

SOUTH WEST WALES INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

CYLCHLYTHYR

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Newsletter 27, March 1981

Editorial committee: F.G. Cowley, P.R. Reynolds, W.I. Roberts

Price to non-members: 15p

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

A reminder of the last three evening meetings of the 1980/1981 winter season

MARCH 19

Annual General Meeting
Royal Institution/Swansea Museum, 7 p.m.

APRIL 9

Mr S.K. Jones
Brunel in south Wales
(This meeting has been arranged by, and is held in association with the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, U.C.S.)

APRIL 23

Dr Hywel Francis will introduce members to the South Wales Miners Library. (PLEASE NOTE: This meeting will be held in the South Wales Miners' Library, 50 Sketty Road, Swansea.)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Will members please take this as the formal notification of the A.G.M? The customary business will be transacted, i.e. to approve the minutes of the last A.G.M.; to hear the reports of the various officers; to discuss future activities; and to consider any other relevant business. Would any member who wishes to raise a matter under A.O.B. please give advance notice to the Hon. Secretary, Mr W.I. Roberts, Grove Cottage, Gloucester Place, Mumbles, Swansea?

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are now due and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer at your earliest convenience. The address will be found on the last page. The rates fixed for this season by the last A.G.M. are:-

Standard rate: £2-00 p.a. Reduced rate (OAPs and students): £1-00 p.a.
Family membership: £3-00 p.a. (to cover all members of a family living at the same address, but on the understanding that only one copy of each society communication is received by each family)

As a result of the note in the last Newsletter a good number of members have already paid for 1981, for which we are most grateful. The committee has been particularly heartened by the good number of members who have most kindly included a donation (in some cases a quite substantial one) over and above their dues. This gesture of confidence in the Society is most encouraging and to all of you we would like to express our warmest appreciation of your generosity.

SIEMENS' LABORATORY, LANDORE

On 5 February 1981 Swansea City Council decided that the derelict Siemens' laboratory should be offered to the Secretary of State to preserve as an ancient monument at the expense of central government. The building is in a delapidated state and work has recently begun on the erection of a £3,000 fence to prevent unauthorised access and possible accidents which could be caused by its dangerous state. The Mayor of Swansea, Cllr. Alan Lloyd is reported to have said: "We should offer it back to the Secretary of State. If he wants to maintain it as an ancient monument he can pay for it himself."

In order to make sure that the general public realised the importance of the Siemens building, the Chairman of the S.W.W.I.A.S., Dr Fred Cowley, sent a letter to the South Wales Evening Post shortly after the Council's decision was reported. In his letter he wrote:

"The recent decision by Swansea City Council's Leisure Services Committee to wash its hands of the derelict Siemens Laboratory at Landore (reported in the Evening Post, 6th February) is understandable but disappointing.

The Laboratory was scheduled as an historical monument in Heritage Year, 1975 and it was then planned to preserve the northern bay of the building with the eight gable chimney stacks while demolishing the other walls to window level to leave a recognisable layout. Since then the building has been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that it is now admittedly an eyesore and a real danger to inquisitive children.

The Laboratory formed part of the works of the Landore Siemens Steel Co. founded by William Siemens in 1868. In 1869 steel production began, using for the first time in Britain the open-hearth process of converting pig-iron into steel. The laboratory with the adjoining rooms which were used as offices and possibly living quarters is all that remains of the original works. A writer in a supplement to the Cambria Daily Leader in 1923 declared that "no ruin in the world can boast a past history of greater value to this generation than the disused buildings below Landore Viaduct where Dr. Siemens, with the help of local men, brought to completion the conversion of pig-iron into the finest qualities of steel." Such was the reputation of the works in the 1880s that the builders of the Forth Bridge ordered 12,000 tons of the 42,000 tons of steel which went into the making of the bridge, from the Landore works.

Swansea's nineteenth century greatness was built on copper, steel and tinsplate and the buildings where the industrial processes were planned and carried out have, apart from their value as a tourist attraction, great historical importance for the city. No responsible person would argue for the indiscriminate preservation of industrial ruins but a strong case can be made for a limited, selective preservation. It is to be hoped that positive action will be taken, even at this late hour, to ensure that something, however small, is preserved of three important sites which epitomise Swansea's past metallurgical achievements: the Morfa-Hafod Copper Works recently vacated by Yorkshire Imperial Metals, the Siemens Laboratory and the Duffryn Tinsplate Works, Morriston, still happily being used by the British Steel Corporation. Selection is not difficult because these three sites are all that survive of Swansea's industrial heritage in the Lower Swansea Valley. In the newly-created Enterprise Zone it will not come amiss to be reminded of the vigour, inventiveness and enterprise of the Victorian entrepreneurs.

Yours sincerely,
F.G. Cowley,
Chairman, South West Wales Industrial Archaeology Society"

WEAVER'S MILL - YET AGAIN

New proposals have just been made public for the demolition of Weaver's Mill in Swansea, Britain's first reinforced concrete building. The present plans include provision for preserving a section of the building and making samples of the constructional material available for analysis by the Building Research Establishment. More in our next issue when the details of the scheme have been clarified.

GLASBROOK AND RICHARD'S GORSE RAILWAY, SWANSEA

During the nineteenth century there were two quite separate and distinct tramroads at different periods running up the Cwm at Swansea from the terminal basin of the Swansea Canal to coal mines to the north and west of the town. The first of these was the property of Sir John Morris (I and II) and was in existence from the 1790s until the expiry of the lease in 1839. It served the Aberdyberthy, Cwm and Pentre pits among others. The second, perhaps better described as a mineral railway, was built by Glasbrook and Richard in the late 1840s and lasted until the early 1870s. It followed the same line as Morris's tramroad in the Cwm, but its terminus was at the Gorse Colliery, Cockett. It is with the latter of these two undertakings that the present piece is concerned.

The land in the Cwm which was used by both lines belonged to Swansea Corporation. The lease under which Morris had been empowered to build his tramroad had originally been granted by the Corporation to William Coles of the Swansea Pottery in 1776 for the period of two lives or 99 years (1). This lease was assigned to Lockwood and Morris in 1790 (2) and they probably built their waggonway or tramroad as part of a programme of expansion in the coal trade which included major improvements at the Pentre Pit and the creation of a coal bank on the river Tawe. The second of the two lives, daughters of Robert Morris, died in 1839 and in consequence Sir John Morris II was given notice to quit from Michaelmas 1839 (3). This marked the end of the first Cwm tramroad.

In 1841 Morris put proposals to the Corporation for a new lease of land for building a "road" (i.e. railway or tramroad) from the terminus of the Oystermouth Railway at the Pottery as far as Weig Fawr. Construction was to be undertaken under the powers of the O.R. Act of 1804 which empowered the owners or occupiers of mineral property to build such connecting lines. A Corporation committee investigated the request, and at its recommendation, the Corporation was prepared to grant Morris a lease subject to certain conditions:-

- the road was to be open to the public on payment of reasonable tolls
- other coalowners were to be allowed to make branches with Morris's line
- any party that wished to extend the line beyond Weig Fawr should receive Morris's permission to do so on payment of a reasonable compensation for the land required
- the Corporation was to be at liberty to terminate the lease at any time and take possession with no liability to pay any compensation other than the costs incurred in construction
- the rent was to be $\frac{1}{2}$ d per ton on all coal carried, but with a minimum of £10 p.a. (4)

Despite the willingness of the Corporation to grant Morris the lease he sought, no further action was taken. W.H. Jones says that opposition to the scheme came from Mansel Phillips who claimed ownership of part of the land required for the tramroad where it adjoined his property at the Pentre bridge (5).

Seven years later, in 1848, the proposal was revived, this time by John Glasbrook and his brother-in-law, Philip Richard, who, as the Gorse Colliery Company, were then starting to develop their collieries at the Gorse and Weig Fawr. N.L. Thomas dates this to 1847-51 (6), and this ties in well enough with an advertisement in The Cambrian (15 December 1848) announcing that coal was now available for sale from the Gorse Colliery. Construction of the railway up the Cwm was, of course, a necessary part of the development of these collieries and in 1848 Glasbrook and Richard submitted an application to the Corporation for permission to lay down their railway insofar as it was intended to take it across the Corporation's land in the Cwm. At its meeting of 12 May, the Corporation referred this application to a special committee which reported back a week later. The committee referred to Morris's request in 1841 and recommended that the present application be granted on the same terms as had been proposed then. However, the situation in 1848 was somewhat complicated by the fact that Glasbrook and Richard had already started to build their railway over a piece of Corporation land adjacent to the Cwm without obtaining the Corporation's permission. This land had been leased to Calvert Richard Jones since 1829. Following his death in April 1847, his assignees had granted permission to Glasbrook and Richard to cross this land for a consideration, and the railway had already been constructed between the Pentre bridge and Cwmbwrla by the time they submitted their application to the Corporation.

No. on Plan and Rental.	Particulars of the Property.	Situation.	Lessee or Tenant.	Date of Lease.	Term.	Unexpired Term from 25th March, 1850.	Rent.	Duties.	Observations.
194A	Way-Leave and permission to lay down a Railway over the Corporation property, from above the Pentre Bridge, through the Cwm, to the Swansea Canal, near the Pottery	Pentre to Pottery	Richard and Glasbrook ..	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	10 0 0	..	The rent for this Way-Leave is $\frac{1}{2}$ of a 1d. per ton, but not to be less than £10 per ann. The Grant for this Railway has not yet been executed — Messrs. Richard and Glasbrook having applied for permission to extend the Railway.
195	Ground, on which a Cottage has been erected	Bryn Melyn ..	William Isaac .. ..	.. .. .	At will ..	.. .. .	0 10 0	..	These cottages were erected by the tenant.
196	Ground, on which a Cottage has been erected	Bryn Melyn ..	William Isaac .. ..	.. .. .	At will ..	.. .. .	0 10 0	..	
197	House, Garden, and four fields containing 8A. 3R. 21F.	Bryn Melyn ..	William Isaac .. ..	.. .. .	At will ..	.. .. .	30 0 0	..	(199.) In the occupation of the Gorse Colliery Company. The lessee has assigned a part of these premises without consent of the Corporation, for the purpose of forming a railway, which has since been made by Messrs. Richard and Glasbrook.
198	Piece of Waste Land above the	Pentre Bridge ..	In hand .. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	.. .. .	..	..
199	House, Garden, and three fields	Wann Wen ..	C. R. Jones, assignee of the late C. R. Jones	1 July, 1829	93 years from 29 Sept., 1829	72 $\frac{1}{2}$ years ..	15 0 0	2	

Entries relating to Richard and Glasbrook's railway taken from the Report on the Estate and Property of the Corporation of Swansea, Lady-Day 1850.

Entry 194A is the original grant made by the Corporation in 1848 before the extension to beyond Cwmbwrla, which is referred to in the column headed 'Observations'. Entry 199 is the lease granted to C.R. Jones in 1829 and shows that Richard and Glasbrook built their railway over this land without the consent of the Corporation.

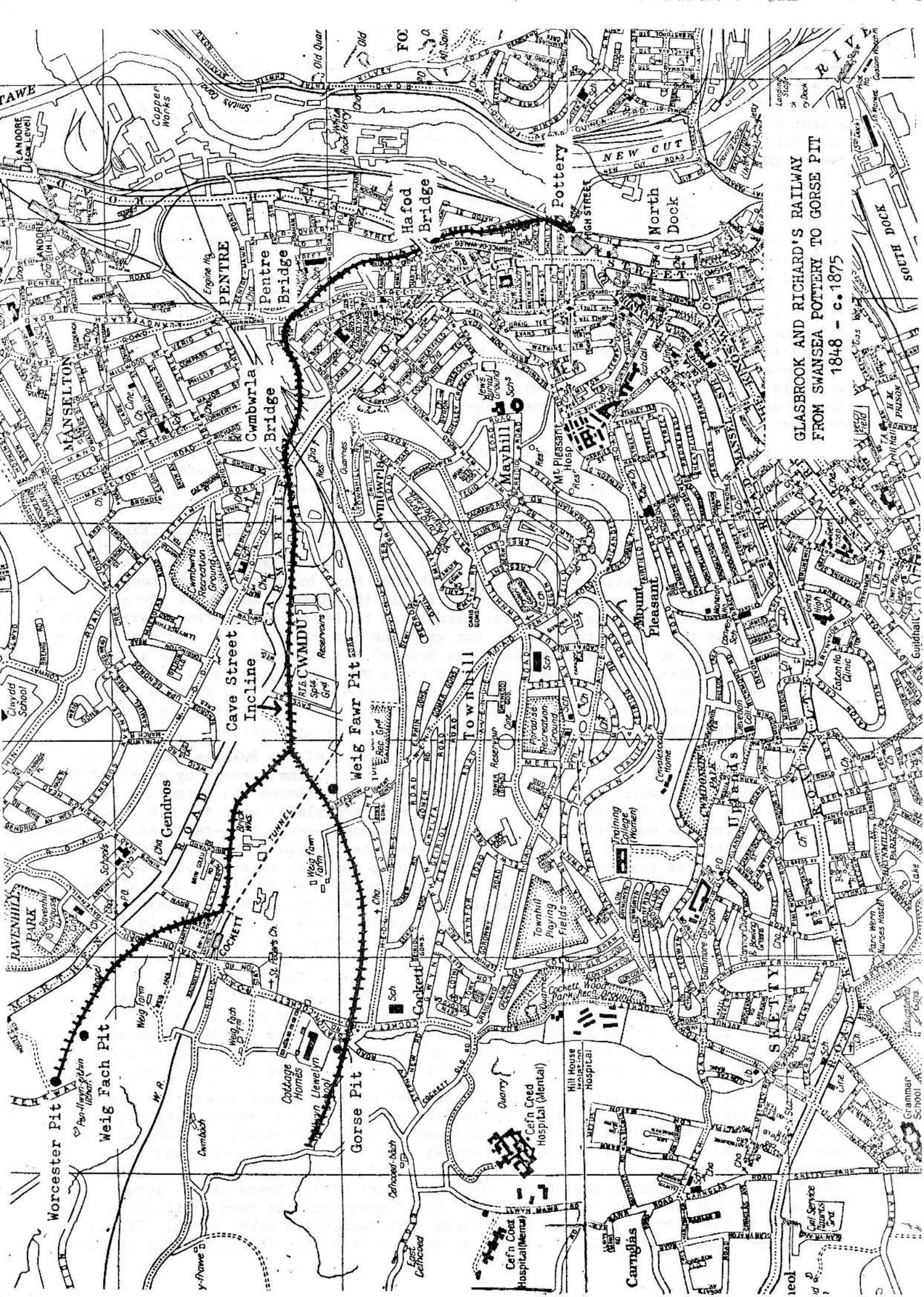
The assignees had acted without the consent of the Corporation and were clearly exceeding the powers granted in the lease of 1829, but the Corporation chose to take a soft line. It was agreed that subject to the Town Clerk receiving evidence of the assent of the assignees of C.R. Jones to Glasbrook and Richard building their railway, then permission should be confirmed by the Corporation and a lease of the land in the Cwm be granted (7).

Obviously the Town Clerk must have been satisfied - a mere formality in any case - for on 9 June 1848 it was resolved unanimously that permission be granted by the Corporation to Richard and Glasbrook to lay down their railway, and that the necessary legal steps be taken to ratify the grant. As recommended by the committee, all the terms were to be the same as had been proposed to Morris in 1841. Glasbrook and Richard can have lost no time in starting work, for by 13 October 1848 a council minute referred to "the railway laid down by Messrs Richard and Glasbrook over the Corporation property through the Cwm". It appears that the dispute with Mansel Phillips over the exact boundary between his property and that of the Corporation had surfaced again, and the Town Clerk was instructed to attempt to resolve the disagreement. In 1841 Phillips' opposition had prevented Morris from proceeding with his line, but Glasbrook and Richard in 1848 appear to have gone ahead and built their railway over the disputed land, leaving the Corporation and the Town Clerk to sort out the legal aspects.

The railway was probably complete from around Cwmbwrla to the Pottery by early 1849, for the first payment made by Glasbrook and Richard to the Corporation was for the half-year March-September 1849 (8). However, a further extension beyond Cwmbwrla was under consideration: this was, of course, essential to link up with the Gorse and Weigfawr pits. In the printed Report on the estate and property of the Corporation of Swansea, Lady-Day 1850 (reproduced opposite) it was stated that "the grant for this railway has not been executed - Messrs Richard and Glasbrook having applied for permission to extend the Railway". Their request must have been granted, although it does not appear in the Corporation minutes, for in the 1850/51 Rent Roll the same entry is given as for the previous year, "For permission to lay a railway from above Pentre Bridge, through the Cwm to the Canal", but with the insertion of what was obviously a last-minute addition "& from above Cwmbwrla Bridge". At the same time the annual rent of £10 has been altered by the addition of "& £10" (i.e. to make a total of £20 p.a.). This seems to show that in the summer of 1850 Glasbrook and Richard received permission to extend their railway from its temporary terminus between the Pentre and Cwmbwrla bridges to join up with the pits at Gorse and Weig Fawr.

The southern terminus of the railway was at the basin of the Swansea Canal, near the Pottery, from which point access could be obtained to the harbour by means of the Oystermouth Railway which extended this far. In 1852 Glasbrook and Richard's railway seems to have shared a mixed-gauge track (edge-rail/tramplate) with the O.R., but in 1855, following the conversion of the latter to standard-gauge edge-rail, an unbroken end-on junction appears to have been made between the two lines with through running possible (9). From the Pottery, the railway ran up the Cwm, passing under Neath Road by the Hafod bridge. This bridge still survives, although it has been widened at some time to allow more room for traffic on the Neath Road. The railway continued up the Cwm to the Pentre bridge, which can now no longer be seen, but was in fact on Llangyfelach Road, outside the entrance to what is now the Cwmfelin Works. To this point the route of the railway can at least be followed in the alignment of present-day streets, but the next stage is completely destroyed. There are no traces at all on the ground, and very few on maps. It crossed the piece of land now occupied by the Cwmfelin works and passed under the South Wales main line by a bridge which has been filled in, but traces of which can still just be made out in the embankment. At Cwmbwrla modern road developments have completely eradicated any sign of our railway, and it is not until Cave Street that it can be picked up once again.

The incline which can still be seen to the west of Cave Street is now the best surviving feature of the railway. The incline operated on the self-acting principle (10), with the wagons being raised and lowered by means of chains. In 1863 an old man was killed on the incline: he had been at work repairing the track and it is stated that he failed to hear the warning shouts of his companions or to see the movement of the chains as the wagons started to move (11). These chains were supported on rollers, and the mounting of one of them could be seen until quite recently in the form of a square stone block with four holes bored in it. It was not unlike the stone sleeper blocks used at an earlier date, but it was not one of these.



GLASBROOK AND RICHARD'S RAILWAY
FROM SWANSEA POTTERY TO GORSE PIT
1848 - c.1875

Worcester Pit
Weig Fach Pit

Cave Street
Incline

Gorse Pit

Cefn Ceed
Hospital (Mental)

PENTRE
Pentre Bridge

Cwmbwrla
Bridge

Hafod
Bridge

Mayhill

Pottery

North
Dock

Mount
Pleasant

Townhill

Training
College
(Women)

Uplands

Carmel
Hospital

Carmel
Hospital

SOUTH DOCK

Grammar
School

The arrangement of the holes, the pattern of wear and its position in the centre of the incline all point to its having been a roller-mounting. Although there is no positive evidence, Glasbrook and Richard's railway was very probably laid on wooden sleepers: 1847-50 would have been very late to find a new railway, even a mineral railway in south Wales, laid on stone blocks, and on the Cave Street incline there are no traces at all of stone sleepers, the one section where one might have expected a few to survive, had they existed at all. Also of interest is a hollow scooped out alongside the incline which is carried on an embankment: there would seem to be no operational need for it, and the only reason for its existence can be that material was obtained for the embankment by side-cutting, by digging it up from this hollow. There are no cuttings elsewhere on the line from which spoil could have been obtained to build the embankment, the practice generally adopted in the construction of railway earthworks.

At the head of the incline there was a junction: the original line forked south to the Weig Fawr and Gorse pits, whilst a later branch came in from the Worcester and Weig Fach pits to the north-west. It is not possible to see any more signs of the railway until the point where it crosses Cockett Road. Here a short stretch can be seen to the east of the road in the form of an overgrown hollow. Gorse Colliery was on the western side of the main road, just south of the new police station, but the site has now been built over. Beyond Gorse Colliery the railway continued for about a quarter of a mile to a patch of disturbed ground which appears to have seen some exploratory workings for coal. This final stretch of railway can still be followed across the fields to the west of the new school.

The branch to the Weig Fach and Worcester pits was probably laid a little later than the main line. The map accompanying Michael Scott's Report on the supply of water to the town of Swansea, published in 1852, shows what appears to be the main line to the Gorse Colliery, but not the Weig Fach/Worcester branch. The Weig Fach pit was in existence by 1844, when it was offered for sale (12), and in 1846 the Weigfach Colliery Company appeared as a trader on the Swansea Canal. In 1854 the owners were Evans, Gregor & Co. By 1870 it had passed to Thomas Glasbrook, the brother of John Glasbrook, who also sank the Worcester Pit, the first reference to which occurs in 1866. It may well be that the branch from these pits to Glasbrook and Richard's railway was laid in the 1860s by Thomas Glasbrook when he had acquired the Weigfach and was in the process of sinking the Worcester Pit.

The railway continued throughout the 1850s and 1860s, and occasionally appeared in the local press, generally in connection with accidents. The youth of the district appear to have played on the railway as a regular pursuit, sometimes with fatal results. A boy was killed in June 1860 in this way, and another in the following September. At the inquest on the latter it was stated that "the deceased, like many other boys, was in the habit of getting on the wagons as they came down the Cwmbwrla incline and about 4 o'clock that afternoon he endeavoured to jump upon one of the wagons, and in so doing fell under the wheels and his head was crushed to pieces". However, it may have been that the boy was killed in the course of duty, and not just as a result of larking about, for it was also stated that he was in the service of Mr Richard Glasbrook (sic). Another interesting point to emerge from this accident report is that the horses and wagon involved belonged to a Mr Trevor Williams: does this indicate that Richard & Glasbrook subcontracted their haulage to small operators, or is this a case of a member of the public exercising his right to use the railway, as provided for in the terms of the Corporation grant? (13)

A further fatality was the one which has already been noted, in 1863, of an old man being knocked down and killed. Yet another accident occurred in 1871 when a William Marchant was knocked down and run over. Marchant was a stranger to Swansea. He had just arrived from Portsmouth and had been offered a job at the Cwmbwrla tin works. He came out of the works all unsuspecting and stepped onto the incline in front of a train. He died the next day from his injuries (14).

The accident to Marchant in 1871 is the last reference that has been discovered so far to the railway being in operation. Within the next few years it was to be closed, and by the time that the 6" O.S. map was surveyed in 1876, it had been completely lifted. A Swansea Corporation plan of 1878 survives (15) which shows the railway still in position, but this must be out of date. Perhaps it serves to show that the railway had only recently been lifted when the 6" O.S. was produced. The reason

for the closure of the railway is not entirely clear, but it must be to do with the abandonment of the pits, at least in part. The Gorse Pit does not appear to have been worked much after the mid-1860s, apart from a short spell in approximately 1880-83, and the Weig Fawr also seems to have closed down at about the same date, if not before, and to have stood idle until Philip Richard Jr recommenced operations in the 1890s. Of the other pits served by this line, the Weig Fach and Worcester were both being developed from the mid-1860s onwards. However, it is probably significant that in 1872 the Great Western Railway converted its lines in south Wales from broad to standard gauge. This meant that through working between the main line and the colliery systems was now possible. A siding was put in from Cockett to Worcester and Weig Fach and once this outlet existed, the need for Richard & Glasbrook's railway was removed. It is unlikely that it survived the change of gauge on the main line in 1872 by more than a few years.

P.R.R.

References

1. University College, Swansea, Library. Hall Day Minute Book, 16 February 1776.
2. W.H. Jones, History of the port of Swansea (1922), 262
3. U.C.S., Swansea Corporation Minutes, 18 March 1839
4. ibid., 24 September 1841, 19 May 1848
5. W.H. Jones, l.c., 262-3
6. N.L. Thomas, History of Swansea's districts and villages (1969), III, 208
7. U.C.S., Swansea Corporation Minutes, 12, 19 May 1848
8. U.C.S., Swansea Corporation Rent Roll, 1849/50
9. Royal Institution of South Wales, Deposited Plans, Swansea Docks & Mineral Valleys Railway
10. Stated in the report of an accident in The Cambrian, 15 June 1860
11. The Cambrian, 2 October 1863
12. ibid., 2 March 1844
13. ibid., 15 June, 14 September 1860
14. ibid., 27 May 1871
15. J.M. Davies, 'The growth of settlement in the Swansea Valley' (M.A. thesis, 1942), map 31

BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

Llangunnor, Carmarthen. Attempts are to be made to preserve the engine house of the Vale of Towy lead mine near Carmarthen (map ref. 437199). It dates from about 1852 and housed a Cornish pumping engine. It is in a serious state of disrepair, and for this reason has been de-scheduled by the Welsh Office. A temporary preservation order has been placed on it by Carmarthen District Council which gives six months to try to reach a decision on its future. The figure of £20,000 has been mentioned as the possible cost of the necessary repair work.

Porthgain for Sale. The Daily Telegraph (26 January 1981) reported that the entire village of Porthgain (bar the pub) is to be sold by its present owners, G.R. Stein Refractories. Tenders are being invited and it is suggested that an offer in the region of £250,000 will be successful.

Burry Port & Gwendraeth Valley Railway. If the British Railways bill in the present session of Parliament is successful, the ex-B.P.G.V.R. line from Burry Port to Carway (near Kidwelly) could be closed and Gwendraeth Valley coal taken out over a new connection from Carway to the main line at Kidwelly. The reason is that the railway was built on the bed of the Kidwelly & Llanelly Canal and the canal still makes its presence felt after heavy rain: the trackbed fills with water, especially under the bridges, and operations have to be suspended. Another difficulty is that some of the bridges were built for the canal and are too low for full-size locomotives. The small shunters that are currently used on the line are near the end of their useful life and it would simplify matters if B.R. could use standard locomotives to replace them.

Neath & Brecon Railway. West Glamorgan County Council hopes to revive a steam-operated passenger service over this branch in connection with Cefn Coed Coal and Steam Centre. Ultimately a service from Neath to Craig-y-Nos is envisaged with motive power being supplied by preservation groups. One problem that will have to be resolved if the passenger trains are not to be confined to weekends, is how to accommodate both West Glamorgan and B.R. traffic on the same single-track branch. There is still quite a healthy coal traffic from Onllwyn and Blaenant on the line.

COSHER BAILEY'S ENGINE

Many versions exist of the popular Welsh ballad "Cosher Bailey's Engine", but few of them have appeared in print. "Cosher Bailey" himself is probably a corruption of Crawshay Bailey, the ironmaster of Nantyglo, and the engine might refer to the locomotive "Cymro" which during the 1850s worked the tramroad from Nantyglo to Llangattock on the Brecknock & Abergavenny Canal.

The following version, of uncertain provenance, has been submitted by Peter Wakelin. The reference to Gower in the third verse is interesting: perhaps it suggests that this is a version of the song that circulated in the Swansea area: certainly no Nantyglo locomotive ever worked in the Gower peninsula. The use of the word 'jive' in the sixth verse seems to indicate that the wording must owe something to the twentieth century even if the sentiments are of the nineteenth. The appended stanza seems to be an alternative to the first one, and probably derives from an alternative tradition.

Cosher Bailey had an engine that was always wanting mending
And according to her power, she could do four miles an hour.

CHORUS Did you ever see, did you ever see, did you ever see
Such a funny thing before?

Cosher bought her second-hand, and he painted her so grand
But when the driver went to oil her, man, she nearly bust her boiler.

On the night run up from Gower, she did go six miles an hour
As she whistled through the station, man, she frightened half the nation

Cosher Bailey's Auntie Julia, she was taken most peculiar,
Something happened to her liver, and she overflowed the river.

Cosher Bailey's Auntie Anna, she do play the grand planner,
She do also play the fiddle, down the sides and up the middle.

Oh! The choir on Sunday night sing much better when they're tight
And their version of 'Cwm Rhondda' makes the angels jive up yonder.

Cosher Bailey went to Oxford for to pass Matriculation,
But he saw a pretty barmaid and he never left the station.

Cosher Bailey he did die, in a coffin he did lie,
Then they heard somebody knockin', Cosher Bailey only joking!

APPENDED STANZA Crawshay Bailey had an engine
And he found it wouldn't go
So he pulled it by a string
All the way to Nantyglo.

CONFERENCES AND COURSES

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 11 April | 12th annual conference of Western IA Societies, Worcester College of Higher Education. Fee £3-50 to include coffee, lunch and tea. |
| 25-29 May | Canals of the Peak District. Peak National Park Study Centre, Castleton, near Sheffield. Fee £73-00 inclusive. |
| 1-8 August | The Midland canals in town and country. City of Birmingham Avoncroft Residential College. Fee £77 plus VAT. |
| 8-14 August | Industrial Archaeology. Avoncroft College. Fee £77 plus VAT |
| 22-29 August | Industrial Archaeology. Peak Study Centre. Fee £98 plus VAT |
| 16-18 October | Practical Industrial Archaeology. Peak Study Centre. Fee £41 incl. |

Further details of these courses are available from Paul Reynolds (address on back page).

RECENT LITERATURE

D.S.M. BARRIE. Regional history of the railways of Great Britain. Vol. XII: South Wales (David & Charles, 1980.) £9-95.

It is not that this is a bad book, but just that it is disappointing that it is not a better one. The facts all appear to be correct - as one would expect from the author - but it contains little that is new. The book is really no more than a resumé of what is known already done in a competent but not very exciting way. Perhaps part of the reason for this is the constraints placed on an author in writing a book which has to fit the pattern imposed by being part of a publisher's series. The format adopted, after two introductory chapters on early developments, is to work across south Wales from east to west giving the histories of the various 19th century railway companies, with a final chapter on the whole of the last 80 years in 30 pages. There are quite a few half-tone blocks (although no list of them) which have reproduced well, but of these a number are old friends making yet another appearance. There is a folding map at the end and several more detailed maps in the text of smaller areas, but again, there is no list of these maps in the preliminaries and the folding map contains no key to the smaller maps. Perhaps the kindest thing to say about this book is that it will be bought and read by a good number of people, and, so far as it goes, they will not be misled by it.

P.G. RATTENBURY. Tramroads of the Brecknock & Abergavenny Canal (Railway & Canal Historical Society, 136 Westway, Raynes Park, London SW20 9LS.) £4-00 plus 60p postage.

The history of the railways and tramroads of south Wales is a tangled web indeed, and no period more so than that of the early horse-worked lines. After many years of research, however, Gordon Rattenbury has successfully unravelled many of the threads and the present work represents part of the result. By its very nature, this work cannot be described as an easy read, but it is a thorough and authoritative piece of work that can be relied on as a reference book, since it is transparently obvious from every page that the author has gone back to the original sources and has not merely hashed up existing information. This book, with its focus of interest on the tramroads linked to the B & A Canal complements Charles Hadfield's well-known Canals of South Wales which is primarily concerned with the canals themselves. After a general introductory chapter, each of the tramroads is considered in turn. Their histories are given, and for readers who want to explore them for themselves, a description of the routes is provided with copious map references. A generous allowance of maps and illustrations contribute to a most workmanlike production by an author who is obviously thoroughly familiar with both the tramroads themselves and with the sources for their history.

G. GABB. 'A second extension of the Oystermouth Railway', Gower, 31, 1980, 36-42.

In a previous article in Gower 29 the author demonstrated that a temporary extension of the O.R. was built in 1812. The present article is an attempt to show that in 1865 the ambitious railway contractor, John Dickson, attempted to extend the line as part of a plan for securing access to Mumbles Head for his Neath & Brecon Railway. The extension may well never have been used, and was probably destroyed by the sea following Dickson's bankruptcy in 1867. A convincing use of documentary and photographic evidence makes the case very plausible.

SWANSEA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Newsletter 10, Winter 1980.

The latest issue of the S.V.H.S. Newsletter contains a further instalment of Dr J.G. Morgan's 'The growth of the tinsplate industry in the Swansea Valley' dealing with the Ynispenllwch, Players and Glanynrafon works, and a note on the Ystalyfera ironmaster, James Palmer Budd. There are also items on other aspects of the history of the Swansea Valley.

P.R.R.