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Crewyd a chyhoeddwyd y fersiwn digidol hwn o'r cylchgrawn yn unol â thrwydded a roddwyd gan y cyhoeddwr. Gellir defnyddio'r deunydd ynddo ar gyfer unrhyw bwrpas gan barchu hawliau moesol y crewyr.

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eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and on the exploitation, for example, of their mineral resources. It is worth remembering, however, that a number of the families involved had no connection with Wales apart from their titles of peerage.

Apart from these big categories, the specialist in the fields of Law, Education, and the Church will find much to interest him in the sections which cover these topics. Finally, in his introduction, the editor refers to the group of Acts which contain clauses relating to the Welsh language; he seems, however, to underestimate the completeness of his lists when he states (p. xii) that the earliest relevant Act in his collection is that of 1860 (No. 2456) which made provision for church services in Welsh. Four earlier Acts which refer to the use of the language are listed in the volume. An Act of 1732–33 (No. 1628) in effect reiterated the Tudor insistence on the use of English in courts of law. Over a century later an Act of 1836 (No. 2446)—modified by an Act of 1838 (No. 2448)—aimed at preventing the appointment of clergymen not familiar with Welsh to parishes where the majority of the inhabitants did not understand English. As far back as 1773 the dean of Arches had held, in the case of Dr. Bowles and the parishes of Trefdraeth and Llangwyfan, that Welsh-speaking incumbents should be appointed to Welsh-speaking parishes, but his view received legislative approval only with the Act of 1836. In 1837 a further Act (No. 2447) authorized the use of a ‘true and exact’ translation of the ‘form of words provided to be used in the case of marriages’ under the Marriage Act of 1836.

The volume is well indexed and it should prove of value to the general and the local historian.

GLYN ROBERTS.

Bangor.

IRON IN THE MAKING: DOWLAIS IRON COMPANY LETTERS, 1782–1860.

Edited by Madeleine Elsas. Published by Glamorgan County Records Committee and Guest Keen Iron and Steel Company Ltd. London, 1960. Pp. xix, 247.

‘As there are Publick Houses nearer dowlais Furnaces than Dowlais Inn, Why are orders for Beer (allowed to workmen on some occasions) sent to *billy teague*. Trust, Sir, that you will be pleased to make enquiries about it, for I am afraid that there is something rotten in the state of Denmark.’ So ‘John Wareteg’ to Josiah John Guest in April 1829. There may have been substance in the complaint. William Teague, keeper of the ‘Swan’, was to be one of Guest’s electoral caucus.

John Griffiths, dismissed furnace-keeper, was more manly in his complaint, to William Taitt, thirty years earlier. ‘Now Sir another thing I have to Lay before you is: we had made at No 3 Something above

51 tons of iron: about three weeks back and the other two furnaces had made something above 40 tons each. So Dick Davis happened to go to the office first and the guinea was refused to him as was Costomary, so he Came and tould the Rest of the keepers and me how it was. Then they all declared that they would not work Except they should have it. So we went all together to the office, and because Dick Davis and me Could Speak english they desiered of us to taugh for them as well as our selves. So Contiquently there was Some dispute but there Was nothing spoke that was vexatious . . . and now Sir, I am informed by Mr. Onnions that I am to be discharged and Dick Davis likewise because we spoke and the rest did not, when at the same time they was all there and spoke the words in the Welsh tongue to us as we spoke to the masters, and that Saturday morning, before the dispute hapened, there Came Some Smuglers to the work with the intention to sell their brandy: and the men that worked the other turn stole it from them and they was all drunk by five or six of the Clock in the morning that they Could not work, so I was sent for about 7, and they gave some of it to me, and I must own that I drank rather free, and it Like to intoxicate me as well as the rest, so the strenth of the spirits Caused me to say more than if I had been Sober, and I am to be discharged the 9th instant . . .'

Inevitably, it is the human and the colourful which catch the eye on a first reading of this rich and rewarding collection of Dowlais Company letters—William Taitt warning the Wesleyan, Thomas Guest, against that 'Set of Hypocrites', the Methodists, and sternly informing Josiah John, 'Alexander and you have had enough of Dancing at this time you must now Stick to business'; John Evans, manager, as 'General' of Guest's electoral army; the two Llwynhendy men who offered to cut ground for a tramroad in Italy in 1839; the miners of Ffos-y-fran with their medieval petitions (surely someone guided their pen?)—and even the revelation that in 1792 the partners seriously thought of offering the whole enterprise to Crawshay for £60,000.

This bicentenary volume is a notable undertaking. From the great wealth of the Dowlais archives (563,000 letters!) in the Glamorgan Record Office, Miss Elsas, Archivist to the County, has worked through the 88,000 and more letters for the period 1782–1860 and selected some 650 as an illustrative cross-section. It should be said at once that this is a superb piece of work. The period is a valid historical unit; the selection has been made with skill, scholarship, and broad human sympathy. This book will outlive many a history based upon it.

Naturally, one is not happy about everything. The letters have been classified under seven heads—Ironmasters, Masters and Men, The Business, Markets and Sales, Transport, Technical, and Politics. Classification must have been inordinately difficult, and there is some overlap. An overall picture of the enterprise at any particular period has

to be pieced together like a mosaic. There is some lion-hunting—the inevitable celebrities, Bessemer, Brunel, Mushet, Americans, Germans, and Russians make their appearance, and Lady Charlotte's few years as controller get rather more than their due. Some of the material, that of a statistical nature in particular, while useful even in isolation, would be more useful in series, so that some sections can serve essentially only as supplementary works of reference. This is particularly true of the section on transport and parts of that on the business, which tend to be very mixed bags. Even as quarries, however, these sections are very rich; that on technical matters is a veritable gold-mine. The work is strongest where its material forms a coherent unit.

The book, for example, makes at least one direct and immediate contribution to knowledge of some significance. This concerns the anti-union lock-out at Dowlais and Plymouth works in the autumn of 1831, which followed the Merthyr Riots. It has hitherto been assumed that trade unions, branches of a Bolton organization, appeared in South Wales, for the first time, in the aftermath of the riots. Home Office correspondence with Wrexham and Ruabon, and with the Merthyr magistrates during the lock-out, however, makes it clear that the riots themselves were in part a product of a sustained recruiting campaign by the Bolton Union, an element in the general Owenite exaltation of the period, which covered not only North and South Wales but practically every coalfield in the kingdom, and that Melbourne at the Home Office treated the struggle in Merthyr as something of a test case, since the legal position of Guest and his colleague, in dismissing union men, was ambiguous. What this collection does is to set the struggle in its context. The series of letters from the north and the other parts of the coalfield, with their repeated and unmistakable message, verify the interpretation of the 1831 conflict as a dress rehearsal for the breaking of Owenism, and the Tolpuddle Martyrs, in 1834. This particular series, incidentally, contains what must be one of the earliest published blacklist 'documents' and, in addition, enough evidence to make out a strong case that Thomas Revel Guest, Josiah John's brother, was the author, or at least the sponsor, of the famous anti-union pamphlet *On the Oaths taken in the Union Club*, by 'Looker-On'.

It is when it is used in this manner that the collection will prove most valuable to historians. The section on masters and men, for example, has a great wealth of information on the structure and character of the labour market at a time when management technique was primitive; it chronicles attempts at joint action and intelligence by the employers, and gives a deal of data, often of a statistical nature, not only on Wales but on Staffordshire, Scotland, and the north. The tribulations of the early years are eloquently conveyed, and much evidence provided, both for and against the conventional interpretation of the Truck system. The papers, for example, indicate that prices in the Dowlais shop were at

times actually lower than those charged in town, but also verify the accusation made by the Radical surgeon of Merthyr, Job James, that some 15,000 men in three of the town's works, including Dowlais, were served by only one doctor.

The section on the masters, coupled with that on markets and sales, confirms the accepted chronology of rhythmic expansion and depression, but enormously strengthens its detail and documentation. The letters on the quality of the iron make tend to be repetitive and disappointing; so does the section on the business in general, though here there is some useful material on early banking activities. The political letters are diffuse, but throw new light on the election of 1852 and on the background to Merthyr's acquisition of a Member under the Reform Act of 1832. Earlier letters tend to confirm L. W. Dillwyn's suspicion that Josiah John Guest was not unconnected with the Bute interest in Glamorgan in the twenties. It was the Reform campaign and the opinions of his own electors which made Guest a liberal. In all categories, the quantity of solid information and statistical detail, even in the less coherent sectors, is a boon.

Glamorgan County Council and the Guest Keen Company have earned gratitude and respect. They could have found no better way to commemorate the bicentenary. To a social historian, it is the difficult early years, before Dowlais began to challenge and surpass Cyfarthfa in the thirties, which prove most interesting; to an economic historian, almost everything in the book will be of value, though he may have to work to extract it. Read in conjunction with such works as those of Dr. A. H. John and Dr. J. P. Addis, it adds materially to our knowledge of one of the more significant periods in Welsh history.

Miss Elsas has put all historians in her debt. Her book is a craftsman's model. There is a good index to correspondents, with genealogical tables and a list of railways which the company served. The introduction, challenging and informative, needs to be read in conjunction with the text. She has done more than produce a volume of source material, for the sympathy and humour which inform her selection have made this a readable and fascinating book, which will freshen many minds besides Dry-as-Dust's. The famous men are there, but our fathers have not been forgotten, and she has produced a worthy testimonial to a great company and a memorable people.

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MABON (WILLIAM ABRAHAM, 1842-1922: A STUDY IN TRADE UNION LEADERSHIP). By E. W. Evans. University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1959. Pp. xii, 115. 10s. 6d.

As Dr. Evans reminds us, this is a generation that knoweth not Mabon. This, perhaps, should not surprise us, for Dr. Evans shows how decisively