in their endeavour to obtain their rights. The din increased, and no longer could the speaker's voice be heard. Eventually Mrs Mackworth had to desist from speaking owing to the terrible uproar. By this time the opposition was assuming a more practical and violent aspect. Cabbages were thrown into the hall through the windows, and these were in turn hurled onto the platform. Bloaters and tomatoes were also thrown at the speakers. Mice were let loose in the body of the hall, and the presence of these creatures naturally caused no little panic among the many ladies present. Several chairs were broken, and the wall-paper was greatly damaged, and a window pane was smashed. The fumes of sulphurated hydrogen [stink bombs] became well nigh intolerable, and violent sneezing throughout the hall testified to the presence of Cayenne pepper and snuff.

At last Miss Kenny got up and attempted to address the meeting. The uproar was now augmented tenfold, the Babel of various sounds being indescribable. The speaker nevertheless pluckily stuck to her guns, and kept on as if no interruption existed.

MORE BLOATERS

Some more bloaters were thrown on the platform, and a tomato narrowly missed Miss Kenny's face. Eventually Miss Kenny directed her remarks to a small circle who stood close to the platform, and amongst whom there were fewer rowdies than in the other parts of the hall. Even from this quarter however she received considerable heckling, but continued 'game' to the end.

There was a slight reduction in the noise when Mr Morgan Watkins, vice-president of the Aberdare Liberal Club, mounted the platform and appealed to the crowd. 'I like a little fun as well as one of you,' said he. 'Join in then,' was the reply. 'But —' added Mr. Watkins, but the bell-ringing etc., cut him short. 'I am not in favour of the suffragettes but,' — Mr. Watkins made several attempts, but could not proceed any further than the 'but.' At last he managed to state that Miss Kenny was prepared to answer any intelligent question put to her.

Mr D W Evans asked, amid loud cheering, how could Miss Kenny expect to enjoy the right of free speech when she refused it to others? She replied that the women had been driven to employ such means as interrupting the meetings of Cabinet ministers because they could not get a hearing in any other way. Besides they had not broken up any meetings in a way their meeting had been broken up that night.

The crowd was getting more and more disorderly, and fearing violence, many members of the audience ascended the platform. At last the lady speakers left the platform and entered the gymnasium at the door of which a cab was waiting for them, and they were driven away. Thus they alluded the large crowd that waited at the other door, ready to give them a hostile reception. Some men who arrived too late to obtain admission to the meeting had brought with them a large supply of live rats and mice which they intended to let loose among the audience.

Some ladies in the audience had handed to the platform the following resolution, which Miss Kenny, however refused to put to the meeting:—
'That this meeting, while approving of genuine efforts to secure the franchise for women, view with the utmost contempt the various antics of the women led by Mrs. and Miss Pankhurst as calculated to do irreparable injury to the cause of women suffrage.'

Note: Mrs Kenny = Annie Kenney, a working class militant suffragette; a cotton worker, she was the only working class woman to become part of the senior hierarchy of the Women's Social and Political Union.

Aberdare Leader, November, 27th 1909.

POST SCRIPT

In July 1913 Margaret Haigh Mackworth, the only daughter of Aberdare born David Alfred Thomas MP, Viscount Rhondda, appeared before Newport Magistrates Court on a charge of unlawfully placing an explosive substance [two test tubes, one containing phosphorus, the other a catalyst intended to cause a chemical reaction and ignite the phosphorus], in a GPO letter box in Risca Road, Newport on the 25th June. After hearing the case for the prosecution Mrs. Mackworth was advised to plead guilty. This she did and the court ordered her to pay a fine of £10 and costs of a similar amount; she refused to do this and was duly committed to prison at Usk for one month as an alternative. Soon after starting the sentence Mrs Mackworth went on hunger-strike, and was formally released after six days under the provisions of the Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill Health) Act 1913, the so called 'Cat and Mouse Act.'

Aberdare Leader, July, 19th 1913.

SOCIETY NEWS

KEN COLLINS

It is with deep regret that we record the death in January of Vice-President Ken Collins. Ken joined the Society not long after its inauguration, and soon became a member of its committee. When John Clatworthy retired he took over the exacting role of treasurer, a post he held for 30 years, a record for any Society officer.

Ken was born in Cwmbach and spent most of his adult life at Cwmaman; educated at Aberdare Boys' Grammar School he left to take up a career, initially in local government, and then in the Fire Service where he served as a Station Officer, until he was obliged to retire through ill health. In his retirement he studied humanities, and gained the Bachelor of Arts degree.

HYWEL VAUGHAN

As we go to press we have received the sad news that another of our Vice-Presidents, Mr Hywel Vaughan M.A., passed away on the 29th March 2015. A tribute will appear in the next issue.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MRS. TYDFIL THOMAS.

Those present at the December meeting of the society had the privilege of participating in a surprise 90th birthday party in honour of our distinguished vice-president Mrs. Tydfil Thomas.



Mrs Thomas



Anne Watts (Society Chair), Elaine Lewis, Mrs Thomas and Val Manning

BOOK LAUNCH.

The Society's latest publication, *The Men Who Marched Away*, remembering the fallen of the 1914–1918 war whose names appear on the St Elvan's Church War Memorial, and others was launched by Dr. Anthony Môr-O'Brien at an art exhibition, which also marked the 100th anniversary of World War 1, at St Elvan's church on Remembrance Day, Thursday 11th November 2014. The book catalogues the valley's war memorials, and contains a selection of letters written by the casualties. Those who attended were able to view the memorial and take part in the various cultural activities which took place in an impressive and roomy church ideally suited to community use.

HANES — This is the 70th edition of our Newsletter – another milestone!

SUPPLEMENT



HENRY AUSTIN BRUCE

This special supplement to the 70th edition of Hanes commemorates Henry Austin Bruce, first Lord Aberdare, and the 200th anniversary of his birth at Dyffryn, Mountain Ash on the 16th April 1815. Publication of this edition has been delayed until the 16th April 2015 the precise date of the anniversary; fortuitously the Cynon Valley History Society hold their monthly meeting on this date.

In this supplement we recall, through contemporary and other articles, the life of the most important person in the history of the Cynon Valley, and a figure described by *The South Wales Daily Post* as the King of Welsh Education.

The editor wishes to thank Alistair John Lyndhurst Bruce, 5th Baron Aberdare, for allowing him to reproduce the Bruce family court of arms illustrated above.

* * * * *

Henry Austin Bruce, (1815–1895), subsequently first Baron Aberdare was the second son of John Bruce Pryce. He was called to the Bar from Lincoln's Inn and, in 1847, became stipendiary magistrate for Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare. In 1855, after the death of Sir J J Guest, he became a trustee of the Dowlais Ironworks. From 1852 to 1868, he represented Merthyr Tydfil in the House of Commons, and after his defeat in the General Election of 1868, represented Renfrewshire from 1869 to 1873. He was appointed Home Secretary in 1869, and was transferred to the position of Lord President of the Council in 1873. In the same year, he was elevated to the peerage. He worked tirelessly in the cause of education and played a major part in the passing of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act of 1889. He became first Chancellor of the University of Wales.

Born in [the parish of] Aberdare and educated at the Swansea Grammar School, Henry Austin Bruce is best remembered today for his life-long interest in education and especially for his efforts to advance higher education in Wales in the latter part of his life. Bruce, landowner and coal owner with an interest in the Merthyr iron industry, began his career as a lawyer and was called to the Bar in 1837. His legal career was cut short by ill health but he returned to public life as stipendiary magistrate for Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare before being elected as Member of Parliament for Merthyr and Aberdare in 1852. A conservative Liberal, he served as Under Secretary of State at the Home Office from 1862 to 1864 and later as Vice-President of the Committee of the Council for Education under Palmerston and Russell. Bruce's obvious capacity marked him out for high office. Nevertheless, despite his local influence as an industrialist with a liberal outlook and, although a churchman, his recognised Nonconformist sympathies, Bruce lost his seat in 1868 to Henry Richard in the face of the latter's emotional eloquence and Liberationist organisation and the radical traditions of the local electorate.

Bruce was found a seat at Renfrewshire in 1869 and joined the Gladstone cabinet as Home Secretary — 'heaven born' as the Prime Minister described him. For nearly twenty years, commented *The Times* 'no cabinet had included ability so great and so various.' Some time before his death Palmerston had said that whenever Gladstone 'gets my place, we shall have strange doings.' During the next five years a legislative programme of vast, far-reaching reforms shattered the leisurely calm of Parliament. Irish disestablishment,

civil service and army reform, education, and the introduction of the secret ballot were all part of a reforming drive which laid the foundations of the modern state.

Among the galaxy of talent in Gladstone's first cabinet Bruce was a worthy rather than a brilliant figure...

As Home Secretary Bruce was most closely identified with the reform of the licensing laws. His original bill, reintroduced in 1872 in a milder form, sought to achieve a compromise between the hardly reconcilable view of the temperance supporters of the government on the one hand and the liquor trade and brewing interests on the other. While it may have been barely adequate for the temperance movement, the final act alienated the publicans and the brewers – hitherto, with most industrial interests, Liberal in sympathy – and it undoubtedly played no little part in the party's disastrous defeat in 1874. As Gladstone himself was to complain, 'we have been borne down in a torrent of gin and beer'.

In 1873 Bruce was made Lord President of the Council by Gladstone, and raised to the peerage as Lord Aberdare. Within five months, though, the government had fallen, and Bruce's official political life had come to an end.

Although now retired from an active political career he remained prominent in public life.

In 1881 he became Governor of the Royal Niger Company and took a close interest in West African affairs. When the company was, in due course, taken over by the government, Lord Salisbury paid a handsome tribute to Bruce's capacity in conducting its responsibilities and in preserving Britain's influence in the vast areas under its control. Bruce's main interest in his later years, however, was the advancement of education, especially in Wales. In 1880 Gladstone set up a Departmental Committee to examine intermediate and higher education in Wales and Monmouthshire. Bruce, who had suggested the enquiry, was appointed chairman and acted with speed and efficiency. Within a year (August 1881) the Committee's report was published. Hailed as 'the educational charter of modern Wales', it was a radical document proposing the creation of a new system of intermediate schools in Wales and the setting up of two new colleges of higher education, one in north Wales and one in the south.



Henry Austin Bruce (seated 5th from left) in cabinet. Gladstone sits in the foreground.

By 1884 the two new colleges had been established, at Cardiff and Bangor, alongside Aberystwyth College, still functioning with growing public support, although the creation of Bangor had postulated his death. It was not until 1889, however, that the proposals regarding intermediate education – the essential linchpin of the whole educational strategy – were given serious attention by the government in the Welsh Intermediate Education Act. By that year and on the basis of the Aberdare report a new and coherent educational

system of secondary and higher education was fast being set up in Wales far in advance of that in England.

In 1883 Bruce was chosen as the first President of the new South Wales College. At his installation he made clear his ambition to see the framework of Welsh education crowned by the creation of a University of Wales. He lived to see this hope realised and to be chosen as the first Chancellor of the University. Unhappily, Bruce died a fortnight later.

David Dykes, *Wales in Vanity-Fair* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1989)

In November 2012 a Blue Plaque marking Henry Austin Bruce's contribution to Welsh Education was set up at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School and unveiled by the present Lord Aberdare, Alistair Bruce, D.L. This carries the inscription:

Home Secretary (1868–1873)
1st Baron Aberdare
Promoter of secondary and university
education in Wales,
born at Duffryn House, formerly on this site.
HENRY AUSTIN BRUCE MP
1815–1895

* * * * *

The Spectator, who had already given Mr. Bruce his patent as Lord Duffryn, will no doubt, be considerably surprised to find that the ex-Home Secretary has preferred to be gazetted as Lord Aberdare. Speculation, however, may now employ itself on the question of the additions to the coat of arms which will be granted to the new peer, and on this point there will be, we are sure, but one wish among the public, namely, that its heraldry should, as far as possible, serve to recall to our minds some few of the successes which have rendered Mr Bruce's reign at the Home Office memorable. An escutcheon of pretence should form a feature in his shield, representing the triumphant reform of the cab system. One quartering would display three cabs crawlant, with flags argent, reversed and surmounted by three tickets and a book of cab fares incorrect. In another part of the shield the 'gratifying diminution of crime' might be typified by a policeman dormant, traversed by three burglars rampant, and faced by a householder couchant, the whole surmounted by a crowbar sinister. Other emblems will no doubt suggest themselves to complete the shield, so that none of the subjects which Mr Bruce has so successfully dealt should be left without its fitting commemoration. Lord Erskine adopted an English motto, 'Trial by Jury.' Lord Aberdare might follow his example and put the words 'Let us consider' beneath his arms.

Source: ***Pall Mall Gazette***, August 13th, 1873.

The 1868 Parliamentary Election - Contemporary Documents.

November 9th. . . I went for a ride down the valley. The town seemed in a state of great excitement, boys hollering 'Fothergill for ever. Bruce in the gutter.' There were Fothergill and Richard's card in almost every house, but no Bruce's. I am sadly afraid he will not get in.

November 13th. We all went for a ride this morning...Tids [Richard Frederick Crawshay] stuck a Bruce card in his hat.

November 14th. Tids says when he was in the works this morning, 2 men came up to him and snatched the Bruce card he had mounted in his hat away, and tore it to pieces, saying 'Don't bring those damned colours here, or I'll warm you.' Tids, without saying anything, picked up the pieces and sticking them in his hat again walked off.

November 17th. To-day is a black day for Merthyr. They have turned Mr. Bruce out and

that mean cringing Fothergill is 2,000 ahead. [Henry] Richard of course is far beyond either...

Bruce himself commented that rather than go through such another election he would be made a peer. (Letter to Lord de Gray)

Source: The diary of Rose Harriette Thompson Crawshay ('Trotty') for 1868.

The result of the 1868 Parliamentary election at Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare (two seats). Election held 17th, November, 1868.

Henry Richard,	11,863
Richard Fothergill,	7,439
H A Bruce,	5,776

* * * * *

Greatly regretting the loss of his seat in 1868 the *Bristol Mercury* informed its readers:

The iron and coal working population of Wales have lost an able representative, and the cause of moral and mental progress throughout the country a noble practical advocate, by the rejection of Mr. Bruce at Merthyr. His antecedents are not generally known ...

[there followed a biography]

He was elected Member of Parliament in 1853, without opposition, and though he was regarded by the people as simply the nominee of the ironmasters, from their holding supreme power in the borough, he at once took an independent position, and showed by unmistakable evidence that he was determined on a rigid impartiality and vigorous advocacy of Liberal opinions.

Up to the time of his entry into Parliament he had simply won the name of a thoughtful administrator of justice; one who not confining himself to the literal and dry interpretation of the law, endeavoured to give it intelligent and merciful life, and make it restraining in its character as well as punishing; and in addition he had taken a lively interest in the moral life of the borough, stimulating the young especially, in a variety of ways, though it may be doubted whether partial services such as these were had any lasting effect on a population whose everyday life was favourable to their remaining in ignorance.

Still, he did all that a wise and energetic man could do, and had the satisfaction of seeing one good institution at least arising into beneficial existence when his political life began. He was from the first a Liberal, yet not too radical in his notions. He held to the wisdom of conserving all the old institutions worth preserving, and advancing in harmony with the requirements of the people. One of the first acts was to legislate on truck; and here he took the popular side and tried in committee to place such preventions as would effectually put a stop to the custom. He also figured on a mines committee; and to those who watched his progress exhibited such a thorough knowledge of the necessities as well as the failings of the large mining populations that a position as an authority was predicted for him.

But it takes a long time for a political life to reach its prime. There was an interregnum of 30 years between the maiden speech of Disraeli, when he told his laughing audience that a time would come when they would hear him and his appearance in the House as its chief; and ten years elapsed before Mr Bruce began to be looked upon as one of the future statesmen of his country. His beneficial labours bore all the same stamp. The people's health, moral, mental, physical – those were his aims; and educational efforts, Health of Town's Bills, and extension of Factory Acts proved that he was no simple theorist, but an enterprising and conscientious politician. Mr. Bruce has shown himself so well fitted for office that by common consent, as it were, the Home-office is decreed to be his future position. But, whatever official post he may fill, this is certain, that he will not be suffered to retire into private life. The country has urgent need of broad-minded and liberal administrators such as he has shown himself to be, and will assuredly not suffer the short-sightedness of a Borough to deprive it of services so essential to the healthy growth of the Nation.

Source: *Bristol Mercury*, December, 12th, 1868.

ANECDOTAL PHOTOGRAPHS.

LORD ABERDARE.

The day on which Lord Aberdare took his seat in the House of Lords must have been an astonishing one to him. He was never a man to use his elbows in struggling to get on; he had no peculiar talent for intrigue, and eloquence was not one of his gifts. He was neither brilliant, powerful in argument, nor endowed with any remarkable capacity to lift him above his fellows when a law student, a practising barrister, a police magistrate, or an MP. The golden key which opened the Upper House to a Baring and a Jones, he wanted. His income was a small one. Some years before he gained his Baron's coronet, he had given fourteen pledges to fortune. Of these, twelve were daughters, two of whom were married when he was Home Secretary. He was himself one of a dozen olive branches, and a younger son, but the favourite of the ladies of his family. The bulk of his father's estate, which was at Duffryn St. Nicholas [in the Vale of Glamorgan], was settled on the eldest son, John Wyndham Bruce. It was in the fat, flat, alluvial district in which Cardiff stands, brought in an annual revenue of £5,000, and was provided with a handsome residence.

Henry Austin Bruce was called to the Bar in 1837. He had not been sent to any great public school, or passed through Oxford or Cambridge. Without being at all a milksop, he had the gentle manners which home education with a good many sisters induces, in height he was six feet; and although athletic, a first rate cricketer, and an excellent shot, he had a rather elegant figure. His features were irregular, and complexion dark; but the Celtic blue eyes were very pleasant, and showed that he was far from being 'wooden.' The temper was sweet and level. Hal Bruce did not wear his heart upon his sleeve. He had many nice tastes, but few strong impulses. It would not have been to his disadvantage had he lived in a glass house. At that stage of his career he had the easy kind of agreeability with which Creoles are endowed. He inherited this quality, with his complexion and stature, from his mother. She was a Miss Austin, and from Barbados. Without being finical, the future Lord had a never-failing supply of small-talk, and conversed, with equal success, with old and young ladies, clergymen, and persons of his own profession. He easily assimilated new ideas, and had a good deal of brain activity. For that sort of culture which Mathew Arnold has written up, he had an elective affinity. He was, to improve his mind, a studious and critical reader, and chose his friends as he selected his books. If some of them did not succeed in life, they deserved success, and failed through want of luck. With his intimate acquaintances he was exceedingly sociable, and they liked him. Parties were rarely, if ever, given in his chambers. But when pheasants and woodcocks were sent to him from Glamorganshire, he asked a friend or two to drop in and sup on them with him.

For Coke and Lyttleton [legal commentaries] his mental digestion was feeble, and his memory, which was retentive for Classic and Cambrian literature, took no fast hold on legal precedents. Whenever he got a brief from the family attorney, or somebody wanting to gain the ear of his uncle, the Lord Justice Knight Bruce, he asked some of his Bar friends to help him through his task. But he had a pretty talent for writing verses. If an eldest son, he would have been a *dilettante*. Being a younger one, he plodded at law as well as he could, and his uneasiness at the unfitness of his mind for hard Chancery practice told upon his health. His eldest brother, who was a man of great but ill-directed genius, did not take a despondent view of his brother's future. 'Hal,' he used to say 'will get on. He has the qualities of the Industrious Apprentice, and knows how to talk to bishops.' This was true. Of Dr. Copplestone, Bishop of Llandaff, Hal Bruce was an especial favourite. This prelate was fond of new-laid eggs at breakfast. He often visited Bruce Pryce's family at Duffryn St. Nicholas in Lent. A messenger used to be sent by the hostess on a pony, scouring the country in search of fresh eggs. There were sunny nooks in the hills, where hens laid nearly all the year round. On one occasion only two fresh eggs could be obtained. They were placed at the morning repast before the Bishop, who was near sighted. He took one. John Wyndham deftly conveyed the other to his own plate. The company looked aghast at the sacrilegious act. When the victim of it got through the first egg, he groped about for the second, and showed annoyance at finding how he was deprived of it. This petty larceny he never forgave. The next time he visited Duffryn St.

Nicholas, the eldest son went to the hall-door to receive him. His lordship took both his hands to shake them, but finding who it was, he recoiled, and said 'Oh! It's you Mr. John! I took you for your incomparable brother Henry!'

Another prelate who did good service to Lord Aberdare was his brother-in-law, Dr. Campbell, Bishop of Bangor, who got him into Parliament for Renfrew, when Merthyr preferred to him Peace-Society Richard. Lord Aberdare's first wife had also episcopal connections. She was a near relative of Dr Beadon, the Bishop of Bath and Wells. It, however, would be wrong to conclude that wearers of lawn sleeves were merely courted for their patronage. Hal Bruce was not insensible to their social and political weight. But he was ever fond of what was of good report and respectable, and he associated the cloth with a towering and beautiful intellect – that of his paternal uncle, the Very Reverend Bruce Knight, Dean of Llandaff. A most genial broad churchman was the Dean. He was profound, learned, singularly eloquent, and had a voice which had the sweet tones in it of Lord Denman's. Hospitality was one of his virtues. In his cellar there was a varied collection of ales, to which he gave fancy names. The Dean of Llandaff was thrown away upon a Welsh-speaking flock. His only appreciate auditors sat in the pew of Squire Talbot, of Margam.

In 1840 Hal Bruce used to talk of the possibility of his father and two uncles entering the House of Lords – one as an influential country squire and magistrate, the second as a prelate, and the third, who was Vice-Chancellor, and then Lord Justice of Appeal, as Chancellor. A very remarkable trio were the three Welsh brothers, who by concatenation [a series of interconnected things] of family events too long to describe, had different names before they died. Nothing was less probable than that one of the coronets which dangled over the heads of Mr Knight-Bruce-Pryce and the Lord Justice should fall on that of Hal.

He owed his fortune to a chronic headache. His apparent destiny was to have vegetated at Lincoln's Inn, now and then obtaining a brief from friendly attorneys. The family doctor, on a visit to London, called on H. A. B., was consulted about the aching head, and reported him in a bad way to an affectionate mother. London, he said, would kill him, and he must live among his native hills to be in good health. At her instance the father obtained for him a stipendiary magistracy of £600 a year at Merthyr Tydfil, and gave him the house in which he was born at Dyffryn, Aberdare. It was roomy and picturesque, and overlooked a romantic glen. A bride was brought home to it. When the police magistrate was elected M.P. for Merthyr, and had to resign his salaried post, the small estate round the mansion was also bestowed upon him, to enable him to attend to his legislative duties. As a magistrate, Mr H. A. Bruce made a creditable figure. The wind was in a Liberal direction, and he forsook hereditary Toryism, but nevertheless he was backed by his father's Tory friends. Being a scrupulously just judge, and kind and patient, he gained popular favour.

About the time that he entered this phase of his career, he lost his first wife, and he himself nearly died of scarlatina, which he took whilst nursing his children, who were ill of that disease. Two years later he married Norah Creina, daughter of Sir William Napier ... Lord Aberdare was tame in debate, but a good man for Committee work ... The Queen took kindly to him, for his views on education, social science, and everything else, were in exact correspondence with Prince Albert's. This was only a coincidence. The Member of Parliament for Merthyr, and afterwards for Renfrew, made education and charitable foundations his speciality in the House. As Home Secretary he was not a source of strength to the Government. Perhaps it was because he never knew how to take a bull by the horns. At any rate, when Lord Ripon's Catholic conscience would not suffer him to remain in office, Mr Gladstone seized the opportunity to get Mr Bruce out of the Home Office, by making him President of the Council and a Baron of the United Kingdom.

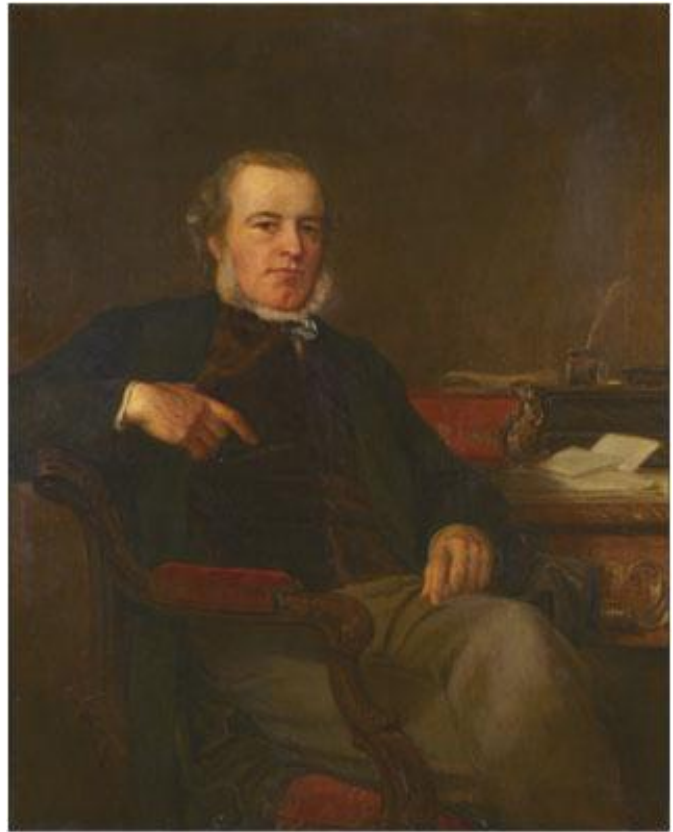
Source: **Truth**, April 20th 1882.

Truth was a British periodical publication founded and funded by the diplomat and Liberal politician, Henry Labouchère. It ran from 1877 to 1957. The editor thanks Mr Jeremy Morgan for bringing this article to his notice.

ABERDARE RANGE OF MOUNTAINS

Kenya, formerly the Sattima Range (Kikuyu, Nyandarua). The 160km-long mountain range was named by Joseph Thomson in 1884 in honour of Lord Aberdare who was at the time President of both the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Historical Society.

IMAGES OF LORD ABERDARE.



Above left, '*He has Gained Credit*,' cartoon of Henry Austin Bruce by 'Ape', Vanity Fair, 21st August 1869. Right National Portrait Gallery, London.

Below: The old house at Dyffryn where Henry Austin Bruce was born in 1805. (Pencil sketch by Emma or Lucy Bacon.) Courtesy Cynon Valley Borough Libraries.)

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Henry Austin Bruce, first Baron Aberdare died at his London home, 39, Prince's Gardens, in the presence of his family and relations on the afternoon of February 25th 1895. His body was brought home to Mountain Ash on Thursday 28th February; the coffin was conveyed to Paddington station and placed in a special saloon carriage attached to the South Wales train. The adjoining carriages were occupied by Lady Aberdare, The Hon H C Bruce (eldest son) and the Hons. Caroline, Lily, Pamela, and Alice Bruce. The Hon. Mrs Vernon Harcourt, The Hon Mrs. Wynne Jones and others. When it became known that the saloon carriage contained the precious remains of one who had become so endeared to the Welsh nation, it was surrounded by a crowd of sympathisers, who reverently approached the curtained windows for the purpose of catching a glimpse of the coffin. The saloon was uncoupled and subsequently attached to the 3.15 pm Taff Vale Railway train. At Cardiff's Queen Street station the carriage was again the object of attention, and there were manifestations of sympathy at several of the stations en route. An immense crowd had gathered at Mountain Ash; there it was met by the principal residents of the district. The coffin was removed from the train by the employees on Lord Aberdare's estate, placed on a bier and carried to a waiting glass panelled hearse drawn by three black horses. A procession was marshalled led by a number of prominent Mountain Ash men carrying black wands tipped with white bows, which escorted the hearse to the mortuary chapel at the cemetery.

The funeral took place on the following day at Aberffwrdd Cemetery, Mountain Ash. The large family plot is marked by a simple Celtic cross the plinth of which is inscribed 'To God the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men more perfect.'

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