

### **“Merthyr Express” 12 May, 1865**

#### Dreadful Explosion: Firedamp at Vochriw Colliery: Fourteen Men and Boys Injured

The old enemy of the colliers has once more come upon them with a rush, and the dreadful scene, unhappily so familiar to many of us, has been re-enacted during the past week in this locality. On Wednesday morning last, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1865, an explosion took place at the New Pit at Vochriw, the property of the Dowlais Iron Company. The explosion took place in the stall of James Jones. This is a new colliery and one of the deepest in the district. Happily, it was not long before the alarm of the workmen and their families was quieted. Fourteen men and boys were injured. Some of the poor fellows were burnt in the most shocking manner and had to be carried to their homes on planks. Others, who were not so badly burned, were able to walk to their homes. The following are the names of the persons injured: James Jones (aged 40), of D. Evans' House, Pantywaun; Rees Howells, (14), 3 Church Street; Evan Evans, (11), 234 Penydarren Rd.; John Davies, (18), 222 Penydarren Rd.; William Thomas, (11), 13 High St. Dowlais; Thomas Thomas (21), 15 Darren St. Dowlais; John Davies, (16), 9 Elizabeth St.; John Davies, (16), 50 Castle St.; Evan Davies, (20), 50 Castle St.; John Hughes, (15), 32 Pond St.; Daniel Jones, (20), Tyla Dowlais; Evan Evans, (49), 234 Penydarren Rd.; Morgan Williams, (41), Nursery Row Rhymney; Henry Davies, (34), Vochrhiw. The damage done to the working was slight and would be easily repaired.

### **“Merthyr Express” 26 May, 1865**

#### The Late Explosion at Vochriw

Since our last issue one of the victims of the explosion in the Vochrhiw new pit, John Hughes, 15 years of age, has died, and an inquest on the body was opened on Monday by the coroner, George Overton, Esq. Two or three witnesses were examined, but they gave no evidence of interest. Deceased, it will be remembered, was the boy who worked with James Jones, whose lamp exploded the gas. The inquiry was adjourned for a month.

#### Another Fire Damp Explosion

An explosion of fire damp took place on Tuesday afternoon in the 4ft pit at Pantywaun, belonging to the Dowlais Iron Company, by which three persons were slightly burned, one man and two boys. It appears that before the explosion there had been a fall of coal from the roof, in consequence of which a considerable quantity of gas was liberated from the fissures, and the men working with naked lights, unaware of its presence, caused it to suddenly explode. There was little damage done to the workings. The names of the parties injured are David Edwards, 31, collier, 25, North-street, Dowlais, who was burnt slightly about the face, John Lumley, 14, Red lion Inn, and Evan Davies, aged 16, of Well-street, Dowlais.

### **“Merthyr Express” 2 June, 1865**

#### Another Explosion at Dowlais & Death of Two Persons

The Dowlais Company's Pits seem to be fatally prolific with firedamp explosions just now. The great accident at Vochriw was followed by a lighter one by which four men were injured, and now this week, there has been a third disaster more fatal than either of the others. On Monday afternoon about five o'clock, an explosion of firedamp occurred in the 4ft vein of Buxton's Pit. John Evans, haulier, 28 years of age, and Thomas Hill, 12 years of age, were both slightly burned. Unhappily, before they could get away, the after damp, the pernicious product of the explosion came upon them, and they were killed by suffocation, being dead before the workmen could get to them. Every precaution was taken to prevent a mishap, and on the morning of the accident, every place in the pit was reported as being free of gas. On Wednesday, an inquest was opened on the bodies, but no evidence was taken, and the inquest was adjourned to the 15<sup>th</sup> inst.

**“Merthyr Express” 9 June, 1865**

Buxton’s Pit Explosion Another of the men, Evan Evans, from Buxton’s Pit explosion died on Wednesday.

**“Merthyr Express” 11 August, 1865**

A Man Killed at the Vochriw Pit On Thursday last week, an accident occurred at the Vochriw Pit to a workman named William Morris, 32 years of age, a haulier, resulting in his death. On Thursday, his horse tackling had got out of order, and he was crossing the bottom of the shaft to go to the stable for fresh harness when the cage descended, and before he could get out of the way came upon him. He was crushed to the ground, and when extricated by his fellow workmen, he said he had broken his thigh and pelvis, which was found to be correct when he was taken home and examined by the surgeon of the works. He died on Saturday. Deceased did not blame anybody, and said that the cage was being lowered at its usual rate. An inquest was held on the body at the Greyhound Inn, and a verdict of “Accidental Death” was returned.

**“Merthyr Express” 30 September, 1865**

A Man Crushed to Death at Vochriw We have another deplorable accident to record. A flueman, aged 55, John Lewis, who worked at the Vochriw colliery, was killed shortly after coming up from the pit. It is pretty well known that the colliers working at Vochriw and living in Dowlais, generally ride to and fro on the engines and coal trains. On Saturday, about 5.30pm, the train had just started, and deceased tried to get on to the engine as it passed. He fell and was run over by the tender. His injuries were so great, he died on the spot.

**“Merthyr Express” 4 November, 1865**

Explosion of Firedamp at Vochriw Colliery An explosion of firedamp occurred at Vochriw No. 2 Pit on Monday morning last, by which two men were severely injured. The names of the injured men are Rees Morgan, aged 50, a repairer, and living at Vochriw, and George Evans, aged 23, a haulier, of Penydarren. Both men were severely burned about the face, hands and arms. It would appear that Rees Morgan went into the pit at 12 o’clock on Sunday night to put up some timber. When he came to the heading in which he had to work, he found the fire mark which must have been there since Saturday. He was within seven or eight yards of the signal, when the gas, which had extended further down the heading, came into contact with the naked light which he carried, and exploded, causing the injuries described. Both men were at once taken out of the pit and taken to their homes, where their wounds were attended to. They are now progressing favourably. There was not much injury done to the pit.

**“Merthyr Express” 21 April, 1866**

Explosion of Firedamp A slight explosion of firedamp occurred at Vochriw No. 1 Pit on Monday last, by which a collier, John Davies, was slightly burned.

**“Merthyr Express” 2 June, 1866**

Shocking and Fatal Accident at Vochriw On Saturday morning last, a shocking accident occurred at the No.1 Pit, Vochriw of the Dowlais Iron Company, by which Thomas Jones of Caeharris, 42, a master haulier, and Ellis Lewis of Fochriw, 28, a hitcher, were killed. The unfortunate men, with three others, were in the act of placing a tram of coal on the carriage at the bottom of the shaft, when, before they had time to get off, the engine started, and they were dragged up the shaft a considerable distance, and they fell from their perilous position. They were taken up by their fellow workmen, having been much bruised, quite dead. Mr. Jones lived at Caeharris where he is well connected, and had a huge business as a master haulier. Lewis was much respected at Vochriw, where he lived. An inquest was opened on Tuesday last at the Horse and Groom, Caeharris, and after the jury had viewed the bodies, the inquiry was adjourned

to the 12<sup>th</sup> June to allow T.E. Wales, Esq., inspector of mines for the district, to be present.

**“Merthyr Express” 11 August, 1866**

Shocking and Fatal Accident to a Fireman A shocking accident occurred at the top of the No.2 Pit, Pantywaun, last week, which ended in the death of John Davies, aged 24, a fireman. From the evidence given before the Coroner, G. Overton Esq., at the inquiry on Thursday at the Farmer’s Arms, it seems that the deceased had occasion to go to the engine house, and on entering, he put his foot on the connecting rod, and as he attempted to get over it, the rod rose with the motion of the crank, and he was thrown to the ground. He was crushed between the rod that governs the ponderous fly wheel, and an arm plate forming part of the foundation. When taken up, after the engine had stopped, he was insensible, and lived only a few minutes. The fly wheel of the engine is protected by a rail, but the rod is not. The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental Death.”

**“Merthyr Express” 3 November, 1866**

Dreadful Pit Accident A deplorable accident happened at Vochriw No. 1 Pit on Thursday, se’nnight to a sinker named Thomas Buxton, aged 25. Buxton was ascending the air pit, and had nearly reached the top when his foot slipped, and he fell down a depth of 26 yards and was killed on the spot. An inquest on the body has been held, and a verdict of “Accidental Death” returned.

**“Merthyr Express” 12 January 1867**

Dreadful Accident At The Vochriw No.2 Colliery: 2 Men Killed. At 7.30 a.m. on Thursday, a dreadful accident occurred at the No. 2 Colliery Vochriw, the property of the Dowlais Iron Company. Seven workmen entered the cage to descend to their work. Richards, the lander, gave the usual signal to Thomas Lewis, the engineman, who by some unaccountable means put the engine into reverse. The cage was pulled into the sheaves. Four men were thrown on to the top, one held on to the cage, and two, David Williams, haulier, aged 22, and David Thomas, collier, 26, were thrown down the pit, a depth of 440 yards. When found, their bodies were frightfully mutilated, and their remains had to be removed in sacks. Both the unfortunate deceased were single men. The others escaped with but slight injury. The inquest will be opened this day at the Bush Inn, Dowlais.

**“Merthyr Express” 19 January 1867**

The Vochriw Accident The inquiry into the cause of the lamentable accident in which David Williams and David Thomas, were killed recently at the No. 2 Colliery, Vochriw, was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January. The jury, after hearing the evidence of the many witnesses, returned a verdict of “Accidental Death.” Of course, everybody who reads the report of the inquest will have his own opinion as to the soundness of this verdict. Whether one agrees with the evidence or not, it is a merciful decision with regards to the luckless engineer, Thomas Lewis, upon whom the witnesses placed the entire blame. It appeared to those who heard the statements of the several persons examined, that there could not possibly be any escape for the poor fellow from any verdict that would have incriminated him, and led to his committal for trial on a most serious charge. To the astonishment of everybody – even of the man himself – the jury saw through other glasses than the Coroner. If any error has been committed in this matter, let us hope it has been on the right side. We would remark here that Lewis appears to be much respected by the colliers employed in the pit, and enjoys their confidence as a steady workman. They got up a memorial to the Coroner, setting forth his sobriety, steadiness, and general good conduct, which they prayed the jury to consider. This memorial may have influenced their verdict.

**“Merthyr Express” 30 March, 1867**

Explosion of Firedamp at No. 2 Pit, Vochrhiw There was an explosion of firedamp on Thursday morning at No. 2 Pit Vochrhiw, the property of the Dowlais Iron Company. Two colliers, Thomas Evans of Dowlais, and John Davies of Rhymney, were rather badly burned about their faces and arms. Fortunately, the explosion was confined to the area in which the two men worked, and no further damage was done.

**“Merthyr Express” 9 November, 1867**

Great Colliery Disaster at Ferndale A disastrous explosion occurred at Blaenllechau, Ferndale, on Friday last, 8<sup>th</sup> November. 170 men and boys were killed.

**“Merthyr Express” 4 January 1868**

Shocking Accident at Vochrhiw No.1 Pit Sidings A terrible accident happened to an Irishman named Michael Lane, aged 30, of Penydarren, on Monday evening, by which he came to his death. It appears that the deceased worked on the siding of No.1 Pit, and he was engaged on Monday night in removing wagons when he got caught between the buffers of two wagons and received dreadful external and internal injuries. He was attended by Mr. Cresswell and Mr. Burne, but after suffering great agony for twenty four hours, he died on the following night. We understand that the usual “wake” was kept up on the night after his death.

The Drop: Reduction of Wages We regret to report that the bad conditions of trade has compelled the iron masters, at length, to resort to notices of a termination of present contracts – which means a reduction of wages – but to what extent is not stated, but we have no doubt, that it will be as little as possible. Hard as it will be to bear on many workmen with families, yet we counsel them to accept it, as we feel now an adverse change of times, which must, eventually, mend. It can't be always bad.

**“Merthyr Express” 15 February 1868**

Colliers Strike last week we reported that many of the colliers in Tir Phil and New Tredegar were on strike. On Monday it was reported that colliers in many of the other pits had joined the Monmouthshire strike. This is most unfortunate, occurring as it does when the prospect is so gloomy. The masters confidently assure the workmen that they are in no way responsible for the present decline in wages, and there is too ample evidence for this assertion. It is, therefore, generally felt, that it would have certainly been discrete on the part of the workmen to acquiesce in the inevitable reduction and to have relied on the masters to have again advanced the wages when the present deplorable, and nearly unprecedented stagnation in trade has passed away.

**“Merthyr Express” 22 February 1868**

Rhymney Valley Coal Strike The state of affairs reported last week has not improved in this valley, and it does not seem likely that there will be a speedy settlement of the dispute. The workmen of the Hope and Brithdir Pits are still out, as well as those of the Powell Duffryn Level. All of these pits produce house coal. The masters are determined to adhere to the reduction of 3d. per ton, and it seems that the workmen will not return to their work on these terms. The Tir Phil Pit of the Rhymney Iron Company have working at the reduced rate. It appears that intimidation has proved to great an agency for them, and that the workmen of this pit have deemed it advisable to give notice of their intention to leave their work when their contracts expire on the 16<sup>th</sup> March. Colliers at Powells Duffryn pits at Tredegar and Aberdare have agreed to the reduction. A large meeting of colliers took place on the mountain, near Tir Phil, on Friday last. The body was addressed by several workmen. The addresses were on the whole very temperate, but, in every case, enjoined on the workmen the imperative necessity in not yielding in the slightest to the present demand of the masters. The meeting was well conducted – the men were particularly orderly. When the addresses were being

delivered not a voice was heard except that of the speaker. The meeting over, a procession was formed, marching through Tir Phil, Tredegar etc. and finally dispersing at Cwmsyfiog. The number was estimated to be between 1,000 and 1,200.

**“Merthyr Express” 21 March 1868**

Fatal Accident at Pantywaun Pit A sad accident occurred in the Pwll Enoch, or No. 1 Mine Pit of the Dowlais Company at Pantywaun, on Saturday last. A miner, named William Jones, 50 years of age, was at work, when a stone, about half a ton in weight, fell upon him, and so severely injured him that he died before he could be removed to the surface. An inquest has been held and a verdict of “Accidental Death” returned.

**“Merthyr Express” 28 March 1868**

Colliers Strike All Tir Phil and New Tredegar Pits (except Powell’s) are out on strike.

**“Merthyr Express” 6 June 1868**

The Colliers Strike It is with very great satisfaction that we record that this protracted strike is now virtually at an end in this district. Nearly all the pits are now in full working, the men having accepted, wisely, the proposed reduction.

**“Merthyr Express” 9 January 1869**

Fochriw There are from 1,000 to 1,100 workmen belonging to the Dowlais Collieries employed at Fochriw, and out of that number, many reside at Rhymney and Pontllynn as well as in the Fochriw. From the commencement, the wages were always paid at the Dowlais office, and that was against every trade in this neighbourhood, and very inconvenient to the women on Saturday. Under these circumstances, the colliers sent to G.T. Clark, Esq., to ask him to get their money paid at Fochriw instead of Dowlais, and we are happy to state that he has granted this, and a doctor to reside amongst the men at Fochriw. The colliers return their sincere thanks to Mr. Clark for his kindness, and to Mr. Menclaus, and Mr. Truran, coal agent, for getting this done.

**“Merthyr Express” 16 January 1869**

Fatal Accident in the Cwmbargoed Pits On the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, a fatal accident occurred in the Cwmbargoed (Penydarren) Pit, resulting in the death of a workman named Thomas Evans. Deceased was a collier, aged 28, and on the day in question was at work in his stall when a mass of rubbish and coal fell upon him from the roof, and so severely crushed him that death ensued before he could be released from the debris. An inquest has been held at the Talbot Inn, and a verdict of “Accidental Death” returned.

**“Merthyr Express” 6 March 1869**

Fatal Accident Inquest An inquiry was held on Thursday week at the Rising Sun Inn, Vochriw, before G. Overton, Esq., coroner, touching the death of Lewis Phillips, who was killed the previous day. From the evidence, it appeared that the deceased had come there to seek employment, and in coming down from the pits over a tip, came rather suddenly on to a siding where there were some trucks being shunted. Deceased, no doubt, thinking he had sufficient time, endeavoured to cross the line, and was caught by the trucks and jammed between them. The engine driver, and another man came immediately to his assistance, but deceased never spoke, and died within a quarter of an hour. The jury returned a verdict of “Accidental Death.” The deceased had only been married for just seven months.

**“Merthyr Express” 4 September 1869**

Coal Discovered Coal has been discovered at the new pit being sunk by the Rhymney Iron Company at Deri. It is the 4 foot vein. [The Darren Pit]

**“Merthyr Express” 2 October 1869**

Fearful Boiler Explosion at Pantywaun – One Man Killed Others Seriously Injured A dreadful boiler explosion occurred on Sunday morning last at Pantywaun No. 4 Pit, the property of the Dowlais Iron Company, whereby one man named John Williams was

killed. Deceased was a fireman. Other persons were seriously injured, one, it was thought fatally, but we have heard that he is now likely to recover. Such was the force of the explosion that a portion of the boiler, about 2½ feet in length was driven a distance of about 200 yards. It stuck on the railway in its flight, and the rails were much bent. Other portions of the boiler were embedded in the tips not far from the Pits. On examination, one of the plates of the boiler was worn considerably. It was the intention to put a new boiler in the place of the one now exploded, one having been ready on the spot for some weeks, but for some cause the work has been delayed. An inquest opened on Tuesday at the Red Lion Inn, Dowlais, on the body of John Williams. After viewing the body, the jury proceeded to the scene of the catastrophe. On their return, the inquiry was adjourned until Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 11 December 1869**

Shocking Accident at Vochriw No. 1 Pit: Breaking of the Winding Rope: Two Men Killed We regret to state that early on Monday morning last, a dreadful accident happened at Vochriw No.1 Pit belonging to the Dowlais Iron Company whereby two workmen lost their lives. It appears that at about 8 o’clock, two men named William Dunstan, 41, married, and William Long, 19, single, entered the cage for the purpose of going out of the pit. They ascended safely until the cage was about 250 yards from the bottom – about two thirds of the depth of the shaft, when the winding broke, and the cage, with the two unfortunate men in it, was precipitated to the bottom. It fell with a terrible crash, and, as it may be imagined, cage and men were dashed to pieces, death being instantaneous. The mutilated remains of the men were collected by their workmates at the bottom, and as quickly as possible removed to their houses. Long had gone home from work that morning, shortly after six, but having left his pick behind, returned for it, and was returning to the surface when the fearful accident befell him. On Tuesday, the Coroner opened the inquest on the bodies at the Hollbush Inn, Dowlais; but no evidence was taken, and the customary formalities of observing the bodies having been observed, the inquiry was adjourned until next Tuesday, when it is hoped some evidence will be forthcoming which will give some satisfactory account of this accident. We have heard that there is now, or was recently a gentleman in the neighbourhood who has patented an invention that would prevent accidents of this description. The sooner its practical efficacy can be put to the test and proved the better.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 15 January 1870**

Another Dreadful Accident at Vochriw No.1 Colliery: Braking of the Rope: Five Persons Killed The No.1 Pit Vochriw, the property of the Dowlais Iron Company, has been the scene of another and more fearful accident than that which occurred there only a month ago, on the 6<sup>th</sup> December – though each accident is in every respect similar except in the amount of life lost. It will be remembered that the accident on the 6<sup>th</sup> December, arose through the snapping of the rope, which precipitated cage and men to the bottom. The Dowlais Company’s collieries are worked with spiral drums, which Mr. Wales, the government inspector of mines, has described as a capital invention in as much as it enables the enormous weight of the cage, which every deep colliery has to contend with, to be raised with ease and without any extra power. On that account it is a valuable economic invention – but the safe working of the spiral drum depends upon the angle formed between the rope and the pulley over the shaft and certain portions of the drum. Mr. Wales says that this angle ought not to exceed 10 or 11 degrees, and he attributed the former accident to the fact that the angle was as much as 15 degrees. On that occasion, two men had got into the cage and signalled to be drawn up. When the cage was about 250 yards from the top, from the cause named, the rope overlapped its coil on the drum, and in slipping in its place caused a jerk which snapped the rope, and

led to the terrible catastrophe. The accident which we now have to record arose from the same cause precisely. On Saturday night between 6 and 7, the No.2 Pit, the Pit ordered by the Company to be the exclusive means of going into and out of the colliery by men and horses, was busy in bringing the colliers to the surface. There were then at No.1 Pit, the overman Morgan Jones, 48, who resided in Francis-street, and the following hitchers who were usually employed in working the shaft, Thomas Rees, 44, Ellen-street, Penydarren; Hugh Thomas, 92, Absolam Andrew, 22, and David Davies, 15. It being late in the evening, they were probably anxious to get out of the colliery as quickly as possible, and not caring to walk through the workings to No.2 shaft, they got into the cage at No.1, and signalled to be drawn up. They must have known that it was against the company's rule to go up through that shaft, but in their anxiety to get home, no doubt, they set it aside for the moment and attempted to ascend. They were nearly successful – but a cruel fate and a terrible death awaited them in only a few moments. The signal was given and the engine started. The cage was drawn swiftly to the top, and had reached to within 27 yards of the bank, the engine having also slackened speed, when the rope overlapped its coil on the drum, and in slipping off caused a jerk by which it was snapped. The catastrophe was horrible. The cage with the five men was precipitated to the bottom, where they were all literally dashed to pieces, and the remains of the unfortunate fellows had to be gathered in pieces for conveyance to their homes. As may be supposed, the accident created a sensation of horror to the enginemen, banksmen, and others who were witness to it, but on recovery they lost no time in communicating it to the heads of this branch of the works, and just as people were returning from their shopping, it became known in Dowlais and threw the place into consternation, having been much exaggerated at first. In all truth, however, it was bad enough in its naked features. The overman, we are sorry to say leaves a widow and several children to mourn his terrible fate. On Monday, G. Overton, Esq, the coroner, opened an inquest on the bodies at the Bush Inn, Dowlais, but no evidence was taken. The bodies were viewed and certificates of burial granted, after which the inquiry was adjourned to enable the government inspector to be present. So shocking a calamity, following so rapidly on the heels of another, and apparently from precisely the same cause as the first, calls for a searching investigation. It is strange that a rope which is strong enough to bear the strain of a quarter of a miles length should be cut asunder by a jerk with a mere cage and five men depending on it at only 27 yards distance.

**“Merthyr Express” 19 March 1870**

Glamorgan Spring Assizes: Fatal Accident at Fochriw A charge of the manslaughter of Morgan Jones of Merthyr against Matthew Turan and William Williams was postponed.

**“Merthyr Express” 7 May 1870**

Explosion at No.2 Pit Vochriw: 2 Men and 15 Horses Killed An explosion occurred late on Saturday night, at the No.2 Pit, Vochriw, the property of the Dowlais Iron Company, by which one man was killed, and another so seriously injured that his life is despaired of. Fifteen horses were also killed. It is fortunate that there were only two men in the pit at the time of the explosion, otherwise the loss of life would have been very considerable. These men were in charge of the horses, and they were found in the roadway between the stables. The accident was discovered by a flueman belonging to No.1 pit about eleven o'clock at night, who smelled sulphur coming up No.2 shaft. He immediately gave an alarm. A number of men descended the pit and found the poor fellows in the roadway, close together, one dead and the other unconscious. Their names were Robert Hughes and Thomas Jones. The cause of the accident will probably remain a mystery, as Thomas Jones has since died. The pit has been much damaged.

This pit has been a very unfortunate one for accidents, being the one where the rope snapped on two separate occasions; and where a platelayer, named Robert Jones, lost his life in it on Saturday by a fall of rock upon him

**“Merthyr Express” 14 May 1870**

The Late Explosion at Vochriw The adjourned inquest on the two men who lost their lives in the late explosion at No.2 Pit, Vochriw, was held at the Holly Bush Inn, Dowlais, on Tuesday, under G. Overton, Esq, coroner. Several witnesses were examined whose evidence was unimportant. Mr. Mathew Truran, Coal Agent of the Dowlais Iron Company, said: I have inquired into the circumstances of the late explosion, and am of the opinion that it took place at the entrance to the stables at No. 5 Cross-heading, and that it arose from the two doors at the bottom of the heading being left open by the ostlers who were obliged to take the horses through the doors from the stables to the place they got their water. This would have caused an accumulation of gas to arise in the extreme ends of the workings, and this was ignited by the light kept in the stables. Very little damage was done to the workings. Mr. Wales, the government inspector, concurred with Mr. Truran as to the cause of the explosion. The Coroner summed up the evidence, and the jury returned the following verdict: “We find that the deceased came to their deaths by an explosion of firedamp, and that the explosion was produced by some doors being left open.”

**“Merthyr Express” 2 July 1870**

Accident at Vochriw Pit A young man named William Davies, residing in Rhymney, and another whose name we have not been able to ascertain, residing at Pontlottyn, met with a serious accident on Wednesday morning, by a fall of stone in the Vochriw Pit.

**“Merthyr Express 10 December 1870**

Fatal Fall at Vochriw An inquest was held before Mr. G. Overton, at the Rising Sun Inn, Vochriw, on Thursday, to inquire into the cause of death of David Evans, aged 12, was killed in one of the Dowlais Company’s pits the previous night. The deceased was working in the Rhas Las vein when rock from the roof fell on him, killing him instantly. There appeared to be no blame attached to anyone, and the jury recorded a formal verdict.

**“Merthyr Express” 7 October 1871**

Sad Accident at Vochriw On Tuesday, an accident occurred at the Deep Pit, Vochriw, by which a collier named George Davies, living at Brecon-road, Merthyr, met his death in a fearful manner. It appears that the deceased was engaged in placing props beneath “top,” and had nearly completed his task, when the timber gave way and a huge mass of coal estimated at 60 tons, fell upon him. The accident was observed by some of his comrades, who immediately set to work to recover the body, as they well knew that death must have been instantaneous, but it was some time before they succeeded in their endeavours. Deceased was 29 years of age, and was an affectionate husband and tender father. Great sympathy has been manifested by a large number of acquaintances towards his young widow and orphans.

**“Merthyr Express” 31 August 1872**

Stealing Coal Mary Smith, 19, was charged with stealing coal, weight 30 pounds, the property of the Dowlais Iron Company. P.C. James Davies said he saw prisoner taking coal from the Dowlais Company’s railway line at Vochriw on Thursday evening; he followed and took her in charge, when it was found that she had 30lbs. weight, coal that had fallen from the overloaded trucks. Prisoner said she did not know there was any harm in it, and her mother, who was in Court, stated that she rented a cottage from Mr. Dixon, who had given her permission to pick up as much coal as she wanted, for her own use, from the tips. Mr. Jones, cashier of the Dowlais Company, said that Mr.



Dixon was merely the contractor for constructing the Great Western Railway extension from Llancaiach to Dowlais, and had no right whatever to give permission to take coal from the Dowlais Company's line. Prisoner was sent for seven days hard labour.

Rhymney Strike All the girls employed at the Coal Pit Banks, and in unloading coal at the forges and mills of the works, about 120 in number, have struck work for an advance of wages to an extent of about 50%. Their present general rate is 7s. 6d. per week, while their demand is 12 shillings. Two large pits are now stopped due to the strike. A number of labourers have been temporarily employed in their stead to keep the works in action. The police are obliged to guard them while engaged in their duties.

**"Merthyr Express" 7 September 1872**

Shocking Accident at Vochriw A dreadful accident happened on the Brecon and Merthyr Railway, at Vochriw, on Wednesday evening. A coal train was shunting, when the guard, John Williams, took an iron bar to sprag the wheels of a truck as the train was moving too fast. In doing this, the bar struck him violently throwing him across the rail. The unfortunate man was so fearfully mutilated that he died about six hours afterwards. Deceased was a single young man.

**"Merthyr Express" 28 August 1875**

Miners' Union? The Amalgamated Association of Miners, held a Conference at Shrewsbury on Tuesday to try to form a Miner's Union. A representative of Vochrhiw was present.

**"Merthyr Express" 12 January 1867**

Dreadful Accident At Vochriw No.2 Colliery: 2 Men Killed. At 7.30 a.m. on Thursday, at No. 2 Colliery Vochriw, seven workmen entered the cage to descend to work. Richards, the lander, gave the signal to Thomas Lewis, engineman, who accidentally put the engine into reverse. The cage was pulled into the sheaves. Two men, David Williams, haulier, aged 22, and David Thomas, collier, 26, were thrown down the pit, for 440 yards. Both were single men.

The Rev. D. Morgan, late curate-in-charge of Vochrhiw, has been made curate of Pontlottyn.

**"Merthyr Express" 19 January 1867**

Accidental Death A verdict of accidental death was recorded at the inquest on 18 January, 1867, on David Williams and David Thomas, who were killed recently at the No. 2 Colliery, Vochrhiw

**"Merthyr Express" 30 March, 1867**

Explosion of Firedamp at No. " Pit, Vochrhiw There was an explosion of firedamp on Thursday morning at No. 2 Pit Vochrhiw. Two colliers - Thomas Evans of Dowlais, and John Davies of Rhymney, were rather badly burned about the face and arms. Fortunately, the explosion was confined to the area in which the two men worked and no further damage was done.

**"Merthyr Express" 25 May 1867**

On Monday last, death in pit of John Evans. He had only come three weeks before from the North.

**"Merthyr Express" 31 March 1877**

Colliery Death Thomas Jones of Mary St. Dowlais was killed last Tuesday at Vochrhiw No. 1 Pit.

**"Merthyr Express" 30 June 1877**

Colliery Death Early Wednesday morning, a haulier, Thomas Lewis Jones, aged 43, last living at 37 East-street. Dowlais was killed in the Vochrhiw Colliery when he was crushed by a train.

### **"Merthyr Express" 15 December 1877**

Colliery Death: Inquest An inquest on the body of Joseph Evans who was killed at Vochriw No. 2 Pit

### **"Merthyr Express" 16 February 1878**

Employment of Colliers On Wednesday evening, a public meeting was held at the Temperance Hall, Merthyr, in response to an invitation from the Rector to colliers to meet him there. The Rector was accompanied onto the platform by Mr. T. J. Dyke, Mr. Simons, Mr. Daniel and Mr. Simpson, a Liverpool gentleman, who has been remarkable for his generosity in aid of the distress now prevailing in South Wales. As the Rector explained, he had sent them tons of meat, peas, flour and rice, and a thousand pairs of clogs. That was for Merthyr alone, but his bounty had been equally large to other parts of the district, and he now came to invite colliers in want of work to go to Lancashire, where he believed at least a thousand could find ample employment. Mr. Simpson spoke and was warmly received. He explained that he was in communication with colliery owners in Lancashire, amongst whose pits 1,000 workmen could easily be distributed. Speeches were delivered by Mr. Simons, Mr. Dyke, Mr. Seddon, Mr. J. W. James, Mr. Rees Lewis, and votes of thanks accorded to the Rector and Mr. Simpson. Persons desirous of falling in with Mr. Simpson's offer can give their names to the Rector.

### **"Merthyr Express" 29 June 1878**

Fatal Accident On Saturday morning, one of the most dreadful accidents resulting in instantaneous death, befel a young man named Daniel Thomas. The man had only recently come to Rhymney from Vochriw, and was employed as a breaksman with No.2 engine. He had only commenced work in the job the previous Tuesday. Whilst involved in shunting work in the Rhymney yard side near the mouth of the tunnel, which is customarily done by the means of chains, the man was walking backwards in front of some empty iron stone trucks, when his foot accidentally became fastened between the point rails of the switch. He failed to release himself and was knocked down by a truck which passed completely over his poor body, and so mutilated it that one side of his head was smashed to atoms and his brains scattered about the place. On Tuesday, an inquest was held on the body by Mr. W. H. Brewer, coroner, at the Royal Arms, when evidence of the facts above related was given by John Stevens, the driver, and in accordance with which a verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

### **"Merthyr Express" 5 July 1879**

Inquest On Saturday, at the Rising Sun Inn, Mr. Overton, the district coroner, held and inquiry into the death of Evan Phillips, son of Sergeant Phillips, Pentwyn, who received serious injuries by an explosion of gas at No. 2 Pit Vochrhiw on the 15<sup>th</sup> May. The jury unanimously gave the following verdict: "That the boy died from injuries received from an accidental explosion of gas; but there was no blame whatever attached to the officials of the colliery."

### **"Merthyr Express" 13 September 1879**

Inquest An inquest was held at the Rising Sun Inn, under Thomas Williams, deputy coroner, into the death of Benjamin Shankland, who was killed in a 'fall of top' at Fochriw No. 2 Colliery. Evidence was given by John Evans, David Harris and Isaac Williams.

### **"Merthyr Express" 8 November 1879**

Merthyr Police Court: Coal Stealing at Vochriw Samuel Davies, a stoker, a respectably dressed young fellow, was summoned for stealing 112 lbs. of coal from the landing of No. 2 Pit Vochriw on the 25<sup>th</sup>. P.C. Evans, who is stationed up there, said that he witnessed the theft at about 3 o'clock in the morning, The defendant pleaded

guilty to the charge and was sentenced to five days imprisonment with hard labour.  
Monday - Before J. Bishop, Esq..

**“Merthyr Express” 31 July 1880**

An Improved Safety Lamp for Miners At the present time, when we are frequently being shocked by the publication of the details of dreadful colliery explosions, it is gratifying to learn that gentlemen who are practically acquainted with mining operations are endeavouring to devise means of preventing the recurrence of such shocking catastrophes. Joseph Rayner, M.A., a mining engineer from Wakefield, late member of the Midland Institute of Engineers, and who has been connected with coal mining operations all his life, is just introducing a patent improvement for safety lamps, which appears calculated to meet the long felt want. The lamp in question is not only keyless, but while it will stand any quantity of wind without having the light exhausted, the flame is instantly extinguished on any attempt being made to open the lamp, or immediately on any foul air being encountered. Mr. Rayner’s patent is rendered of still greater value by the fact that his improved extinguisher can be applied to all the numerous varieties of safety lamp at present in use in collieries. By a simple contrivance, the quantity of air entering the lamp can be regulated at will, and whilst the miner can instantly perceive danger, it is impossible for him to tamper with the lamp, which is completely encased.

**“Merthyr Express” 9 October 1880**

Colliery Death On Saturday last, Isaac Jones of Dowlais, a youth employed in a stall at the Dowlais Company’s No.1 pit, Vochriw, was instantly killed by a fall of rock.

**“Merthyr Express” 23 October 1880**

Colliery Death On Tuesday, at Vochriw No.1 Pit, a lad named Charles Evans, living at Dowlais Top, was severely crushed between a tram and the side.

**“Merthyr Express” 8 January 1881**

Colliery Accident On Tuesday afternoon, Edmund Williams, a young man living at Blanche Street, Dowlais, and employed as a collier at No.2 Pit Vochriw, was killed by a fall of stone whilst at work in his stall.

**“Merthyr Express” 29 January 1881**

Shocking Accident To A Collier At Dowlais Inn on Saturday, an inquest was held before Mr. Deputy-Coroner Williams on the body of David Thomas, collier, living at 177, High Street, who was run over by a locomotive at Fochriw on the 18<sup>th</sup> inst.. Deceased by a terrible mishap lost both his legs, and died within half an hour of the occurrence. A verdict of “Accidental death” was returned.

**“Merthyr Express” 30 June 1881**

Colliery Death Moses Williams, aged 19, was killed in a fall of roof in No.2 Pit, Vochriw.

**“Merthyr Express” 9 June 1883**

Engine House Fire at Vochriw On Thursday night last, about 12.30 a.m., an alarm was given at the Dowlais Police Station that the engine-house at Vochriw pit was on fire. Inspector Rodman and a number of constables obtained the hose, reel, etc., and went over to the spot, and found that the roof had fallen in. There was no hydrant for water near the spot, but fortunately, Mr. Turnbull, the chief engineer, got a connection, and by means of a donkey engine obtained a good supply of water. The large cross beams were steadily burning, and Inspector Rodman got on the top storey of the building, and the fire was soon extinguished. On making inquiries, it was found that some workmen had been repairing until 9.30 p.m. with open hand lamps, and after they had finished the engine house was locked up. At 11 p.m., fire was discovered in the upper part of the engine-house, and the conjecture is that some of the workmen had, in snuffing their

lamps, thrown the burning wick on some oily waste lying there. A good supply of water was, from the time of discovering the fire, brought to play on the frame work attached to the shaft, and thus saved that part. The fire took place near the up air way shaft, otherwise the men might have been suffocated.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 26 July 1884**

Pit Accident At the Big Pit, Vochriw, on Tuesday, a collier named William Thomas of 11, Railway-terrace, Vochriw, was severely injured by a fall of rock from the roof. He was carried home, where he was immediately attended by Dr. Davies, the district medical officer. The Board resolved not to grant the request.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 25 October 1884**

Accident On Monday morning a serious accident occurred at No.2 Pit Vochriw, to a boy of about fourteen years, the son of a collier named Morgan, who lives at Pentwyn. The boy was assisting his father when a great mass of debris from the top fell upon him, causing very serious injuries, one of his legs being broken. It is a painful coincidence that some time ago, the same boy had a similar accident whilst engaged in the same work. His condition is somewhat critical, though he appears to improve.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 24 January 1885**

##### The Firedamp At Vochriw: Death Of One Of The Injured Men And Of The Horse.

Mr. Thomas Williams, the district coroner, opened an inquiry at the Rising Sun Inn, Vochriw, on Monday afternoon, into the circumstances related to the death of David Davies, a colliery repairer, in the employ of the Dowlais Iron Company. The deceased was 32 years of age, and resided with his wife and one child at 2, Martin's-row, Vochriw. He was employed at No.2 Pit, and on the night of Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, he went to his work as usual. With other men, he was employed in placing the workings in a condition of security by placing great baulks of wood to prop up the top. This process is called “standing timber.” Everything went on in its usual way until shortly before 3 a.m. on the following morning. At that time, the deceased and another man were about to set up a baulk, and near them stood a haulier named Charles Williams, with his horse and tram ready to convey the debris brought down from the top by the setting up of the timber. While thus engaged, a heavy mass of debris fell from the top, and the firedamp, thus liberated, was immediately ignited with frightful effect. All three men, and the horse, were burned in the most shocking manner. The three men rushed wildly through the heading, mingling their agonising cries with those of the poor quadruped. Some of the other workmen who were in the pit at the time came to their assistance, and attended to their injuries as well as they could. When daylight dawned the sufferers were carried to their homes, where afterwards they received the efficient attentions of the skilful medical men in the employ of the Dowlais Iron Company. Davies was fearfully burned about the head, face and body, but it was thought possible he might recover. However, a serious relapse took place on Friday last, and in less than two hours after midnight his sufferings were terminated by death. The inquiry was adjourned until the 26<sup>th</sup> of February.

On Tuesday afternoon, the body of the unfortunate man was taken to the Brecon and Merthyr Railway station, whence it was afterwards conveyed for interment to a little village near Llangammarch, Breconshire.

It is reported that the doctors have now given up all hope of the recovery of the haulier, Charles Williams, who lives at 106, Ivor-street, Dowlais. The poor horse has died from the effect of its injuries. Of the third man, we have been unable to gather any information.

### **“Merthyr Express” 17 May 1890**

Great Increase of Colliers' Wages: 13¾% Advance On Saturday, at the Angel Hotel, Cardiff, a series of meetings was held of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Sliding-Scale Committee, on which sit representatives of the owners and the workmen. The following report of the sliding-scale audit for the three months ending 31 March, 1890, was supplied for publication, and it resolved that the wages paid to the workmen of the associated collieries shall be 46% above the standard of December 1879, being an advance of 13¾% on and from the 1st May 1890.

### **“Merthyr Express” 20 May 1893**

Terrible Death of a Boy by Falling Down a Shaft at Vochriw A shocking fatality occurred on Monday afternoon at the North Tunnel Pit, Fochriw, when a lad named William James Spacey, 14, employed to wheel stones across the mouth of the upcast shaft, by some means fell down the pit, and was literally smashed to pieces. An inquest was held at the Ivor Castle Inn, on Wednesday evening before Mr. R. J. Rhys, coroner, and a jury of whom Mr. R. J. Pryce was foreman. Mr. Lewis, H.M. Inspector of Mines, and Mr. Snape, Dowlais Iron Company, attended, as well as James Spacey, father of the boy, and Thomas Thomas, foreman to Mr. William Watts, contractor for masonry under the Dowlais Company. It appeared that the deceased had been employed for the last six weeks to attend the masons engaged in the building of a drift from the top of the upcast shaft at North Tunnel Pit Vochriw, towards the fan. Masons were working on both sides of the pit which was oval in shape - 18ft. by 10ft.. To avoid going all round, a strong wooden platform was thrown across the shortest diameter. It was made of a 12 inch square baulk, with two 3 inch by 12 inch planks either side of it. The planks were their own thickness above the baulk. Along the baulk, in this depression, it was the boy's work to wheel stones for the masons - from one side to the other - a brick being placed at the end for tipping. The boy had been wheeling on planks for some time, but began this work on Monday morning. He had been working all right till 4.35 p.m. when the accident occurred. Thomas Thomas walked across the planks and was being followed by the boy with his barrow. He stepped aside at the end to allow the boy to tip, when on looking around, he missed him. It was an occurrence of the moment, and there was not a sound to indicate that anything had happened. The weight of the barrow and the stones would be about three quarters of a cwt. The pit was 330 feet deep. Mr R. Snape, the colliery agent, said that as this was the upcast shaft, it was impractical to cover it over entirely, and the requirements of the Act had been complied with. The platform was fully five feet wide and free from vibration. The coroner said that the evidence pointed to the fact that the deceased had in some way stumbled and fallen. A verdict of “Accidental Death” was returned. The remains were recovered from the bottom of the shaft by David Lewis, fireman.

### **“Merthyr Express” 1 September 1894**

Dreadful Accident at Vochriw: A Boy Falls into a Tank of Boiling Water A terrible accident, ultimately fatal, occurred at Vochriw on Monday afternoon. It happened to a young fellow of 16, named John Lewis, who was in charge of an hydraulic pumping engine, commonly termed a donkey engine, at the Dowlais Iron Company's Collieries. He had been engaged in the oiling of the machinery, and whilst crossing a narrow plank over a tank of boiling water, which accumulated from the boilers, he somehow missed his footing and fell into the tank beneath. He was observed by Mr. Thomas the mechanic, who immediately went to the boy's assistance and rescued him. Dr. Davies was called but his services were of little use as the boy had been dreadfully scalded. There were no hopes of recovery from the first, and the boy died a few hours later. The deceased was the son of Mr. John Lewis, Dynevor-street, and the grandson of Mr.

John Davies, sawyer, Alma-street. He was a member of the "Henry Lloyd" section of the Cadets of Temperance. The funeral took place on Thursday at Pant Cemetery.

**"Merthyr Express" 8 September 1894**

The Fochriw Fatality Mr R. H. Rhys held an inquest at the Rising Sun Inn, Fochriw on Thursday on the body of John Lewis who met an awful death by scalding. His father said that he had been employed on the pit bank, working a donkey engine, about one week only. Henry Evans, engineman, stated that he worked about 50 yards from the boy. He had been with the him at 2 p.m., and on going back to the engine, the lad must have fallen into the tank of boiling water. He could not say how he fell. David Roberts, mechanic, said that he was returning to his pit at about 2 p.m. when he saw the boy in the tank. He was on his feet trying to get out. A plan of the surroundings was then supplied by Mr. Turnbull the engineer. The pool was about 2ft. 2in. deep at the time. He must have fallen in bodily as he was wet all over. The engineer said that the boy had to go over these planks to get to the donkey engine. The plank was 11 inches wide. There was no handrail. He considered them quite safe to go over. There was no night work at that place. Judging from where he saw him in the pool, he believed he must have slipped his foot by the overflow, and not have fallen from the planks. He lived for about two hours after he was taken home. The jury foreman, Mr. W. O. Morgan, schoolmaster, returned the verdict of "Death from misadventure."

**"Merthyr Express" 27 March 1897**

Accident An accident which might have ended fatally happened at No.1 Pit on Monday afternoon. A tube forming part of an engine in command of Mr. William Jones, Guest-street, suddenly burst, and in consequence a few of the persons who had gathered ready to ascend were scalded, more or less severely. Mr Dan Evans, Sun-row, was scalded rather badly, whilst three others received minor injuries. We are glad to know that all are now progressing favourably.

**"Merthyr Express" 5 November 1898**

Dowlais Collieries The two Fochriw pits, and the Long Work Pit, Cwmbargoed, were idle on Friday last owing to 'stop-trucks.' A number of the workmen employed at the Big Pit, Fochriw, ceased to work on Monday noon, the necessary months notice having expired, in consequence of a dispute over terms for cutting coal.

**"Merthyr Express" 26 November 1898**

Dispute at Fochriw Collieries The wage difficulty at the Big Pit, Fochriw, has been amicably settled, and the men have returned to work.

**"Merthyr Express" 25 March 1899**

Supper On Friday night, a supper, promoted by the fitters of the Dowlais Fochriw Collieries, was held at the at the Mount Pleasant Inn, Pentwyn, when that tables were decorated most tastefully, the occasion being St. Patrick's night. The arrangements had been carried out by a committee, which had Mr. W. Bellamy as chairman. A word of praise is also due to the numerous singers which took part, namely: William Griffiths, John Lebourne, George Jones, Willie J. Barry, James Davies, Alfred Evans, William Willams, John Davies. The pianist was Miss Lizzie Gwynn.

**"Merthyr Express" 27 May 1899**

Mining Success At the annual examination held recently at Cardiff, Mr. Tom Roberts, Martin-street, was successful in obtaining a second class certificate, qualifying him as an under-manager of a mine. Mr. Roberts is the son of Mr. Thomas Roberts, the under-manager of the No. 2 Colliery Fochriw, under whom he is at present employed as a fireman.

### **“Merthyr Express” 9 June 1900**

Coal Trade: The Dispute at Fochriw Owing to the prolongation of the dispute, and the absence of any visible signs of a settlement, the men employed at the No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, handed in notices on Friday, to cease work at the end of the present month.

### **“Merthyr Express” 21 July 1900**

The Strike At Fochriw The prospect of any immediate settlement of the dispute between the No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, and the Dowlais Iron Company, appears to be very far removed, and negotiations are for the present at a deadlock. The men affected, who are all unionists, numbering about 150, have now been idle a fortnight, and received their first strike pay on Saturday at the Corner House Inn, Ivor-street, when of Messrs. Alfred Onions, Tredegar, and Thomas Richards, Beaufort, (the general treasurer and secretary respectively of the South Wales Miners' Federation), and Mr. John Davies, (the local miners' agent), attended to make the payment of the money. Some of the strikers have obtained employment in neighbouring collieries not affiliated to the South Wales and Monmouthshire Coalowners' Association

### **“Merthyr Express” 28 July 1900**

Meeting of Dowlais District of Miners The monthly meeting of the Dowlais District of the South Wales Miners' Federation was held at the Clarence Hotel, Dowlais on Saturday. Mr. Rees Thomas, Fochriw, president, occupied the chair, and every Lodge was represented with the exception of the Pontlottyn section. The dispute at the No. 1 Pit Fochriw, was considered, and it was resolved to extend the fullest support of the district to the men on strike, a motion being carried that the whole of the people employed in the Dowlais Collieries be levied on their behalf. The change of badges was arranged for tomorrow (Saturday), and the inspection of membership cards to take place next week. A deputation presented a request that a lodge should be formed for pit surfacemen alone, but the meeting could not see its way clear to accede to the wishes of those concerned. It was decided, however, inasmuch as the proceedings of the various lodges are conducted in the vernacular, that an English-speaking lodge be established in the interest of those to whom Welsh is an alien tongue. In view of the relatively small membership that the Pontlottyn Lodge, and the difficulty of obtaining an acting secretary, a proposal that the existing members should be transferred to the Fochriw Lodge was agreed to. Mr. John Davies, C.C., (local miners' agent) reported upon district matters, and Mr. David Thomas, the secretary, stated that £30 have been received in payment of compensation for accidents, and that the parents of Benjamin Paul, Dowlais Top, who was killed at Fochriw, had been paid £50 in settlement of their claim.

Federation Day at Dowlais: Demonstration of Colliery Workmen Monday was "Federation Day" in the Dowlais coalfield, and the huge demonstrations organised for the occasion was conspicuously successful. It had been ordained by the Executive Committee of the South Wales Miners' Federation, to which the district is affiliated, that Dowlais should join forces with the West Monmouthshire Valleys in the mass meeting at Brynmawr on Tuesday. The local leaders, however, preferred to ignore the decree of the higher authority, and decided to arrange, as last year, a demonstration "on their own." The town was gaily decorated in honour of the event, and almost every street was freely embellished with mottoes, flags, banners, and bunting of varied hues. The leading thoroughfares, High-street, Union-street, and North-street, to particularise, were one gorgeous blaze of colour. East-street, however, made the supreme coup d'etat with an imposing triumphal arch of evergreens and Union Jacks erected by Mr. D. H. Huggins, Clarence Hotel, treasurer of the Dowlais District of Miners. It was flanked on each side by a portrait of the late veteran miners' champion, Alderman David Morgan,

Aberdare, and two hands clasped in friendship, signifying "Unity is strength." The whole was surmounted by the motto "Success to the South Wales Miners' Federation," which spanned the roadway. On the reverse side, was the same inscription in Welsh, and pictures in colour of a pithead and a miner working in his stall. The whole was admirably executed by Mr. Matt de Lacy, painter and decorator, North Street. Shortly after 10 o'clock, the Federationists, about 2,500 in number, all wearing the membership badge, assembled at their several lodge-rooms, and the Prince Llewelyn and Ifor Lodges, having proceeded to Caeharris, were joined by the contingents from Fochriw, Bedlinog, Pontlottyn, Pantywaun, Deri, and Caeharris. Forming into a procession, headed by the Dowlais Volunteer Band and the Deri Brass Band, a march around the town was entered upon, a waggonette containing Messrs. John Williams (miners' agent, Skewen, Neath), Wm. Hopkins (engineers' agent, Aberdare), John Davies (miners' agent, Dowlais), Rees Thomas (Fochriw, chairman of the Dowlais district), and David Thomas (secretary) leading the way. Parading High-street, where the Britannia and Clarence Lodges, and the local branch of the Enginemen's, Stokers' and Surface Craftsmen's Association fell into line, and thence to the end of the New-road. Having met the Penydarren and Twynrhodyn sections, a return was made via Gellifaelog, Union-street, North-street, Francis-street, Victoria-street, and Station-road, the long detour finally concluding at the Central School-yard, where a mass meeting was held. Altogether, it is estimated that 2,500 miners participated in the procession, but only a comparatively small proportion remained to hear the addresses of the several speakers.

Mr. Rees Thomas, Fochriw, chairman of the Dowlais district of miners, presided, and opened the meeting by congratulating the miners upon the splendid show they had made at the second annual demonstration. The Federation was undoubtedly doing a grand work, and was ever increasing its sphere of influence and power. Much, however, remained to be accomplished, and it was only by securing full and perfect cohesion amongst the members could they hope to achieve great results (cheers). Speeches followed from Mr. John Williams, Neath, Mr. Wm. Johns, Hirwain, (in Welsh), and Mr. William Hopkins, Aberdare. The following resolution was then moved by Mr. Evan Evans, checkweigher, Fochriw, seconded by Mr. William Walters, Fochriw, and carried unanimously: 'That this annual demonstration of the Dowlais district miners, learn with pleasure that the Federation is still increasing in membership and funds, and resolves to continue to promulgate the principles of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, by making every effort possible to secure the adoption of a Board of Conciliation with a minimum rate of wages for all colliery workmen. We desire to thank all the Members of Parliament who voted (and in other ways supported) the Miners' Eight Hours Bill from bank to bank, the Coal Mines' Regulation Amendment Bill, and again urge upon the government the necessity for these bills being passed into law. We also call upon the Government to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, by abolishing the contracting out clause, the inclusion of a minimum for disablement pay, the amendment of the words "in his employment," and provide compensation for first two weeks etc. We are also of the opinion that the Government should effectively deal with providing old age pensions. Further, we protest against any special rules for mines becoming operated without first consulting with the workmen thereon.'

Mr John Davies, Dowlais, speaking in Welsh, dealt with the strike at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, and appealed for the moral and financial support of the district on behalf of their fellow workmen affected by the dispute. A fierce struggle with the employers was threatened, and it was incumbent upon them to render every possible aid to the men in order to gain a victory. It was agreed unanimously that the levy of 2 shillings per month per adult member be paid and one shilling per boy. A further decision was arrived at



with reference to certain grievances existing at the Long Work Seam, No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, that the same measure of support would be extended if the occasion demands. The question of the continuance of the Dowlais' Colliers Sick and Disablement Fund was considered, and it was resolved to continue on the present basis. A proposition regarding an Old Age Pension Scheme was ruled to be embodied in the resolution, and was not dealt with.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 4 August 1900**

Fatal Accident Near Fochriw Pits On Friday afternoon, an underground hostler, named Joseph Allen, 6, Broad-street, Dowlais, was blocked by some tracks just as he came up from No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, and died while on the way to Dowlais. An inquest was held at the Police Station, Dowlais, on Monday last by the coroner, Mr. R. J. Rhys, and Mr. White, one of the inspectors of mines, was also present. The deceased's son, William George Allen, said that his father was 46 years of age, and worked as a hostler at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw; he was quite active, and could see and hear well. John Jones, horse inspector under the Dowlais Iron Company, said that deceased was coming towards him, when he was blocked; this happened at between three and four o'clock on Friday afternoon. Deceased was talking to the witness with some trucks between them, and when they came to a gap between the tracks, Allen came into the gap and was blocked; there was a space of about one yard between the trucks where deceased was blocked. The witness got hold of Allen, and as the trucks slackened, he moved him to the side, and laid him on the ground until help came. The engine was about the length of eight trucks, where it was shunting, and was whistling now and again as it was doing its work. David Jones said that he was driving the "Kingfisher" that day, and was shunting some six wagons, and they were to be put into three roads; his engine was a distance of about 36 yards from where Allen was blocked; he had touched the whistle; the wagons were not pushed, they went of themselves after a touch was given them. He did not see anyone about, and he always touched the whistle before moving. Mr. Howell Jones, deputy coal manager, swore to a plan of the spot that was produced, and explained how the accident happened, and his evidence was in accordance with the that of the previous witnesses. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 18 August 1900**

Vochriw Dispute A meeting of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Joint Sliding-scale Committee was held in Cardiff, on Tuesday, Mr. Archibald Hood in the chair, and Mr. William Abraham (Mabon) M.P., in the vice-chair. It was reported that the committee had considered the subject of the continued strike of the men employed at the Dowlais Company's No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, the men having been on strike since July 1<sup>st</sup>. The arrangement arrived at the last meeting of the joint committee was that the men should resume work, on condition that the dispute would be investigated by Messrs. Foster Brown and William Abraham. It was, however, reported that, although the two representatives had been willing to make the inquiry into the dispute, the men had not resumed operations. The workmen's representatives intimated that they had, at their meeting on Monday, appointed two of their number to see the Fochriw men, and endeavour to bring about a resumption of work, and if they did so, the dispute would be investigated.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 6 October 1900**

Colliery Accident at Fochriw Pit An inquest was held at the Police Station, Dowlais, on Friday last, on the body of Thomas Bateman, Market-street, who was killed at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, on the previous Wednesday morning. The identifying witness, Joseph Evans, brother-in-law, said that the deceased was 34 years of age, and that he was a foreman haulier. William Jones Angell, 26, Guest-street, Fochriw, collier, said that the

accident took place about 8 o'clock in the morning, and that he was the first to get to the deceased. Witness was working at the top of the steep, when he heard a noise as if the trams were turning over, and the fall came immediately after. He went on at once and did what he could to get out the men. The man that was injured (Henry Thomas) was lying in the tram, which was not upset. Some timber was over him, and a big stone on top of that. The timber had saved him. The dead man, Thomas Bateman, was completely covered by the fall. They did not get to his body for half an hour, nor to the injured man for an hour. John Davies said that the trams were derailed and the timber dislodged. Thomas John Wright of Pentwyn, haulier, said that he was not on the journey with Bateman, but in the last going down the road previous to the accident. He was taking a horse down the road, which was all right then. He did not hear the fall, but heard a boy shout, and so went back, and fetched the colliers. Mr. Howell R. Jones, colliery manager, produced a plan of the workings, and said that he saw the fall within the hour, as did H.M. Inspector, who happened to be in pit on another matter at the time. The accident was in the west branch drift. Two trams were there at the time, and it was the first journey that morning. Henry Thomas and Thomas Bateman were in the last trams going up, and the trams were derailed in opposite directions. Henry Thomas was found in the last tram, and Bateman in the road. Spars of timbers and collar were down. In his opinion, the first tram knocked out the first timber, and the roof dislodged the other three. The timbers were good, and are good, though knocked out, and good enough to go back. He could not account for the trams going off the rails. Henry Thomas has no explanation to give of the accident, and he is much too injured to come to give evidence himself. It is quite usual for the two men to be in the last tram. The road is in the same condition today as when the accident happened, and coal is being carried over it all right every day since. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned. The funeral, which took place on Saturday afternoon at Pant Cemetery, was an exceptionally large one. Besides a vast concourse of colliery workmen and the general public, the Dowlais Philharmonic Male Voice Society, of which deceased was a faithful member, attended in its full strength, and as a token of respect, each choralist wore an armlet of white ribbon.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 20 October 1900**

The Dispute at Vochriw Colliery An early settlement of the long-standing dispute of nearly three months duration at the Long Work Vein, Vochriw, is hoped for. Mr. Ben Davies, Pontypridd, visited the town on Saturday evening, and, as a result of the consultation with the men on strike, it is believed that they will shortly return to work, and allow the question to be dealt with by the joint arbitrators, Messrs. T. Foster Brown and W. Abraham, supported by the Sliding-scale Committee. It is on the distinct understanding that the miners first resume of their employment that the arbitrators will sit on the the matter.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 17 November 1900**

Vochriw Colliery Dispute At the meeting of the Joint Sliding-scale Committee held on Tuesday at Cardiff, it was reported that in compliance with a recommendation passed at a recent meeting of the Joint Committee, the four-feet workmen at the No. 1 Colliery Fochriw, who had previously been on strike, had resumed work, and agreed to refer the matters in dispute to the Joint Committee. That being so, Messrs. T. Foster Brown and William Abraham were disposed to inquire into the dispute.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 19 January 1901**

Shocking Accidents At Fochriw Pits During the past week, very painful accidents have taken place at pits belonging to Guest, Keen and Company, three men being killed and two injured. At the White Horse Inn, Merthyr, on Friday morning, an inquest was

held touching the death of Elias Evans, aged 20, of Twynyrodyn, assistant engine-driver, who was killed at No. 1 Pit Vochriw, the previous day, by being drawn into the coils of a rope around a drum. Mr. Adams, assistant inspector of mines, Mr. Hopkins, on behalf of the Enginemen's Association, Mr. Howell Jones, manager of the pit, and Mr. Loveband, engineer, were all present. The deceased's father identified the body.

John Lumley, haulier at the pit, said he found Evans on the dram tangled up in the wire rope. His left hand was on the drum, under the ropes, and his stomach was against the drum, and his head at the side of it. A spanner was on the ground near him. The crab engine had only been working about 24 minutes, and then he heard the deceased groaning. There were about 15 to 20, coils on the drum when the engine was stopped. Samuel Hill, the engine driver, said he used a spanner, and so did the deceased, to guide the first two or three coils of the rope on the drum in proper order, and then the rope went round all right. The spanner was about 18 inches long. He had not noticed the rope was jagged, so that deceased's clothes would become entangled. The drum was quite low, so that the deceased did not have to reach over the drum to guide the rope. Mr. Loveband, mechanical engineer, said the spanner was as good as anything to guide the rope; he could not think of anything better. He produced a plan of the site of the accident. Mr Howell Jones said the ropes travelled at the rate of about three miles an hour. Samuel Hill, recalled, said he always touched the slack rope with his hands; he was bound to do so. Mr. Loveband said he could not explain this; it was very unwise to use the hand when the drum was in motion. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and added a rider that a better means should be adopted for guiding the rope on the drum.

Another sad and serious accident took place about noon on Saturday at No. 2, or Rhas Las Pit, belonging to Messrs. Guest, Keen and Co. Limited, whereby two men lost their lives, and two of their fellows were badly injured. Reports of the mishap reached Dowlais in the course of an hour or so, and the news was quickly noised abroad. The nature and full extent of the accident were, however, not known at the outset, and the necessarily scanty details to hand were grossly exaggerated, so that the wildest rumours gained currency, and the affair became magnified into a bigger colliery disaster. At Fochriw itself, the affrighted inhabitants, fearful of the worst, flocked to the pithead, which lies within a stone's throw of the village, whilst in Dowlais, a perfect ferment of excitement prevailed, and large numbers of people made their way to Caeharris station, where the colliery workmen detrain, to ascertain the truth. More assuring information was, however, received, and served to allay the distracted feelings of the many.

Briefly the facts are these. Owing to the fatality earlier in the week to the winding engine-man, Elias Evans, his comrades, in order to attend the funeral on Saturday afternoon, worked only a short day, ceasing employment at 12 instead of 2 o'clock. Just about noon, the journey of 12 loaded trams of coal - the last of the day - was being drawn up the 9-ft incline. Suddenly, after proceeding a distance of about 100 yards, the last nine trams became disconnected, and made a wild run back for some 30 or 40 yards, finally crashing into several workmen who were making their way up the drift towards the shaft. A harrowing scene of indescribable disorder prevailed. Help was speedily forthcoming, and after the elapse of considerable time, and with extreme difficulty, the workmen were at last extricated from the avalanche of coal and debris. One unfortunate fellow, James Hugh Jones, collier, Pantscallog, Dowlais, was found to have been killed outright. He was 32 years of age, married, but had no children. Thomas Lewis, a haulier, a youth of 17, living with his parents at 15, Ivor-street, was shockingly crushed about the lower part of the body, and he died shortly after being conveyed home, Dr. Stuart Cresswell being in attendance at the time. Two other

workmen, Thomas Bassington, collier, Deri, and Thomas Morris, roadman, aged 29, Penydarren, also suffered serious injuries and shock, the latter sustaining an ugly lacerated wound on the cheek, and one of his ears was almost torn off. They are, however, making favourable progress under the care of Dr. Davies (Fochriw), and Dr. Murison (Penydarren). Meanwhile, Mr. Henry W. Martin, the general manager of collieries, Mr. Howell Jones, deputy manager, and other officials, reached the spot by special train from Dowlais, and gave every possible assistance. Shortly afterwards, the dead and injured were conveyed to their respective homes, the arrival of the train at Caeharris station being awaited by an immense gathering of people.

The inquest upon the bodies of two men, James Hugh Jones, and Thomas Lewis, was held on Tuesday morning at the Police Station, Dowlais. Mr. Thomas Jones, grocer, Church-street, was the foreman of the jury. Mr. T. Adams, assistant inspector of mines was present, also, Mr. Howell Jones, deputy colliery manager, Mr. J. Vaughan, chief mechanical engineer, and Mr. John Davies, miners' agent.

After evidence of identification, Thomas Morgan, rider in the No. 4 Drift of Fochriw No. 2 Pit, deposed that he was not on the journey that broke, and neither did he see the parting. He arranged with Elias Davies yesterday to take charge of the journey of trams which broke loose. He did not see the journey starting, but he saw the nine trucks which parted after they had come down. He helped to pick up Jones, who was dead, and he saw Lewis, and the other injured men. There were three horses killed. The drift was the ordinary travelling road for the men to go along, and it was well supplied with manholes. Twelve trams constituted the regular load. The shackles and pins coupling the third and fourth trams were produced, and the witness stated that they were found on the tram that broke away. In answer to questions from Mr. Adams, witness said he had been a rider for eight years. A crab brought the trams up to the No. 3 level, and the big engine up to the No. 4. He had never had any trouble with the engine giving the rope a sudden pull.

Edwin Davies, assistant haulier and shackler at the bottom of the number of No. 4 Drift, said he shackled five trams of the journey. There were two coal trams in front, a tub, and then two more coal trams behind the tub. One of the two hauliers, William Evans and David Williams, must have shackled the tub to the tram behind it, but he could not say which. John Morgan went with the trams for about 300 yards, and then Elias Davies would take charge of them. William Evans brought out two trams to one of which the tub was shackled, and David Williams brought out the other two in front. It was the practice for the haulier who drove out from the face-level, and it was his trams which were behind the tub.

Mr. Howell Jones explained the plans of the workings of the pit, and said that the gradient of the drift was about three inches in the yard. The average width of the road was about 6 ft, and there were manholes at regular distances, as required by the Act of Parliament. The journey proceeded about 90 yards, and ran back a distance of 40 yards. Elias Davies, assistant foreman haulier, said he was looking after the three horses which drew coal to the parting. He hitched the journey from the No. 4 Drift to the journey that came from the No. 3. He fetched seven trams on to the five for the big rope. He rode on the journey, between the second tram and the tub, at the request of Morgan, it being his practice to ride the drift when the rider was absent. He noticed all the shackles of the journey before starting with his safety lamp. He put his lamp between each tram so as to have light to see the hitching. He was able to say that the shackles of the first five trams were all right. He heard the pin on the other side of the tub click, and then he knew something was wrong. When the journey separated he went flying with the other three trams. In reply to Mr. John Davies, witness said he did not notice how far the man

found dead was from a manhole. Mr. Adams also questioned the witness on the point, and Mr. Howell Jones said that the deceased was found exactly opposite a manhole.

Edwin Davies, recalled, said that as the five trams went by him, he examined them with his lamp, and saw nothing the matter. He took the shackles produced off the tram that ran back. He could not say which was attached to the tub, and which to the tram.

Thomas Hughes said he worked in the fair level. On Saturday, he was on his way out, and saw Elias Davies on the crossing, waiting for the horses to clear. He stood there for some time, because he did not want to go in front of the journey. Elias Davies hitched the rope to the full journey, and told witness to keep far enough back as he did not care much for the tub. When the trams ran back, witness was by the crab. Some men and three horses got in front of him. He did not tell any of these men about the journey having gone on.

Elias Davies, recalled, said the reason why he told Hughes he did not care much about the tub was because the bottom plate was not so strong as the bottom plate of the trams. David Davies, haulier, who was so deaf he had to be shouted at, causing the Coroner to suggest that he should not be employed underground, said his horse was the last of the three killed. He followed behind his horse, but he did not know how many men were in front of him, but he knew there were several behind. When the trams came back he got into a manhole.

Mr. Vaughan said the shackles produced were home-made, of best selected scrap iron, all forged solid, of the very best material that can be put in them. The style of coupling was certainly the safest that could be adopted, and the one which was most generally used. There was no difference between the height of the hitching plate of the tub and the hitching plate of the trams. If the pin, which was now bent, was passed down through the upper eye of the shackle and through the eye in the hitching plate, and then only partly into the lower eye, then with any extra strain it would gradually come up with a pull, and the effect would be to twist the top part of it upwards. If it were attached to the tub, it would not have so far to go as if attached to a tram, because the tub had a thinner hitching plate. The bend must have been caused by the trams parting. The Coroner then proceeded to review the evidence, and pointed out that, if the men were to be believed, and they had no reason to doubt their evidence, the shackling had been twice examined, and if that were so, neither of them had noticed anything wrong. Mr. Vaughan had declared the material used in the shackles to be of the best, and the particular design to be the best he knew of, and the most generally adopted. The mischief, according to Mr. Vaughan's theory, was that the pin had not been sent right home into the eye of the jaw of the shackle. The jury, after a short consultation in private, returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," finding that there was no blame to be attached to anybody.

**Funeral** The interment of the deceased men, James Hugh Jones and Thomas Lewis, took place on Thursday afternoon at Pant Cemetery. There was an exceptionally large attendance, the men employed at the Vochriw pits, which were idle for the day, being present almost en masse. Before proceeding to the cemetery, both corteges joined to form one huge procession, which was of an imposing and impressive character.

### **"Merthyr Express" 9 February 1901**

**Fatal Colliery Accident At Fochriw** The inquest on the body of John Swancott of Dowlais, killed at No. 2 Pit Fochriw, on Wednesday night of last week, was held at the Police Station, Dowlais, on Friday afternoon last, by Mr. Coroner Rhys. Mr. Howell Jones, deputy colliery manager, and Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, were also present. Benjamin Swancott, brother to the deceased, said that his brother was 31 years old, and

worked as a repairer at No. 2 Pit. He had worked underground for about 12 years. He was married and had two children.

Richard Jones, aged 17, labourer and waller, said he worked as a shackler sometimes. He was shackling all-day Wednesday at the double parting. At quarter to five in the afternoon, he had shackled the last journey of 10 trams of coal, and left the journey at the parting called the "Bottom parting." He was confident that he had shackled each tram properly, and put his hand on each pin to see that it was through. Evan Jones, aged 18, night driver, said that he saw the journey of trams going up the parting during the night, when he was bringing up another lot of trams; Swancott was riding a journey. The journey came back about five yards, and his light went out. He was going to get a light when he found he could not go as the trams were upset on the road, and he then went and told the night firemen, William White; the trams parted between the first and second tram.

David Coles, mason, was working at this pit on the drift, but there was no room and for him to do his work and tail of this journey was clear. He was the first who saw Swancott; who was lying in the middle of the road quite dead, and the tram was on top of him.

Watkin Williams, the driver of the hauling engine that works the bottom drifts, said he had the signal to haul the first journey about 11 o'clock. He found that there was something wrong with the journey after hauling it about 400 yards, and then he stopped immediately. Only one tram came up on a rope and nine ran back.

Mr. Howell Jones, deputy colliery manager, produced a plan. In reply to Mr. John Davies, he said that there was a distance of 11 inches between the bottom of the shackle and the road. The shackler had been shackling for two years, and had shackled at the pit top before that. The shackle was identical to the one produced at the last inquest on the men killed at the same pit, and was as perfect a shackle as could be used. The Coroner remarked that this kind of shackle is the one in general use in the South Wales Collieries. Mr. John Davies asked Mr. Jones if he did not think it possible for the bottom of the pin to touch the rollers on which the rope worked, and Mr. Jones said it could not, as there was plenty of space between. In reply to the coroner, Mr. Jones said that the trams had travelled 350 yards before they parted, and he could not account for their having parted in any way. The road rises all the way and the gradient is 3 to 3½ inches to the yard.

The Coroner, in summing up, said that this accident seemed to him almost identically the same as the previous one that had happened about two or three weeks ago, and it was most difficult to find out what caused it. The shackle seemed all right, but it would be a good thing if a shackle could be devised that would be safer, but, nonetheless, it was the kind that was used all about this neighbourhood. The jury, after deliberating in private, returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and that no blame could be attached to anyone.

The funeral of the deceased took place on Monday at Pant Cemetery, and there was a large attendance of fellow workmen and friends.

#### **"Merthyr Express" 13 April 1901**

Presentation A very interesting presentation took place at other Fochriw Board School on Thursday evening last, when Mr. John Powell was presented, and on the occasion of his marriage, with a silver-plated tea service by the Fochriw Mining Class. The present was given in recognition of services rendered to the class during the past few months. Mr. John Powell has supplied a long-felt want in Fochriw, as it has been known for years that only a teacher was wanting to make a good class, many intending students walking as far as Bedlinog and Pontlottyn on week nights, after finishing their

days work, to attend classes in mining. One very interesting feature of the presentation was the taking of a flash-light photograph of the class by one of the members, who is an amateur photographer.

**“Merthyr Express” 27 July 1901**

Three Colliers Burnt At Fochriw Just about noon on Saturday, three colliers employed at the No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, were badly burned in consequence of a "blower" of gas firing whilst they were at work. A married man by the name of Edward Moore, living at Deri, was the greatest sufferer, and he was removed to the Merthyr and Dowlais General Hospital for treatment. Another man, Thomas Griffiths, married, residing at the back of the Clarence Hotel, Dowlais, was taken home; as also was the third, a youth living at Deri. A rumour was current that Moore had succumbed to his injuries, but it is reported that he and his fellow sufferers are now out of danger, and making satisfactory progress towards recovery. Naked lights are used in the colliery.

**“Merthyr Express” 3 August 1901**

Fochriw Pit Explosion On Saturday, at the Merthyr General Hospital, Mr. R. J. Rhys held an inquest on the body of Edward Moore, collier, who died on Thursday from burns sustained on the previous Saturday at the Fochriw Pit. Mr. Dyer Lewis, assistant inspector of mines, was present, as were Mr. Stuart Martin, and Mr. Jones, the manager of the pit, who both represented the Company. Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, was also in attendance. The evidence showed that the deceased and a lad, named Mansbridge, were working together, and that when a haulier, named Griffiths, came into their stall to take away a tram, an explosion occurred, by which all three were burned, the deceased being the most severely injured. Naked lights were being used with permission. The presence of a very slight quantity of gas had been noticed in the roof of the deceased's working place previously, but not on the morning of the explosion, and the presumption was that the gas there lurking became ignited owing to some unaccountable disturbance in a current of air. The jury came to the conclusion that the explosion was purely accidental, and that there was no blame to be attached to anybody, and they returned a verdict accordingly.

**“Merthyr Express” 24 August 1901**

Accident to a Polish Jew at Fochriw Pit A Polish Jew who works at the pit bank of Fochriw No. 1 Pit, was shifting a tram on the pit top on Tuesday last, when he was knocked down and the tram went over him. Fortunately, he was only badly bruised, and was taken to the Merthyr Hospital on the GWR Ambulance car.

**“Merthyr Express” 4 January 1902**

Fochriw Mining Class: Social A pleasant evening was spent by the members of the Fochriw Mining Class at the Board School on Monday week, each member bringing two friends. Invitations were also given to the Ambulance Club. Mr. J. Prichard was the secretary, and made all of the arrangements. The class wish to thank Mrs. J. H. Jones, Miss Williams and others, for the kind way they assisted at tables, also Mr. Payne for looking after the fires. Great credit is due to Mr. John Powell, the teacher, for the way in which he has persevered with the class. He has already been paid the compliment of having the most successful mining class in the district.

**“Merthyr Express” 11 January 1902**

Pit Accident at Fochriw On Thursday last, the cage fell to the bottom of No. 1 Pit, a distance of 400-500 feet. Fortunately there were no casualties. The colliers left by the No. 2 shaft. There was no work at No. 1 Pit for a few days.

**“Merthyr Express” 1 February 1902**

Colliery Doctor A meeting was held at Fochriw Colliery concerning new arrangements for engaging and paying a Doctor.

Companies Amalgamate At the meeting in Birmingham last Monday, Messrs. Guest, Keen & Co. amalgamated with Messrs. Nettlefolds Ltd.

**“Merthyr Express” 3 May 1902**

Colliery Death Mr. Wm. Kinhane of Penyardarren was killed at the No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, on the 17<sup>th</sup> April.

**“Merthyr Express” 7 June 1902**

Explosion at No. 2 Pit: Eight Dowlais Men Die In the early hours of Wednesday last, there was an explosion at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw. The pit was sunk in 1860 to a depth of 420 yards. The accident happened in the east side of the west district in the Rhaslas. Eight Dowlais men were killed. They were: Robert Thomas Hughes, aged 18, single; Owen H. Williams, aged 48, married and with one child; Evan J. Cheek, aged 24, married with one child; William Jones, aged 30 married with one child; William Eustace, aged 19, single; William Strange, aged 17, single; David Evans, aged 17, single; Edward Williams, aged 38, married. The first two named are North Walians.

**“Merthyr Express” 14 June 1902**

The Fochriw Explosion An inquest has been held on the bodies of the men killed in the recent explosion. The funerals have also taken place.

**“Merthyr Express” 5 July 1902**

Mining Examination Results Mr. William Thomas and Mr. J. Richards were both successful in the recent Mining examinations being placed in the second class. Their teacher is Mr. John Powell.

**“Merthyr Express” 23 August 1902**

Sequel to Fochriw Explosion The two firemen - Griffith Davies and William White - were fined 20 shillings each and costs.

**“Merthyr Express” 30 August 1902**

South Wales Miners' Federation Demonstration The Fochriw Brass Band and the Dowlais Volunteer Band, followed by Keir Hardie M.P., led the procession at the above demonstration at Dowlais. The fight over the sliding scale and the eight hour day were the main subjects of the speeches that followed the procession.

**“Merthyr Express” 6 September 1902**

Colliery Explosion at Abertysswg 14 men were killed, and 23 injured on Wednesday last, at No. 1 McLaren Pit, Abertysswg, owned by the Tredegar Iron and Steel Company.

**“Merthyr Express” 15 November 1902**

Fochriw Collier Killed Thomas John Thomas, 1, Brook-row, Fochriw, aged 21 years, was killed on Friday last by a fall of roof at his workplace. He was the son of Mr. John Thomas, who rendered such conspicuous service at the explosion a short time ago. Young Thomas John played at centre three-quarter for the Fochriw Rugby team. He was also last season's cricket captain.

**“Merthyr Express” 22 November 1902**

Funeral The funeral of Thomas John Thomas took place at Pant Cemetery. Rev. J. Jones officiated, supported by the Rev. R. D Jenkins. Also present were members of the local Rechabite Lodge and the Carmel Choir.

**“Merthyr Express” 17 January 1903**

Fatality to Collier Boy On Wednesday afternoon, a lad named Daniel William Williams, aged 15, whose parents live near the Horse and Groom Inn, Gellifaelog, was killed by a fall of stone at Fochriw No. 2 Pit, where he was employed. The inquest was held on Thursday by the Coroner, Mr. R. J. Rhys.



**“Merthyr Express” 14 March 1903**

Accident to a Collier Whilst following his employment at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, on Thursday afternoon, a man named John Lewis, living in Gellifaelog-terrace, was struck by a fall of stone from the roof. He sustained serious injuries to his head, and his leg was fractured. The unfortunate man, who is married and has a large family, was removed home, where he lies in a precarious condition.

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**“Merthyr Express” 27 June 1903**

Dowlais Collier Killed at Fochriw: Promising Career Cut Short We regret to announce the death through an accident underground at Rhas Las Pit of Mr. David Jenkins, son of Mr. Evan Jenkins, Guest Cottages, Penywern, and brother of Mr. William Jenkins, conductor of the Dowlais Temperance Choir. Although only 19 years of age, David Jenkins had reached a good position as a musician, having passed the examination of the Tonic Sol-fa College with honours. Great regret is felt on account of his untimely death, as he was a particularly lovable young man, and his loss will be keenly felt, not only among the family circle, but by his friends in general. The inquest was held at the Police Station, Dowlais, on Saturday morning last, by Mr. R. J. Rhys, district coroner, and there were present, Mr. Dyer Lewis, H.M. Inspectors of Mines, Mr. Stuart Martin, deputy manager, colliery department, Messrs. G.K.N. Ltd., and Mr. John Davies, miners' agent. After the jury had been sworn, Evan Jenkins, father, gave evidence of identification. He said that his son had always worked as a collier, having a place of his own about three or four months, and had his brother, Benjamin, working with him.

Benjamin Jenkins, aged 16, collier, then gave evidence. He said that he worked with his brother David, and that he was in the place where he was killed on Thursday morning. They had not started to work, and it was about eight o'clock. He had not noticed the fireman's mark, but he usually put one on the top or on the cogs. He saw the fireman of the district as they were going to their place, but the firemen did not give any instruction as to setting posts etc.. His brother tried the place, and also the stone that fell on him, and his brother asked him to get a post to put under it. He got a post, but it was too long, and his brother told him that he would cut the job. Just then the stone fell on him. The first to come to help was William Evans. The stone was close up to the coal. His brother had had a place of his own for over two months. William Evans, collier, who worked in the next place to David Jenkins, said that he went to his own place through Jenkins's, and did not notice anything wrong. He heard the fall, and when he got to him, Jenkins was quite dead. The stone was three or four cwt. in weight, and it fell from the top near the coal. It would be about 3 ft. long, 18 inches wide, and 12 inches thick. Jenkins had worked a fortnight by him, and he was a very tidy man in his work, and a good collier.

Thomas Evans, repairer, acting temporarily as firemen, said that David Jenkins' place was in the district he had to look over. He had examined the place, and had marked it close to the stone, but he did not take any particular notice of the stone, and did not try it. He told Jenkins the place was all right. He re-visited the place after the accident. His description of the stone tallied with that of the previous witness. Mr. Stuart Martin produced a plan of the place, and described the same.

After a few remarks from the coroner, the verdict of "Accidental Death through the fall of a stone," was returned. The funeral took place on Tuesday at Pant Cemetery, and there was an exceptionally large attendance.

**“Merthyr Express” 29 August 1903**

Fatal Pit Accident At the Rising Sun Inn, Fochriw, on Friday last, Mr. R. J. Rhys, the district coroner, held an inquest touching of the death of David William Edwards, 19 years of age, who was killed at the No. 1 Pit, the previous day, by a fall of roof causing a fractured skull. Mr. F. J. Trump, deputy inspector of mines, was present; also Mr. W. Jones, the manager of the pit. W. J. Ballard, with whom deceased worked, said deceased was turning a stall, and he was in the heading nearby, when a stone fell from the side of the rippings on to Edwards' head. The place was well-timbered. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

**“Merthyr Express” 14 November 1903**

Pit Idle The Rhas Las Pit, Fochriw, was idle on Wednesday whilst repairs were being effected.

**“Merthyr Express” 28 November 1903**

Pit Idle In consequence of an accident to the pump at the No. 1 Pit, Vochriw, belonging to Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds (Limited), the colliery was in a state of enforced idleness on Monday.

**“Merthyr Express” 30 January 1904**

Colliery Fatality at Fochriw On Friday, an inquest was held at Clarence Hotel, Dowlais, on the body of David Davies, collier, who died early on Thursday morning, as a result of the fall that came upon him the previous afternoon. Davies, as was testified, was a most capable and careful collier, and was aged 53. He worked in Rhas Las. He was very badly hurt about the head and body. Albert Garratt, aged 16, said he worked with David Davies, and commenced last Monday. He had worked about 12 months altogether underground. He was with Davies when he was hurt at about 4.25 on Wednesday afternoon. Davies was stooping down making the last wedge for a cog, when a little stone fell by the witness, and he jumped out of the way when the main fall came down on the deceased. Two men from the next stall came to help. They were just 1½ yards from the face. The fall was a lot of stone. The deceased had tried the top that afternoon, and it was quite safe them - half an hour before the accident. He had commenced working about ten minutes before the fall. Evidence was given by John Hughes, collier, James Evans, overman, and Mr. J. H. Jones, manager. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death." Mr. Stuart Martin, deputy colliery manager, was present.

**“Merthyr Express” 10 September 1904**

Fatal Accident to a Colliery Boy About three o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, an unfortunate accident occurred at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, causing the death of a youth of 13 years, named Evan John Rowlands, who worked with his father, Daniel Rowlands, No. 4, Pit-row, Fochriw. At the time of the accident, he was sitting at the top of the road of the deceased's father's level, in company with another lad, Thomas Lawrence, when a stone fell from the roof on to Rowland's head and neck, death being instantaneous. His companion had a miraculous escape, and the father, and James Lawrence, also witnessed the fatality.

**“Merthyr Express” 1 October 1904**

Accident Whilst working at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, on Tuesday afternoon, a young lad named Gilbert Owen, living with his parents at Gellifaelog, was struck on the back with a 'clod' which fell from the roof. He was badly hurt, and had a narrow escape from more serious injury. He was taken home.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 5 November 1904**

Accident Whilst engaged at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, on Monday, an underground contractor named Mathias met with an accident whereby he sustained serious injuries.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 26 November 1904**

Sudden Death at Fochriw At the Police Station, Rhymney on Thursday week, Mr. J. R. Walford, the district coroner, held an inquiry into the death of Michael Donovan, aged 50, of Rhymney, who died very suddenly at the Fochriw Pit on Monday week. Thomas Powell, who worked with the deceased, said that Donovan had been doing his usual duty at the boilers on the morning in question. He was speaking to him a quarter of an hour before receiving the signal from a man named Hay. Deceased was lying on a heap of rubbish. He shouted to him but received no reply. He was then carried with assistance on to the stand, but by then he was dead. Donovan had had no heavy work to do. William Hay, who saw the deceased fall, said Donovan was driving wooden wedges into the joint of a water pipe to prevent a leak. This was five minutes before his death. He was not using a heavy piece of iron. He saw him fall away quietly from the act of striking. There was no sigh or groan from the deceased. There was no foul air about, and he did not appear to injure himself in falling. Dr. Davies also gave evidence. The jury returned a verdict of death due to natural causes by the failure of an imperfect heart.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 11 March 1905**

Fatal Accident at Vochriw Pit On Friday afternoon, one of those regrettable accidents that happen in our collieries and workplaces took place, when a boy of 16 years, the only support of his widowed mother, was suddenly crushed by a huge stone of about a ton in weight, that fell upon him at the Fochriw No. 2 Pit. It appears that David John Evans was working in the 9 foot seam with John Stevens, aged 18, and both under the supervision of the latter's father, William Stevens. They had just been talking joyously about the splendid "top" they had to work under, went down comes the big stone upon the smallest boy, killing him on the spot. It was some time before they could get the body free, such was the weight of the stone. After its recovery, the body was taken to 10, Gas-row, Dowlais, by a large number of those working in the pit. The inquest was held on Monday afternoon at the Dowlais Police Station. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 5 August 1905**

Pit Idle On Monday morning, a terrible crash occurred at the pumping engine of the Fochriw pits, which caused No. 2 Pit to be idle for the first part of the week, and will probably keep the Pit idle for the whole week. Considerable damage was done to the engine, the piston rod being bent and the cylinder damaged very badly.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 10 February 1906**

Breach of Mines Act John Henry Davies was summoned under special rule 171 for not keeping his working place safe by properly timbering and spragging at the Fochriw pit, the property of Messrs G.K.N. Ltd. Mr. F. P. Charles appeared to prosecute. Mr. D. W. Jones defended for the Miners' Federation. Mr. Stewart Martin, assistant agent for the Dowlais Colliery, said that on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> January, he visited J. H. Davies's working place, on the four foot seam. It was in a dangerous condition, owing to the want of proper spragging. Timber was there but it had not been set. The Stipendiary said that on this occasion proceedings were only taken as a warning, and fined the defendant five shillings including costs. He pointed out, however, that in future a larger penalty would be inflicted.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 24 March 1906**

Sad Fatality at No. 2 Colliery, Fochriw: Narrow Escape for Two Others: A Critical Question of Signalling

A pumpman, named John Williams, aged 56, married, living at High-street, Caeharris, met with a terrible death at No. 2 Colliery early on Sunday morning. Deceased was engaged, with six companions, in repairing the pump in the up-shaft of the pit, and whilst in the act of changing the plunger and staffing box, for which purpose he was standing on some planks at the bottom, the cage was lowered, and the unfortunate man was crushed beneath it, death ensuing in the course of half an hour. The body was afterwards removed to his home. Deceased was a native of Caernarvonshire, and came to Dowlais in 1871, being employed as a sinker in South Tunnel Pit, and then as a pitman and at pumps for 31 years. An inquest was held at the Clarence Hotel, Dowlais, on Tuesday, Mr. Stuart Martin, colliery manager, and Mr. John Vaughan, colliery engineer, appearing for the Company, and Mr. Aneurin Jones and Mr. W. Hopkins for the family.

William Evans, leading pitman at No. 2 Pit, gave evidence. He said that he worked with John Williams on the day of the accident repairing the pump at the bottom of the pit. There were men on top of the cage - guiding the pump rod, and they were about 30 feet above them. The men at the bottom were putting the rod in the barrel; the leading hand was John Powell; the cage had been up and down all the time, but had been standing where it was before it came on Williams for 25 minutes. The men on the top of the cage signaled to the engineer at the top of the pit with the signal wire. When the cage was to be moved, they would shout to those at the bottom - working at the pump - to look out. If the men at the top shouted on this occasion, those at the bottom did not hear it, and they did not answer; they were hammering a pin into the joint, and made a good bit of noise, so that they might not be able to hear. The witness could not say how many times the cage had been up and down during the time the job was on, but they heard a shout each time until this time. The hammering was louder on this occasion than previously; the cage had to be shifted so as to adjust the rod into the barrel. The cage came down very quickly, so that they could hardly see it. John Williams happened to be under it at that time, and he was bound to stand where he was standing at this time to do his work, and could not do it from any other position. He had been a pitman for 25 years. The signals were worked by their own gang, and no one else would touch the wire signal. The signaling between those on top of the cage and those at the bottom was done by word of mouth, and it was not possible to put the wrong signal. John Roberts, repairer, and one of the team at the pit bottom, confirmed the evidence given by William Evans. John Davies, pit repairer, said that he was on the cage with two other men, Hy. Wilcocks and Wm. Arthur Evans. He was in charge of signaling. He remembered signaling, and he remembered shouting to those below, but he could not say who had answered back, but he was sure that he was answered. Hy. Wilcocks, pitman, said that he remembered distinctly hearing a reply of "All right." Wm. Arthur Evans, pitman, said that he could not say that he heard any shouting from the top of the cage to those below, or that he heard any answer from those below on this occasion. He only heard those signals occasionally, as he was not paying attention. The court was then cleared, and after some deliberation, the jury returned the following verdict: "We find that John Williams was accidentally killed in No. 2 Pit, and we are of the opinion that the cage was lowered without a signal from below that all was right." The Coroner said he agreed with the verdict, and mentioned that it was on the borderline of manslaughter, but just outside it.

**"Merthyr Express" 7 April 1906**

Pit Hauliers' Wages After protracted negotiations, the Hauliers' Wage Joint Committee of the South Wales Conciliation Board, arrived at an agreement on

Saturday. Under this agreement, the standard wage will be 3s.4d. per day, plus percentages and plus bonuses, together with the allowance paid for "dooring."

Notice to Dowlais Colliers Having failed in the first instance to agree upon a price-list in the New "Eled" (or 2ft. 9in.) Seam at the No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, Messrs. G.K.N. Ltd. gave the men a month's notice from March 3<sup>rd</sup>, and declared it was not their intention to further develop the seam. Now, as a result of a meeting between Mr. H. Stuart Martin, manager, and Councillor John Davies, miners' agent, this notice has been withdrawn. (The notice period would have ended on Saturday). The colliers, who are all day-wagemen, will continue employment without interruption, the question of the price list being left over for further consideration. Of the 132 men engaged in the Top Coal Seam at the South Tunnel Pit between Cwmbargoed and Fochriw, all of whom received notice a month ago, Mr. Martin has found places for the big majority in other collieries in the district owned by the company.

#### **"Merthyr Express" 14 April 1906**

Colliery Fatality On Friday afternoon at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, a lad of 16 named Garfield Lewis, living with his parents at Penydarren, was buried beneath a fall of coal weighing several tons, death being instantaneous. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned at the inquest.

#### **"Merthyr Express" 25 August 1906**

Merthyr Volunteer Killed at Vochriw Pit On Monday afternoon, a sad fatality occurred at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, the victim being a married man named William Price Millward who lived at Pontmorlais. Deceased was well known and respected in the town and district; he was formally a side drummer in the Merthyr Volunteer Band, and was up to his death a side drummer in the Cefn Volunteer Band. There will be a military funeral on Saturday. At the inquest, John Henry Jones, manager of the pit, said the deceased rode on the west drift in the 9 foot seam. Witness was in a manhole waiting for a full journey of 16 trams to pass him. The journey went by all right, but he did not see the rider, who would have been between the third and fourth tram on the shackle. He went down the road, and heard deceased groaning, and found him in the middle of the road between the rails. He died about 20 minutes later. The journey started from Clarke's level, about 120 yards down the heading. The gradient was three inches on the average, but it was four and a half inches at the spot where deceased was found. The lamp was on the ground, about two yards away from the injured man. The trams travelled at about a good walking pace. The place had side walls and the rails about a foot apart. Nothing had fallen that could have knocked the poor fellow. The headroom was 6 foot 10 inches where the deceased was found, but just below it was less. There was a "bridge" six yards below where he was found which was five feet from the roof down; deceased's cap was on his head. There was no jerking of the rope. This was the deceased's tenth full journey of the day. Work would not have ceased until 5 o'clock. There had been a considerable squeeze on in the drift of late. There might be heights of 4 feet 10 inches lower down the road, but it would not be lower than that. He had not allowed riding since the accident. Deceased only commenced work there last Saturday, and David Cole showed him his job. Deceased had worked there two years ago. Evidence was also given by David Williams, master haulier in the same district, and Joseph Payne, driver of the hauling engine, who said that he had a mark to show him when the journey was at Clarke's level, and that the haul had been quite smooth. The Coroner stated that either the rider had lost his hold, or he had struck some part of the roof - perhaps the "bridge" mentioned. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death."

### **“Merthyr Express” 8 September 1906**

Fatal Accident at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw A haulier named Thomas Jones of Penydarren, aged 42, married, received serious injuries at No. 1 Pit on Monday, which resulted in his death. He was taking a tram from his stall, when the horse bolted and he was knocked down. He sustained serious injuries to his spine. He was taken to Dowlais, and then carried home on the police ambulance, where he died.

### **“Merthyr Express” 13 October 1906**

Dowlais Miners' District Meeting The monthly meeting of the Dowlais Federated District of Miners was held on Saturday evening at the Clarence Hotel. Mr. William Morgan, Pantywaun, president, occupied the chair, and all the constituent lodges were represented. The contributions for the month were £142 10s; levies - £12 10s; and membership 3,420. Non-unionists in the district were now just 34. Reporting on behalf of a deputation to Mr. H. S. Martin, deputy general colliery manager, Mr. C. Mason stated that Mr. Martin had declared that he was prepared to adhere to the prevailing custom of a whole colliery being stopped in the case of a fatal accident at the pits, so that the comrades of the deceased might bear the body home. He did not see that it was absolutely necessary in every instance, but he was ready to comply with the wishes of the men. With regard to first aid facilities at the collieries, Mr. Martin stated that the Company intended supplying three new ambulance cars at Cwm Bargoed, Fochriw, and Bedlinog, respectively. Having failed to arrive at a settlement, the dispute relating to cutting prices at the Elfed Seam, Fochriw, No. 1 Pit, was referred to the Joint Conciliation Board, and that of the Big Seam, Fochriw No. 2 Pit, was left over for the present. The question of aged workmen in receipt of compensation being compelled to travel to Penarth to the offices of the Assurance Company was raised. Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, would seek to deal with this matter. It was agreed to test the opinion of the lodges on the desirability of sending delegates to the forthcoming conference in London to consider the report of the Executive Committee of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain on the question of non-unionists, the minimum wage and the new L. R. C. scheme.

### **“Merthyr Express” 5 January 1907**

Lecture on Miners Safety Lamps: Mr. H. Stuart Martin at Fochriw At the Council Schools on Tuesday night, Mr. H. Stuart Martin, general manager of Messrs. G. K. N. Collieries, delivered the first of a series of lectures which he proposes giving to the working men in the district. The meetings are being convened under the auspices of the Dowlais District of the Miners' Federation. The next of this series will be at Bedlinog on the 8<sup>th</sup> February. Mr. Evan Evans presided, and amongst others present were Mr. J. H. Jones and Mr. John Bevan, colliery managers, and Mr. John Davies, miners' agent for the district. Mr. Martin, who was accorded rounds of applause, said that colliers generally knew something of the lamp, but there was probably further knowledge which would be beneficial to all. The miners today had their agents and associations throughout the country. There was also a Royal Commission to make rules and amendments to the Miners' Regulations Act, but whatever rules they might make, they would still have accidents in mines, and not until each man and boy in each colliery felt fully his personal responsibility for the safety of the miners and mines, would there be a substantial reduction in accidents. Dealing with the lamp, he referred to one colliery in his charge where but a short time ago, a serious accident was narrowly averted. Two doors had been left open and the current of air was changed. He made inquiry of the men, and was astonished at the reply he received from one collier. When the doors were left open, the flame went up in the lamp. Asked what he did, he replied, "Well, I got a bit excited, and threw my lamp about in order to extinguish it." This was the most

dangerous thing to do, and increased the liability to ignite the gas. After stating the primitive means of lighting and ventilation in the early days, he said that the comparative absence of explosions in those days was probably due to the admixture of gas and air not being in proper quantities to produce an explosion of any great force. He then talked about the question of sparks. He said most of them would be familiar with the sparks given off in using the mandrill, but these did not become really dangerous until they attained a very high degree of heat. In 1786 they had the Humbolt safety lamp, and this was followed by an improved lamp, but it was not until 1815 that Sir Humphrey Davy produced the lamp for which all colliers owe him a debt of gratitude. Davy discovered the gauze, and they had gone one step further in this respect up to the present day. The great point was for the miners to keep the gauze cool. With a high velocity of air there was a possibility of flame being driven through the gauze. Today they had innumerable patents in lamps. Some men today, when their light got a bit low, took off the cap of the gauze, in order to improve it, but he did not think that any man had a right to tamper with what he did not understand. These capped gauzes would very shortly be into the Fochriw pits, and if he found any man tampering with it, he must take strong measures against the offender. He advised men not to hold their lamps on one side, as this practice culminated often times in the glass being cracked, and consequent danger. The men should not swing their lamps when going underground, and to drop a lamp suddenly was highly dangerous. It was also safer, when examining for gas, to have a large flame, and not a small one. If they found a three inch cap on the flame, they should not go scurrying about, but the lamp should be removed quietly to a place where there was no gas. He advised the men not to try to lower the height of the wick burner. Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, expressed appreciation of Mr. Martin's service in delivering these addresses to colliers, and on the motion of Councillor Rees Thomas, seconded by Mr. Thomas Thomas, a vote of thanks to Mr. Martin was heartily accorded.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 9 March 1907**

Doctors Disagree Samuel Brown, living at Dowlais, who had been unable to work for four years in consequence of injuries received in No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, by a fall of stone from the roof, applied to His Honour to say that he was unable to work underground as a lamp locker in consequence of the distance he would have to go, and the dangerous state of the roads over which he would have to travel underground. The statement of the medical referee, Dr. Martin Jones was read by Mr. Hill Kelly, who appeared for the applicant, on instruction from the Miners' Federation, and it read as follows: "The man is suffering from the effects of the accident, and his condition is such that he is only fit for some light work not involving much walking." Mr. Ivor Bowen, who appeared for the respondents, the Insurance Company, said that the work of lamp locker involved nothing more than sitting down. The man had to go by train to the pit, and then walk to the lamp station, a distance of 250 yards. Mr. Kelly contended it was 300 to 400 yards. Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, described how applicant, who now walked with the aid of sticks, would have to climb up to the colliers' train, and told the judge of the rails, ropes and journeys which Brown would have to "clear" before he got to the working place. He was sure it would be too dangerous. Dr Hugh L. Hughes said that he attended the man in May 1903, and had done so since. He was quite unable to walk the distance described owing to his having to meet with so many obstacles. There was a distinct gap in the course of the muscle, which indicated that the muscle was ruptured. Dr. Webster and Dr. Rees Griffiths, senior surgeon at Cardiff Hospital, agreed with this opinion. Dr. Bird of Cardiff, for the Insurance Company, said that he had not seen Brown use a crutch until that day. He was fit to do light work, and he could go to the lamp station if

there was no danger from the trams. The case was adjourned until the next court when other medical evidence will be called.

**“Merthyr Express” 13 April 1907**

Rider's Mistake at Fochriw Colliery: Forgot the Points How a colliery manager and overman nearly lost their lives was related at the Rising Sun Hotel, Fochriw, on Tuesday, when the Coroner, Mr. R. J. Rhys, and a jury, inquired into the circumstances attending the death of David Jones, aged 51, a repairer, of 26, Aelybryn-terrace, Fochriw. Amongst those present were Mr. Trump, Government Inspector of Mines; Mr. Jones, solicitor, who represented the wife of the deceased; and Mr. Davies, miners' agent. From the evidence, it appears that Jones was in the branch slip east side of No. 2 Colliery, together with Mr. J. H. Jones, manager, and Mr. James Evans, overman, when an empty journey suddenly dashed upon them. The two officials were able to jump clear, but Jones was caught, and died the following day, despite prompt action from Dr. Davies.

Thomas Thomas, a repairer at the colliery, stated that he forgot to put the points back, with the result that a journey of fifteen trams came from the main level into the branch slip. He went up and down the slip thirteen or fourteen times each day, and it was his duty to put the points back each time. The manager said that the space between the sides and the journey was very narrow.

In summing up, the Coroner said that although it was true Thomas was responsible for Jones's death, the evidence was not strong enough for manslaughter, as there was no systematic carelessness. At the same time, Thomas would always have it on his mind that he was responsible for the death. He hoped that would be a warning to him and others to perform their duties properly. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," and censured Thomas Thomas for his neglect, but there was not enough negligence to commit him for manslaughter.

Thomas gave his evidence in Welsh, and the Coroner had great difficulty in getting particulars of the accident from him. The Coroner remarked that such a person as Thomas, who could not speak English at his age, ought to be ashamed of himself.

**“Merthyr Express” 11 May 1907**

Mine in Danger: Ostler Summoned for Possession of Live Matches in Pit William Barrett, ostler, was summoned for having live matches in his possession in No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Lodwick Davies, night overman, produced a case containing ten matches and a nail, which he found in the defendants pocket. Mr. Charles, who appeared for the Company, said that the presence of the nail made it even more dangerous. Defendant, who said he forgot to leave the matches on top of the pit, was fined 40 shillings and costs.

**“Merthyr Express” 18 May 1907**

Workmen's Trains: Are The Company Liable for Accidents? Is a Company liable under the Act if a man meets with an accident whilst travelling on a workmen's train? Thomas Lewis, a collier at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, who resides at Caeharris, Dowlais, claimed compensation from Messrs. Guest, Keen, and Nettlefolds, Ltd, in respect of an accident. Mr. Hill Kelly was for the applicant; Mr. Ivor Bowen for the respondents. Mr Kelly said that on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, Lewis was carried to Fochriw in the collier's train. There was no platform on which to alight; Lewis slipped on the step of the train, and injured his leg, and was away from work for seven weeks. He understood found that the defence raised was that the accident did not arise "out of and in the course of his employment." Mr. Ivor Bowen said Lewis did not pay for the use of the train; he lived at Caeharris, which was four miles away from the pit, and he was not under contract with his employers to travel by that train.



Thomas Lewis, the applicant told His Honour that the workmen's train took the men to the pits in the morning and brought them back at night; the respondents supplied the coaches and the Rhymney Railway Company supplied the engine. The colliers train had run to his knowledge ever since he was a boy, and years before that. Only workmen were allowed to travel on those trains, and so far as he knew they paid nothing.

Mr. Ivor Bowen to Thomas Lewis: Is there any kind of agreement at all between you and the Company that they should provide this train for you except for the purpose of convenience? Witness: I don't know of any agreement myself, unless our fathers had it. He added that a similar train runs from Pantywaun, and also from Cwm Bargoed. Mr. Kelly said that the men were under an agreement which was common throughout the coalfield. Mr. Bowen re-asserted that Lewis had said that there was no agreement between himself and the Company to carry him; in other words, he was not bound to go by train, and the Company was not bound to carry him. It would, no doubt, lead to trouble in the pit if the men were not taken to the colliery, but there was no legal obligation or duty to carry them.

His Honour thought there was an implied agreement on the part of the company. The question was, was it understood by both parties that the train was to be supplied? I am of the opinion that there is an obligation where the thing has been done for all those years - that there is an implied obligation.

After further argument, His Honour said he would look through the cases quoted by counsel, and give judgement on Friday.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 18 May 1907**

Shocking Death of Dowlais Miner: Body Reduced To Pulp Shortly before 2 o'clock on Saturday afternoon, as the men employed at No. 2 Pit were about to terminate their labours for the week, a shocking accident occurred, resulting in the instantaneous death of James Williams, aged 34, married with five children, living at 16, Pantscallog, Dowlais. The deceased, a labourer, had finished his turn, and had got to Clarke's Parting in company with David Coles. Williams then proceeded up the West Main Drift, and had gone about 200 yards, when he was overtaken and knocked down by the journey of 15 full trams of coal. It was later found that the whole journey had passed over him, the body, which could hardly be recognised, having been reduced to pulp. The remains were brought up to the pit surface, and taken to Dowlais by train, and subsequently conveyed home by his fellow workmen. At the inquest, evidence was given by David Coles, platelayer, Ernest John Launchbury, rider, William Payne, the driver of the hauling engine, and Mr. Martin for the Company. In summing up, the Coroner said that from the testimony before him, it seemed evident that Williams had two chances of escape from the fate that befell him. If he had stayed with Coles or had turned into a manhole, he would have got clear. It was very likely he was overtaken and killed by the journey, which never left the road. There was ample provision of means of safety by manholes in accordance with the requirements of the Act. A verdict was returned to the effect that the deceased was overtaken by the journey of trams and killed.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 25 May 1907**

Workmen's Trains: Are Employers Laible for Accidents? Judgement for Applicant On Friday, His Honour gave judgement in the case of Thomas Lewis versus Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds Ltd. His honour said it seemed that there was nothing like a sufficient number of houses at Fochriw for all the workmen, and consequently the company had, for a number of years, run workmen's trains to the Fochriw Pits. The accident occurred at the colliery end of the journey. The defence was that the accident did not arise out of and in the course of the applicants employment, and the respondents

relied strongly upon the case of Davies and the Rhymney Iron Company. In that case, the collier was going home in the workmen's train, and it was when alighting at the home end of the journey, three-quarters of a mile away from the pit, that the accident happened. His Honour also cited the other cases referred to - Holmes and the Great Northern Railway Company, Sharp versus Johnson & Co. Ltd., and said that in his view, this case depended entirely upon where the employment commenced - when they got into the train, or when they got to the pits mouth. He came to the conclusion that there was an implied term of contract that the workmen's trains were to be provided to take the men to Fochriw, and therefore, that the accident arose out of and in the course of the man's employment. He gave judgement for the applicant, with costs of Scale B.

**“Merthyr Express” 22 June 1907**

Coal Mining Success Mr. D. O. James, Mount Pleasant-street, has secured his second class certificate of competence under the Mines Regulation Act, 1887. It is much to the credit of Mr. James, who is a working collier at South Tunnel Pit, Fochriw, that he has succeeded in his examination after only six months tuition under Mr. D. Oliver Evans of St. David's Schools, Merthyr, who also deserves a measure of praise.

**“Merthyr Express” 14 September 1907**

Gelligaer District Council Mr. J. Jones drew attention to the state of the roads near the tips at Fochriw, and stated that it was not safe for anyone to pass that way. Large boulders and stones rolled frequently on to the highway. The tip was on fire, and there were frequent falls. One very large fall took place recently. The Chairman agreed that something should be done, and remarked that the Fochriw people were in fear of being burned in ashes before long. The Clerk said that the Council must protect their highways, and districts, or they would run the risk of that portion of the village being swallowed up. Mr. Jones stated that when the fall took place, the company's officials rendered every possible assistance, but what was needed was some protection for the district. A committee of the council arranged to meet on the site.

**“Merthyr Express” 21 September 1907**

An Unfounded Report of an Explosion at Fochriw Collieries Quite a consternation was created on Wednesday afternoon by the circulation of a report that a terrible explosion, resulting in fearful loss of life, had occurred at the Fochriw Collieries. In the streets were to be seen groups of distressed women, having husbands, sons and relatives employed at the pit, as well as large numbers of night men who had been aroused from their slumbers with news of the explosion. It was a great relief to the community to find, on inquiry, that the report had no foundation in fact. Considerable indignation was expressed that such a wicked rumour should have been started and spread.

**22 February 1908** Fatal Accident A serious accident befell David John Davies, aged 15, of Dowlais, on Friday afternoon, in the Red Coal Seam of the No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, when a piece of engine from the top fell on him, fracturing his leg and causing other injuries. He was conveyed home, and from thence to Merthyr General Hospital, where he died of his injuries about midnight. The funeral took place on Wednesday last at Pant Cemetery.

**4 July 1908** "Long Work" Pit, Fochriw: Coal Worked Out On Wednesday last, between 160 and 170 colliers, engineers and other colliery workmen, engaged at the Long Work Pit, Fochriw, which belongs to Messrs Guest, Keen, and Nettlefolds, Ltd, received notice to terminate contracts in one month, on July 31<sup>st</sup>. This is one of the oldest pits belonging to the company, and it is understood that the coal has given up. It is expected and hoped that places will be found for those who have received notice in the other pits of the company.

### **“Merthyr Express” 18 July 1908**

Fatal Accident Edward Ashley, a collier employed at the Fochriw No. 2 Pit, met his death on Wednesday morning being caught between a tram and a wall. The accident occurred at 9:50a.m., and the deceased died of his injuries 20 minutes later. The body was brought to Dowlais, and conveyed on the Dowlais Brigade Ambulance Car to No. 17 White Street. Deceased was 53 years of age and leaves a widow and children.

### **“Merthyr Express” 25 July 1908**

Fatality at Fochriw Pit: Inquest Mr. R. J. Rhys, coroner, held an inquest at the Clarence Hotel, Dowlais, on Friday last, into the death of Edward Astley, an overlooker of underground traffic at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw. Present: Mr. W. Saint, HM Inspector of Mines; Mr. D. W. Jones, solicitor; Mr. H. S. Martin, colliery manager; Mr. Wm. Davies, under-manager Fochriw Pits.

After evidence of identification was given, Richard Vines, a rider in the West district, gave evidence. He said he was taking down 15 empty trams on the main rope, when some of them went off the rail; Astley came to him from the parting, and helped to get them on again. They were pulled back about 20 yards. There were manholes on each side of the road, and there was a space of 18 inches each side from the trams. In two or three minutes after the trams re-started, he heard a scream. When he got to Astley, he was sitting at the side of the road, and he said to witness in Welsh, "Y mae ar ben" (It is all over). He died in about 20 minutes. Vines said that he signalled in about three minutes after getting the trams right on the rails that the journey was going to start. Astley was not in a manhole, but was near one, about three or four yards away. Deceased was assistant over the traffic. Mr. William Davis, the under manager, gave orders to change the road after the trams were got right.

Mr. William Davies, under-manager, produced a plan of the area, and said that he was coming out of the "Red Coal" District, and give orders to take the empty trams to the "Red Coal," and Astley told Vines to get them pulled up. He (Mr. Davies) was in a manhole on the left hand side, and Astley was on the right hand side in a manhole - they were opposite each other. When Astley was found, he was 34 yards from where he saw him in a manhole. Witness saw Astley get on a shakle, but he had no right to be there, and he shouted to him saying so, but he could not say whether he heard him. The Coroner remarked that he was very much surprised to find that Astley rode on the tram right under the nose of Mr. Davies. He had heard that when the cat was away the mice would play, but it was reversed in this instance. Mr. Davies said that Astley was looked upon as a sort of official, and that he took the liberty. The road was in perfect condition, and Astley was a very careful man, of wide experience. He had only one arm. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death."

### **“Merthyr Express” 12 September 1908**

Wire Rope Splicing Mr. Edward Lewis and party were successful in securing the second prize for wire rope spicing at the Blackwood Show on Monday last.

**26 September 1908** Collieries Idle The annual demonstration of the Dowlais District of the Miners was held on Monday at the Oddfellows' Hall, Dowlais, and as a result, both pits were idle on that day

**26 September 1908** Fatal Accident Mr. John Davies of Dowlais, was killed at the South Tunnel Pit on Monday last. He was a repairer, and was in the act of putting up some timber when a stone from the roof fell on him.

**7 November 1908** Collier Boy Killed A lad of 13 named Harry Kington was struck on the head by a stone at the Fochriw No. 2 Pit on Wednesday afternoon and died in the course of a few minutes. A sad feature of the case is the fact that the family had only

recently moved to the district from Ynishir, and the deceased, with two elder brothers, commenced work just three weeks ago.

**“Merthyr Express” 19 December 1908**

Colliers Idle Both pits were idle on Saturday last, owing to the shortage of waggons.

**“Merthyr Express” 9 January 1909**

Collieries Both pits were idle on Friday and Saturday last, owing to a shortage of waggons.

**“Merthyr Express” 13 February 1909**

Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Thursday week owing to a shortage of wagons.

**20 February 1909** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Wednesday week and Saturday last, owing to a shortage of waggons.

**27 February 1909** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Saturday and Tuesday last owing to a shortage of waggons.

**6 March 1909** Coal Output in the Merthyr Union Returns were presented to the Merthyr Assessment Committee on Saturday showing the output of all rateable coal in the various parishes of the Union during the past year as compared with 1907. Returns show the following results: Merthyr - Large coal worked and raised in the parish, 1,789,787 tons - 61,215 increase; Small coal raised: 502,897 tons - 31,484 increase; Gelligaer: large coal worked and raised in the parish: 1,894,567 tons; small coal: 361,440 tons increase; Aberdare: 1,707,353 tons - 185,034 decrease; small coal: 586,879 tons - 59,774 decrease.

**“Merthyr Express” 13 March 1909**

Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Tuesday last owing to a shortage of waggons.

**“Merthyr Express” 27 March 1909**

Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Saturday last owing to a shortage of waggons.

**“Merthyr Express” 5 June 1909**

Big Pit Idle The Big Pit is idle owing to a dispute in the cutting prices of the Eled seam, about 560 men being affected.

**“Merthyr Express” 12 June 1909**

Work Resumed The 500 men employed at No. 1 Pit, who left work last week in consequence of a dispute, have resumed work. The difference between the men and the owners is now under consideration. Alderman Enoch Morell and Mr. Hubert Jenkins (miners' agent) who were appointed by the Executive Committee of the South Wales Federation of Miners at Cardiff recently to investigate the causes of the dispute between men and management at No. 1 Pit, paid a further visit to Dowlais on Monday with a view to affecting a settlement. The principal matter at issue concerned the cutting prices in the Eled seam, and notices to terminate contracts, handed in by the men, expired on 31<sup>st</sup> May, but tools were not brought up from the workings until Thursday last. In the meanwhile, improved terms were offered by Mr. Howell Jones, general colliery manager, but these were rejected. As the outcome of the protracted conference in the Oddfellows' Hall Assembly Room, Alderman Morrell and Mr. Jenkins prevailed upon the miners affected, over 500 in number, to reconsider the question. Ultimately, the resolution passed on 1<sup>st</sup> June was rescinded, and a deputation, with Councillor John Davies (miners' agent), was appointed to negotiate with Mr. Howell Jones, and an amicable settlement was arrived at. The night workmen resumed employment on Tuesday evening, and the day men on Wednesday as usual.

**10 July 1909** Pits The pits were idle on Thursday, Friday and Saturday owing to the dispute linked to the new Miners' Eight Hours Act. Work resumed on Monday.

**7 August 1909** Shocking Pit Accident at Fochriw Early on Tuesday morning, at No. 1 Pit, a very serious accident happened to two pit repairers, John Powell, foreman, of

Penywern, and William A. Evans, his assistant. The former was severely hurt, and the latter lost his life. The dead man was 36 years of age, and he leaves a widow and nine children, the eldest of whom is 17 years of age.

The inquest was held at the Clarence Hotel on Thursday by Mr. R. J. Rhys, coroner. John Powell, foreman pit repairer for the collieries, was called. He said that William Arthur Evans was working under him on the morning of Tuesday last, and was repairing water pipes in the shaft. They went down first at 6:30a.m. After being in the pit some time they came up, and went down again about 7:10a.m. The carriage they were working on was tied to the side of the pit, so that they could get near to the pipes they were repairing. He roped the carriage to the side, and it was a bit askew. They were trying to get a wire into the pipe when the cage was taken from them - up the pit. This broke the rope causing the carriage to swing. After going some distance, it caught in something, causing a jerk. Davies was struck by something and fell down the pit, whilst he fell on to the cage. John Llewellyn, spare hand and banksman for the day, said that he had banked scores of times off and on. After the men had gone down for the second time, in about 20 or 25 minutes, he had "two threes," and he passed on five to the engine man, which were the usual knocks. The knocks given him (the two threes) were only used by the repairers, and not the hitcher at the pit bottom. John Lewis, winding engine man, said that he let Powell and Evans down the pit. In about 15 minutes, he had a signal from the banksman to bring the men up - five knocks. In a very short time, a noise like thunder came, and he stopped his engine. Thomas Prosser, hitcher, and charge-man of machinery underground, said that he had heard the noise and saw the body of Evans come down the pit. Mr. John Vaughan, the mechanical engineer of the collieries, said that he thought that the deceased might have been struck by the down cage. Mr. J. H. Jones, deputy manager, explained the signalling system used in a colliery. John Powell was recalled for questioned as to the length of wire they has in use to put in the pipe and draw it, the Coroner thereby endeavouring to find out whether, by some means, the wire might have caused the knocks. Witness said that the wire was about 27 to 30 feet long, and with the exception of about 2 feet, which he had in his hand, was all in the pipe. The jury returned a verdict, "that William Arthur Evans met his death by falling down No. 1 Pit through an apparent error in signalling."

#### **"Merthyr Express" 4 September 1909**

Coal raised in the Parish of Gellygaer for Year Ending June 1909 Fochriw Pits: large coal (tons) 202,746; small coal (tons) 43,363; Tunnel Pits: large - 99,869; small - 21,275; Bedlinog Pits: large - 363,146; small - 58,315; Nantwen Pits: large - 30,053; small - 43,362 (bituminous)

#### **"Merthyr Express" 18 September 1909**

Fatal Accident On Tuesday morning, a young man named Ernest Joyce, about 29 years of age, was killed by a fall of roof in the Red Coal Seam, No. 2 Pit, Fochriw. His body was conveyed to his lodgings, Council Houses, Penydarren.

**9 October 1909** Collieries Idle Both pits were idle on Friday, Saturday, and Monday, owing to the non-unionist trouble. A large procession paraded the streets of the villages of Pentwyn and Fochriw on Friday night, and the houses of defaulters were visited, and the men persuaded to pay up their dues and join the Federation. Work was resumed by the night men on Monday night and by the day men on Tuesday.

**6 November 1909** Expression of Sympathy At Nazareth chapel on Sunday evening, a vote of condolence was passed with the widows, families and relatives of the victims of the Darran colliery explosion. This was done by the congregation silently standing for a few moments.

**20 November 1909** Fatal Accident at No. 2 Pit A fatal accident befell Mr. John Cole, 4, Brynteg-terrace, on Tuesday last, at about half past one. He was engaged as a fireman in Clarke's Level, West Side, No. 2 Pit. He was called to the return airway near the top of the thirteen heading to examine the roof, and whilst passing under the defective part, a heavy stone from the roof fell on him, killing him instantly. Deceased was a married man. An inquest was held at the Rising Sun Inn on Wednesday afternoon by the district coroner. Mr. Charles Payne was appointed foreman of the jury. Mr. Simon Cole gave evidence of identification, and stated that the deceased was 43 years of age, and had been fireman for eight or nine years, and a timberman before that. Edward Williams, Fochriw, who was an employee in the airway, said he was near the deceased when he met his death. He (Williams) was drawing out old timber, and failing to get out an old collar. He tried to use the Sylvester to draw up the collar, but the chain was too short. He then tried to get it out by prizing it up with a 9ft stick, but failed. Deceased then arrived, in response to his call. He stood on the top of the fall that occurred a fortnight ago. Witness warned him to keep back, as the top was working, and he did so for a few minutes, until he thought it was safe to pass. As he was passing over to the witness, a collar sprang off an arm, and the roof fell on him, killing him instantly. Joseph Thomas, repairer, Fochriw, said he thought that about three tram loads of rubbish had fallen, mostly on the deceased. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death."

**11 December 1909** Overwinding A case of overwinding occurred at the Big Pit of Messrs G.K.N. Ltd., about 2a.m. on Tuesday. Much damage was done to the cage and pithead. As a result, the colliers were idle on Tuesday and Wednesday. Luckily no one was injured.

**“Merthyr Express” 19 February 1910**

Colliery Fatality at Fochriw: Boy Sees His Father Killed About nine o'clock on Monday morning, a collier named Solomon Williams, aged 53 years, living at Dowlais Top, and working at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, was killed by the fall of a big stone. He leaves a wife and 10 children, of whom only three are working. An inquest was held at the Clarence Hotel, Dowlais, by the borough coroner, Mr. R. J. Rhys. Wm. Williams, son of the deceased was the identifying witness. A younger son, Thos. John Williams, aged 13 or 14, was next called. He said he had worked with his father since last August. He was standing by his father while he was cutting top coal. His father's lamp went out, but his own, which was hanging on a post, did not. It was a bed of rippings that came on his father. His father had tried that top before he went to get the coal, and he had only been at it a short time. There was no warning at all. David Thomas, collier, who worked in next stall, said he heard the fall and the boy call, and was first to get there. Solomon Williams was underneath the stone, and he had to get help to move it. Simon Cole, firemen, said he had examined Williams' place that morning, and it seemed all right, and no sign of a squeeze near. The stone was 7 ft long and 2 feet 9 inches wide, and 8 or 9 inches thick. Mr. G. H. Jones, deputy manager, said that the deceased was a most experienced man. That the stone was in a dangerous position could not have been foreseen. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

**“Merthyr Express” 26 February 1910**

Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Thursday week, also on Monday and Wednesday, owing to a shortage of waggons.

**“Merthyr Express” 5 March 1910**

Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Monday and Tuesday evening owing to a shortage of waggons.

**5 March 1910** Condolence At the meeting of the Checkweighers' Committee of No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, a vote of condolence was passed with the families and relatives of two workmen – Mr. Solomon Williams, and Mr. William Edmunds - who met their deaths through fatal accidents at the Pit, all present standing with bare heads.

**30 April 1910** Presentation At the Bargoed Inn, Deri, on Saturday last, Mr. Harry Evans, Fochriw, was presented with a gold albert, medal, and a pipe, by his fellow workmen on the occasion of his resigning from Fochriw collieries after 35 years service. He has held the position of foreman for the past 20 years. The presentation was made by Mr. William Williams, Pentwyn. At intervals, songs, etc, were rendered by Mr. James Healy, Mr. W. T. Williams, Mr. J. Evans, Mr. Wat Williams, and Mr. H. Hughes. The accompanists were Mr. J. Evans (Dowlais), and Mr. H. Hughes. Mr. W. T. Williams gave an excellent rendering of "The Veteran." The singing of "Hen Wlad fy Nhadau" by Mr. W. T. Williams brought a very pleasant evening to a close. Mr. J. Evans carried out the arrangements, and the vice-chairman was Mr. G. Uzzell, Deri.

**2 July 1910** Mining Success Mr. Evan Henry Davies, 16, Hill-row, Pentwyn, has passed the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the 3<sup>rd</sup> class County Council Mining examinations, held at the Fochriw Council School, in April last. Mr. Simon Cole, Aelybryn, passed the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class.

#### **“Merthyr Express” 10 September 1910**

Presentation at Fochriw On Wednesday evening at the Mount Pleasant Inn, Pentwyn, Mr. Adams was presented with a handsome gold albert and medal (suitably inscribed) by his fellow-workmen - the enginememen, stokers and service craftsmen – on his leaving the district. A very large number of workmen were present. Mr. Wm. Powell presided. Mr. Adams thanked his fellow workmen heartily, and said that he had never worked a day out of Fochriw in his life. Now, he was venturing on a new life, and he thought that hundreds of Welshmen should do the same. An excellent programme of music, etc. was contributed by the following: gramophone selection, manipulated by Mr. Wm. Parry, Pentwyn; solo, “The Veteran” Mr. T. G. Davies; comic song, “As a friend,” Mr. Harry Griffiths; song, “Eileen ma Creagh,” Mr. S. Philpot; comic song, “I have to be cruel to be kind,” Mr. Harry Charles (Dowlais); song, “Thora,” Mr. T. G. Davies; humorous address, Mr. Wat. Watkins; descriptive song, “Love and Honour,” Mr. Tom Harris; comic song, “Has anyone seen our Charlie?” Mr. Hy. Charles; song, “John Willie,” Master Arthur Prichard; solo, “Yr Ornest,” Mr. T. G. Davies; Indian Club Exhibition, Mr. Wat. Williams; song, “The Cows in the Dairy,” Mr. Dd. Prosser; song, “Another good man gone wrong,” Mr. Hy. Wilcox; song, “Roger Tichborne,” Mr. Wm. Evans. A vote of thanks was accorded to the chairman and artistes on the motion of Mr. Watkin Williams, seconded by Mr. Jenkin Pugh. Mr. Harry Hughes was the accompanist.

**24 September 1910** Fochriw Miners' Meeting The members of the Fochriw Lodge of Miners held their annual meeting on Monday at the Fochriw Council Schools. Mr. Thos. H. Llewellyn, president of the lodge, occupied the chair. There was a large attendance. The chairman referred to the resolution concerning the question of starting the collieries an hour later, which has been relegated by the monthly meeting for the lodges to discuss. He said, he preferred to start an hour earlier, but it was for the members of the lodge to decide the matter. After a short discussion, it was resolved unanimously: "That we adhere to the working hours in vogue at present at the collieries."

The secretary of the lodge, Mr. Thomas Ballard, then moved the following resolution: "That this meeting calls the attention of the Government once again to the imperative necessity of amending the Coal Mines Regulation Act, so as to secure the more efficient inspection of all mines, and taking other precautions necessary to bring about a

reduction in the enormous loss of life and serious accidents to the workmen. We also urge upon the Government to initiate and carry through the necessary legislation for relieving trades unions from the disabilities created by the Osborne Judgment; and until this is accomplished, we call upon all members of the Federation to voluntarily contribute the funds necessary to secure direct representatives in the House of Commons and upon local government bodies. Also, we protest against the rack-renting which is prevalent in our neighbourhood, by which the earnings of the workmen are so much taken up. We also protest against the actions of the land owners of Fochriw in not giving the necessary facilities for the community to build houses and other buildings appertaining to the welfare of the inhabitants, believing that the only solution to the problem of the land question is nationalisation. Also, we consider that the Federation will not secure for its members the full protection possible, until the contributions are increased, and an out-of-work fund established." The resolution was seconded by Mr. James Williams, and supported by Mr. E. Black (Cardiff) in a spirited address on Trades Unionism, its origin, its growth, and its beneficial results to the working men of this country. The resolution was carried unanimously.

Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, followed with timely advice on the present crisis in the Rhondda Valley and the Cambrian Collieries. He said he did not believe in sectional flights, but we had to choose the lesser of the two. His advice was that the Cambrian workmen alone should tender notices, and all of South Wales and Monmouthshire miners should support them by contributing a levy by which they would be able to prolong the fight.

**19 November 1910** Lecture A lecture on "Mines and Miners," was given at the Council Schools on Monday night by Mr. Henry Davies, director of mining instruction. The lecturer dealt with mines from their earliest inception, and was illustrated with lantern slides. The Rev. D. Hughes Jones presided.

**"Merthyr Express" 3 December 1910**

Fochriw Men Against "Down Tools" Policy A special meeting of the Fochriw Lodge was held at the Fochriw Council Schools on Tuesday to consider "the present crisis and our future policy." The chair was occupied by Mr. T. H. Llewellyn, the local lodge chairman, who asked members to give the speakers who would address them, a fair hearing, to be cool-headed, and to consider seriously the present situation in the South Wales Coalfield, which was of vital importance to each one. Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, said that they had called this meeting for the purpose of making a reply to the Aberdare speakers who addressed the mass meeting at Dowlais last Sunday, and who had criticised the action of the Executive Council of the Miners' Federation in not calling a conference. He (the speaker) said that the Executive Council were not against calling a conference to deal with the position, but what they would not agree to was to convene a conference which would decide finally the issue which would be placed before it. They knew full well that on different occasions, on very important and grave matters, conferences had come to one conclusion, while the men in the coalfield, on a ballot being taken, gave the reverse decision. An official conference would be called, and he asked the meeting to select a delegate in readiness to represent the Fochriw lodge before the meeting finished. He was very sorry that so many had attacked Mr. W. Abraham (Mabon), which was unjust. He believed honestly, although Mr Abraham was getting old, he was still one of the finest leaders in South Wales, and had worked hard for the miners of the coalfield (cheers). At this juncture, the chairman left, and the vacancy was filled by Mr. George Thomas, the monthly delegate. Mr. Thomas Jenkins, district secretary, gave timely advice to the workmen. He also said that before the week was out, the voice of the Dowlais workmen would be heard through a ballot for or



against the "down tools" policy. The meeting resolved: "That we, as members of the Fochriw Lodge, are against the policy of "down tools," - the resolution being carried unanimously. A vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the proceedings.

[All references below – ‘Merthyr Express’]

**18 February 1911** Coal Returns Coal worked in Gellygaer: Return for 1910 Fochriw Pits: Large Coal - 202,044 tons (5,161 increase); Small Coal - 44,277 tons (4,441 increase)

**20 May, 1911** Fochriw Collieries On Wednesday morning, the collier's working at the Big Pit, Fochriw, would not go down the pit to commence work, as they could not get the colliery manager's permission to finish early to attend the funeral of two men killed at the pit last Saturday morning,. Instead, they went home.

**29 July 1911** Pits Idle The Fochriw, South Tunnel and Cwmbargoed pits were idle on Thursday, owing to a shortage of waggons, as a result of the seamen's strike. This is the first stop at these collieries since the seaman's fight began.

**25 November 1911** Pits Idle Both the Fochriw pits, and the South Tunnel pit, were idle on Wednesday, owing to a shortage of waggons.

**2 December 1911** Fatal Accident at Fochriw Colliery About 3a.m. on Wednesday, a fatality happened at No. 2 Pit Fochriw, to Charles Conway, aged 30, a young married man, living at 1, Garden Street, Dowlais. He was at his work, looking down into the sump, when a stone came down and knocked him in the back of the head. He was killed, and his body was thrown into the sump. His body was conveyed home early in the morning by the collier's train.

**9 December 1911** Death of a Hitcher at Fochriw An inquest was held by the coroner, Mr. R. J. Rees, on Sunday morning at the Clarence Hotel, Dowlais, on George Conway, 28 years of age, who was killed early on Wednesday morning at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw. Deceased was a married man, and left a wife and two children. John Tucker, a hitcher in the same Pit as the deceased, said that he, the deceased, and others, were working nearby each other. The accident to Conway happened about 2:30a.m. but witness did not see the accident. He had just put up a tram of coal, and did not see anything fall, nor anyone else. Conway was found in the sump, and was not dead when found. He had a wound at the back of his head: he was alive when taken up the pit to the lamp room, where he died. Bartholomew Meade said he was working not far off, but did not see Conway struck, nor did he hear a noise. The last thing put in the cage was a tram of coal, pushed on by Conway. He did not hear anything fall. They had not seen anything that would account for his being struck. John Maloney, assistant repairer, said he did not know how Conway was hit, nor what with, neither did he see a piece of wood out of its place. Mr. J. H. Jones, colliery manager, showed a plan of that part of the pit, shaft, etc. He said that a diligent search was made at the bottom of the pit, the sump, and also in the shaft, and nothing was found displaced. The pit was 435 yards deep. Coal must have fallen on Conway when he was looking down into the sump. He could not think of anything else. A verdict was returned by the jury "that Conway met his death while working at the bottom of No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, by being hit on the back of the head, but there was no evidence to show what it was."

**16 December 1911** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Wednesday owing to a shortage of waggons.

**9 March 1912** Gellygaer Coal Returns W. H. Harris, assistant overseer for the parish of Gellygaer, has issued a return showing the quantity of coal worked in the area during the year ended 31 December 1911. The return shows that Fochriw produced 190,821 tons of large coal, an increase of 11,227 tons on the previous year.

**9 March 1912** Enginemen's Meeting A meeting of the Fochriw Branch of the Enginemen, Stokers and Surface Craftsmen's Association was held at the Mount Pleasant Inn on Tuesday, and was well attended by the members for 'roll call.' The feeling of the meeting was that peace and order should be kept by the strikers in that district.

**30 March 1912** Enginemen, Stokers, and Surface Craftsmen's Association A most enthusiastic meeting was held in the lodge room on Monday morning. The Agent, Mr. Woosnam, addressed the gathering. The following resolution was then passed: 'That this meeting expresses its confidence in the executive Council and Officers, and pledges itself to loyally carry out their instructions.'

**18 May 1912** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Monday owing to a shortage of waggons.

**15 June 1912** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Monday and Wednesday owing to a shortage of waggons.

**22 June 1912** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Tuesday owing to a shortage of waggons.

**29 June 1912** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Wednesday owing to a shortage of waggons.

**20 July 1912** Miners' Meeting A meeting of the miners employed at Fochriw Collieries was held at Carmel Hall on Monday night, and was addressed by Mr. Kirkhouse Jenkins, solicitor, who advised the miners to form themselves into an approved society for the working of the Insurance Act. Mr. George Thomas, chairman of the district, presided, and he was supported by Mr. John Davies, miners' agent, and Mr. Tom Jenkins, sub-agent.

**14 September 1912** Mining Successes The following have been successful in passing the examinations held under the Glamorgan Education Committee: Stage I: (1st Class) Mr. Edward Wellings; (2nd Class) Mr. Howell Thomas; (3rd Class) Mr. Tom Jenkins; Stage III: (3rd Class) Mr. Evan Henry Davies, Mr. Llewellyn Rees. The classes were held at Fochriw. The class teacher is Mr. Wm. Davies, Dowlais.

**19 October 1912** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Thursday owing to a shortage of waggons.

**26 October 1912** Stop Trucks Both pits were idle on Wednesday as a result of a shortage of trucks

**2 November 1912** Fatal Accident at No.2 Pit A shocking accident happened on Tuesday afternoon at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw. Evan Evans, a 30-year old, single-man of Ivor Street, Dowlais, was ascending the pit after his day's work. He was about 100 yards from the pit bottom, when he fell from the cage. His body was recovered immediately and taken to his home.

**9 November 1912** Inquest The jury at the inquest into the death of Evan Evans returned a verdict of 'Accidental Death,' with the recommendation that Messrs. G.K.N. should provide the surest method of preventing accidents of this kind that officials could invent.

**8 March 1913** Presentation A presentation took place at the Mount Pleasant Inn, Pentwyn on St. David's Night, to Mr. Ben Grey Davies, Penydarren, of a beautiful gold albert, given by fellow-workmen at the Fochriw colliery. Mr. Davies, who is leaving this country for the Far West of America, has worked as a blacksmith at the Fochriw colliery for many years.

**15 March 1913** Miners' Federation A general meeting of the miners of Fochriw was held at the Council School on Wednesday, Mr. E. M. Davies presiding. The speakers were Mr. John Davies, agent, and Mr. W. Brace, M.P. Mr. Davies, speaking mainly on

local matters, emphasised the fact that non-Unionism must be got rid of before the end of April. He strongly urged all men to pay up their dues and become Trade Unionists in the highest sense of the word. Mr. Brace dealt at great length with both phases of Trade Unionism, industrial and political, and in a most lucid manner, pointed out the necessity of a strong organisation, so that the voice of Labour may be heard, and its power felt on the various boards, and also in Parliament. This was one of the best attended meetings in the district.

**21 June 1913** Mining The Fochriw Mining Class has made very good progress during the season, under the careful tuition of their esteemed teacher, Mr. Wm. Davies, Dowlais. Three of his pupils - Mr. Edward Willings, Mr. Dd. Thomas, and Mr. Llewellyn Rees - have been successful in winning a week's tour in West Wales. They intend visiting a good number of collieries, also the power station and rescue station at Swansea. Friends wish them every success.

**9 August 1913** Colliery Accident Samuel Evans of 4, Penygraidd, Fochriw, was severely injured by a fall of roof at the Ty Newydd No. 2 Pit, Pontlottyn, on Thursday. He died from his injuries on Friday.

**1 November 1913** Memorial Services A service in memory of the departed brothers, 'the victims of the Senghenydd explosion,' was held at St. Mary's Church, and at St. Andrew's Church, Pentwyn, on Sunday evening. The offertories throughout the day were given to the relief fund.

**10 January 1914** Presentation On Saturday night, a presentation was made, at the Mount Pleasant Inn club room, to Mr. Ted Evans, Aelybryn, Fochriw, of a purse containing £52-8s-6d, the result of a drawing which had been arranged for him by his friends, he having been ill for over two years. Mr. Evans is an old and respected inhabitant of Fochriw. Until his health failed, he had for many years carried out the duties of colliery winder at No.2 Pit. A large company of friends was present. The chair was occupied by Mr. Tom Morgan, colliery overman, who spoke of Mr. Evans good qualities, particularly his straight-forwardness in all matters. He also said that everyone was pleased to show their support in a practical way. An excellent programme followed. Mr. Watkin Williams, vice-chairman, who is known as 'the ideal man,' greatly amused the company with his stump speeches and comic recitations. He then introduced the illusionist, Mr. Williams of Pontlottyn, who delighted all with his marvellous doings. Mr. Jenkins (Dowlais), who was the accompanist during the evening, gave an excellent pianoforte solo, which was followed by a song, 'The Woodman,' by Mr. Joe Poke, and a further song, 'The Totanic' by Mr. Crad Chankland. Mr. Stephen Davies (Dowlais) gave a beautiful rendering of 'Thora,' and a comic song, 'I shall meet you some dark night,' which caused roars of laughter, was sung by Mr. Josiah Kinsey. There was further conjuring, and songs from Messrs. John Evans, Crad Shankland, John Thomas (Pentwyn). Mr. Tom Evans (Pentwyn) then made the presentation to Mr. Evans, wishing him a speedy return to good health, and a happy and prosperous future. Mr. Evans responded saying that he was greatly touched by the generosity and practical sympathy of his friends. There were further songs from Mr. John Thomas, Mr. Stephen Davies, and Mr. Turner (Pontlottyn). Praise is due to the committee, especially Messrs. Thomas, Rees, C. R. Mills, and Thomas Morgan, for the excellent way in which they worked to bring this drawing to such successful issue. A message of sympathy was to be conveyed to Mr. C. R. Mills, the energetic secretary, in his sad bereavement at the recent, sudden loss of his sister. Votes of thanks to all, including Mr. Jones, Mount Pleasant Inn, brought the evening to a close.

**14 February 1914** Return of Coal Raised in Fochriw Pits: Year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1913 Large Coal - 230,772 tons; Small Coal - 57,799 tons.

**21 February 1914** Over-Winding About 1 o'clock on Monday morning, the cage of the No. 2 Pit Fochriw was overwound, but was fortunately held by the safety mechanism. No one was injured. However, there was no work at the pit during the day, as the small amount of damage to the pit head had to be repaired, and the rope re-connected to the cage. The cause of the accident was, we understand, the snapping of the indicator chain.

**7 March 1914** Fatal Accident A fatal accident occurred at the No. 2 Pit Fochriw on Monday. The victim was Mr. Richard Thomas, Old Houses, Cross Row, Penyard, Merthyr. The accident took place in Clarke's Level on the west side of the pit. Deceased was run over by a journey of full trams, receiving such terrible injuries that he expired almost immediately. Work was suspended at the pit for the remaining portion of the day, and the deceased was conveyed to his home, where, we understand, he was the sole supported of his widowed mother. He was about 28 years of age.

**13 June 1914** A Weigher Found Dead at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw The death of T. Lewis Davies, a weigher at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, was first enquired into at an inquest at the Talbot Inn, Penydarren. Lewis Williams, a banksman at the pit, said he found the deceased dead in the weigh-house soon after 3.30 a.m. on Friday morning. He was lying on his back on the floor. He had seen the deceased several times during the night, and was in the weigh-room at 3 a.m., the last time he had seen the deceased alive. He was quite as usual then. The body was not moved before the doctor came to the weigh-house. Dr. E. Davies J. P., Fochriw, said that he examined the body and that there were no bruises or marks on him. The eyes were normal. In his opinion the cause of death was cardiac failure, and a verdict to that effect was returned.

**20 June 1914** Inquest An inquest was held on Monday by the coroner, Mr. R. J. Rhys, on Mrs. Mary Hamlett, Martin-street, who was killed on Saturday morning, June 13<sup>th</sup>, by being knocked down and run over by one of the colliery engines. The unfortunate old lady had been to the office for her husband's pay and found there was a mistake in the sum of money, so she proceeded along the colliery sidings to inform her husband. While returning she was caught by the buffer of the engine and dragged under the engine. A verdict of 'Accidental Death' was recorded, and the driver of the engine exonerated from all blame. An important point was raised by one of the jurymen, Mr. J. D. Jones, as to whether it was possible to reach the pay office without crossing the sidings. It was agreed that it was not possible. Whereupon, it was proposed that a rider be added to the verdict respectfully calling the attention of the company to the need for a pay office in the village so as to avoid the danger of crossing the sidings. The Coroner said that this was not possible as the old lady was not killed while walking to or from the pay office. Mr. C. Payne (jury foreman), Coun. John Jones, and Mr. George Sibley also agreed with Mr. J. D. Jones' suggestion, and hoped the company would be good enough to consider this important question. The foreman pointed out that a very convenient place would be the ambulance hall. Messrs. J. Bevan (manager), Robson (locomotive supt.), Sergt. Williams and P. C. Perrott were also present.

**15 August 1914** Pits Both pits are working the extra hour this week, finishing instead at 4 o'clock, owing to the needs of the Admiralty.

**12 December 1914** Stop Trucks Both the Fochriw Pits were idle on Monday and Wednesday last owing to a shortage of wagons. The collieries have worked very regularly until this week.

**16 January 1915** Stop Trucks Both pits were idle on the day owing to a shortage of wagons. The pits were also idle from 11 o'clock on Saturday for the same reason.

**27 February 1915** Accident On Friday evening, at No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, John Williams, of Dowlais, was severely injured by a fall of the roof. Dr. Davies descended

the mine and attended to the man's injuries. Afterwards, he was conveyed to the Merthyr General Hospital, where he died the same night. Deceased was 25 years of age, and a native of North Wales.

**27 February 1915** Coal Worked in the Parish of Gellygaer for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1914 2,045,784 tons (large coal), a decrease of 92,473 tons on last year. Fochriw Pits: 211,322 tons (large coal); 48,652 tons (small coal).

**9 October 1915** Miners' Doctor The result of the ballot was made known on Wednesday, for a doctor to take the place of the Dr. E. Davies, who is retiring owing to failing health, to the general regret of all the inhabitants of the place. The voting was as follows: Dr. Munro, Tonyrefail, 461; Dr. Dunbar, Treharris, 179. Majority for Munro, 282. Dr. Davies held the position to the satisfaction of all for over 30 years, and his departure will be greatly felt.

**4 December 1915** Fatal Accident An accident occurred at Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds, Fochriw No. 2 Colliery, on Friday last, which resulted in the death of Mr. Philip Davies, Martin-street. It appears that the deceased was injured through some timber discharging, with the result that he received severe internal injuries, to which he succumbed the following day. Great sympathy is felt with the young widow and family in their sad bereavement. The inquest was held at the Rising Sun Inn on Wednesday by Mr. R. J. Rhys, coroner. Evidence of identification was given by Mr. T. Edwards, father-in-law. Mr. T. Shankland, a workman who was with the deceased at that time of the accident, also gave evidence. Mr. Tudor Davies, agent of the company, Mr. McBride, inspector of mines, Mr. C. Griffiths, miners' sub-agent, and Mr. D. O. Jones, an official at the colliery, were present. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned. Mr. Charles Payne was foreman of the jury.

**11 December 1915** Fatal Accident At Fochriw On Thursday week, a fatal accident happened at Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds, Ltd, No. 2 Pit, Fochriw, to a man named Michael McCarthy, aged 26, living at 221, Lower High Street, Dowlais. Mr. R. J. Rees, coroner, conducted an inquiry into the circumstances at the Dowlais Inn, on Monday afternoon. Mr. Tudor Davies, M.E., colliery agent of the company; Councillor John Davies J.P., miners' agent; and Mr. Jenkins, H.M.I., were present. Evidence of identification was given by Pat Daley, who said deceased was a native of Cork. John Allen, banksman at No. 2 Pit, said McCarthy often worked as a banksman, though he was employed as a labourer underground. The accident happened about 1:30p.m. when they were winding stones and mortar. He could not see the man, but he signalled to the engine driver to stop, and he slackened down steadily. The man was fastened down by the fangs of the carriage, and he was squeezed terribly. The fangs were within two inches of their place. Daniel Singleton, who was working on the same side as the deceased, said he saw the cage and a load of stones and mortar. He also saw the tram lowered and catch on McCarthy. Jenkins Pugh, winding engineman, said he had a signal to ease the carriage at the fangs which he did very carefully. Mr Tudor Davies showed a plan of the pit and the bed plate. The coroner, in summing up, said he could not help thinking that the deceased had lost his head and there was no blame to be attached to the men working with him. A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

**5 February, 1916** Nurse There were 38 applicants for the post of the colliery and maternity nurse for Fochriw and District, and the voting resulted as follows: Nurse F. Mercer, Cardiff, 341; Nurse A. L. Pritchard, Llanelly, 118; Nurse A. E. K. Edwards, Aberbargoed, 43. Nurse Mercer commences her duties next Monday.

**26 February, 1916** Mark of Esteem A handsome gold watch, chain and pendant, have been sent to Mr. Lewis Beynon, late time-keeper of the mechanical department of the Fochriw, Cwmbargoed, and Tunnel Pits, of Messrs Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds,

Ltd. which had been subscribed for by the officials and workmen, as a mark of the esteem in which he was held, and to mark his departure to take up an appointment in London. Because of business arrangements, he was unable to come down to receive the gifts personally. Mr. Beynon has acknowledged receipt of the gifts by letter. The secretary was Mr. William Griffiths, the treasurer Mr. John Walters, and the chairman Mr. Bernard Lewis.

**26 February, 1916** Addresses To Workers A large gathering of workmen assembled at the Fochriw Colliery yard on Monday afternoon, when excellent addresses were delivered by Mr. H. E. Pratten, from Sydney, Australia, and Mr. Robert Tootill, Member of Parliament for Bolton. The chairman was Mr. William Jones, checkweigher. Mr. Pratten spoke of the noble sacrifices they were making in Australia to help the motherland bring this war to a successful issue, saying they had given men in thousands and there were still thousands more anxious to give of their best. He urged the workmen to attend readily to their work so that they may turn out a plentiful supply of coal for the Navy to command the seas. Mr. Robert Tootill, thanked the men on behalf of their gallant countrymen and Mr. Lloyd George, for the work they were doing in producing the coal so essential in winning the war. He said they were doing their bit working underground, just as the soldiers were doing so in the trenches and other places. He begged them to continue in that work, to sink all differences, and to have one object only - the winning of the war. He spoke of his visit to France, where he had seen the sacrifices our soldiers were making, and he dwelt on the atrocities committed by the Germans upon their entry into Belgium. A vote of thanks brought the meeting to a close.

**27 January, 1917** Presentation An interesting presentation meeting of the held at the White Horse Inn on Thursday last week, when Private William Evans, R.A.M.C., late timekeeper of their Mechanical Department, was made the recipient of a silver cigarette case and silver cigarette holder, presented by his friends of the Mechanical Department. The chairman was Mr. Edward Lewis. Mr. George Jones presented Private Evans with the cigarette case, and Mr. William Evans the silver cigarette holder. During the evening an excellent programme of music was contributed to by the following: overture, Mr. David Cole Jones; solos, Messrs. D. C. Jones, W. H. Davies, Morgan Jones, David Vines, Thomas Rees, Trevor Lewis; club swinging, Mr. W. S. Williams; solo, Mr. Philip Vines. An address was also given by Gunner Griffiths. The singing of the National Anthem brought a very pleasant evening to a close.

**24 February 1917** Presentation An interesting presentation took place at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Bevan, manager of the collieries, when they were handed a beautiful piano, on the occasion of their marriage, by representatives of the colliery officials, workmen and friends. Mr. Bevan's connections with Fochriw are of long standing, he being son of the late Mr. Thomas Bevan, who was manager of the collieries for 25 years, and previously under manager. Many old friends were present. Expressions of goodwill and future happiness were expressed all round, to which Mr. and Mrs. Bevan responded with feeling.

**17 March 1917** Travelling Medical Board The Travelling Medical Board visited Fochriw on Friday last, and examined a number of men employed at the colliery. Colliery recruitment was also held.

**1 September 1917** Gellygaer Coal Return for year ending 30 June last Fochriw: 203,240 tons (large); 40,529 tons (small)

**24 November 1917** Accident Mr. Samuel Way, 21, Aelybryn, met with a serious accident at No. 2 Colliery, Fochriw, on Friday morning, from which he died on Saturday morning. Deceased was 57 years of age.

**22 December 1917** Stop Wagons Both pits were idle on Tuesday owing to a shortage of wagons.

**26 January 1918** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Monday last owing to a shortage of wagons.

**26 January 1918** Fochriw Colliery Albert Powell, repairer at the Fochriw Colliery, was fined 10 shillings or seven days imprisonment, for having a match in the mine.

**13 July 1918** Sleeping in the Mine William Hughes, a bell-man, Pit-row, Fochriw, and John Evans, engineman, Station-terrace, Dowlais, were each fined 20 shillings or 11 days imprisonment, for sleeping in the South Tunnel Pit, Cwmbargoed.

**28 September 1918** Fatal Accident On Friday at Fochriw No. 2 Colliery, Mr. Edgar Morris, Aelybryn, was instantly killed by a fall of the roof, whilst following his occupation as a collier. Great sympathy is extended to the young widow and a little child.

**11 January 1919** Shaft Accident A shocking accident occurred at No. 1 Pit, Fochriw, on Sunday evening last. It appears that Thomas Harris and Wyndham Edwards, pitmen, were engaged in carrying out their duties in the shaft, when by some means, they were knocked off. Thomas Harris was precipitated several hundreds of feet down the shaft, death being instantaneous. Edwards had a miraculous escape by clinging to one of the guide ropes. The dead man was married with a large family. He was very popular in the district. He was a discharged soldier, having joined the Colours at the commencement of the war, and afterwards obtaining the position of sergeant. He was discharged from Salonika the early part of last year owing to ill-health. The funeral, a military one, will take place on Saturday next at Pentwyn Churchyard.

**18 January 1919** Fochriw Pit Tragedy: Fall Down Shaft The sensational experience of a man in difficulties 420 feet from the pit bottom was revealed in an inquest held at Fochriw by the district coroner, on the body of Thomas Harris, aged 43, pitman, married, with nine children. Principal witness in the story was Wyndham Edwards, who appeared in the Court bearing evidence of the ordeal which he had undergone. The Coroner congratulated him upon his marvellous escape, and said that during the whole of his experience as a coroner, he had not met with a similar incident, and that he was fortunate not to be holding an inquest on two men. The story revealed, showed that Edwards, with the deceased, was engaged on Sunday as a pitman in examining No. 1 Pit of the Fochriw collieries. They had a special wire in the shaft for signalling for pitmen only. When about 140 yards from the bottom, they signalled to the winder to pull the cage up a little. Immediately this was done, the signal wire broke and came crashing down upon them. They sought protection under the birdles of the cage. Suddenly, Edwards found himself hauled down the pit. He grasped the guide rope, and felt himself slipping towards the bottom of the shaft. Harris, who was at the top of the cage, shouted to him and he responded. A second later, he saw the body of Harris pass him towards the bottom of the pit. He continued to slide down the guide rope to which he was clinging and at the bottom of the shaft found the body of his comrade on the slump planks. How Harris got knocked off the top of the cage he did not know, but surmised that the recoil of the broken signal rope, or something else, caught and knocked him off the landing point. He did not know how he himself got knocked off. The coroner returned a verdict of "Accidental Death."

The Funeral The funeral, which was a military one, was one of the largest and most representative that has ever left the village. Deceased was a discharged soldier. His eldest son, Gilbert, is in the Army, and was at Brussels at the time of his father's death. A telegram was dispatched to him, but unfortunately he arrived home a day late for the funeral. The deceased was a member of the local fire brigade, to which duties he was

devoted, holding the rank of sergeant. He was also a member of the R.A.O.B. After a short service at a house, conducted by the Vicar, the cortege, headed by the Fochriw Brass Band, Police Sergeant Williams, Discharged Soldiers and Sailors (under the command of Sergeant W. J. Jones), the Fochriw Fire Brigade (under Lieut. W. J. Payne), the Pontlloftyn Fire Brigade (Lieut. E. Robson), the Tirphil Fire Brigade (Lieut. Turk), members of the R.A.O.B., and the general public, proceeded to St. Mary's Church where the service was conducted by the Vicar, and Rev. Gilbert Williams, vicar of Pontlloftyn. They also officiated at the graveside. After the service the organist played the "Dead March." Rev. Gilbert Williams conducted the R.A.O.B. service. The chief mourners were: Master Harold Harris, son; Messrs. William Thatcher, son-in-law, J. E. Jones, brother-in-law, J. H. Harris, Victor Davies, Charles Wall, Morgan Morgans, Thomas Webb, Frank Jones, Rees Lewis, William Bevan, Fred Wootten, cousins. Great sympathy is extended to the widow and nine children in their sad bereavement, and to other members of the family.

**1 February 1919** Strike Both collieries were idle on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday as a result of the strike in the district.

**8 March 1919** Strike Owing to the strike, both the Fochriw pits are idle, all the horses having been brought to the surface.

**15 March 1919** Strike The strike still continues. On Saturday last, a huge procession from Dowlais and Bedlinog, headed by a brass band, marched into Fochriw, where an open-air meeting was held. Speeches were delivered by Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, Mr. D. B. Jones, Enginemen and Stokers' agent, and others.

**10 January 1920** Mining Success The many friends of Mr. David Thomas, the son of Mr. Rees Thomas, Plantation-terrace, will be delighted to hear of his brilliant success in acquiring the distinction of Mining Engineer, under the tutorship of Mr. Williams, F.R.G.S., Llanishen. Great praise is due to him for his achievement at the early age of 26. He has laboured incessantly, for, in addition to passing all his examinations, he followed his daily occupation at the colliery. He has now been appointed manager of collieries at Ynysybwll.

**24 January 1920** Pits Closed Both pits were rendered idle at Fochriw on Monday last because of a shortage of wagons.

**5 June 1920** A Dead Hero - Mr. Tom Harris, Aelybryn: Allowance to Family and Memorial Certificate from the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust As reported in these columns on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1919, an accident occurred at the Guest Keen Colliery, Fochriw, which resulted in the death of a pitman, Mr. Tom Harris, Aelybryn. It may be recalled that the knocker broke, and the deceased's fellow pitman, Mr. Wyndham Edwards, was knocked off the top of the cage into the pit, but succeeded in gripping a guide. He shouted to Harris, who was in safety, to let him know where he was suspended, saying he could not hold on much longer. The next thing, Edwards saw Harris's lamp and body passing him. He presumed that Harris lost his grip of the guide rope in trying to effect the rescue of his fellow pitman. This is the sequel. The matter was taken up by Mr. Fred J. Wootten, and reported to the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust. The trustees of this fund have decided to place the name of the deceased on their roll of heroes, in recognition of his heroic action. In addition, they unanimously agreed to grant his widow an allowance of 20 shillings weekly for herself, and 3s. 6d. weekly in respect of each of her three children under 14 years of age, together with a memorial certificate.

**15 January 1921** Merthyr Hospital A meeting of the workmen in connection with the maintenance of the Merthyr General Hospital was held at the Co-operative Rooms on Tuesday evening. The chair was occupied by Mr. George Thomas, one of the governors



of the Hospital. The chairman gave a brief outline of the object of the meeting, afterwards calling upon Mr. T. Powell, Bedlinog, a member of the executive board of the Hospital, to address the meeting. Mr. Powell gave a very lucid account of the work of the hospital, and said that for the last two years expenditure had exceeded receipts. A new extension was being erected to accommodate an additional 54 beds, (the present beds numbering 42, and this would greatly relieve the waiting list), thanks to the great generosity of Mr. Seymour Berry, who was defraying the cost of building. The furnishing of the same would have to be borne by the various classes of workmen and other organisations. Several questions were put and satisfactorily answered. On being put to a vote, it was unanimously decided to double the present contributions. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Powell and the chairman.

**22 January 1921** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Saturday and Monday last owing to a shortage of wagons.

**29 January 1921** Pits Idle Owing to the discovery of a defect in the shaft of the No. 2 winding engine, the majority of the men have been rendered idle until the new draft is put in. A large number of men are engaged, and every effort is made to get it ready as soon as possible.

**5 March 1921** Stop Trucks Both pits of Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds were idle on Monday and Wednesday, also the greater part of last week, owing to the great depression in the coal trade.

**12 March 1921** Meeting A special meeting of the Fochriw Mechanical Section of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain was held at the Lodge room, Mount Pleasant Inn, Pentwyn, on Tuesday evening, and was well attended, the chief speakers being Mr. W. Hopkins, agent, and Mr. S. O. Davies, B.A., miners' agent.

**16 April 1921** Strike Items The coal strike is going on very quietly in the village. Every thing is peaceable. During the past week, the workmen have been busily engaged on their respective allotments in readiness for the season. Others are busy searching for coal in the colliery tips, which are once again the scene of much activity. Also a lot of football is being played.

**30 April 1921** Mass Meeting On Thursday last, a mass meeting of the members of the South Wales Miners' Federation, was held at the Co-operative Rooms, presided over by the Mr. A. Jones, in the unavoidable absence of the miners' agent, Mr. S. O. Davies, B.A.. Mr. W. J. Payne, the delegate to the Cardiff conference, gave an account in detail of every item that had been dealt with. In his concluding remarks, he said he was delighted with the peaceable way they had conducted themselves during the crisis, and he hoped it would continue to the end. His advice was: Keep peaceable and don't interfere with any persons on the road during the present crisis. Keep away from the colliery premises and do no rash act that would bring discredit on the Federation. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded the speaker for his excellent report. Mr. Walter Jones, the delegate of the Caerphilly Divisional Labour Party, then gave a very able report on the doings of that body, which was well received, and for which he was accorded a hearty vote of thanks.

**7 May 1921** Mass Meeting A largely attended meeting was held at the Co-operative Rooms on Wednesday afternoon presided over by Mr. W. J. Payne. Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, addressed the meeting, giving a very able report on the present crisis, and dealing very minutely with the negotiations in London. He also dealt with the question of communal kitchens which they intended opening in Dowlais. Several questions were asked and satisfactorily answered. At the close, a resolution was unanimously carried confirming the action of the delegate.

**28 May 1921 Meeting** A meeting off the Enginemen's Branch of the South Wales Miners' Federation was held at the Co-operative Rooms on Friday last, presided over by Mr. W. Williams, when several important matters were under discussion. Mr. W. J. Payne, the delegate, gave a brief word on the situation in the coalfield, which he was pleased to say, so far as the spirit of the men was concerned, was very peaceable. A resolution was unanimously carried to send a letter of congratulation to one of their former members, the Reverend J. C. Payne, on his recent admission to Holy Orders.

**4 June 1921 South Wales Miners' Federation** A well-attended meeting was held at the Co-operative Room on Wednesday evening, when the Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, presented the new proposals submitted by the Prime Minister for a settlement of the present dispute. He dealt very minutely with every clause, after which several questions were put to the agent. It was unanimously decided to reject the terms.

**4 June 1921 Mass Meeting** A crowded meeting was held at the Co-operative Rooms on Friday afternoon. Mr. W. J. Payne was voted to the chair. The chairman briefly outlined the object of the meeting before calling upon Mr. S. O. Davies, to address it. Mr. Davies gave an address on the position in general throughout the coalfield, and also touched on other matters of interest.

**18 June 1921 Miners' Meeting** A well-attended open air meeting was held at Fochriw on Tuesday evening last, presided over by Mr. R. Thomas, when Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, addressed the meeting. He submitted a statement of the latest offer, which is to be balloted upon, dealing very minutely with all the clauses. Several questions were put and satisfactorily answered.

**9 July 1921 Mass Meeting** A very well attended open-air meeting was held on Friday to hear the delegates report to the Cardiff Conference. Mr. Rees Thomas was elected to preside. Mr. W. J. Payne, the delegate, gave a very lucid report of the conference. He said that he went there with an open mind, to find out from the National Executive members, the reason for the recent new developments. There had been some very straight talking from a number of delegates, but he was going to admit that under the present circumstances it would be very unwise to prolong the struggle. The report was unanimously accepted by the meeting. Mr. William Hopkins, agent, then addressed the meeting and dealt at great length with the crisis. He was followed by Mr. S. O. Davies, agent, who dealt in detail with the situation in the light of what had taken place quite recently, leading up to the present situation. Questions were asked and satisfactorily answered. Votes of thanks brought the meeting to a close.

**9 July 1921 Work Resumed** Work was resumed at the Fochriw Collieries on Monday last, but owing to the large accumulation of water, and falls, only a very small percentage of the men were able to resume. It is feared some time will elapse before all are able to restart.

**30 July 1921 Conference Reports** A mass meeting was held at the Co-operative Rooms on Tuesday evening, presided over by Mr. Rees Thomas, to receive the report of the Cardiff conference. It was given by the delegate, Mr. Tom Rees, in a very able manner, and accepted.

**21 January 1922 Messrs Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds New Scheme** Messrs. G.K.N. are progressing with important colliery developments in the Fochriw and Dowlais area. At Fochriw, two drifts are being driven to four house coal seams of excellent quality, and in each of the drifts, one seam of nearly a yard thick has been reached. It is anticipated that the undertaking will be completed within two years, and will yield an output of about 1,500 tons daily, and provide employment for 2,000 men.

The Fochriw drifts are one or two miles from Deri, where the Powell Duffryn are forging ahead with the sinking of their new and up-to-date colliery which is expected to yield eventually, about 2,000 tons of coal per day.

**25 March 1922** Fatal Accident A fatal accident occurred at Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds' Fochriw No.2 Colliery on Tuesday morning, whereby Mr. Edward Prosser, Dowlais, met his death in the course of his employment. The pit ceased work when the sad news was made known. Deceased was well respected amongst his fellow workers. He had been on active service all through the war.

**22 April 1922** Fatal Accident It is with feelings of deep regret that we record the fatal accident which befell Mr. David Hitchins, Dowlais, whilst following his employment at Fochriw No.1 Pit on Tuesday morning. To the bereaved we extend our sincere sympathy.

**29 April 1922** Mechanical Workers On Tuesday evening at the Lodge Room, Mount Pleasant Inn, Pentwyn, Mr. D.B. Jones (agent) delivered one of his famous addresses, entitled "The Future of the Mechanical Union." The chairman of the Branch, Mr. Harry Hughes, presided, and extended a hearty welcome to Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones said that he was pleased to be amongst them again, and that he had very pleasant recollections of meetings held at Fochriw in the past. This was his 45<sup>th</sup> public address throughout the coalfield since his return amongst them. He dealt lucidly with the affairs of the coalfield since March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1921, through the crisis, until the present day, dealing very minutely with the failure of the Triple Alliance to function, the fallacy of the destruction of the mines' policy during the crisis, and a number of very interesting events which led up to the Mechanical Union breaking from the South Wales Miners' Federation. He was very pleased to say that since the breakaway, the Mechanical Union was in a more highly organised state today than ever he remembered. He then dealt with the future programme of the Union through the National Union of Enginemen, Boilermen and Mechanics, to which they were affiliated. He appealed to those who were still outside to join up, because their future salvation lay in their organisation. Others who spoke were Messrs. W.J. Payne, J. Evans and H.C. Seabourne. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded the speaker for his excellent address, and also to the chairman.

**27 May 1922** Mechanical Workers A meeting was held at the Co-op Rooms on Friday evening last, with the object of forming a branch of Mechanical Workers in connection with the South Wales Miners' Federation. The chairman was Mr. John Walters, and the speakers were the mechanical agents of the S.W.M.F., Mr. Wm. Hopkins and Mr. J.W. Grant, who delivered able addresses. Several questions were asked and answered at the end of the addresses.

**1 July 1922** Work Resumed Work was resumed at the Fochriw No.2 Pit on Tuesday evening after the breaking of the winding rope on Wednesday morning. Fortunately, only coal-winding was in operation at the time. The loss of wages to the men and the heavy expenditure in repairs has been great.

**15 July 1922** Wagon Stoppage Both the Pits of Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds were idle on Monday and Tuesday because of a shortage of wagons.

**9 September 1922** Fatal Accident A fatal accident befell Mr. D. J. Burns of Dowlais who met his death by a fall of roof at No.2 Colliery Fochriw on Friday morning last. As is the custom with a fatal accident, the pit stopped work for the day.

**21 October 1922** Mechanical Workers' Union A meeting of the above union was held at the Mount Pleasant Inn on Thursday. Mr. W. J. Payne reported on the flourishing state of the union and he also dealt with the recent increase in the standard rate.

**20 January 1923** Subsistence Wage: Buxton Award Settlement : Payment for Sunday Night Work and Overtime An explanatory circular dealing with recent decisions in regard to the payment of the subsistence wage to lower paid day wage men who work overtime, and in relation to the Sunday night shift, has been issued by the South Wales Miners' Federation. One of the main points of controversy - payment for the Sunday night shift - has now been disposed of. Under the employers' interpretation of Lord Buxton's award, a man who worked the Sunday night shift, would have received only 1s. 9d. more than those who worked five nights. It has now been arranged that payment for this shift will now be made in full, that is 6s.4.8d per shift. Also, men whether employed in the morning, afternoon or night shifts, will not be deprived of the subsistence allowances for working overtime. Total wages for a workman employed on the morning shift who works a full week with overtime - 52s.6.4 d; for afternoon and night shift workmen - 52s.7.2d. Payments made under these provisions will be made retrospective - from November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1922.

**27 January 1923** Fochriw Development: Employment for a Thousand Men in Two Years Within the last few weeks, a new winder has been installed at the No.1 Pit, a head gear has been re-inforced and various other improvements are in progress with a view to new facilities for increase in output. Trial drifts have been driven at four points on the face of the mountain between Fochriw and Pontlottyn, and have proved satisfactory. House coal veins, particularly the Brithdir seams, have been found intact and are of excellent quality. Slants will be driven into the mountain and a bridge will be erected over the railway line for dealing with coal. Sidings will open at the north end towards Fochriw Colliery and about 800 - 1,000 men will be employed over the next two years. Two new drifts have been driven in the direction of Dowlais from Fochriw Colliery, and a number of workable seams have been intercepted. These will be worked at the same time as the drift face is being driven forward. In view of the developments, it is difficult to understand the attitude of the Ministry of Health in sanctioning the removal of 40 Fochriw Houses to Bargoed, when no difficulty exists to interfere with their erection. If Gellygaer Council is not careful, and the local members are not alive to the interests of the locality, the remaining 12 houses - a quite inadequate allocation - might also go to Bargoed.

**8 September 1923** Recreation A letter was read from the Dowlais Miners' Welfare Scheme on Tuesday evening, intimating that they were prepared to grant a certain sum to Fochriw for the purpose of providing a recreation ground. It was decided to defer the matter pending some definite information with regard to the Bedlinog Welfare Scheme.

**29 September 1923** Pits Idle Owing to the shortage of wagons, both pits of Messrs. G. K. N. were idle on Wednesday and Thursday.

**10 November 1923** Idle Pits Owing to the shortage of wagons, both pits of Messrs. G. K. N. were idle on Monday last.

**17 November 1923** Fochriw Pit Tragedy On Friday morning last, at No.1 Fochriw Pit, Isaac Jones, 54, labourer, married, of 14 Brynteg, Fochriw, lost his life. Injuries were sustained by Wm. B. Mason, haulier of Penydarren, R. Connors, haulier of Penydarren, and David Wm. Lewis (slight injuries). Mason and Connors were conveyed to the Merthyr General Hospital, and Lewis to his home. ). Mr. R. J. Rhys, coroner, held an inquest at the Rising Sun Hotel on Monday. Mr. Tudor Davies, M.E., agent, and Mr. J. Bevan, M.E., Fochriw Colliery, represented the Company, Mr. M. Hughes for the Home Office, and Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, Dowlais, for the relatives. Robert Jones, brother of the deceased, gave evidence of identification.

Richard Price, timberman, said he was in charge of a number of men who were doubling timber on a double parting in the lower 6-foot seam on the east side of No.1

Pit. They had put up two arms, and when they were in the act of lifting the collar, when a fall of roof occurred, and some timber was discharged. This was without warning. Witness said that at this spot, the roof was a little treacherous, as there were balls of mine in the roof. Deceased and the three men were caught by the fall, deceased being buried outright. He was dead when extricated. Thomas Jenkins, fireman, corroborated this evidence. Mr. Tudor Davies said that the ground at this spot was subject to heavy crushes and that although the timber had been doubled, they had some trouble with it. It was revealed that the deceased was not killed by the fall, but was suffocated before being released. A verdict of 'Accidental Death' was recorded.

**24 November 1923** Idle Pits Owing to the shortage of wagons, both pits of Messrs, G. K. N. were idle on Saturday and Wednesday last owing to a shortage of wagons.

**26 January 1924** The Railway Strike: Restricted Service of Trains Every Day: How the Mining Districts are Affected Merthyr, in common with other districts throughout the country, has felt the inconvenience of the railway strike, and everyday evidence is forthcoming that this will be maintained. Through an excellent bus and charabanc service, travellers are able to get into contact with the ward, which up to the present has enjoyed a very fair share of communications with the outside districts. The Rhymney Valley was more fortunate than many other districts. Up to Thursday, the service on the local line, both as regards travellers and traffic trains, was practically normal. The collieries were, however, affected, and on Tuesday, 3,000 men employed at the Groesfaen, Deri, Mardy, Rhymney and Britannia Collieries, Deri, were rendered idle, whilst on Wednesday, about 5,000 men employed at the Bargoed Steam Coal, East and West Eliot's Collieries, were unable to work. The reason for the favoured position of the Rhymney section is evidently due to the fact that the majority of the men belong to the N.U.R. and not to the locomotive men's Union.

**22 March 1924** Mass Meeting A largely attended meeting was held at the Co-operative Rooms on Monday evening, when Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, explained the new offer of the owners. He also dealt with the question of non-unionists.

**5 April 1924** Mass Meeting On Saturday evening at the Library Hut, Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, spoke once again on many important issues.

**3 May 1924** Blow For Fochriw - Three Collieries Closed On Wednesday - Efforts To Find Work In Other Pits On Wednesday last, three of Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds' Collieries in the Dowlais area were closed down. They are the Fochriw Nos. 1 and 2, and the South Tunnel Pits, where approximately 2,300 workmen have found employment, this number representing, roughly, half the membership of the Dowlais District of the South Wales Miners' Federation.

Since notices for the termination of all contracts of employment were served on the workmen a fortnight ago, the local Federation leaders have sought to prevail on the employers to reverse their decision to shut down the three collieries. During the past few days, a deputation from the miners, headed by Mr. S.O. Davies (their agent), was received by Mr. Howell R. Jones. J.P., general manager Messrs. Guest. Keen and Nettlefolds' steel and coal undertakings in Dowlais, and a director of the firm. The interview has had no material bearing on the situation, as the notices to cease work, which affects the officials at the collieries as well as the miners, have been allowed to take their course.

Arrangements are being made to absorb some of the labour thus dispensed with from the two Fochriw and the South Tunnel Pits into other collieries owned by Messrs. G.K.N. in the neighbourhood of Dowlais, and in the Merthyr area, while it is thought that a considerable number of Fochriw miners may discover a new avenue to employment in the Powell Duffryn Company's undertakings near Deri. Meanwhile,

many men are reported successfully to have gone as far as the Vale of Neath in search of employment.

No official statement has been issued as to whether the abandonment of the three collieries is in the nature of a permanent or temporary measure, but it is understood that the step taken by the Dowlais Company is due to economic reasons.

When the decision of the directors of Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds' became known, the Dowlais miners' agent, in conjunction with Mr. R.C. Wallhead, Labour M.P. for the Merthyr Borough, approached the Ministry of Mines with an application for an inquiry into the position, on the grounds that the coal resources of the Fochriw district were such as did not justify the closure of these collieries.

**5 July 1924** Collieries Stopped Feelings of sadness could be observed throughout the village on Monday last when it became known that the Cornish pumps and fan engines of both Fochriw and South Tunnel pits had been stopped, and practically all the remaining men who had been kept on for the past two months were stopped. The collieries have been working for over 60 years and have been the source of employment for local inhabitants and large numbers from Dowlais, Pontlottyn, etc.. Needless to say, it is a severe blow to Fochriw which is one of the most industrious villages to be found. About 70 to 80 per cent of the people own their own houses. The majority were purchased from Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds, Ltd., a few years ago, when they were disposing of their property. Let us hope that the clouds of darkness will soon disappear and that Fochriw will become, once again, what it has been in the past, a happy, prosperous village.

**1 August 1925** Workman's Meeting On Saturday at the Library Hut, a meeting of the Ogilvie workmen was held. The chair was occupied by Mr. Arthur Cogan. Mr. Bryn Roberts, the general secretary, gave an address dealing with the present crisis.

**16 January 1926** Colliery Stack Collapsed On Sunday night quite an unusual sound was heard in the village. It transpired that one of the high stacks at the Fochriw Colliery had collapsed. Fortunately, no one was injured.

**27 March 1926** Accident The many friends of Mr. Edward Gittins, Guest-street, will regret to know that he met with an accident at Ogilvie Colliery on Friday morning. After being attended to by Dr T. Stennar Evans, he was conveyed to Merthyr General Hospital, where he is making a satisfactory recovery.

**22 May 1926** The Strike Perfect peace prevails in the village. The Strike Committee are working hard to organise different events to bring in funds to help relieve the distress prevailing in the village.

**22 May 1926** Mass Meeting Mr. S. O. Davies, B.A., miners' agent, addressed a crowded meeting in the village on Monday evening. He dealt in detail with the coal crisis, and in his address, he gave a survey of the whole position.

**19 June 1926** Miners' Meeting At the Co-operative Rooms on Monday, Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, addressed the meeting with some very interesting points and a discussion of the coal situation in general.

**14 August 1926** Miners Meetings Mass meetings were held in the open air on Wednesday and Thursday last in connection with the coal crisis. The speakers were Mr. Bryn Roberts and Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agents, who dealt with the Bishops formula. Questions were asked and answered at the close.

**21 August 1926** Mr. Morgan Jones, M.P. A crowded meeting was held at the Reading Room on Friday evening to hear Mr. Morgan Jones M.P. Mr. E. M. Davies presided. Mr. Jones dealt with the coal crisis up to the present time, his address being attentively listened to and well received. Questions were asked and answered.

**9 October 1926** Mass Meeting On Monday, an open-air meeting was addressed by Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, in the Co-op Yard. He dealt at length with the coal crisis. Mr. Prosser presided.

**20 November 1926** Mass Meetings Meetings were held on Tuesday morning, when the coal crisis was dealt with by Mr. Albert Thomas, miners' agent, Bargoed, and Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, Dowlais. Both meetings were largely attended and able addresses were given by the speakers

**27 November 1926** Coal Crisis At Carmel Chapel on Monday evening, Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, addressed a crowded meeting. He gave a report on the proceedings in connection with of the coal crisis to date.

**12 March 1927** Memorial Service: Cwm Disaster At the Parish Church of St. Mary's on Sunday, a memorial service was held in memory of the victims of the Cwm Disaster. The Church was well filled and the service was conducted by the Vicar. Touching references were made to the sorrowing families, and also to the heroic men who would risk their lives in the endeavour to rescue their entombed brothers. At close of the service, the organist played the "Dead March" in "Saul." A collection was taken in aid of the Distress Fund

**23 April 1927** Mr. Cook's Visit Mr. A. J. Cook, secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and Mr. S. O. Davies, vice-president of the South Wales Miners Federation, addressed a well attended meeting at Carmel Chapel on Monday.

**30 April 1927** Industrial Peace Union Meeting About 40 members of the Fochriw branch of the South Wales Miners' Industrial Union journeyed to Cardiff on Saturday, and attended the meeting organised by the Industrial Peace Union which was held at the Empire Theatre. The meeting was presided over by Mr. W. Gooding, chairman of the South Wales Miners' Industrial Union. The principal speakers were J. Havelock Wilson, and J. A. Seddon, ex-chairman, Trades Union Congress. The audience was disappointed at the non-appearance of Mr. A. J. Cook, who had been invited to attend to answer Mr. J. Havelock Wilson's far-flung challenge on the realism of Soviet rule.

**30 April 1927** South Wales Miners' Industrial Union A strong branch of the above Union has been formed at Fochriw, and the number of people on the books is well over 100 already. For the convenience of miners wishing to join, contributions are taken every fortnight (Saturday night at 6:30p.m.) at the White Horse Inn, Pentwyn. The officials of the branch are: Mr. Mordecai Evans, chairman; Mr. Edward Thomas, treasurer; Mr. Stanley Jones, The Villas, secretary.

**21 May 1927** The New Union On Saturday evening, a meeting of the above was held at the White Horse Inn, Pentwyn, presided over by Mr. Mordecai Evans. A very fine address was given by Mr. Drew of Glasgow, who dwelt on the aims and objects of the new union, in a very able manner.

**16 July 1927** Industrial Peace Union Through the persistent efforts of Mr. Lloyd Jones, there is every likelihood of a branch of the Union being established in the village. The objects of this Union are, in short, to promote loyalty, patriotism, fellowship, self-sacrifice and service. Further information can be obtained from Mr. Lloyd Jones.

**16 July 1927** Miners' Meeting Mr. Ben Roberts, miners' secretary, addressed a small meeting of miners on Sunday last, and dealt with the much needed re-organisation scheme of the South Wales Miners' Federation. The village, which is a stronghold of Nonconformity, always deplors these Sunday meetings, as was evidenced by the sparse attendance.

**16 July 1927** South Wales Miners' Industrial Union A well-attended meeting of the Union was held at Pentwyn on Saturday, when a resolution was passed congratulating

Mr. W. Gooding, Ynysddu, on his appointment as secretary of the Union, which was formed in London on Friday. Mr. Gooding is chairman of the South Wales Miners', and those who attended that memorable rally of patriots at Cardiff on 24<sup>th</sup> April last, know what a capable speaker and sterling fighter Mr. Gooding is. Evidently, he is the "man for the job."

**12 November 1927** The Coal Trade Fochriw, in common with other places, is keenly feeling of the depression in the coal trade. There are frequent stoppages at Ogilvie and Groesfaen collieries. The Fochriw levels of Messrs. Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds are working regularly.

**7 April 1928** Accident Mr. Daniel Rowlands was removed to Merthyr General Hospital last week as the result of an accident received at Ogilvie Colliery.

**22 June 1929** Mass Meeting Mr. S.O. Davies, B.A., miners' agent, addressed an open air meeting on Tuesday evening, and dealt with many important events in connection with the work of the M.F.G.B. and local matters.

**14 September 1929** Stop Trucks Owing to a shortage of wagons at Ogilvie and Groesfaen Collieries, the workmen of the village have been unemployed.

**19 October 1929** Fatal Accident As the result of an accident at Ogilvie Colliery, Mr. Henry Richards, Penybank, was conveyed to Rhymney Hospital, where he died of his injuries. Sympathy is extended to the family in their sorrow.

**1 March 1930** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Wednesdays.

**29 March 1930** Pits Idle Both pits of Ogilvie and Groesfaen were again idle over the weekend owing to a shortage of wagons.

**12 April 1930** Pits Idle Both pits were idle on Saturday and Monday.

**17 May 1930** Pits Idle Both Ogilvie and Groesfaen Pits were idle on Saturday owing to a shortage of wagons.

**2 August 1930** Stop Trucks Owing to depression, the levels of G.K.N. Ltd at Fochriw were idle the latter part of last week, and the first few days of this week. Work resumed on Wednesday.

**30 August 1930** Land Marks: Removal of Last Colliery High Stack The last of the prominent landmarks was removed from the village on Friday, when the last high stack of the collieries which are now dismantled, was razed to the ground.

**4 October 1930** Fatality Mr. Elwyn Davies, eldest son of Nurse Ballard Davies, received terrible injuries at Ogilvie Colliery whilst following his employment. He was hurried to Merthyr General Hospital, and passed away after admission. Deceased, who was 17 years of age, was a bright intelligent young man, and had passed his C.W.B. Examination at Bargoed Secondary School. Sympathy goes out to the widowed mother, who lost the breadwinner twelve years ago, and has struggled hard to educate her three children. The youngest daughter recently won an entrance scholarship to Bargoed Secondary School, and commenced her studies this month. Touching reference was made to the fatality at the harvest festival service on Monday night by the Vicar.

**25 October 1930** Stop Trucks The Fochriw levels of Messrs. G.K.N. were again idle on Saturday and Monday.

**8 November 1930** Fochriw Levels The levels were idle on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Monday.

**15 November 1930** Stop Trucks The Fochriw levels were idle again on Monday Tuesday and Wednesday.

**10 January 1931** Mass Meeting On Friday, the Old Library was crowded to overflowing to hear an address on the coal crisis by Mr. S. O. Davies, B.A., miners' agent. Mr. Davies gave a very minute review of the negotiations to date. Mr. Graham Roberts, miners' agent, addressed a meeting on Sunday.



**24 January 1931** Mass Meeting At the Library on Saturday, a crowded meeting was held. The speaker was Mr. S. O. Davies, miners' agent, who was in good form. He dealt in detail with the negotiations in London, and explained the terms that were to be submitted to the delegate conference that evening at Cardiff. It was agreed to vote for the acceptance of the terms.

**14 March 1931** Stop Trucks Owing to a shortage of wagons the Fochriw Drifts and Nantyffin Drifts were idle on Tuesday.

**21 March 1931** Meeting At the Old Library on Sunday morning, Mr. Bryn Roberts, miners' agent, addressed a mass meeting of workmen on the new award in the coalfield. The agent dealt in detail with the award which had been received with so much dissatisfaction. Several questions were asked and answered.

**25 April 1931** Stop Trucks Both the Brithdir and Tyla-du Levels were on stop on Tuesday owing to the trade depression.

**9 May 1931** May Day At the library on Monday afternoon, the usual May Day meetings in connection with the South Wales Miners' Federation were held, the chair being occupied by Mr. William J. Edwards. Addresses were given by Mr. J. Watkins and others.

**30 May 1931** Accident The numerous friends of Mr. George Davies, Brynteg-street, will regret to know that he received injuries whilst following his employment at Ogilvie Colliery, which necessitated his removal to Merthyr General Hospital. His friends join in wishing him a speedy recovery.

**18 July 1931** Pits Idle Owing to the trade depression, the pits of Groesfaen were idle on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday last.

**19 September 1931** Depression Both the Brithdir Levels and Nantyffin Drift of G.K.B. were idle again on Wednesday owing to trade depression. Frequent stoppages have occurred lately.

**7 November 1931** Stop Trucks The inhabitants of the village are feeling keenly the effects of the frequent stop days at Ogilvie and Groesfaen.

**14 November 1931** Pits Idle Both Ogilvie and Groesfaen Collieries are still on short time owing to a shortage of wagons. It is a frequent occurrence of late and is keenly felt by the people.

**12 December 1931** Fatal Accident Quite a gloom was cast over the village on Saturday, when the news spread that Mr. David Lewis Jones, Brook-row, had met with a fatal accident at Groesfaen Colliery. He was 61 years of age, and had resided in the same house all his life. He was of a quiet disposition and was loved by all. Heartfelt sympathy goes out to this sorrowing family.

**12 December 1931** Killed in Deri Pit: Coroner and a Colliery Rider A censure was delivered to a colliery rider at an inquest conducted by Mr. R. J. Rhys, coroner, at the Rising Sun Inn, Fochriw, on Tuesday afternoon. The inquiry concerned the death of David Lewis Jones, aged 61, a bachelor, labourer, of Dynevor-street, Fochriw, who was killed at Groesfaen Colliery, Deri, on Saturday last by being crushed between a post and the side of the road. Mr. Ernest Cumpstone, Fochriw, was the foreman of the jury. Also present were: Mr. H. Maddley (representing the Ministry of Mines); Mr. Dan Thomas, M.E., (the colliery company); Mr. Albert Thomas, miners' agent (representing the relatives). Evidence of identification was given by the brother of the deceased, Mr. Evan Jones, Martin-street. Fred John Helps, in evidence, said he was the rider and was taking the journey of 11 trams into a conveyor heading, and deceased was unloading timber from one of the trams. He wanted to move the journey, and when he was ready he shouted to the deceased to stand clear, and signalled the engine driver. In answer to the Coroner, who asked if deceased replied to his shout, witness said he did not know

as the machinery was working at the time. He then found deceased on the road-side. Coroner: Don't you think it would be just as well for you to go up and make sure that he was clear? Witness: I warned him before starting that I would be moving the journey. Henry Charles White, collier, said that he found deceased with a piece of timber against his chest, and he had evidently been crashed when the trams moved. The Coroner described the rider, Helps, as "a somewhat casual individual," and said he should have taken more pains to make sure that the deceased had heard him when he shouted that the trams were to be moved. The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death," the foreman adding that the members thought the rider should be told to be more careful in future. The Coroner recalled Helps and told him that he agreed with the jury. "Instead of shouting at the old man, you might have gone up to him and told him that the journey was going to move. If you had done so, he would be alive today. You can think that over."

**16 January 1932** Pits Idle The workmen of the Ogilvie and Groesfaen Collieries are experiencing very hard times owing to the frequent stoppages at these pits.

**30 January 1932** Pits Idle Ogilvie, Groesfaen, and Brithdir Levels are again experiencing short time owing to trade depression in the coalfields.

**30 April 1932** Pits Idle Both collieries were idle again on Saturday.

**11 June 1932** Pits Idle The Fochriw Levels of Messrs. Guest, Keen are experiencing a number of stop-days owing to trade depression.

**18 June 1932** Pits Idle The Ogilvie and Groesfaen Pits of the Powell Duffryn Co. and the Levels of Guest, Keen were idle on Wednesday owing to trade depression.

**2 July 1932** Accident The many friends of Mr. John Williams, Plantation-street, will regret to know that he received injuries whilst working at Taff - Merthyr Colliery, and is now a patient at Merthyr General Hospital. His large circle of friends join in wishing him a speedy recovery.

**2 July 1932** Employment Notices Quite a number of workmen residing in the village and employed in the neighbourhood collieries received their notices to terminate contracts a few weeks ago, and these have now taken effect. It is hoped that they will be shortly re-instated, as the percentage of unemployed in the village is already very high.

**20 August 1932** Stop Trucks The Fochriw Levels of Messrs. G.K.N. Ltd., are experiencing depressing times of late.

**17 September 1932** Accidents On Monday, while following their occupations at Ogilvie Collieries, two Fochriw men were severely injured. Mr. Edward Chapman, Williams-row, was conveyed to Merthyr General Hospital, and Mr. David Tyler, Hill-row, Pentwyn, was also injured.

**2 December 1933** Accidents A very severe accident befell Mr. Stephen Jones, Council Houses, whilst following his employment at Groesfaen Colliery on Thursday week. He was removed to Merthyr General Hospital. His many friends wish him a speedy recovery. Master Gordon Llewellyn, Pentwyn Farm, is also a patient at the hospital - the result of an accident.

**5 May 1934** Colliery Accident All friends of Mr. William Pope, Pentwyn, join in wishing him a speedy recovery after an accident sustained at Ogilvie Colliery.

**15 September 1934** Colliery Accident Mr. James Cole, Brynteg, was taken to Merthyr General Hospital last week after an accident at Groesfaen Colliery.

**29 September 1934** Miners' Meeting County Councillor W. J. Kedward, Bargoed, presided at the New Hall on Wednesday, when addresses were given by Mr. James Griffiths, president of the South Wales Miners' Federation; Mr. Albert Thomas, J.P., miners' agent; and Mr. W. H. Crews, Llanbradach, Executive Member of the S. W. M. F..

**23 February 1935** Colliery Fatality David Williams, aged 39, a colliery rider, of Aelybryn, Fochriw, was killed at the Ogilvie Colliery, Deri, on Wednesday. He was run over by a journey of trams. He was a married man with two children. His injuries included a fracture of the base of the skull, and a fracture of the neck.

**9 March 1935** Fatal Accident: Inquest "Accidental Death" was the verdict returned at the inquest at Fochriw on Friday on David Williams, aged 38, of Aelybryn, Fochriw, who was killed at Ogilvie Colliery, Deri, on 20th February. Mr. R. J. was the coroner. David John Price, rider, said that 10 trams were attached to a rope and two of them went off the road. At the time of the accident he (witness), the fireman and deceased were trying to release an iron girder, called a ring, which was in a tram, when the journey started moving forward. In reply to the coroner, witness said no one gave the signal for the journey to start. Deceased was in a tram helping to release the ring when it caught him across the neck, killing him instantly. Further in reply to the coroner, the witness said it might have been that the ring caught the wires and gave a signal to the engineman to pull up. Thomas Harris Evans, a fireman, gave corroborative evidence. John H. Rudd, engineman, said he received five knocks, which were clear and perfect, indicating to him to move the journey forward for about a yard or four feet. After the accident, he saw the wires had been twisted and the ring was in between the wires. Coroner: That is the most extraordinary point about it. In returning it verdict as stated, the Coroner said it was a curious case.

**9 March 1935** Pity Fatality Stanley Lewis James, aged 23, 11, Dynevor-street, died at Merthyr General Hospital on Wednesday as a result of injuries received in an accident which occurred at the Brithdir level, Fochriw, on 28th February, when a large store fell from the roof pinning him to the ground. John Jones and Berkley Anfiel, firemen, went to his assistance, and he was removed to hospital suffering from spinal injuries, from which he died.

**23 March 1935** Fochriw Inquest: "Accidental Death" Verdict On Young Collier A verdict of "Accidental Death" was recorded by the North Glamorgan Coroner and a jury at the inquest at the Belle Vue Hotel, Merthyr, on Thursday week, on Stanley Lewis James, aged 23, collier, Dynevor-street, Fochriw, who was buried under a fall at the Brithdir Levels on Thursday, 28th February. The identifying witness, Thomas John James, brother, Pantywaun, said deceased had been a collier since he was 14 years of age. He had been taken to Merthyr General Hospital after the accident and died there on Wednesday 6th March. A collier's helper, Melvin Rogers, aged 16, who was working near James when the fall occurred, said James was "holing" at the time. Two new posts had been put in position by James that morning. Rogers said that he heard no sound. The day fireman, John Jones, said that the night firemen had inspected the place. Witness said he heard the fall as he was only about 10 yards away at the time. The stone which fell, together with some coal, was 5 ft long by 2 ft wide, and seven inches at the thickest part. Berkley Angell, the night firemen, who had examined the spot early in the morning, said he had marked the place safe to work in. Mr. Trevor P. Griffiths represented the owner's insurance company.

**12 October 1935** Miners' Meeting In connection with the miners' wages campaign, a meeting took place at the New Hall on Wednesday presided over by Mr. D. J. Davies, when Messrs. W. Betty (Rhondda), W. J. Sadler (Newbridge), and Obadiah Evans (Blaenavon), delivered addresses.

**16 May 1936** Miners' Meeting A meeting was held at the Hall on Wednesday evening presided over by County Councillor W. J. Kedward, Bargoed, and addresses were given by Mr. Albert Thomas (miners' agent, Bargoed) and Mr. Sydney Jones (miners' agent, Blackwood).

**12 September 1936** Miners' Meeting A meeting was held on Sunday at the New Hall presided over by County Councillor W. J. Kedward, Bargoed. Mr. Albert Thomas, miners' agent, was the speaker, when a report dealing with the Bedwas dispute was given.

**24 April 1937** Colliery Accident Mr. William Evans, Brynteg-street, fractured his leg whilst working at Ogilvie Colliery. He was conveyed to Merthyr General Hospital.

**5 March 1938** Annual Meeting The annual meeting of the Ogilvie Lodge of the South Wales Miners' Federation was held at the New Hall on Monday evening. Mr. D. J. Davies presided, supported by Mr. F. Brook, secretary, and Mr. Albert Thomas, miners' agent, who addressed the meeting. He said that their aim was 100 percent organisation, and he wanted their co-operation to bring the same about. He said that in future, monthly meetings would be held throughout the district to give various reports. The paying shed had been erected. All the officers were re-elected, including Mr. J. Robbins, part time examiner. Messrs. W. Watkins and A. Mantle were appointed on the Pit Committee, and the following elected as Ogilvie working representative on the Welfare Committee: Messrs. A. Mantle, C. Ballard, G. Williams and M. Evans.

**21 May 1938** Miners' Meeting Under the auspices of the South Wales Miners' Federation (Area No. 6), a public meeting was held at the New Hall on Thursday presided over by Mr. A. Mantle. The meeting was addressed by Mr. W. H. Crews, executive council member and Mr. Glyn Jones of Ystrad Mynach. They dealt with the organisation, holidays with pay, compensation, etc..

**3 September 1938** Brithdir Levels: Closing Down Saturday saw the closing down of the Brithdir Levels - a sad blow to the once thriving coal mining village of Fochriw. The closing down of the Fochriw collieries in 1924, and now the closing down of the levels, have been a severe blow to what was once known as a prosperous village.

**24 September 1938** Pit Accident Mr. John Bevan, M.E., manager of the Guest, Keen & Co. Fochriw levels, met with an accident on Tuesday, when he slipped and fractured his arm. He was conveyed to Merthyr General Hospital, where he is now a patient, and is progressing favourably.

**15 October 1938** Pit Accident As a result of an accident at Ogilvie Colliery, Mr. George Williams, Pentwyn, was removed to Merthyr General Hospital, where he is making satisfactory progress.

**10 December 1938** Accident Mr. Tom Jones, Glyn-terrace, fractured his legs at Ogilvie Colliery on Thursday. He received first aid from Dr. McCarty, and was then removed to Merthyr General Hospital.

**5 August 1939** Colliery Death: Evan John Thomas, Hill-row, aged 19 While following his employment at Ogilvie Colliery, Evan John Thomas was killed. He is the son of Mr. & Mrs. William Thomas.

**26 August 1939** Inquest An inquest was held at Fochriw on Friday, on Evan John Thomas, aged 19 years, a repairer's assistant, of Pentwyn, who was killed by a fall of stone weighing three tons at Ogilvie Colliery on August 1st. Mr. R. J. Rhys was the coroner, and a verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned.

**13 April 1940** South Wales Miners' Federation A meeting of the Ogilvie workmen was held at the New Hall on Monday, presided over by Mr. D. J. Davies, supported by Mr. F. E. Brooks (secretary) and Mr. T. Morgan (treasurer). They dealt with the work carried out by the organisation. George Davies and Mr. Crad Ballard were appointed representatives, and Mr. D. Davies surface representative.

**26 October 1940** Accident At Work Mr. George Davies, 10, Brynteg, is a patient at Merthyr General Hospital after an accident at Ogilvie Colliery. His friends wish him a speedy recovery.

**15 February 1941** Colliery Accident While working at the Ogilvie Colliery, Mr. Gilbert Harris, Plantation-street, injured his hand. He was conveyed to Merthyr General Hospital.

**8 March 1941** Fatal Accident It is with regret that we announce the death of Mr. Ronald Williams, aged 19, son of Mr. & Mrs. Williams, South Tunnel Pit Houses. He met with a fatal accident while working at Ogilvie Colliery.

**15 March 1941** Slipped in Front of Tram: Young Fochriw Miner's Fate "This is one of those cases where there is no evidence to show exactly how the deceased got under the journey of trams. The position where the body was found makes it perfectly clear that six trams passed over him and that the seventh stopped on top of him. The only thing that I can submit is that the deceased must have slipped while walking in front of the trams, and could not recover himself in time to get clear." These remarks were made by the Deputy Coroner, Capt. W.F.T. James, when he conducted an inquest on Ronald Baden Williams, aged 19, of South Tunnel, Cwmbargoed, who died at Merthyr General Hospital on February 28 as a result of an accident at Ogilvie Colliery, where he was employed as a rider and shackler. The lad's father, William Henry Williams, said his son was well experienced with this type of work, and had been in charge of a journey of trams before. Dr. Islwyn Davies, house surgeon at Merthyr General Hospital, gave evidence on the injuries that the deceased had suffered. Frederick Williams, 4. Martin-street, Fochriw, said the accident occurred about 8.45 p.m. He had noticed some trams going up at a walking pace and Williams was walking between the rails about four or five yards in front of the leading tram. There was sufficient room at some places to enable him to walk on the left hand side of the rails. He thought that the journey had gone up too high, and after shouting to Williams, he went up and found him lying with his head towards the dump. There was no fall of roof, and there was no obstruction to the rails. Williams was the only man in charge of the trams, and it was a regular practice of his to walk in front of the trams. Thomas Jones, a colliery rider of 7, Brynteg-street, Fochriw, said it was a regular practice to walk in front of the trams. In answer to Mr. G. Jenkins, H.M. Inspector of Mines, Jones said that Williams had an electric cap lamp worn on his safety helmet. The lamp, which was still lit, was lying between the rails close to Williams. Evidence was also given by Glanmor Thomas, a colliery haulage driver. The Coroner returned the following verdict: "Death was due to multiple injuries accidentally received when run over by a journey of trams while working underground."

**19 April 1941** Fatal Accident Mr. Herbert J. Watkins, aged 20, son of Mr. & Mrs. Evan Watkins, Williams-row, died at Merthyr General Hospital on Saturday morning as a result of an accident at Ogilvie Colliery. He was of a genial disposition and was liked by all who came into contact with him.

**10 May 1941** May Day Meeting The May Day meeting of the South Wales Miners' Federation was held at the New Hall, Fochriw, on Monday. Mr. D.J. Davies presided. The speakers were Mr. W. Paynter, miners' agent, Mr. Glyn Jones (Hengoed), and Mr. Idris Williams (Rhymney).

**21 June 1941** South Wales Miners' Federation A meeting of the S.W.M.F. Area No.6 was held at the New Hall, Fochriw, on Sunday, presided over by Mr. D.J. Davies. The subjects dealt with were the Essential Works Order and the Wages Issue. The speakers were Mr. Idris Williams, Mr. Jack Davies (Llwynypia), and Mr. E.J. Evans (Ammanford).

**21 March 1942** South Wales Miners' Federation Meeting On Tuesday, the annual meeting of Ogilvie Lodge was held at Noddfa vestry. Mr. D.J. Davies presided, supported by Mr. F. Vrooks, secretary. The auditor's report was given by Mr. Albert

Mantle. The following representatives for the Fochriw Lodge were appointed: Mr. A. Mantle and Mr. R. Thomas.

**4 April 1942** Accident Mr. W. Ballard, Plantation-street, is a patient at Merthyr General Hospital as a result of an accident at his work at Ogilvie Colliery on Sunday night. His injuries include a fractured leg.

**7 November 1942** Fatal Accident It is with regret we record the death of Brynmor Jones, son of Mr. & Mrs. T.H. Jones, Pantywaun, who met with a fatal accident while following his employment at Ogilvie Colliery. He was 15 years of age. He was an excellent pianist.

**19 February 1944** S.W.M.F. A meeting was held at the New Hall on Sunday presided over by Mr. D.J. Davies. The meeting was addressed by Mr. W. Paynter, miners' agent, who dealt with the recent Porter Award.

**11 March 1944** Colliery Fatality Mr. Ernest Williams, 4, Martin-street, met with a fatal accident on Thursday whilst following his employment at Groesfaen Colliery. The eldest son is in the Navy.

**25 March 1944** Killed at Colliery At the inquest on Friday on Ernest Harold Williams, aged 48, of Martin-street, Fochriw, who was fatally injured at Groesfaen Colliery when he was crushed by a balance lift underground. The Coroner, Capt. W.F.T. James, recorded a verdict of "Accidental Death."

**6 September 1947** Pit Accident Mr. Terence Kelly, Dynevor-street, met with an accident at Ogilvie Colliery, where he is employed, and was taken to Merthyr General Hospital. His many friends wish him a speedy recovery.

**13 November 1948** Fatal Accident Mr. Thomas Evans, 3, Moore's-row, met with a fatal accident whilst following his employment at the Bargoed Colliery. Mr. Evans was one of the foremost St. John Ambulance men in the Rhymney Valley. He is survived by a wife and grown up family.

**19 November 1949** Their Help A smoking concert was held at the Rising Sun Inn recently to raise funds for the assistance of young Eddie Morgan, who received spinal injuries while working at Ogilvie Colliery. The concert was organised by Mr. S.V. Powell and Mr. Stan Davies.

**17 December 1949** Colliery Victim: Mr. Stanley Gittens, aged 26 The funeral of Mr. Stanley Gittens took place at Rhymney Cemetery on Tuesday. He was killed by a fall of roof at West Bromwich Colliery where he had recently gone to work. Mr. Gittens was a widower with a son of four. The body was brought home to his mother's house, Mrs. M. Gittens, 4, Gusest-street. Aged 26, he was held in high esteem. Rev. G.R. Lloyd of Penuel, Rhymney, and Rev. T.J. Jones, Fochriw, officiated. Mourners were: Messrs. Eddie, Edwin, Elwyn, John Gwyn, Merddyn and George Gittens (brothers); Alun Davies, Trevor Handley, Desmond Evans (brothers-in-law); David Gittens (nephew); Edwin & John Davies, D.W. Morris, J. Jenkins (uncles); Bryn Davies, Vivian Davies, Tom, Bryn, John I. Jones, G. Evans, Willie, David and F. Eynon (cousins). At the house: John Lynn (son); Mrs. Gittens (mother); Mrs. Jones (mother-in-law); Beryl, Mair, Hetty & Sal (sisters); Gladys, Sarah, Eira and Eirwen (sisters-in-law); Esther, Edith, Mrs. Jones & Mrs. Morris (aunts); Harriet, Phyllis, Muriel, Nora May (cousins). The bearers were Messrs. Derek Jones, Ross Morgan (West Bromwich), Windsor Chapman, Trevor Edwards, John Williams, Jacky Elias, W. Shankland, Ernie Sibley, Dewi Morgan, Evan Evans, Ken Evans. Funeral arrangements: Mr. V.S. Powell, Fochriw.

**14 January 1950** Surveyor's Prize Mr. Idris Shankland, son of Mr. & Mrs. Crad Shankland, Guest-street, received second prize after attending a course of surveying at Swansea University under the N.C.B.. He is employed at Groesfaen Colliery.

**8 July 1950** Colliery Death William Shankland, aged 35, single, of Guest-street, was killed by a fall of roof at Ogilvie Colliery, Deri, where he was employed as a conveyor turner. He was the son of Mrs. Kate Shankland, and the late Mr. Crad Shankland, Guest-street.

**2 August 1952** Pit Fatality The death has occurred at Gwauncaegurwen, as a result of a colliery accident, of Mr. Glyndwr Edwards, son of Mr. Charles Edwards, and the late Mrs. Edwards. Before going to Gwauncaegurwen, he had lived the whole of his life at Fochriw.

**23 May 1953** Fochriw Widow Wins Claim: Colliery Work Contributed To Husband's Death Judge L. C. Thomas, at Bargoed County Court on Wednesday, made an award, which was agreed between the parties at £400, the maximum, in favour of Mrs. Lydia Gwen Williams, widow, of Martin-street, Fochriw, who claimed compensation from the Coal Board in respect of the death in Merthyr General Hospital on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1948, of her husband, John Williams, aged 64, who was employed as an underground repairer at Groesfaen Colliery, Deri. An order for costs was made against the Board. For the applicant, it was claimed that Williams' work in using a mandril and pneumatic drill to make room for the erection of rings, had contributed to cerebral haemorrhage from which he died. Mrs. Williams said her husband was in good health and good spirits when he left home for the night shift on Jan. 22, 1948. Early on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, he was brought home by ambulance and later taken to Merthyr General Hospital. She said that on arrival home, her husband understood what she was saying but could not speak. Edmund Jones, Regent-street, Dowlais, Williams' assistant, said that he and Williams were working on "hard ground," and that before having his food, Williams had been standing on a staging for two of three hours. The Judge heard medical evidence from both sides before giving his decision.

**18 February 1956** Fatal Accident It was with regret that the people of Fochriw heard that Mr. Thomas Rees Lewis of Lewis-street, Aberbargoed, had met with a fatal colliery accident. He had only removed from the village, where he had lived for many years, a few months ago, to live in Aberbargoed. He leaves a wife and two daughters. The funeral took place on Saturday at Pentwyn Churchyard. The Vicar and the Rev. T. J. Jones officiated. The funeral was a large and representative one.

**6 October 1956** Inquest Held on Fochriw Man: "Accidental Death" A verdict of "Accidental Death" was returned at the Caerphilly inquest last Wednesday on Jenkins Richards, aged 48, a miner, of Glanynant, Fochriw. Richards, a married man with four children, was struck by a journey of runaway trams at Ogilvie Colliery, Deri, on September 7. He received multiple injuries from which he died at Caerphilly and District Miners' Hospital, five days later. George Williams, master haulier at the colliery, said he realised something was wrong when he saw a journey gain speed too quickly because a rope had become loose. He ran down to see what had happened, and found Richards lying in the middle of the journey that had stopped. Richards said "I've had it pretty bad George." Daniel Jones, ropeway man, said he heard Richards say he would go on in front after he had helped to get the journey re-started, after one tram had become derailed. Glyndwr Richards, and electric haulage driver, said he received the signal to 'slack rope' and the journey move off at a walking pace. Then he saw the rope leave the drum. Dr. June Birch, house surgeon at Caerphilly Miners' Hospital gave details of Richards' injuries. The coroner, Mr. Owen Rees, said nobody was to blame for the accident. The men concerned were all experienced workers, and they had no reason to believe the rope would become detached. Neither had Richards taken any suicidal risk in going ahead of the journey as he did.

**2 March 1957** Miner Killed A 52 year old bachelor, David John Way of Glenview, Pentwyn, received head injuries while working underground at Pentwyn Level, Fochriw, on Wednesday. He died in the ambulance on the way to Tredegar General Hospital.

**6 April 1957** Crushed By Bogey Underground Caradoc Shankland, aged 56, married, of Guest Street, was injured when a bogey crushed him whilst working at Groesfaen Colliery, Deri, on Monday. He was taken to Caerphilly Miners' Hospital, where he died.

**12 October 1957** Open-Cast Mining At Fochriw Permission of the Ministry of Fuel and Power for open cast mining on the Tunnel Pits' site at Fochriw is to be sought by the National Coal Board. From the prospecting operations it has carried out, the Board is satisfied the site could be worked by open cast means.

**27 September 1958** Three Fochriw Miners Die After Being Taken From Gas Polluted Levels Three Fochriw miners, a father and son and the owner of the coal level, died in Redwood Memorial Hospital, Rhymney, on Wednesday afternoon, soon after being taken from a gas-polluted coal level overlooking Fochriw. The men were the owner of the level, known as Cae Glas Level, Mr.. Idris Shankland, aged 32, of 3, Brynteg, Fochriw; Mr.. Wilfred Hollister, aged 56, and his son, Mr.. Charles Hollister, aged 32, both of 3. Pit Row, Fochriw. The men were working with two others about 250 yards inside the level when Idris Shankland was overcome by gas fumes. Seeing him in difficulties, Charles and Wilfred Hollister rushed to his assistance and they were overcome as well. The two other workmen in the level, David Evans of Guest Street, and David Gittens of Glanynant, Fochriw, gave the alarm about 10 a.m.

P.C. Ralph Southworth was the first to arrive on the scene. He was joined a few minutes later by firemen from the Glamorgan Fire Service at Bargoed under Chief Fire Officer Moon. Firemen wearing breathing apparatus cautiously made their way into the level. They managed to bring two of the miners out of the gas-filled area with the help of a rope held by P.C. Southwood, before their oxygen supply ran out. Mines rescue teams from New Tredegar and Porth then arrived. Artificial respiration was given on the spot, and then the third miner was brought out. Two hours after the men had succumbed to the gas, they were brought to the surface, and carried on stretchers to the waiting ambulances. On the four mile journey to Rhymney hospital artificial respiration was applied, but the miners died half an hour after arrival at Rhymney. While the rescue operations were in progress, groups of relatives and villagers gathered at the entrance to the level. Relatives of one of the dead miners, Misses Cassie and Nellie Shankland, kept themselves occupied by serving tea to the rescuers as they came from underground. Miss Pamela Yeomans of Dynevor Street assisted them. Mrs.. Amy Shankland, mother of the dead miner, has suffered her second loss through a mining tragedy. Last year, her husband, Mr.. Crad Shankland, died of injuries received in an accident at Ogilvie Colliery, Deri, Mr. Idris Shankland, who was married last year, opened the Cae Glas Level just over five months ago. Normally six men work the level, which is licensed by the National Coal Board. It forms part of the old Fochriw Pit.

**29 July 1961** Miners Holiday Many miners and their families are on holiday at Porthcawl, Swansea and Barry. There are also daily coach trips from the village.

In Hospital Mr. Samuel Lewis, J.P., is in hospital at Abertysswg, while his wife, Mrs. M.A. Lewis is in hospital at Merthyr.

**29 July 1961** Mining Success Mr. Islwyn Shankland, Plantation Terrace, has been successful in obtaining his M.E. in mining. He is 24 years of age.



**6 October 1962** Fochriw Collier Killed A 60 year old Fochriw collier was struck and killed by a flying haulage rope sheave four days after he had tightened it by hand, it was stated at a Bargoed inquest on Tuesday. The North Glamorgan Coroner recorded a verdict of "accidental death" on Mr. David Rees, a married man with four children, of 4, Heolybryn, Fochriw. It was stated that Mr. Rees, a sheavesman, was killed in the R.H. 5 district of Ogilvie Colliery, on Friday, August 17. The manager of the colliery, Mr. David John Lewis, said that Mr. Rees was responsible for greasing the sheaves. "In my opinion, I think he was undoing the sheave to re-position it. The strain in the rope caused it to fly off," he said. Dr. Paul McCarthy of Deri said that Mr. Rees' death had been instantaneous. Death was caused by lacerations of the brain due to an injury to the skull. His ribs were also fractured. In returning a verdict of accidental death, the jury expressed sympathy with Mr. Rees's widow and family. The Coroner and the manager also expressed their regrets.

**6 July 1963** Holidays At the commencement of the miners' holiday, two bus-loads of holiday-makers left for Trecco Bay, Porthcawl, and others for Blackpool.

**25 April 1964** Accident Mr. Francis Thomas, 8, Williams Row, sustained a serious accident at Merthyr Vale Colliery on Friday. He is the father of Welsh Rugby International Alun Thomas. Mr. Thomas is in St. Tydfil's Hospital, Merthyr.

**30 May 1964** N.C.B. First Aid The Ogilvie Colliery First Aid Team travelled to Skegness to compete in the N.C.B. National First Aid Competitions on Saturday. The team gained third place. The team was trained by Mr. Ivor Morgan, Superintendent of the Fochriw Division, to which some of the Ogilvie team belong.