
***COWBRIDGE AND DISTRICT
1860 TO 1930***

***REMINISCENCES OF MR. E. W. MILES,
SOLICITOR, COWBRIDGE***

EXTRACTS FROM BAKERS SCRAPBOOK
TAKEN BY NICOLE BURNETT AUGUST 1998

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REMINISCENCES OF MR. E W MILES, SOLICITOR, COWBRIDGE.

(A copy of MSS prepared for publication by Mr. Miles in 1931 and kindly loaned to Mr E.R. Baker, Assistant Chief Constable of Glamorgan, in November 1954, by the family)

PREFACE

In the early part of the year 1930 I arranged with the Editor of a local weekly paper to supply jottings which were published on eight occasions, I had no intentions of writing so many, but the various incidents revived in the memory far exceeded my expectations.

I then suggested to the Editor he should hand a donation to a local charity, which he courteously declined. Consequently, I did not continue to supply. I sincerely felt they were of no literary value, being chiefly mere spontaneous jottings dictated to a shorthand writer as they occurred to me.

Several readers, to my surprise, urged me to have them printed in book form, some desired to read and post copies to their relatives over-seas, so I am having a limited number printed that the youth and future generations may have what I believe (other than a few diversions) a fair word picture of the Vale of Glamorgan as in the past sixty years.

I have no desire to retain any profit that may accrue, but will hand same, if any, to some local charity.

Cowbridge

1931

Cowbridge is reputed to be the most ancient town in Glamorgan, and was probably the most important a century or so ago, before Cardiff had developed. I have heard elderly people say, quite sixty years ago, there were only a few houses in Cardiff in the early days. The inhabitants were undoubtedly a well disciplined people, although the press records a serious affray in June 1576 between the Bassetts of Beaupre and the Turbervilles of Penline, who fought with swords in the street. The Curfew Bell was rung from an early period at 8.p.m. up to the year 1896, the church bell rung for about five minutes up to 8.0.p.m. and immediately after the treble bell tolled the day of the month.

The residents were reputed to speak the best English in Great Britain by way of articulation which was much eulogised by men of learning, as at that time there were numerous dialects or colloquialisms with nasal or guttural inflections, which have not yet wholly disappeared, all over the country such as "Zomerset":- Vetch I that thicky there shoul", and near home at Llantwit Major where the humbler folks expressed themselves thus :- "Were beest thee going? - Beest thee going down zee"?

There was formerly a strong spirit of rivalry between the Llantonians and Cowbridgians. The former claimed to be the more ancient as a Seat of Learning, which was undoubtedly correct, apparently of the Monastic type, and mostly in the Latin language, not understood by the humbler class therefore they were not trained to acquire intelligent enlightenment.

The condition of the time may have led to the sentiment expressed in the following couplet which has been handed down to posterity:-

"God bless the Squire and his relations
Any keep us in our proper stations"

I do not agree with the implication that we should ignore respect to those who merit it, regardless of social or official positions, exalted or lowly, but should adopt the right attitude taught by the wisest of teachers to honour all men.

Happily the good folk of Llantwit Major and Cowbridge have long since become reconciled and generally regard each other as one family in progressive activities.

The unifying of general education resulting from the Education Act of 1872 has almost dispelled the local dialects and colloquialisms yet, in spite of the great progress in the intellectual sphere and the circulation of cheap literature, there is much ignorance extant to the purpose of life and the physiological constitution of the individual.

Although the general conditions and facilities are very much advanced, I do not think people are happier or so contented as sixty years ago, and feel sure there is not such mutual sympathy and local personal interest and sacrifice among the humbler class. I have observed the rise and fall of many wealthy in material possessions, some who had a lust for gain and flourish for a time in the public eye. Unforeseen circumstances, or a series of such, brought them down to a state of penury, that the last state of such was worse than the first, which illustrates the warning of Solomon, The Wisest of Men:-

"That riches have wings and fly away" 23 Prov.

"They that hasteth to be rich considereth not that poverty shall come upon him" 28 Prov.

Conversely I have observed many with a fixed ideal of thrift and diligence, with a spirit of contentment and moderation to their calling, realising that half a loaf

was better than none, and progressing unostentatiously in comfort and material possessions as well as securing the Spiritual Pearl of great price which could not be taken away from them:- "Better is one hand full with quietness than two hands full with trouble"

I have also observed very many, including personal friends of my younger days, to my personal sorrow, who had no fixed ideal turn into the various byways that beset life's path, and without a defined road plan on their maps, become corrupt physically and morally, and otherwise victims of ills that the flesh is subject to; a grief to their families and acquaintances. Prosperity has ruined many, and the love of money has been the root of much misery, and loss of the best ideals which make life worth living.

I have also observed that those who have permitted physical pleasures to dominate their lives have suffered the penalty referred to the ancient warning:- "He that loveth pleasures shall be a poor man". Also that industrial combination, like individuals, who had comfortable possessions, have unwisely acted like the dog in the Fable;

While crossing on a plank over a river with a bone in his mouth, saw his shadow in the water, made a grab for the bone's shadow and lost what he possessed.

Many others have ended their earthly career by their own hand under the delusive idea that the destruction of the body terminates their trouble, deluding themselves of the accept fact that the memory lives on, as part of the spiritual self in peace or in sorrow reign what has been sown. I feel confident that when we quit our bodies our sixth sense (memory) will be active in our eternal destiny.

"When will people learn wisdom which is within reach of every one; in our enlightened age, so plain that every wayfaring man tho' a fool need not err.
35 Ish"

Education has not generally dispelled the ancient vices, but as the intellect has been sharpened and the law more generous, the vicious are more skilled and ingenious. The Ancient Adage "If a man will not work neither shall he eat" is tabooed generally, and such stigmatised people who are industrious and frugal as mean and antiquated. The thrifty pay their debts while the thriftless speculate and adopt the modern speculation of the Hire Purchase system and other ventures by which a large number come to grief. The crazy ambition prevails to assume better position than that which they can command and such have not the wisdom to "sit down and count the cost" or "out the coat according to the cloth". I know people who earn £2 a week assume the position of those who earn £3 a week and so on, which leads to penury, who treat their misfortunes as unfair, others, lightly, not considering, the inconvenience and loss to tradesmen, landlord, and other creditors, having no regard for the wise injunction :- "Owe no man anything". "Nothing venture nothing win" is the motto of many but the large majority who adopt this loose to their sorrow.

In my early days the females in families made their own clothes, chiefly of local spin yard, and the shawls and dresses etc. made of that material often lasted the owner's lifetime or if grown out the garment was sent down for the young members of the family.

The male cottagers and boys cultivated their gardens, bred pigs (which roamed the public roads) and were experts in the common handy crafts as there was no tempting counter attraction for amusement except the periodical local Fairs, club feasts or occasional visits of Ginnett's or Sangers' Circus or Wombell's Menagerie which were a great attraction. Ginnett drove twenty piebald horses drawing the circus band carriage leading the procession of the staff mounted on piebald horses dressed in fancy costumes through the town on one occasion. It was the custom of Circus Companies to parade the whole of the town and clowns would walk on high stilts, turn circles, and walk up to houses and peep through the bedroom windows during the parade. Crowds from far and near would assemble to view the grotesque procession, and attend the one day performance as an exceptional treat.

Valentines Day on the 14th February was a popular anniversary. The shops trading in paper and novelties had a large assortment displayed in the windows of every description from a penny single sheet with a handsome, comical, and ugly picture of humanity with a printed verse below expressing loving, cynical, critical and offensive sentiments, suitable to the taste of all types. It was an opportunity to post an anonymous message of flattery, disgust, jealousy, and spite. Fortunately the practice has died a natural death.

THE TOWN OF COWBRIDGE

This town was the centre for Farm Stock Sales; Tuesday being the Market Day. There were no enclosures for live stock except a few hurdles for sheep and pigs near the Butts Pool, by the remains of the ancient town wall, south of the Mason's Arms Inn. (the pool was of considerable size, and was filled in during the erection of the new Market in the year 1888). It was a favourable resort for skating and sliding when frozen over.

Cattle were shown in groups on the pavement on each side of the main road on the western side of the town which was known as the West Village, being in the earlier days outside the boundary of the Town Wall.

The Ancient Town was very small as the Wall, 25 feet in height and in parts 7ft 8 ins in width, only extended from the South Gate in an irregular circle to the West Gate on the main road between the present Stock Market and the Eagle Inn, then curving at the end of the lane in a south east direction as far as the eastern boundary of the present Town Hall, then turning south across the main road, where the eastgate stood, extending to the Southern extremity of the Grammar School Garden, and then curving westward to the Ancient Archway known as South Gate surrounding an area of 10 acres. The East and West Gates

are believed to have been removed about the year 1776 as wheel traffic had increased over the main road. Mail coaches ran through up to the year 1850.

The Ancient Town must evidently have been a fortress as part of the wall remaining at this time is studied with battlements and is amount 7ft 8ins in width on the top. I am disposed to believe it was practically surrounded by a Moat as the never dry little stream, named the thaw according to indications, flowed near the site of the East Gate near the present town hall (the stream having many years ago slightly diverted to a constructed pond for supplying water to work the new derelict Town Flour Mill). The whole of the land on the Western side is full of water springs, and is very soft and pungent during the rainy seasons.

The pavements within the Town Walls were sunk Cobble stones (much of which remained in my early days), and subsequently paving slabs were placed in a narrow portion near the Houses until about 1885 when Granolithic was substituted.

Farmers and their wives used to ride in on their carthorses, the wife sitting behind the husband on a pad, and carrying a large basket of butter, cheese and poultry on her lap, as at this time the ordinary farmer was a "working man" and the wife a "working woman" and probably could not afford a spring carriage, though they sometimes used a farm cart. Carriages were very scarce and a costly luxury, only a few of the wealthier, called gentlemen farmers, owned a two wheeled spring carriage.

Many of the public inns provided extensive accommodation, and in front of their houses were stone steps called "Mounts" at which the wife mounted and dismounted from the carthorse, who knew his business in sidling up to the mount for the purpose without any guidance. These horses were trained to run in a sliding fashion and would travel 6 to 8 miles an hour in that way without jolting or causing the good wife any discomfort.

The butter cheese and poultry were sold to local shopkeepers and to hucksters who came from Cardiff and Pontypridd in spring carts, and the Butter etc. was received by them in a room allotted in the various inns.

Butchers and pottery stalls were on the Western side of the Town Hall and flannel, wearing apparel, and confectionery stalls, etc. on the Eastern side. Vendors came from Cardiff and Pontypridd Districts and occupied market stalls. There was no railway communication and buyers of live stock produce would arrive from a great distance the previous day.

There were only 5 butchers selling meat, which was sold on Market Days. There were no butcher shops. Three resident butchers, Richard Howe, John Williams, The Pelican Inn, and David Morgan, Butchers Arms; also Williams of Llantwit Major, and Thomas John, Trehingyll. Very little fresh meat was bought. Only two butchers slaughtered one animal producing beef between them, and they supplied to the local gentry and a few of the more affluent people

of the district. The remaining Butchers confined their business to mutton and pork, and not much of that, as the ordinary people could afford a fresh meat dinner on Sunday.

The chief articles of diet were oatmeal for porridge, then called gruel, bakestone Bakes, home-made bread of luscious flavour, cheese, bacon, and vegetables. Most of the cottagers in the town district reared pigs and poultry which were allowed to roam at large about the roads, except in the town. I remember going to Penylan, Newton, when a boy and visiting a small cottage occupied by an old woman. The front and only door opened into room on the ground floor where there was a bedstead with a bed and a heap of wraps thereon. Fowls were walking about the room and a pig quite at ease which seemed to be treated as one of the family. While the floor under the bed was stored with swedes or field turnips which gave way to a very pungent aroma, but this was an exceptional case and did not typify the cottagers of this class, as they were generally clean and neat.

Cowbridge was the Emporium of the Vale. All kinds of commodities in use at the time were stocked or made and supplied by competent, ingenious, and practical tradesmen from a needle and thread to a church-warden long clay tobacco pipe, and from tallow candle to the full complement of household furniture, Scythes, Rakes, Threshing flails, carts and wagons. Bristol was the wholesale Emporium, goods being shipped to Cardiff by a regular Steamboat service and then brought to Cowbridge by horse wagons by the proprietor known as "the carrier".

Donkeys were numerous in district and, when not at work, would flock together in their district grazing on the waste land or roadside. Many cottagers would bring them to town to carry their purchases in sacks and also coal from Llanharry. Many small villages had a cottage shop and the proprietors possessed a Donkey and Cart. I remember them coming for the supplies from Llantwit Major, Llanharan, Llangan and other villages.

The town possessed tradesmen of every description: Grocers, Bakers, Drapers, Ironmongers, Bootmakers, two hand-loom weavers, Tinkers, Tailors, Herbalists for the internal and ointments for the external cures for all ailments, and poets of no mean order, of which the following are examples.

"If you want good Tea, full flavoured and strong,
Don't fail to try what is sold at the Hong Kong"

"Mr. Thomas of the Bear has a stable for your Mare.
He will give her Oats and Hay
But will surely make you pay"

Although English was the predominant language most of the tradespeople spoke Welsh. The young people were not generally taught that language, but could understand it to a limited extent, yet in the villages around there were many monoglot Welshmen. I remember hearing of a workman being sent from a

farm to Mr Bird's shop for some hay rakes. He was not familiar with the town and discovered the shop by enquiring "Bla mae shop good y-oo?" Iolo Morganwg is reputed to have kept a book shop in High Street many years earlier at the time when a certain book entitled "The rights of man" of a seditious nature was banned. He placed a notice in the window:- "The rights of man sold here" - a legal official called to arrest him and to confiscate the books, when Iolo produced the Bible, which relieved the official of an unpleasant duty.

The town flour mill was then a busy centre for business when the late venerable Mr. William Thomas controlled it and Mr. James Eddols acted as head miller. Carts and Horses were constantly discharging corn or carting meal away. It is sad to see the building now derelict. I saw the Llantwit Major and Wick Wind Mills working in my childhood days, but they have all been superseded by steam mills. There were other water corn mills in full work at Llanblethian, Llandough, Gigmon, Saint Athan, the Ham, Llantwit Major, Llando, Llanharan, Ewenny, Ogmere and Peterston. The Town Mills and premises were the playground of the Grammar School days boys (who were few in number) when the Boarders were in bounds at their studies, as Mr. William Thomas, the genial and good natured proprietor encouraged his two boy's playmates to join them there in the various games of the time. I spent much of my leisure time there and have a happy recollection of the kindly interest of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas to myself and schoolmates. In wet and cold weather we would settle down by the Malthouse fire at the rear of the Mill or learn the art of Malting, discuss the topics of the time and books of adventure. We had many a scouting hunt over Llanblethian Hill after a couple of boys whose practice was to drop pieces of paper as a trail, as one of the Thomas's was called Eddie we in some unaccountable way called him "Ida" and in one of the proposals for a trail hunt over Llanblethian Hill (which was never previously referred to by any other name) one of the company suggested that we call it "Mount Ida" and from that time we adopted the name. This was about the year 1866. I thought nothing of it then, but some years after I left school, I heard some of the school boys call it "Mount Ida" which led me to think the name was being perpetuated, and I now find it is still being referred to in the School by that name. I am quite confident this is a correct account of the origin of its being called, and have the impression it is taken from some book of adventure. In year to come much research will probably be made to trace the origin. Possibly this explanation may dispense with much investigation by curious seekers.

During the Hay harvest Scythe mowing was very general, and a company of men would combine in taking contracts for mowing fields of company of men would combine in taking contracts for mowing fields of growing grass. It was a pretty sight to see six or seven men swinging the scythe following each other in adjoining swathes in perfect rhythm when mowing a field. They would start work in early morning, have a rest time during the heat of mid-day and resume work from late afternoon till night. It was laborious and exhausting work in the stooping position, and I surmise few men would undertake that work in these days. Mowing machines gradually supplanted the scythe.

During the Corn Harvest a gang of sturdy, sober, respect, and peaceful Welsh reapers who would arrive annually from Carmarthanshire with their sickles and assist farmers in Corn reaping, and one or two gangs of men from Ireland whose occupation at home was understood to be sea-fishing.

The latter did not, to the best of my recollection, require sleeping accommodation, and when out of work, or on a day of rest, were a nuisance to the neighbourhood, as on such occasions they indulged in excessive beer drinking and practically became unmanageable and offensive. They fought among themselves and in various ways annoyed the peaceful, resident, but as unfortunately men of the same type lived in the locality the local and visitors were often in serious conflict. In those days Beer was "Beer" of undoubted potency brewed from Malt and Hops.

The Ancient Town Hall (of which there are many Oil paintings in the possession of residents) was of the same type as the Ancient Hall at Cardiff, and the present Hall at Llantwit Major. It stood almost in the middle of the main road opposite the Duke of Wellington Hotel then "The Black Horse" leaving sufficient open space to permit an ordinary cart to pass on the Northern side, and a mere footway on the southern. It faced West and had wide stone steps leading up to the Hall on the second floor. I believe there were Market Stalls on the ground floor. The County Sessions were held there and many Judicial Commitments at important trials for various crimes in the days when men found guilty of sheep stealing and other offences, were hanged in a primitive fashion from the branch of a tree near the Grove which from a land-mark (said to have been planted by a member of the Traherne family) alongside the old Roman Road on Stallingdown. This Land-mark, from which there is an extensive view of the Bristol Channel, can be seen from North Somerset and Devon. I have understood prisoners had to assist in the demolition of the Ancient Hall and in the building of a new one.. An aged inhabitant informed me years ago that he saw prisoners dressing the stones now to be seen in the front wall of the present Town Hall building, and the late Alderman David Thomas' father informed me he saw and heard the Rev. Christmas Evans preaching in the open Street from the steps of the Ancient Hall, opposite the Duke of Wellington Hotel.

I have heard that those condemned to be hanged had the choice of a tree for the gruesome penalty, but cannot conceive of that privilege being true in this district. One man selected the British Oak. Another a "Gooseberry Tree" - when told it was not strong enough, he replied "I'll wait till it grow".

A woman used to drive a herd of about a dozen donkeys from Ogmores Down carry bags of sand on their backs once a week, the latter for sale to householders for sprinkling on stone flag floor in houses. The animals like most of their kind made very slow progress, but served a useful purpose as the poor man's burden bearer. Our local chimney sweep named Aeron Anderson owned a remarkable lightweight fast trotting Donkey exceptional in every way. It had a dark grey short silken coat, always stabled when not at work, well fed and groomed. It was a high stepper with a long stride, quick in movement and would travel with freedom in a spirited way like a through bred fast trotting pony in a small spring, cart with the sweep and his brushes aboard, as if enjoyed a good

spin, without the necessity of using the whip. It had a long term of life and was always an attraction to animal lovers. so different in temperament to the generality of the stubborn breed. These animals are now a rarity in the District.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography seems to have been introduced about the year 1860. I remember having my photo taken when a small boy by a visiting artist who rented accommodation at the "ship around Inn" (now demolished) for a week occasionally, when he was well patronised. The photos were on glass and were very inferior, when compared to those of the present day, and cameras were not introduced till recent years.

About the same time silhouette artists visited the town on fair and market days cutting outline profile photos with a scissors in the public streets while the person stood in front of him. They were cut out of black paper and posted on white cardboard. They were surprisingly exact in outline, and cost 2d. or 3d. each. I remember having mine done which only occupied five to ten minutes. The dexterity displayed in the work when standing up had to be seen to be realised. It was indeed a fine art which seems to have been lost.

WEAVING AND WEAVERS

There were two working weavers busy at their craft in the town. One business was conducted by Hannah Howe in Church Street, and the other by Thomas Williams in the East Village. I used to see them weaving on their hand looms on many occasions, a small weaving factory was in operation in Llanblethian. The women of the time generally knitted their own garments. Silk material was very scarce and expensive, and homespun was in general use which would last a lifetime. In the summer many of the women wore thin white sun bonnets made of a material called "cambric".

There were no spinning-wheels here in my days, and I do not remember any complete Welsh Costumes being worn, except on the Fair and some Market days when Cowbridge would be visited by Cockle and Oyster vendors, from the Gower District, who wore the complete costume.

A blind man living in Colwinstone travelled on foot alone for many years carrying knitted stockings, etc. on a pole across his shoulder through Cowbridge to Pontypridd Market, a distance of about 16 miles. He carried a long stick to protect himself from obstacles, but he knew the way to Pontypridd and other places without enquiry. His practice was to walk in the gutter on the left hand side of the road.

When asked by strangers who he was, etc. his reply, in Welsh language, was - "John James is my name, Colwinston is my abode, and Christ is my Salvation".

TOWN CRIER AND CHURCH CLERK

The Town boasted of a Town-Crier named William Norton who wore Official Uniform. He was a man of fine physique possessing a pleasant, deep stentorian voice and rang a large brass handbell to attract an audience. It was a treat to hear him announcing his messages, which was the most effective way of advertising sales, concerts, notices, etc., as there was comparatively little printing in the sixties.

A worthy man, by trade a shoemaker, named Thomas David was the Church Clerk who also possessed an unusually clear voice and displayed devotional cultured fluency. It was a treat to hear him reciting the responses in the Church Service. I doubt that any Crier or Clerk in the Kingdom could excel these men. I have never heard their equal.

“They both were as straight as a poplar tree
With cheeks as fair as a rose,
Any looked like a gentleman of high degree
When dressed in their Sunday clothes”

It was the customary practice of most people to wear their very best clothes on Sundays.

“MARI LLWYD”

In my early days the Mari LLWYD visits were very general, as part of the Christmas Festival and Greetings. Three or Four Companies would visit the principal houses in the District for a couple of weeks singing their peculiar greetings in Welsh. The leading man would carry the skeleton of a Horse's head fixed on a pole with the head decorated with ribbons and pebble glass for eyes, and a white sheet covering the man and the pole. The best hypothetical account of the origin of this custom which I have read, is, that it originated in Monmouthshire when donkeys were first used, to attract the illiterate in a primitive way to impress the various incidents of the birth and early life of Christ, in order to counteract the pagan festivities of the Yule-tide. As time went on donkeys heads became scarce, horses heads were used. I am inclined to believe, even in this advanced intellectual age, the majority are more impressed by ocular demonstration than by theory.

HEAVY SNOW STORM

A very heavy Snowstorm occurred in March 1869 when all the roads were blocked up to the hedge rows, which made it impossible to hold the Annual Stock and Pleasure Fair in that month. On the 18th February, 1881, a severe blizzard continued the whole day and night. The railroads were kept clear by locomotives, and gangs of men were engaged removing drifts. A devoted young doctor named Stanistreet who had a patient seriously ill near Llanharry station

ventured to travel by train to Llanharry, and walked up the line in the direction of his patient's house when he was run over and killed by a locomotive, which it was assumed he failed to hear, or see on account of the blizzard.

On the 31st March, 1922, a severe blizzard occurred during the night and following morning which caused the roads to be impassable for 3 or 4 days. I remember a heavy fall of snow in the month of June about the year 1880 after the potatoes were hoed and snow filled the ridges.

YOUNG MEN'S INSTITUTE

The late Mr Nathaniel Bird of Cowbridge, who had a flourishing Ironmongery business, realising the young men of the town had no public accommodation for meeting and for reading and indoor games about the year 1873 induced the local authorities to permit part of the western building attached to the front of the Town Hall, now the Council Chamber, for the purpose of a reading and recreation room. In this project he took the late Mr Alfred James and myself into his confidence and commandeered our assistance.

Eventually under his direction the Reading and Recreation Room was duly established and I was appointed the first secretary.

Some little time afterwards he felt there should be better accommodation provided and as he was nearing the allotted span of life he handed over £500 to two local gentlemen as a nucleus for a new building. He however lived to see his wishes realised, and the present Institute was erected and opened in the year 1895. This most benevolent Gentleman was the only one in my recollection who ever benefited the Town with a tangible gift.

“It is not the man who knows the most who has the most to say,
“Nor is it the man who has the most that gives the most away”.

Discussions were organised on various controversial subjects, and it was there I learnt the game of chess, about 1870. It being a game of attack and defence, requiring concentration became an infatuation to my companion and myself, and, I believe, disciplined me in the habit of serious thinking, and enabled me to avoid, as well as surmount many obstacles in the progressive stages in life. The game incites one to attain an ideal or objective.

An eminent Author has declared:-

“what a man is depends generally on what he does when he has nothing to do”.

Another:-

“That the best place to live in is within your Income”

STOCK PLEASURE FAIRS

There were four stock and pleasure fairs held annually which were highly patronised. A large number of horses and cattle and other animals changed hands. The March Fair was the largest of the year: The May Fair was chiefly for horses and cattle and also for the hire of men and lads and lassies (it being the custom to then to hire for a year certain). The June Fair for lambs and the September Fair for general stock, chiefly sheep. They were attended by dealers from London, Bristol and various parts of the country, and will account for the number of licenses Inns in the little town, as accommodation was necessary.

The business as to the live stock fairs was generally over by 2.p.m and then would begin the gathering of the clans of all ages from many miles around. There were distinct social classes and each class had its special inn for meeting and dancing. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the maidens and their swains would couple and march out in orderly procession through the town around Broadway to Llanblethian and back through Church Street, just like an ordinary school procession of the present, and then perhaps view the street acrobats who did wonderful feats, or list to "cheap Jack" orations, view the various 2d. peep shows held in canvas tents fixed near the front of the Town Hall and other available spaces, or ride on roundabouts (or model horses) turned by hand gear to the tune of an old time squeaking barrel organ.

They regaled themselves with gingerbread, brandy snaps, etc., and satisfied their vanity at the variety stalls purchasing tin whistles, Jews harps, china ornament and sundry and personal decorations, and glass beads of various colours and forms. Some would purchase for relatives at home what was called a "Fairing":- some souvenir of the fair. They would then go to their Inn for dancing, jigging and the like for the evening, refreshing themselves with ginger beer, or something stronger, which never failed to create a breach of the peace among the rougher type. These dances were held to the strain of fiddles (now called violins), tin whistles, cornet players or harpists at the Three Boars Head, Tennis Court, White Lion (each of which are now unlicensed) the Pelican and Mason's Arms at which there was and is now, a long room with a gallery for the harpist, who regularly visited the Fairs from Pontypridd or Merthyr District on their own initiative. They depended on voluntary gifts and would remain for about a week or so until the enthusiasm was exhausted. All these harpists bore evidence of being regular toppers, and I have the impression they attended the various pleasure fairs in South Wales as a means of livelihood. Beer, made then of malt and hops, had the effect of causing those who immoderately indulged in it to over-estimate their wisdom, strength and prowess and were humiliated by collapsing into a state of helplessness. I have heard of a dispute by two on an occasional "rolling" home at night as to whether the moon was the Sun or Moon. they appealed to a passer-by, "I say, mate. decide this dispute etc. etc." and the mate decided he did not know as he was a stranger there.

There was only one Police officer here then, but on fair days a few more were imported. The officer, Serg. Thomas, was a man of fine physique, wore a dark uniform and a tall glazed hat, generally known as a Box-Hat. I believe there were half a dozen residents sworn in as special constables.

The Police Station was then at the base of the Town Hall on the Western Side, and the Justices Court was in the ante room of the Hall, now the platform. The Town Hall was built about the year 1830 over the prisoners Cells of what was called the Bridewell.

This Serg. Thomas was friendly with my father, and when I was a child had the privilege of inspecting the cells with him, when the Sergeant as a joke closed the ponderous door and left me alone in practically total darkness. It was a severe shock although only for a few second or so, and it created a life long conception of solitary confinement.

The Town and Vales were frequently visited by roving gypsies with a cripple horse and an old patched up van covered with tent material and containing a small stock of tinned goods, various cheap brushes and floor mats, which they offered for sale from door to door. They generally had a couple of donkeys and a few fowls which perched on the horses or donkeys when on the move, and a few fast dogs which picked up many a hare or rabbit on their journeys, or near where they pitched their tents on the wasteland, where their horses and donkeys grazed. The economical method of living inspired the composer of the song "A Gypsy's Life is a Joyous Life".

The Vale was also visited by foreigners with tame bears held by a chain by one man and put to stand, walk and jump on his hind legs and catch pole, while the other played some strange tunes on an instrument like a flageolet. Also foreigners with barrel organs played by turning a handle, having three tunes or so, and often with a live monkey perched on top to receive what coins the public would chose to give it. There were also for many years German Brass Bands of third class merit, but nearly all have ceased to roam (except a few Gypsies) since the commencement of the European War 1914.

ROADS AND RAILWAYS.

The Mail Coach from London to Milford had ceased to run about the year 1850. The proprietor of the Bear Hotel, John Thomas, afterwards a prominent Auctioneer, provided Post Horses and Carriages for hire, but there was comparatively little done, as most people were accustomed to walk great distances.

Artisans often walked 5 or 6 miles to their daily work. Turn-pike gates of large size, quite 5ft in height painted white were fixed at Bridgend, Cowbridge, Bonvilston and Dusty Forge, etc., and charges were made for horses, donkeys, cattle, etc., passing through, in order to meet the cost of repairing the road.

The gates were generally kept by elderly people, residing at the small cottage adjoining, who were often slow of action, very trying at night time, especially when snow was on the ground or during heavy rain to wait for the response to the call. These gates were abolished in the year 1890.

Roads were repaired when required every winter by layers of local rough stone, quarried by the roadside of adjacent land and broken up with hammers to the size of a goose egg by elderly men. The stones were worked in the road surface by the heavy traffic and when worn down would become very muddy in wet weather and very dusty when dry. Thus causing clouds of dust to arise, and until the arrival of the steam roller in recent years. The Mail Coaches ceased to run before my day, but aged Ostlers names Dick Rees (who never wore a hat) and "John the Black Horse" (a son of the Inn-keeper) which is the hotel known as the Duke of Wellington informed me that the coach was drawn by four horses which were changed about every twelve miles: at five Bells< near Cardiff, a very ancient Inn having an entrance Yard situated on what is now the Main road between the Castle and the Angel Hotel. Cowbridge, Pyle Inn and so on, The horses used to gallop (except I presume on the hills) the whole distance between each stage. It was represented to me that on one occasion they started off from Pyle before the driver had mounted, and did not halt until they drew up in the ordinary way on the pitching in front of the Bear Hotel, Cowbridge.

At that time there was not a direct road to Bridgend. The main road westward was the old Roman Road through Corntown then an industrious pottery village, presumably passing through Ewenny Priory, and then I assume there crossed a ford previous to the building of the Bridge over the Ewenny River. I assume the road for Brocastle was not completed when the coaches were running as I have seen references to it in plans as the "New Road", and in my early days it appeared to be new. The "Golden Mile" was then an open Common, and notwithstanding the tradition that it was so called because Owen Glandower paid off his men in gold, I suggest it was an ancient race-course. I have a faint recollection of the cutting of the first sod of the Cowbridge Railway to Pontyclun by Dr. Carne of Dimlands, afterwards of St. Donats Castle, who led a procession through the Town dressed as a Navy with a shovel on his shoulder. There was great enthusiasm locally, and many tradesman ventured to invest £50 in shares and lost the greater part of the investment as the company worked the line at a loss. I do not remember the date of the opening, probably about the year 1860, with two small power locomotives and two small coaches which one engine failed on one occasion at least to pull up the gradient leading to Ystradowen Station. Eventually the Taff Vale Railway took over the line and on 29th September 1865, the first train came from Pontypridd to Cowbridge. The day was observed as a general holiday, and a free ride was given to all who availed themselves on the return journey to Llantrisant Junction. Great expectations were aroused by tradesmen from this acquisition, but in the course of time it proved detrimental to their business by taking people out of the town and district rather than bringing them in. This, with the construction of the Vale of Glamorgan Railway later and stock Sales at Llantwit Major deprived Cowbridge Market of its prominence as a centre for livestock sales. Just as the

new livestock Market was built in the year 1888 a serious epidemic of Foot and Mouth Disease occurred in the neighbourhood when farmers were prohibited from sending stock to market. Butchers made a practice of visiting farms to buy stock, and thus the custom of attending markets decreased to a great extent and diverted business from the Town.

In the year 1873 I travelled by rail to Bristol, for my prelim Exam, which was a tedious journey having to cross the Severn by a steam tug from Portskewet which was very unpleasant especially through rough weather, and in 1875 I made my first journey by rail to London, the day before my second Exam. Starting from Cowbridge at 7.30 am an hours wait at Llantrisant, and (the route being then via Gloucester) arrived at Paddington Station between 5 and 6pm quite exhausted. (the Severn tunnel was not then constructed). The most tedious journey of my experience, so different to the present day in 3 1/2 hours, with better accommodation.

COWBRIDGE FAMED AS EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

The present Grammar School was erected in 1857 on the site of what was previously called the Free School moderately endowed by Sir Leoline Jenkins near the South Arched Gateway (part of the Ancient Town Wall which is still standing as a relic of the past), but I doubt that it was ever actually a free school, as only a few local boys who were able to pass a standard exam were admitted at reduced fees, but I was not one of the privileged. It was famous for its classical tuition and many were the geniuses trained there in my early life. Chiefly a boarding school comprising 60 to 80 scholars, most of whom were men of mature age, full whiskered, and apparently members of wealthy families.

For recreation they owned rowing boats of different types, some similar to those used at the annual Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race in the present day. The River (now neglected and narrowed by the Banks falling in) was cleaned from the Poplars House to the Mill and held time races in single file as the river was not wide enough for rowing abreast. Cricket, football, etc., were prominent games when in season. A spirit of rivalry between them and the pupils of the famed local "Eagle" Commercial Day School caused frequent conflicts, chiefly on account of holding an inflated opinion of their school position, considering farmers and tradesmen's sons inferior non-entities, but I consider many of the "Inferiors" excelled many of the "superiors" in ethics. During my time two sets of the wealthy scholars owned dogs and ferrets and engaged local boys as gillies. Rabbits were very numerous on farms worked by the late Mr. Culverwell who gave the young gentlemen permission to catch the rabbits. I was favoured to accompany them on occasions when many were caught, and afterwards sold to travelling Fish Hawkens who made weekly visits to Cowbridge. I also learned the art of net making.

About the year 1867 when I became a day scholar, the flat square black hats, known as mortar boards, were compulsory.

The sixth form boys, advanced scholars, had a tassel attached to the centre of the hat, and all the other kinds of hats were prohibited except on the playing field. The Rev. Curre Thomas, who died at Colwinston in 1930, was then monitor.

At that time the Rev. Holt Beaver was Headmaster, and he also farmed Crossways with his venerable bailiff, Robert Williams. We had to be in school at 6.30 to 8.30, 9.0 am to 12 noon, and 2.0 ? p.m. except on Saturdays when School duties ceased for the day.

Six months after my introduction the Rev. Holt Beaver retired and the Rev Thomas Williams became Headmaster in the year 1864. Morning school was then altered to 7.00 am and to the best of my recollection the extra half holiday on Wednesdays was instituted. A year or so afterwards, during the summer time, an agitation arose for lighter hats, and about the year 1867 small caps, bearing the crest of the school were introduced which are being work at the present day.

The leading scholar Curre _Thomas, Jim Thomas, the Shaws, Cloughs, Batemans, Cadwalladrs, Jack Davies, and the late recent Headmaster, Rev W.F. Evans, and his brothers who then lived in Llanmihangel Rectory, several of whom attained important positions in the Army, Navy, Ministry and other professions.

The whole of the scholars of every religious sect were compelled to attend the Parish Church services, Sundays and Saint Days, under the supervision of one of the teachers.

At this period The Eagle Commercial School conducted alone by the late Mr. William Lewis flourished. Farmers and Tradesmen's sons and a few of their daughters from far and near comprised the complement of about 60 to 80 scholars. In the summer time it was the custom for some farmers' sons to work at home and to attend school during the autumn and winter months only.

They included the Thomas's, Plymouth House, Llantwit Major, Lloyds of Frampton, John of Sheeplys, Thomas's (Penrheol), Morgans and Wilsons of Lisworney, Spencers of Flemingstone, Johnny David, St Athan, and the Bowens of Broughton, etc., Several of these were of mature age, and those from the outlying districts took weekly lodgings in the Town from Monday Morn to Friday evenings.

This school was famed for the three "R'S" and especially handwriting in many instances equally copper-plate. At this time an elderly Dame, Molly Barton, conducted a child's school in a small house in West Street, then West Village, and another more advanced Girl's school was conducted by a refined elderly lady, Miss Kitty Harris, in Eastgate Street. For the adolescent girls

flourishing school was conducted in the same street by Miss. Barnes who was succeeded by a Mrs. Davies and a Miss. Thorne, eventually by the Misses Culverwell at The Great House.

The Eagle was considerably affected by the Board School established in 1872, and was not continued after the death of Mr. William Lewis a few years after. Lewis was a very strict disciplinarian who administered corporal punishment pitilessly, probably as he had so many under his tuition. His instrument of punishment was called a ferule; a flat piece of thin cigar-box hard wood about a foot in length oval on the top with which he would slap the open hands of the boys who had to hold them out. There was a sting in the impact and the receiver winced with pain, the general idea was that the ferule had been soaked in vinegar.

Another method was a flogging with a long pliable ash stick as long as a bean stick.

The Desks across the oblong schoolroom were 12ft or so long in rows and if there was any transgression at a particular desk, Lewis who was of medium height with a strong body, would take one of these sticks from the recess in the pedestal by his desk in the top corner, walk down the aisle scowling fiercely and articulating his complaints, and when reaching his objective, would flog the whole row at that desk until they were crying with pain. No doubt some of the transgressors derived permanent impressions - many were the subdued threats of revenge.

Notwithstanding this practice, it was the custom of the boys from the county to bring fresh supplies of these sticks, which often proved rods for their own backs and other parts of their bodies. We have reason to be thankful that disciplinary methods are now more human, though still resented. Yet all needed it to acquire the virtue of self-mastery, which is the key to success in every sphere. Every position in life, great or small, can be made as great, or as little, as we desire to make it. It is recorded on a certain tombstone:-

“Here lies a man of great renown, who fought many a battle under many a crown,

But the greatest battle he ever was in was the battle of self in the kingdom within”.

Crinolines were worn by the ladies of fashion to the best of my recollections about the year 1860. Some were like balloons, cut in half, horizontally, very hideous. It was common talk that Mrs. So and So, wore one to Church and had to turn sideways to get into her seat.

Cowbridge was then an important centre for postal deliveries for an extensive district, reaching from Llantwit Major to Aberthaw and Llancaiwan on the South, and Llanharan and Pendoylan on the North and East, Deliveries were

by footmen covering 20 to 30 miles a day. Gradually as correspondence increased some of the postmen acquired donkey carts to carry their loads.

SOCIAL AND RECREATION GAMES.

From the year 1860 to 1870 the attitude of the humbler classes was courteous and great respect was accorded to their betters. It was the common practice of the male portion to raise their hats, and for the female portion to make a lowly curtsy when meeting their superiors. There were various distinct classes of the community, and gatherings of the male members of the particular classes met at their favoured Inns with regularity for evening gossip and refreshment. When required it was known where to find them. At some of these gatherings the men at some of the Inns would sit in a circle while refreshing themselves with favourable cordials and strong tobacco smoke from clay pipes called "Churchwardens", as there were not mild brands of tobacco and cigarettes manufactured then, neither were wooden pipes and members of the company would to the tune of either a tin whistle, Jew's harp, or concertina (which were in common use) take their turn in jigging in the centre of the circle and keeping with the music. Some excelled at this art, and it was surprising that men who had been employed at manual labour all day could move their feet with such alacrity. They would have intervals of folk songs and generally spent a merry eve till stop tap. Jigging, tin whistles and Jew's harps have long since disappeared and have been supplanted by modern music.

Classes for the culture of choral and vocal music were initiated by the Late Mr. Nathaniel Bird at Cowbridge, and many of the adherents became proficient and popular artists. A party of young men, several of whom were accomplished musicians, formed a popular expert minstrel troupe and entertained the public over a period of servile years. Concertinas and tin whistles were in common use and experts could play them with much skill. Pianos were very scarce and expensive. The original were of the table class, but the cottage pianos were introduced about the year 1865 and gradually became the popular instrument. Cheap popular social entertainment's known as penny readings were introduced about the year 1870, and many of the young and middle-aged took an active part in turn during the winter months for several years, but, like most good things, they lost their attraction by being overdone, and eventually ceased.

Shop assistants had to attend to their duties from 8.0 am to 8 pm, and there were no half holidays then. I visited the business men of the Town and prevailed upon them to sign an undertaking to close their business premises on Wednesday afternoons, and arranged an agreement to close at 3.0pm. This was the commencement of the business half holiday which in later years was extended from 1.0 pm.

A strong branch of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows existed in the Town and was still well supported by the industrial class, which proved of great benefit in times of sickness. The late Alderman Edward John had through a long active life interested himself in the welfare of the poor and helpless, and in the

Oddfellows Society, he became one of the most popular and beloved, both far and near, by reason of his happy and benevolent disposition, notwithstanding a strenuous business life from the bottom of the ladder to a successful seed and implement Merchant. He died on the 26th May 1921. The assembly at his funeral procession was the largest ever seen in Cowbridge.

In the wintertime football and bando, now called hockey, and rounders were played on moonlight evenings on various fields, with and often without, the permission of the occupiers.

One of the most exciting games up to the year 1880 was ball tennis which was played with the bare hand. I believe there are some of the high tennis courts in existence in various places now, but in my early days there was a very large one at Cowbridge which has been recently demolished. It was on the site of the splendidly designed Cinema, an ornament to the Town, constructed by our local genius in architecture, Alderman A.T. Mills. The Court was attached to what was then the Tennis Court Inn, afterwards the Wheelwrights Arms, occupied by Mr. Richard Aubrey, Wheelwright, whose waggons and carts were famous as being made to last. This game of tennis was played with the bare hand with a ball rather larger than a modern golf ball, made of layers of rubber bound with worsted and covered with white soft leather. These balls could not be bought, but were made by local specialists. The hop or tamp was extraordinary and the players' hands at the commencement of the season in the spring time would become very swollen, but gradually would become hard and capable of the work. Really only experts could play the game properly. Competitions with players from other courts were occasionally held and were popular attractions and aroused great enthusiasm. In my opinion there are none of the present day sports equalling it in demanding quickness of the eye and alacrity of movement. It was marvellous. The last experts I remember seeing were a collier named Will Tywern, a man of medium stature possessing marvellous elasticity, and the late Dr. Ivor Lewis of Penygraig or Rhondda. The brothers Traherne of Llantrisant were very clever players, and a few of the best Cowbridge players were Edmund John and the late Mr John George, coal merchant. The pneumatic rubber ball came into being about the year 1870 and displaced the hard ball. The games of Association as now played and Rugby Football were not introduced until probably the year 1900. The early Football rules allowed the opponents a free kick if the ball was caught before touching the ground or on the first hop.

CYCLING

The pedal cycle was invented about the year 1875, although three wheel heavy velocipede had been previously introduced but were too cumbersome for general use. The above named Mr Richard Aubrey, being of an inventive turn of mind, constructed a strong three wheeled machine (miniature cart wheels) of substantial parts which created keen public interest, and on a set day gave a public demonstration of its movements when crowds wended their way to the Stallingdown. When returning down the hill from the Grove the machine was

wrecked on account of inefficient brakes. The rider escaped injury by a miracle. The so called "Bone-shaker" bicycle was introduced to Cowbridge about the year 1874 when a young law student named Coulton and myself purchased one each. We were the first owners of this type of cycle in Cowbridge. The wheels were of hickory wood with thin iron bands, the front one about 36 inches in diameter, the rear a couple of inches less, and the pedals were attached to the front wheel axle. Comfortable to ride and as easy and speedy as the modern medium geared machine with pneumatic tyres they rapidly came into popular favour, and improved designs in metal work were introduced from time to time.

Motor bicycles came into use about 1900

Ploughing machines were an exciting attraction in the earlier days among the farming community and great rivalry existed among different localities, and on winning the champion prize the partisans on returning home in the evening would announce the winner and shout his praises with much enthusiasm while passing through Cowbridge or villages, equal to a great national victory.

The so-called "steam-plough" was introduced by the late Mr. Hooper of Llansannor. It was worked by a stationary engine with circular wire strands around the fird. Great was the attraction of this novelty, but it did not take the public fancy and in a short time was abandoned.

About that time a Mr. Culverwell, a native of Somerset, rented two or three farms in addition to Llwynhelig, and introduced the Devonshire breed of cattle, and also ploughed the land with teams of Oxen for many years. He brought with him a number of Somerset farm labourers names Royals, Villias, etc. Whose descendants are local residents at the present time.

The late John Homfray, Esq. J.P. Penline Castle maintained a pack of Harrier Hounds for many years which was well patronised by local gentry and farmers, and which created much completion among farmers in the rearing of horses, a much heavier type that those of the present day. Packs were kept previously by Mr. Wilkins of Llantwit Major and Mr Entwistle of Marlboro. The Harriers were supplanted about the year 1872 by the Late c. Mansel Talbot of Margam who introduces a pack of Foxhounds at Llandough. They were mute in hunting and very fast which did not please the local hunting community, and eventually some hounds which gave tongue were introduced to the pack. The local huntsmen of former years were used to the Welsh breed whose "full cry" was said to be like the sweet cadence of an organ.

I have been told that in former years it was the custom for local farmers to keep one or two hounds on their farms, and on hunt days the huntsman would blow his horn and the hounds would make for him guided by the sound of his horn. The last of such huntsmen was "Will of Grindon" in the neighbourhood of Llancarfan, who I am informed, used to turn out at 5.00 in the morning and wen his way to the Crabler Woods, Llandough, where there was, and is a cavern where foxes make their retreat. While on his journey Will would sound his horn and by the time he reached Llandough the hounds from the neighbouring

farmers would have responded with many of the hunting community who delighted in the chase. I remember old Will with his hound "Tapser" returning homeward on his cob from a fair at Cowbridge having indulged in his favourite beverage, shouting the huntsman's' calls as if he were on the hunting field.

In my childhood days Horse Flat Races were held on Stallingdown; Crowds of people would pass through Cowbridge on foot to view the races. I believe they were an annual event, and I understand they were held there from time immemorial, over a prepared Course, which can be seen even now, starting near the War Memorial across the Main Road and round the summit of the North part of the Downs and back to the starting point. I have the impression that these races were more of the yeoman type than the present day style.

About the year 1870 a respectable farmer's son in the Vale secretly left his house for pastures new as a venture to strike out a new career, but was not successful. He wandered over the country, and eventually got stranded in Liverpool, his pocket money exhausted, and was at his wit's end. The only valuable possessions he had were a good voice, good clothes and a few sentimental songs, and being too proud to beg, and too honest to steal, he adapted the expedient of street singing in some of the private streets, and this was part of his song:-

"Motherless, fatherless, lonely I roam
Without a penny far, far from home."

having a good voice people perceiving an air of respectability, showered silver on him, which supplied him with immediate necessities and enabled him to pay his fare to "Home Sweet Home".

Moral : If we cultivate our talents they become valuable possessions and may prove useful in an emergency.

NOTABLE PERSONALITIES

There were a few outstanding personalities in Cowbridge. One was known as Lord Raglan. His proper name, not generally known, was John Roderick. A meek and courteous little man when sober. One of his legs was shorter than the other which caused a limp. He was free from the vice of bad language, but when drunk, at periodical lapses possessed the voice and mentality of a genius. A journeyman tailor by trade, like others of his craft, addicted to an occasional spree which liberated his inherent mental powers with great eloquence. He would appear in the public street half clad and unkempt and claimed to be of high rank. At that time his fellow craftsmen were a very intelligent type of individuals as they often worked in companies during which the social, political and religious problems of the day were intelligently discussed and thus cultivated each others intellect. Tailors sewed garments by hand needles while sitting on the floor or a table. He affected, when under the influence of beer, an attitude of importance and authority, and was exceedingly obstructive, quite the opposite to

his gentle self when sober. Many are the stories of his caprices, such as taking a Jewish pedlar towards the Police Station for having possession stolen articles. Sometimes he would be locked up in the cells when the police officer would be disturbed all the night by kicking the door and his voluble loud speeches.

He did not seem to take an active interest in politics, but on one occasion, amidst very great general excitement he displayed his eloquence at a Parliamentary Election. When a large party of influential people arrived in a four horse brake stood up before them and delivered a marvellous speech revealing his oratorical powers and describing himself as Lord Swansea to the great amusement of the Crowd. He was generally addressed by the local public as "Lord".

Another personality was James Knap. A man of great intellect but also unfortunately, of unkempt habits, he was the son of intelligent parents who had the misfortune to suffer pecuniary losses which necessitated his taking a workman's job. His father was a miller at the Town Mill and died before my recollection, but the mother lived in my time and was a very refined lady but reduced to penury, which necessitated her selling expensive leather bound classical and theological books to my father in order to provide food for her children. One of her elder sons John, served through the Crimea War and had one of his arms amputated. He later spent most of his time doing odd jobs and training greyhounds.

Jim had never had any occupation except that of loafer. After his mother's death he spent his time doing odd jobs such as cutting bean sticks in the season, but he possessed the voice of an orator, and could quote Shakespeare fluently although he was practically in rags, very dirty, and slept in outhouses in the neighbourhood. He was often put in the Police cells for drunkenness, but was always respectful and possessed what is known as a clean tongue. I once saw him in the public stocks in the front of the Town Hall. This was evidently his punishment for being drunk. It was a very unsightly and unpleasant position as there were no back rests on the stocks, which are now in the Cardiff Museum.

The stocks were kept in one of the recesses under the back of the Town Hall, and often, with other youngsters, have I experimented with them.

Yet another personality was a man called "Llantwit Bill" a very untidy man. A Journeyman tailor by trade, who could talk intelligently on any subject and assumed an air of importance, was a member of the Rifle Corps and became second cornet player in the local brass band. The late Edward Ballard, JP, was reputed to have horsewhipped a resident for some minor offence, rather than grant a summons at the Police Court.

One Known as "Uncle Tosh" a respectable and refined working tailor who had had some business experience in London. I used to visit him at his workshop where he entertained me with many experiences and yarns. One incident I can well remember:-

“On one occasion I was walking up Ludgate Hill, where a passing
“cabby insulted a large dog standing on the pavement by
“cracking his whip and uttering some uncomplimentary
“expletives. The dog stood for a moment and looked straight
“at the cabby who persisted in annoying the dog which then
“rushed to the cab caught hold of the spoke of the wheel and
“turned the cab and cabby over”

There were some outstanding personalities among the humbler people in the Town. Richard Jenkins, a Crimean Veteran, was the Town Postman, and his wife often assisted him in the delivery. She possessed a genial and voluble disposition and conveyed to the people all the gossip and was generally known as the “Cowbridge Chronicle”.

Another personality was Owen Roberts who made nails by hand in a small smithy. The shop was at the rear of a public house called the “Ship Aground” long since unlicensed and demolished. It was on the site of the grocer’s shop now occupied by Mr. Graham Miles. Owen had a wife who conducted the business of the Inn and she was a very interesting personality. She would talk intelligently of the straggle in passing the Reform Bill and her husband referred to her as the “White Sergeant” but I do not know the origin of the title.

Mr James Ballard, who previously farmed Llynhelig, was resident at the Verlands, and his brother Edward had an Ironmongers Shop opposite the Duke of Wellington. James was at that time aged and rather infirm and rode a pony of about 13 hands on his daily rambles. During my recollection he had outlived three ponies in succession. They were trained to canter and never to trot, but to canter up and down like a rocking horse in their progress. He daily dismounted opposite his brothers shop (now Mr Arthur John’s store room) and left the ponies unattended for a couple of hours while he gossiped in the shop, during which time they would not attempt to move away.

GAMES AND PASTIMES

In the early part of each year, being cold, the boys would take up hoop driving. These were in my early life made from quarter inch round iron rods, and were driven by a short thin iron rod with a hook. These were in general use for many years, until hoops of various sizes of light cane or wood were introduced about 1890, when the girls took up the pastime, and the iron hoops gradually disappeared. The chief outdoor game for boys was marble playing, known as “Round Ring” or “Little Ring”. Each player would deposit one or more in the centre of a ring two or three yards in diameter, according to their fancy and ability. The players generally had a special colour coded stone or glass marble for use in their turn to know the marbles out of the ring. Each would drive his marble out of the ring by knuckle power, and it would hardly be realised by the youngsters of the present time with what force and accuracy an expert could drive his marble from the outer circle, striking some of the centre marbles out of

the ring. Another marble game was called "Little ring", played in a similar manner from a longer distance, as agreed. Later spinning tops were introduced and supplanted marble games for that reason. These tops were of hard boxwood tapering to a point, with a small iron or steel peg fixed at the thin end. The tapered wooded part would be grooved to take thin cords which would be round tightly and the operator would hold the end of the cord tight and throw the top away from him so that the unwinding cord would cause it to revolve and it would fall to the ground spinning. Some were adepts and often played top pegging; i.e. throwing a top so as to strike another as it was spinning on the ground. These games and pastimes were revived every year in regular succession, seemingly by instinct as there were no club or fixed regulations applying to them. The old custom of shooting marbles with the thumb and knuckles seems to have been dropped, and the hands and cord spinning top seems a thing of the past and has been supplanted by the whip top, a much less skilful art. There were no playgrounds for the young at that time. Adults had some arrangement with the landlord to play cricket on the field at the rear of the Bear Hotel, and on many occasions played with no mean skill against teams of repute. Fred Stibbs, senior, was a superb wicket keeper, David Harman a swift round - arm bowler (this type of bowling is not allowed) and David the "Weakarm" a good left hand bowler. Young lads generally trespassed on private fields, but the late kind hearted Mr. Thomas of Mount Pleasant Farm permitted them to play on the public pathway on his meadow. Shop apprentices and youngsters would play there on the summer evenings, and also in the mornings from about 5.0 to 8.0 am, according to the light.

RIFLE VOLUNTEER CORPS

Cowbridge Rifle Corps was formed about the year 1860, Col. Butler of Llandough Castle being the first captain, and Mr. Thomas Griffiths (Maltsters) the first lieutenant. About 80 of the young and middle aged men of the district joined up and the corps continued at about that strength for many year. A sergeant from the regular force was stationed in the town to drill and train the Corps, and this was mostly done in the open and was an enjoyable entertainment for the juveniles and some adults for many years. The first uniform adopted was of grey material with scarlet piping, and of course the novelty was a great attraction. Lieutenant Griffiths died on the 16th March, 1862, and was buried with military honours. This was the first of its kind in Cowbridge and a great event. Crowds from a great distance attended the funeral, and the newly formed Brass Band, assisted by a contingent with an expert side drummer from Cardiff, and led by Mr. Johnson a Cardiff Bandmaster, were impressively solemn when they led the Corps in full strength, in slow marching time, playing "The Dead March in Saul" to the church gates. The drums, being larger, were of a deeper tone than those of the present day. While returning form the solemn service, and immediately after leaving the church gates, the band struck up the lively tune "The Girl I Left Behind Me", with vigour and marched through the town as if nothing solemn had transpired. I was, as a small boy, much impressed with the inconsistency of such a spirited tune after such solemnity. I am aware the object was to divert survivors from drifting into a state of depression, but this practice

is a travesty of Christianity and a perpetuation of pagan practices. A few more military funerals transpired at intervals during the existence of the Corps. I can recall to mind those of Serg. Thomas Preece, a respectable blacksmith, and Serg. Lewis Jenkins, maltster and brewer. Mr D. Burch Thomas of Pwllwrach, afterwards of Llanblethian, became captain of the corps for some years and he was followed by the late respected Townsman, Mr S.D. Evans, Draper until the Corps was disbanded some years ago, I believe when the Territorial units were adopted.

Many members of the Corps became expert shots, and on one occasion, a member named John Thomas won the Championship prize of £50 at Margam County Competition. Tremendous enthusiasm was aroused, the full Corps turned out on parade in the evening of his arrival home and marched to meet the hero led by a brass band, and returned to the tune of "See the Conquering Hero Comes" with great enthusiasm as if the town had been rescued from destruction.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

This function was generally arranged at the Parish Church, when the bridal pair, if they were not of the wealthy class, would walk with the circle of friends in couples to the sacred spot where the ceremony was completed, and as the event had been published in the Church on three previous Sundays, the public were fully prepared and turned out in great numbers, although many were not particularly concerned in the welfare of the pair, and have long ropes to obstruct their return journey until money was handed over; sometimes there would be half a dozen sets of rope obstructions. They also expected a jollification as it was the custom to distribute a generous supply of beer and other favours. Many who took excessive portions had to be assisted home.

The same customs existed when members of wealthy families were united. The grounds of the mansion were opened to the public and a feast of good things provided to the parishioners. Field sports for money prizes were held; foot races; grinning through a horse collar; climbing a greasy pole (a dirty but laughable act which could seldom be accomplished, and which with the advance of decent habits has long since been abandoned. It was practicable to marry at the Superintendents Registrars Office, Bridgend but comparatively few adopted this method, chiefly for social reasons. Also at any Non-Conformist place of worship registered for marriage, subject the Superintendent of Marriages for the District being present, and with open doors, between the hours of 8 am and 3 pm and declaring the presence they know of know impediment, etc. The Marriage Act of 1888 provides that, after 1st April 1889, each Non-conformist Church may appoint one person authorised to conduct the ceremony in a registered building without the presence of the Registrar.

Two men married at the same time agreed to report in twelve months time the result of their catch. One reported that he had married a "Tartar" the other reported he had married the "Cream of tarter".

**“When one marries the right partner, there is nothing like it.
When one marries the wrong partner there is nothing like it.”**

some conceal their defects for each other to discover after the plunge - if one chooses a toy of either sex that one must be prepared to pay the price. each should take lessons in self discipline, which is the key to happiness, and qualify in domesticity, companionship, concession and a common ideal. “fine feathers do not make fine birds”.

There is no official training system inaugurated for the marriage state similar to courses available everywhere for attaining competency in First Aid to the injured, and nursing classes, which every person ought to attend. Children in the London Elementary Public Schools, and possibly elsewhere, are trained in these arts, and I have heard of a young girl in the slum district perceiving a woman injured in a street accident rushed to the injured and discovered a fractured leg, and when she was busy preparing bandages a well-dressed lady came to the scene, brushed away the young girl, tore up her umbrella for tourniquets and used the stick for a splint. When taken to Hospital it was found that the lady had bandaged the wrong leg - we are often wise in our own conceit.

TELEPHONE SERVICE INTRODUCED YEAR 1898.

Up to the year 1898 we had no telephone service in Cowbridge . I negotiated with the authorities as to the introduction and ascertained the terms were £8 per annum rental for installation, provided I obtained at least eight subscribers. I was only able to obtain seven in the Town including the Late Alderman Edward John, Messrs Rees and Gwyn and others. At that time the late Mr Thurston Bassett lived at Crossways. I appealed to him to make up the complement, which in his case entailed a much higher rental. I was not intimate with him, but while passing through the Town in his Carriage he accosted me in reference to the subject, and asked me in his affable manner what he ought to do. I replied it was his duty to help all progressive movements. He then replies “I will take your advice”. I think this was the only time he ever sought my advice although he was always courteous, so we had the privileges of the “phone” and soon realised its advantages and were amazed to hear the human voice from distance towns. Others of course soon joined the list of subscribers, and, as wonders never cease, after being initiated in the phone communication we heard of wireless communication and on 15th November 1922 the B.B.C. gave its first programme from London, Birmingham and Manchester, and a little later on from Cardiff, enabling us all to share in the inexplicable (to the ordinary mind) mysterious acquisition.

ELECTRIC LIGHT INTRODUCED 1927

I gather that coal gas was first manufactured and supplied to shopkeepers in Cowbridge about the year 1852, but it was not in general use in private houses until many years later. In my early days tallow candles, rushlights and inferior

smoking oil lamps, without glass chimneys (not then invented) were in general use, and later, a candle similar but inferior to the present day wax candles were introduced. I do not remember the practice of using flint and tinder box for lighting, but the first matches were on rather long thin wood strips or strips of thick brown paper, the shape of a long hair comb with tips tipped with combustible red paste, like, but heavier than the present day matches. Gradually the type of match and lamp improved, and they are still improving, and gas-light became more general and now we have the splendid acquisition of Electric lights, which were installed and current switched on the 12th December, 1927 at Cowbridge and a year or so later at llanmaes and Llantwit Major and various houses intervening. We live in an age of rapid progress and I am inclined to predict all the houses and owners in the rural districts will be served with the previous discovery. I am told by the experts they cannot describe what electricity is.

WATER SUPPLY

Water was generally obtained from natural ancient open springs at various places throughout the Vale, rivers and brooks, or caught off roofs of buildings and carried by shutes to casks or stone cisterns.

In many places deep excavations were made to the level of a water spring, the top being covered over by wooded flaps above which was fixed a roller with a handle supported by framework, to let down a bucket below the water level, connected to the roller by a rope by a turning handle fixed to the roller, and by reverse action pull up the bucket. This contrivance was called a "winch". If a flowing brook or river was not near those who did not possess a stone cistern, or did not reside near a convenient open well, they had to travel a long distance daily for water in the dry season as the brooks often became dry. Suction pumps were later gradually introduced, replacing winches. Frampton open well, near Llantwit Major, always had a good supply which about the year 1910 was covered and pipes therefrom laid by the District Council to llantwit Major where standards were fixed to supply the inhabitants. About the same time the springs at the swilts near Ogmores Mill were harnessed and conveyed to Southerndown and the surrounding district. Cowbridge and vicinity were favoured with copious springs, had three covered wells with pumps in the main street at convenient distances, from which the householders had to carry their supplies. These pumps are still standing as a relic of the past service. The Mid Glamorgan Water-Board, formed about the year 1927, took over the swilts, Frampton, Cowbridge, and other local wells, constructed a reservoir at New Forest, connected with other sources and will have by the end of 1930 connected a network of pipes to practically all the houses in the Town and rural districts.

SPIRITUALISM

This has been the subject of much controversy all my days - the main demonstration in a secular way was at the Town Hall, Cowbridge, on the occasion of a visit of a lady professional mesmerist thirty to forty years ago. The professor was a lady of apparent culture and gave a series of demonstrations of her art during four or five consecutive evenings to large and interested audiences. She invited members of the audience to the platform and was responded to by the local young men of the frolicsome type, some rather unkempt, who I am sure were complete strangers to her. They were seated in a row on a platform facing the audience, a position which they had not been accustomed to, and when under the influence of a few waves of her handkerchief across their faces they became stolid and oblivious of the surroundings and would respond, in turn to the lady's requests, to sing a favourite song, delivered a short speech or run an errand. One stood up in a drowsy attitude and sang a popular song of the time:- "I'll hang my harp on the willow tree, I'm off to war again"

Making facial contortions, and as unconcerned as if he were alone in his own dwelling place. Another was told to go to a public house near for the kitchen fender; he went through the aisle past the audience returning with the fender to the delight of the audience, but to the annoyance of the landlady, though she was conciliated when the fender was returned and the incident explained. There were similar other incidents too numerous to mention.

I attended one of Mrs. Annie Besant's lectures on theosophy at Cardiff 25 years or so ago, when she declared that cult would not interfere with any form of religious belief and asserted that at one time spiritual communication with the supreme was common in this country, but had been lost and that the principles of theosophy would restore it. It occurred to me at the time if she would condescend to visit the various evangelical and free churches in Wales she would have ample proof of the existence of spiritual communion, even now in the year 1930. There were many phases of spiritualism, analogous to the variety of natures. As there is unquestionably a natural law, there is also a spiritual, we cannot destroy the law of nature but can impair or neglect it, as a flower or other products of the soil. Man naturally thinks his body is the whole of himself, whereas if he were to investigate his makeup, he will be compelled to realise his body, which must decay, contains something indefinable which on the highest authority will not perish. The eye does not see, but that within the body sees through the eye. When then is this other than a spirit?

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

In the order of Providence I happened to be a descendant of staunch Non-Cons and liberals politically whose vision of life's progress I undoubtedly inherited, and consequently, I, with others was ostracised by the caste-spirit of the time, but have providentially survived and had a small share locally in improving the conditions of the poor and the system of elementary education. I am inclined to believe much misapprehension exists from sheer prejudice and personal ignorance. To be prejudiced is always to be weak.

I think my colleges and I were considered a dangerous class of people, probably worse than the communists of the present day, whose tenants I abhor, but I presume my opponents, most of whom have passed over to their destiny, have given me credit for being a law-abiding citizen and supporter of the needy and just reforms for the welfare of the nation at large. At parliamentary elections previous to 1872 when the ballot was introduced, voting was open. Only property owners and occupiers of land rated on the Vale of £50 had the right to vote that is they had to name the persons whom they voted for in the presence of local officers and agents. The Electors were brought in from the outlying parishes under the guidance of special agents in carriages or brakes belonging to the neighbouring gentry, and guarded on each side. At that time people of the liberal opinions were considered to be tainted with seditious motives by the dominant social party. My father with five other residents, who had the courage to vote for their principles, were presented with a complimentary address on silk, as fellows, copied from the one in my possession:-

A faithful but unostentatious
offering

Mr. Thomas Lewis	The Revd. David Roberts
Edward Williams, Esq.	Mr Thomas Miles
Mr. Benjamin Williams	Mr. John Evans.

We the undersigned Burgesses of the Town of Cardiff being influenced by the sincere and due respect for the principles manifested by the above six noble spirited gentlemen, who fearlessly and honestly recorded their votes for Walter Coffin, Esq., in the great Battle of Independence, fought on Wednesday the 8th day of July, 1852, respectfully invite them to a dinner to take place at the "Horse and Groom" Inn in the town of Cowbridge on Monday, the 13th July instant.

This was signed by 28 Cardiff Burgesses including Philip Bird and William Alexander.

At that time Cowbridge Borough was united with Cardiff and Llantrisant for parliamentary representation.

In my early days we were more or less under the sway of our superiors and there was a degree of local despotism, and a great fear of offending, especially on political grounds. The large majority of our superiors were Conservatives (then known as Tories) and any holding opposite views had to be in a position of independence to assert them-selves, but contrasting the so-called despotism of sixty years ago with the despotism of democracy of the last decade. The latter has caused much more hardship and suffering than prevailed during the previous sixty years.

In my early days Sundays was observed as a sacred day. All work was suspended (except feeding animals and acts of mercy). Boots were cleaned and sundry requirements prepared on the previous day. Religious services were faithfully attended. Very few would be seen walking about except when wending their way to morning and evening service, and afternoon schools. A typical day of rest, hardly any traffic on the roads, except on the way to the several church services. Stables were provided for the horses at most non-conformist chapels. It is a beautiful tribute to the deity of his Omnipotence, but the practice by the generality of people has gradually declined and now very few observe it strictly. This may have arisen from the improved condition of the times and from the standard of living, each generation relapsing to secularism in stages by influence of home life as per the oft quoted axiom:-

“prosperity is the ruin of many”

Youngsters felt it a day of penance being restrained from playing with toys, etc. It was then a hard discipline, but many, including the writer, have been very thankful after arriving at an age of understanding. Then the parents observed the injunction to “bring up the child in the way he should go so that when he is old he will not depart from it”. The parents rules, now, alas, the child rules, more or less to its ultimate disadvantage.

“A Sabbath well spent brings a week of content,
and joy for the work of tomorrow,
But a Sabbath ill spent whater’e is gained
is the sure fore-runner of sorrow”

“Tis religion that can give sweetest pleasure when we live,
Tis religion that supplies sweetest pleasure when we die.”

In the month of April 1888, when the Cowbridge- Aberthin Railway was being constructed, the ministers of the various non-con churches convened a united meeting of intercession at the Wesleyan Church, the evening before the annual Horse races on account of the debasing influence of the rough crows, pick-pockets, etc., that generally followed these events, and their corrupting influence on the young life of the district. Invocations for the awakening of the heedless to the evils and corruption’s of the time. To the best of my recollection there was no reference to horse races or to any persons concerned in the sport. That day was beautiful, calm and sunny, and the eve promised a beautiful morrow. To the astonishment of everybody in that gathering, there was a heavy fall of snow during the following early morning which covered the land, to the best of my recollection, about a foot in depth - sent but not asked for - many and various were the impressions and many were the taunts and gibes cast at the whole of the non-cons, especially the Methodists to which I was a humble adherent. The taunters and scoffers could not conceive it possible that a higher than human authority was responsible for the snowfall. So we held or peace remembering the proverb:-

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit better than he that taketh a City”

I remember a trustworthy family friend forty or more years ago relating this incident of my grandfather, the Revd. Thomas Morris (Baptist Minister), a venerable man of fine physique, the pastor of Ramoth Baptist Chapel, Cowbridge, on the arrival of his furniture at his new residences, The Greenfield Llanblethian, being asked by one of the men helpers what a large and unusually heavy box contained, and he replied “Medicine” meaning books of divinity, which was spiritually correct as they were for spiritual correction of reproof and instruction in righteousness.

He afterwards conducted a public baptism of converts by immersion in the Cowbridge River. This must have been 80 to 90 years ago when a young farmer named Howells lead a gang of disturbers, while deriding and scoffing during the ceremony threw a small dog into the river near my grandfather and the converts. That man Howells then immediately became a changed and devoted Christian and for years my grandfather preached at his house at St. Mary Church Village to week-night congregations.

I may as well include the following extracted from the biography of the Rev. Howell Harries of Trevecca, a Welsh Evangelist, by H.H. Hughes while on preaching tour the following incident happened:-

“public open air meeting at Llanblethian near Cowbridge, Glam, not far from Fonmon Castle, the residence of Mr. Jones Descendant of one who had signed the death warrant of King Charles I. Hearing of Harries’ meeting he made for it with all speed, accompanied by a party of gentlemen and having drawn a sword in his hand. In no degree alarmed by the threatening appearance, the preacher simply desired the people to make way, changing Welsh to English, and saw Mr. Jones’ horse stick fast in the mud within hearing distance. The truths which the furious squire heard so affected him that he became an altered man. He there uncovered his head in reverence, bent his soul to receive the yoke of Christ, invited the preacher back with him to the Castle and on going home erected a pulpit in his house for preaching, and was ever a friend of Harris and the Methodist Revival”.

This indicates the efficiency of the spiritual medium. I believe the eminent John Wesley also preached at Fonmon Castle.

In those days preachers after taking a service in Cowbridge in the morning would walk to St. Athan for afternoon service, altogether about 13 miles. This order was occasionally reversed. The Superintendent of the district was stationed at Bridgend and Mr. William Price, wool merchant, kept a horse and trap to convey the Superintendent and other local preachers in the district from Bridgend.

As the Non-Conformist services, except the Wesleyan, were in the Welsh Language, the Cardiff coal magnate, Mr Richard Cory, built a small hall in the Limes, Cowbridge, for English Service which were conducted by a modest delicate gentleman names David Lewis whose occupation was that of gardener,

with the Late Reverend Tyler, Rector of Llantrithyd. This good man, although delicate, would, after working all week at manual labour, walk the 3 and a half miles from Llantrithyd every Sunday and deliver morning and evening sermons in English to a considerable congregation, and also conduct school in the afternoon for a few years.

He was unlearned in secular literature, but learned in the sacred, and although not dramatical in his expositions, it was patent he possessed the secrets. I became much attached to him on account of his unquestionable sincerity and self-denial in the service. I know that he walked to the services when much snow was on the ground and when suffering from spasms of haemorrhage, and was a noble example in zeal and loyalty in the higher service. I do not think he received or expected any salary. In the course of a few years the Welsh Church introduced English to the services, and Mrs. Cory handed over the Hall to the Salvation Army for a couple of years whose representatives left lasting impressions for good in the minds of many of the thoughtless, but as the population was small providing little scope for the Army's work they retired, and the hall has from that time been in the occupation of the Sons of Temperance Society. Clocks were scarce and country people used to know the time on Sundays by seeing the adherents passing to their chapels.

In the year 1881 a wave of the temperance spirit advocacy filled the country and had a deep impression on the young people at Cowbridge and District, and it is believed that the large majority of the adolescent and middle-aged became convinced of the advantages.

I remember one of the rural postmen entering one Temperance Meeting with his empty postbag on his shoulders. He probably came, or was sent, with the intention of creating a disturbance. Instead of sitting properly on the seat he fell to the ground but was not impervious to common sense and reason and he soon became sober, admitting the facts were stubborn things. He sighed the pledge in that meeting and became a fervent active teetotaler for many years notwithstanding the violence and taunts of his comrades, and his home became a centre of peace and comfort for many years.

About the year 1881 the gas works were under construction and gas was introduced into the town and gas lamps fixed a couple of years afterwards. This supplanted the tallow candles, rush lights and inferior oil lamps with the chimney in the shops and inns and other business houses and was a great acquisition.

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The first Manger, John Jenkins, failed from Bodmin, Cornwall, and was one of Nature's gentlemen. He was about middle aged and had a family of seven. He was unobtrusive, modest and intelligent and was also a local preacher of the Wesleyan Denomination. All the family were strict abstainers from alcoholic drinks and known as "Teetotalers". As beer drinking was the general custom Jenkins and his family were considered cranks and bigots. After he had settled down for some years he started a Band of Hope and a small company of boys met weekly in a loft of an old stable in the centre of the town. Many of the

youngsters were trained in temperance and grew up to be men of fine character, lived clean lives and occupied responsible positions after attaining maturity.

'Reminiscences of Cowbridge and District from the year 1860 to 1930 – written for the Glamorgan Gazette by Mr E W Miles in 1930.

Mari Llwyd

In my early days, the Mari Llwyd visits were very general, as part of the Christmas festival and greetings. Three or four companies would visit the principal houses in the district for a couple of weeks, singing their peculiar greetings in Welsh. The leading man would carry the skeleton of a horse's head, fixed on a pole, with the head decorated with ribbons and glass eyes, a white sheet covering the man and the pole. The best hypothetical account of the origin of this custom which I have read, that it originated in Monmouthshire, where donkeys' heads were first used, to attract the illiterate in a primitive way in order to impress the various incidents of the birth and early life of Christ, in order to counteract the Pagan festivities of the Yule-tide. As time went on donkeys' heads became scarce, and horses' heads were used. I am inclined to believe, even in this advanced, intellectual age, the majority are more impressed by ocular demonstration than by theory. One outstanding example is the failure of a vast number, who have listened to innumerable discourses, to comprehend and appropriate Christian principles.

Heavy Snowstorm

Within my memory, a very heavy snowstorm occurred in March 1868, where all the roads were blocked up to the hedgerows, which made it impossible to hold the annual stock and pleasure fair in that month. On the 18th February 1881, a severe blizzard continued the whole day and night. The railroads were kept clear by locomotives and gangs of men were engaged removing drifts.

A devoted young doctor, named Stanistreet, had a patient seriously ill near Llanharry station, and ventured to travel by train to Llanharry, walked up the line in the direction of his patient's house, when he was run over and killed by a locomotive, which, it was assumed, he failed to hear or see on account of the blizzard.

On the 31st March 1922, a severe blizzard occurred during the night and following morning, which caused the roads to be impassible for three or four days. I remember a heavy fall of snow in the month of June, about the year 1880, after the potatoes were hoed, and snow filled the ridges.

Young Men's Institute

The late Mr Nathaniel Bird of Cowbridge, who had a flourishing ironmongery business, realising the young men of the town had no public accommodation for meeting, and for reading and indoor games, about the year 1873 induced the authorities for the time being

to permit part of the western building attached to the front of the Town Hall, now the Council Chamber, to be used as a reading and recreation room. In this project, he took the late Mr Alfred James and myself into his confidence, and commandeered our assistance. Eventually, under his direction, the reading and recreation rooms were duly established, and I was appointed the first secretary.

Some little time afterwards, he felt there should be better accommodation provided, and, as he was nearing the allotted span of life, he handed over £500 to two local gentlemen as the nucleus for a new building. He, however, lived to see his wishes realised, and the present institute was erected and opened in the year 1895. This modest, benevolent gentleman was the only one in my recollection who ever benefited the town with a tangible gift.

‘It is not the man who knows the most who has the most to say,
Nor is it the man who has the most that gives the most away’.

..... The pavements within the town walls were evidently sunk cobble stones, much of which remained in my early days, and subsequently paving slabs were placed in a narrow portion near the houses until the year 1885, when granolithic was substituted.

Farmers and their wives used to ride in on their carthorse, the wife sitting behind the husband on a pad, and carrying a large basket of butter, cheese and poultry on her lap, for at that time the ordinary farmer was a ‘working man’ and the wife a ‘working woman’, and probably could not afford a spring carriage, although they sometimes used farm carts. Carriages were very scarce and a costly luxury; only a few of the wealthier called ‘gentleman farmers’ owned a two-wheeled spring carriage.

Many of the public inns provided expensive stabling accommodation, and in the front of their houses were stone steps called ‘mounts’ at which the wife mounted and dismounted from the carthorse, who knew his business in sidling up to the mount for the purpose without any guidance. These horses were trained to run in a sliding fashion and would travel six to eight miles an hour in that way without jolting or causing the good wife any discomfort.

The butter, cheese and poultry were sold to local shopkeepers and hucksters who came from Cardiff and Pontypridd in spring carts, and the butter etc was received by them in a room allotted in the various inns.

Butchery and pottery stalls were on the western side of the town hall. And flannel wearing apparel and confectionary stalls etc on the eastern side. Vendors came from Cardiff and Pontypridd districts and occupied market stalls. There was no railway communication then and buyers of live stock and produce would come from a great distance the previous day. There were only five butchers selling meat on market days, only at the market stalls. There were no butchers’ shops. Three resident butchers – Richard Howe, John Williams (Pelican Inn), David Morgan (Butchers Arms) – and Williams (Llantwit Major) and Thomas John (Trehyngyll). Very little fresh meat was bought. Only two butchers slaughtered one animal producing beef between them, and supplied the local gentry and a few of the more affluent people of the district. The

remaining butchers confined their business to mutton and pork, and not much of that, for the ordinary people could only afford a meat dinner on Sundays.

The chief articles of 'diet' were oatmeal for porridge, then called gruel, bake-stone cakes, home-made bread of luscious flavour, cheese, bacon and vegetables. Most of the cottagers in the town and district reared pigs and poultry, which were allowed to roam at large about the roads, except in the town, with impunity. I remember in folklore.

Unfortunately, I have mislaid manuscripts, but here is a poetic sample :

' If you want good tea, full flavoured and strong,
Don't fail to try what is sold at the Hong Kong.'
'Mr Thomas of the Bear has a stable for your mare.
He will give her oats and hay
But will surely make you pay'.

Although English was the predominant language, most of the tradespeople spoke Welsh. The young people were not generally taught the Welsh language, but could understand it to a limited extent, yet in the villages around there were many monoglot Welshmen. I remember hearing of a workman being sent from a farm to Mr Bird's shop for some hay rakes. He was not familiar with the town, and discovered the shop by enquiring 'Bla mae shop, good y oo?' (meaning 'owl' i.e. bird). Iolo Morganwg is reputed to have kept a book shop in High Street many years earlier, at the time when a certain book, entitled 'The Rights of Man', of a seditious nature was banned. He placed a notice in the window : "The 'Rights of Man' Sold Here". A legal official called to arrest him and to confiscate the books, when Iolo produced the bible which relieved the legal officer of an unpleasant duty.

The Town Mill

The flour mill was then a great centre for business, when the late venerable Mr. William Thomas controlled it and Mr. James Eddols acted as head miller. Carts and horses were constantly discharging corn and taking meal away. It is sad to see the building now derelict. I saw the Llantwit Major and Wick windmills working in my childhood days, but they have all now been superseded by steam-mills. The town mill and premises were the playground of the Grammar School day-boys, who were few in number, when the boarders were in bounds at their studies, for Mr. William Thomas, the genial and good-natured proprietor, encouraged his boys' playmates to join them there in the various games of the time. I spent most of my leisure there, and have a happy recollection of the kindly interest of Mr and Mrs Thomas in myself and schoolmates. In wet and cold weather, we would settle down by the malthouse fire at the rear of the mill, and learn the art of malting, and discuss the topics of the time and books of adventure. We had many a scouting hunt over Llanblethian Hill, after a couple of boys who had been told off, and whose practice was to drop pieces of paper as a trail, and as one of the Thomases was called Eddie, we, in some unaccountable way, called him 'Ida', and in one of the proposals for a trail hunt over Llanblethian Hill (which was never

previously referred to by any other name), one of the company suggested that we call it 'Mount Ida', and from that time we adopted the name. This was about 1866. I thought nothing of it then, but some years after I left school, I heard one of the schoolboys call it Mount Ida, which led me to think that the name was being perpetuated, and I now find that it is still being referred to in the school by that name.

...going to Penylan Newton when a boy, and visiting a small cottage occupied by an old woman, whose name I with-hold. The front and only door opened into her room on the ground floor, where there was a bedstead with a bed and heap of wraps thereon. Fowls were walking about the room, and a pig seemed to be treated as one of the family. The floor under the bed was stored with swedes or field turnips, which gave a very pungent aroma to the room, but this was an exceptional case and did not typify the cottagers as a class, for they were generally clean and neat.

Cowbridge was the emporium of the Vale. All kinds of commodities in use at the time were stocked or made and supplied by competent, ingenious and practical tradesmen, from a needle and thread to a churchwarden clay tobacco pipe, and from a tallow candle to the full complement of household furniture, and scythes, rakes, threshing flails and wagons. Bristol was the wholesale emporium, and goods were shipped to Cardiff by a regular steamboat service, and then brought to Cowbridge by horse-wagons by the proprietor, who was called 'the currier'.

Donkeys were numerous in the district, and when not in work, would flock together in their district grazing on the waste land or roadside. Many cottagers would bring them to the town to carry home their purchases in sacks, and also coal from Llanharry. Many small villages had cottage-shops, and the proprietor possessed a donkey and cart. I remember them coming for supplies from as far as Llantwit Major, Llanharan, Llangan and other villages.

The town possessed tradesmen of every description : grocers, bakers, drapers, ironmongers, bootmakers, two hand-loom weavers, tinkers and tailors, medicinal herbalists for internal, and ointments for external cures for all ailments. There were also literarymen, almost equalling my old and present-day versatile friend, 'Silurian'....

During the hay harvest, scythe mowing was very general, and some men would combine in taking contracts for mowing fields of growing grass. It was a pretty sight to see six or seven men swinging the scythe, following each other in adjoining swathes in perfect rhythm when mowing a field, but mowing machines gradually supplanted this practice.

During the corn harvest, a gang of sturdy, sober, respectful and peaceful Welsh reapers would come annually from Carmarthenshire, with their sickles, and assist farmers in corn-reaping, and one or two gangs of men would come from Ireland. Their occupation at home was understood to be sea-fishing. The latter did not, to the best of my

recollection, require sleeping accommodation, and when out of work, or on a day of rest, were a nuisance to the neighbourhood, for on such occasions they indulged in excessive beer drinking and practically became unmanageable and offensive. They fought amongst themselves, and in various ways annoyed the peaceful residents, but unfortunately men of the same type lived in the locality, and the locals and the visitors were often in serious conflict.

In those days, beer was 'beer' of undoubted potency.

The ancient town hall (of which there are many oil paintings in the possession of residents) was of the same type as the ancient town hall at Cardiff, and the present town hall at Llantwit Major. It stood almost in the middle of the main road opposite the Duke of Wellington Hotel, then the Black Horse, leaving sufficient open space to permit an ordinary cart to pass on the northern side, and a mere footway on the southern side. It faced west, and had wide stone steps leading up to the hall on the second floor. I believe that there were market stalls on the ground floor. The preacher from the steps of the Ancient Hall was the immortal Christmas Evans.

The county sessions were held there, in the days when men found guilty of sheep-stealing and other offences were hanged in a primitive fashion from the branch of a tree near the Grove, which forms a landmark. The Grove, adjoining the old Roman road on the Stallingdown, is said to have been planted by the Traherne family. This landmark, from which there is an extensive view of the Bristol Channel, can be seen from North Somerset and Devon. I understand that prisoners had to assist in the demolition of the ancient hall and in building the new one (i.e. the town hall). An aged inhabitant told me years ago he saw prisoners dressing the stones now to be seen in the front wall of the present Town Hall building.

Weaving and Weavers.

There were two working weavers busy at their craft in the town. One business was conducted by Hannah Howe, in Church St, the other by Thomas Williams in the East Village. I used to see them weaving on their handlooms on many occasions. The women of the time generally knitted their own garments. Silk material was very scarce and expensive, and home-spun was in general use, and would last a life-time. In the summer, many of the women wore thin, white sun-bonnets made, I believe, of material called cambric. There were no spinning wheels here in my days, and I do not remember any complete Welsh costumes being worn, except on the Fair and some Market days when the town would be visited by cockle and oyster vendors, from the Gower district, who wore the costume.

Town Crier and Church Clerk.

The town boasted of a crier called William Norton who wore official uniform. He was a man of fine physique, possessing a pleasant, deep, stentorian voice, and rang a large brass hand bell to attract an audience. It was a treat to hear him announcing his messages, which was the most effective ...

A woman used to drive a herd of about a dozen donkeys from Ogmores Down with bags of sand on their backs once a week, the latter for sale to householders for sprinkling on stone flag floors in houses which were then general on the ground floor. The animals, like most of their kind, made very slow progress but served a useful purpose at the time. Our local chimney sweep (named Aaron Anderson) owned a remarkably light weight, fast trotting donkey, which was exceptional in every way. Its colour was dark... (difficult to read). It was a high stepper with a long stride, quick... and would travel... in a spirited way like a ... fast trotting pony with ... spring cart with the sweep and ... aboard ... good... without... using the whip.

Photography seems to have been introduced about the year 1860. I remember having my photo taken when a small boy by a visiting artist, who rented accommodation at the Ship Aground Inn for a week occasionally. He was well patronised. The photographs on glass were very inferior when compared with those of the present day.

About the same time, artists visited the town on Fair and Market days, cutting outline profile photographs, known as silhouettes, with a scissors in the public streets while the person stood in front of him. They were cut out of black paper, and pasted on white cardboard. They were surprisingly exact in outline, and cost about 2d or 3d each. I remember having mine done, which only occupied about five or ten minutes. The dexterity displayed in doing the work when standing up had to be seen to be realised. It was indeed a fine art which seems to have been lost.

The Town of Cowbridge

The town was a centre for farm stock sales, and Tuesday was the Market Day. There were no enclosures for live stock except a few hurdles for sheep and pigs near the Butts Pool, by the remains of the ancient town wall, south of the Mason's Arms Inn. The pool was of considerable size, and was filled in during the erection of the new market in the year 1888. It was a favourite resort for skating and sliding when frozen over.

Cattle were shown in groups on the pavement each side of the main road on the western side of the town, which was known as the West Village, being in earlier days outside the boundary of the town wall.

The ancient town was very small, as the wall, 25 feet in height and in parts 7 feet 8 inches in width, only extended from the south gate in an irregular circle to the west gate

(which was demolished about the year 1760) on the main road between the present stock market and the Eagle Lane, then curving at the end of the lane in a south-east direction as far as the eastern boundary of the present Town Hall; then turning south across the main road, where the old Eastgate stood, extending to the southern extremity of the Grammar School garden, and then curving westward to the present ancient archway known as the South Gate, surrounding an area of about 10 acres. The East and West Gates are believed to have been demolished about the year 1776, as wheeled traffic had increased over the main road. Mail coaches ran through up to the year 1850.

The ancient town was evidently a fortress, as parts of the wall remaining at this time are studded with battlements, and are about 7 foot 8 ins width on the top. I am disposed to believe it was practically surrounded by a moat, as the never-dry little stream named the Thaw, according to indications, flowed near the site of the East Gate near the present Town Hall, the stream having been, many years ago, slightly diverted to a constructed pond for supplying water to work the now derelict town flour mill.

The whole of the land on the western side is full of water springs – very soft and pungent during rainy seasons.

.....periodical local fairs. Club feast days, or occasional visits of Ginnett's or Sanger's Circus, or Wombell's menageries were great attractions. Ginnett drove twenty piebald horses, drawing the circus band carriage through the town on one occasion. Crowds from far and near would assemble to view the grotesque processions, and attend the one-day performance as an exceptional treat.

St Valentine's Day, on February 14th – now entirely disregarded – was a popular anniversary. The shops trading in paper and novelties had a large assortment displayed in the windows over every description from a penny single sheet with a handsome, comical, and ugly picture of humanity, with a printed verse below expressing loving, cynical, critical and offensive sentiments, according to the taste of all kinds of people. It was an opportunity to post an anonymous message of flattery, disgust, jealousy and spite. This practice has practically died a natural death.