

Civic planning and leadership in Cardigan, 1845-65: strategic vision,  
social responsibility and self interest.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In 1859, a Guildhall and market-house complex was opened in the centre of the small, isolated rural town and port of Cardigan (population 2900) by the Borough Council, funded partly by the enclosure and lease of 200 acres of town commons, following a private Act of Parliament with the stated aim of making improvements to the town<sup>1</sup>. It was the first Ruskinian neo-Gothic civic building in Britain and its scope and planning are deemed 'remarkable' by Peter White as it contained a large indoor market, corn exchange, grammar school and 'divinity' library, public meeting hall, mechanics institute, council room, reading room, a separate slaughterhouse, and modest improvements to the town's sanitation and

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<sup>1</sup> Anon, Act of Parliament, Cardigan markets and improvements Act, UK Parliament, catalogue entry (1857). Available at [https://archives.parliament.uk/collections/getrecord/GB61\\_HL\\_PO\\_PB\\_1\\_1857\\_20and21V1n52](https://archives.parliament.uk/collections/getrecord/GB61_HL_PO_PB_1_1857_20and21V1n52), Accessed 21 April 2021. The full Act was unavailable from UK Parliamentary archives but was provided from the personal collection of G.Johnson.

other infrastructure<sup>2</sup>. The leading journal, *Building News*, considered the project to be 'of great advantage to the town and immediate neighbourhood'<sup>3</sup>. The choice of a neo-Gothic design is interesting because it represents the secular strand of neo-Gothic architecture that was less associated with a return to an authentic style of medieval church architecture, rather than the supposed communal and cohesive society of the Middle Ages<sup>4</sup>. In a separate initiative, the Council was seeking a connection for Cardigan with the national rail network, and the creation of a deep water harbour to facilitate Atlantic trade<sup>5</sup>.

These developments suggest a period of economic and social transformation for Cardigan and its rural hinterland, with the town Council playing a central role in planning and leadership. This study will explore the Council's role in some depth, and will seek answers to key questions. What were the factors behind this period of transformation? How was such a complex scheme as the Guildhall and market-house conceived? What were the financial plans? In view of instances of rioting against the enclosure of common land in Cardiganshire, was there resistance to the Council's plans? Why was such a distinctive neo-Gothic design chosen for the buildings? What was the impact on the town and rural hinterland in the first few years of their opening? What were the benefits of a rail connection and harbour renewal to Cardigan and its rural hinterland, and what progress was achieved in securing them? Who were the strategic leaders and what were their motives?

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<sup>2</sup> For a listed building report, see: Anon, 'Full report for listed buildings, CADW.', Cardigan Guildhall and Markets, ref.10479 (1992). Available at <https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=10479>, Accessed 4 April 2021. For a brief appraisal of the buildings see: P.White, 'The secular urban architecture in context', in *Cardiganshire County History, vol.3, Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H.Jenkins and I.G.Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), pp.289-90.

<sup>3</sup> Anon, 'Public buildings and markets, Cardigan', *Building News* (16 Sept. 1859) pp.830,840-1. Available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112004352867&view=1up&seq=854&q1=Cardigan>, Accessed 4 April 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Michael.J.Lewis, *The Gothic revival* (London, 2002), pp.83-6; Ian Sutton, *Western architecture* (London, 1999), pp.274-7.

<sup>5</sup> Donald Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People, vol.2* (Cardigan, 1992), pp.16-18.

There is considerable scholarship on which this dissertation can draw to answer these questions. The overviews of Welsh urban historiography by Borsay and Evans reveal how towns emerge, adapt, and are transformed by a range of factors, in particular topography, historical roots, and the external forces of industrialisation<sup>6</sup>. This provides a framework to analyse the particular factors that have influenced the developments under consideration in this study between 1845-65. Historians have shed light on key factors that threatened Cardigan's economy and welfare, exerting pressure for adaptation and renewal. Studies by Lewis, Davies, Williams and Cooper chart the steady decline of Cardigan's traditional and prosperous maritime trade, shipbuilding, and associated businesses from the 1840's, owing to the limitations of Cardigan's port for larger ships due to its sand bar and silted river, exacerbated by the transition from sail to steam and the extension of the rail network into Cardiganshire in the 1860's<sup>7</sup>. Cooper estimates a 13% fall in the population of the Cardigan registration district (urban and rural) between 1851-71 as young farm workers out-migrated to the iron works and coal mines of South Wales or emigrated, threatening Cardigan's role as a service centre and market town<sup>8</sup>. Studies by Lewis and Wheatley, and Lewis describe the 'infilling' of Cardigan's overcrowded town centre with poor quality housing and appalling sanitation, and the urgent need for hygiene improvements in the town's small market facilities<sup>9</sup>. Fee and Brown provide a helpful summary of the Public

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Borsay, 'Welsh seaside resorts: historiography, sources and themes', *Welsh History Review*, vol. 24, no. 2 (2008), pp. 92–119; Neil Evans, 'Rethinking urban Wales', *Urban History*, vol. 32, no. 1 (2005), pp. 114–31.

<sup>7</sup> Lewis, *The gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, (Dyfed, 1990), p. 68; Donald Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People*, vol. 1 (Cardigan, 1991), pp. 6 & 15; M.I. Williams, 'Commercial relations', in *Cardiganshire County History*, vol. 3, *Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H. Jenkins and I.G. Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), p. 205; Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural–Urban Migration in Victorian Britain* (Wales, 2011), p. 73.

<sup>8</sup> Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural–Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*, pp. 89 & 95.

<sup>9</sup> C.R. Lewis and S.E. Wheatley, 'The towns of Cardiganshire, 1880-1995', in *Cardiganshire County History*, vol. 3, *Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H. Jenkins and I.G. Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), p. 225; Lewis, *The gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp. 85.

Health Act 1848 which led to the formation of a statutory Board of Health in Cardigan in 1853, with the authority to seek improvements to the town's sanitation and public health<sup>10</sup>.

The cornerstone of the Council's financial plans for the Guildhall and market-house was the enclosure and lease of common land on the outskirts of town. Although the majority of private fields had been enclosed by the 1840's, studies by Jones, Colyer-Moore and Cooper reveal the bitter resentment of commoners in Cardiganshire that could erupt into riots when faced with the deprivation of their traditional 'rights' to using common land for food, fuel or living space<sup>11</sup>. Studies by Jones and Lewis reveal the strong historical roots of *ceffyl pren* communal justice and Rebecca riots in Cardigan itself<sup>12</sup>.

There are few direct references to the Guildhall and market-house in British architectural historiography to shed light on the Council's choice of neo-Gothic architecture. However, the general historiography of Gothic revivalism is helpful. Sutton reveals how neo-Gothic architecture emerged in Britain in the 1840's from the eclecticism of the early century as a serious alternative to classicism<sup>13</sup>. Although largely 'church-led', it was 'eagerly adapted' for

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Fee and Theodore M. Brown, 'The Public Health Act of 1848', *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, vol.83(11) (2005), pp.866-7. Available at <https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/83/11/866.pdf>, Accessed 20 May 2021. For details of the actions of the Cardigan Health Board, see: Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p. 85.

<sup>11</sup> Rhian E. Jones, *Petticoat Heroes: Gender, Culture and Popular Protest in the Rebecca Riots* (Cardiff, 2015), pp.55-6; R.J. Moore-Colyer, 'Agriculture and land occupation in eighteenth and nineteenth century Cardiganshire', in *Cardiganshire County History, vol.3, Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H. Jenkins and I.G. Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), pp. 21-22; Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural-Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*, p.25.

<sup>12</sup> *Ceffyl pren* was a highly ritualised form of public ridicule and communal punishment, used against neighbours and peers but also against the ruling classes where traditional duties and obligations were flouted. It was prevalent in Cardigan and south Cardiganshire between 1837-50. For details see: Rosemary A.N. Jones, 'Popular culture, policing, and the disappearance of the *ceffyl pren* in Cardigan, c.1837-1850', *Journal of the Ceredigion antiquarian society*, vol.11, no.1 (1988), pp.19-40. Available at <https://journals.library.wales/view/1093205/1097602/24#?xywh=-101%2C-110%2C2766%2C1995>, Accessed 22 May 2021. For details of Rebecca activity in Cardigan see: Lewis, *The gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.126-8; Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People*, vol.2, pp.56-7.

<sup>13</sup> Sutton, *Western architecture*, p.271. Sutton explains that the essential characteristic of medieval Gothic architecture was the structural combination of pointed arch, the rib vault and the precisely placed buttress. For more details, see: Sutton, *Western architecture*, p.74.

secular buildings as well, including public buildings such as those in Cardigan<sup>14</sup>. Whilst neo-Gothic church architecture sought a return to the idealised moral intensity of medieval Christianity, its secular strand represented the supposed communalism, social cohesion and humanism of the Middle Ages<sup>15</sup>. Basina, Rybalka and Popov suggest that the neo-Gothic style of civic buildings was a marker of the superiority of status groups, which may have been the intention of the elites of Cardigan<sup>16</sup>. The architect for Cardigan's new public buildings was R.J.Withers, a disciple of John Ruskin, a principal theorist of the Gothic revival<sup>17</sup>. Ruskin emphasised the virtues of fitness for purpose and the qualities of the surface of a building - its colours, patterns, shades, textures and lines, that represented the full range of human faculties involved in physical labour in contrast to the mindless repetition of machine production of the industrial revolution<sup>18</sup>.

To understand the benefits of a railway connection to Cardigan and its rural hinterland, Howell and Cooper reveal how the expanding railway network to south-west Wales in the third quarter of the nineteenth century provided farmers with bouyant markets for dairy products, meat and corn in south-east Wales where growing industrialisation and the consequent rise

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<sup>14</sup> The 'turning point' for secular neo-Gothic architecture came with the reconstruction of the Houses of Parliament in London in 1840: Sutton, *Western architecture*, p.274; Megan Aldrich, *Gothic revival* (London, 1994),p.9.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, *The Gothic revival*, pp.83-6; Sutton, *Western architecture*, pp.274-7. Sutton and Lewis salute Augustus Pugin (1812-52) as the founding-father of the Gothic revival. Lewis asserts that Pugin was strongly influenced by his indictment of the physical repulsiveness and moral degradation of the industrial revolution.

<sup>16</sup> N.I.Basina, A.Yu Rybalka and S.L.Popova, 'Gothic and neo-gothic in the architecture of modern European cities', *IOP conference series. Materials Science and Engineering*, Vol.698, no.3, 33038 (Kislovodsk, 2019), pp. 1-6. Available at <https://iopscience.iop.org/volume/1757-899X/698>, Accessed 5 April 2021.

<sup>17</sup> John Ruskin was 'an evangelical who stood outside England's established church' (Lewis, '*The Gothic revival*',p.112.). This may have eased any tension in Cardigan amongst non-conformists who were uneasy at the Council's choice of Gothic architecture with its strong associations with the high Anglican Church.

<sup>18</sup>Lewis, *The Gothic revival*, pp.113-15. See also: James Stevens Curl, *Victorian architecture* (Newton Abbot and London, 1990),pp.49&55.

in population resulted in an increased demand for food that could not be met by local agriculture<sup>19</sup>. Howell estimates that the cost of sending corn or dairy produce by rail instead of ship via Bristol was cut by as much as 90%, and rail transport put an end to the heavy expense of driving store cattle for fattening<sup>20</sup>. He suggests that the extension of the South Wales railway to Carmarthen in 1852 saw a decline in farmers sending cattle to markets in towns without a rail connection<sup>21</sup>; this may well have been the case for Cardigan. Rail transport of limestone and coal for treating the acidic soils of south Cardiganshire offered significant cost savings over traditional shipping<sup>22</sup>. Howell and Cooper also argue, from different standpoints, that railways led to an increase in agricultural wage rates<sup>23</sup>.

Local historians shed light on the interconnected network of entrepreneurs, civic leaders and gentry who were the power brokers in the plans for Cardigan's renewal. This addresses a key research question for this study. Davies introduces Thomas Davies (1824-87), wealthy shipping owner, trading merchant and major employer in Cardigan, a member of a powerful family dynasty of entrepreneurs in West Wales in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Known locally as 'Master Tom', he became a town councillor in 1848 and subsequently Mayor on 6 occasions. In the 1860's, together with his eventual brother-in-law, R.D.Jenkins, he promoted and invested in the scheme to connect Cardigan to the

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<sup>19</sup> D.W.Howell, 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in nineteenth century Wales', *Welsh History Review*, vol.7, no.1 (1974), pp.47&50. Available at <https://journals.library.wales/view/1073091/1075980/43>, Accessed 13 May 2021; Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural-Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*,p.111.

<sup>20</sup> Howell, 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in nineteenth century Wales',pp.44-48.

<sup>21</sup> Howell, 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in nineteenth century Wales',pp.50-51.

<sup>22</sup> Howell, 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in nineteenth century Wales',p.58. The soil in south Cardiganshire was poor, and needed frequent treatment with lime, burnt in coal-fired kilns, to reduce the level of acidity. See: Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.46-7.

<sup>23</sup> Howell asserts that rail transportation increased sales and prices of produce, lowered costs, and increased profits for farmers, which raised the value of land and increased rents, which in turn accelerated out-migration of labour, leading to a labour shortage and increased agricultural wage rates. See: Howell, 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in nineteenth century Wales',p.59. Cooper asserts that wage rates were boosted by the demand for labour from railway construction. See: Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural-Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*, p.76.



national railway network, build a deep-water harbour, and capture Atlantic trade<sup>24</sup>. According to Johnson, R.D.Jenkins (1815-85), a Cardigan solicitor from a ship and land owning family, was Mayor of Cardigan on 14 occasions including 1855-60 when the Guildhall and market-house was developed<sup>25</sup>. Davies asserts that R.D.Jenkins was a confidant and agent of the local gentry<sup>26</sup>. He singles out two gentry families, the Miles and the Lloyds, who were large landowners, shipowners, merchants, industrialists, major employers and benefactors in Cardigan, and involved in all significant projects in the area<sup>27</sup>.

To consider the motives of the strategic leaders of the developments, this study will draw on case studies of Cardiff, Porthcawl and Llandudno which reveal the potential for conflict in the planning and leadership of urban transformation, between the forces of civic responsibility and entrepreneurial self-interest<sup>28</sup>. This study will consider evidence of civic consciousness and philanthropy from representatives of an emerging independent middle class in Cardigan, as Evans claimed in Cardiff in the 1880's to challenge the domination of

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<sup>24</sup> Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People*, vol.2, pp. 16-18.

<sup>25</sup> G.Johnson, Cilbronnau (n.d.). Available at <http://www.glen-johnson.co.uk/cilbronnau/>, Accessed 5 April 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People*, vol.2, pp. 64-5. As an agent for the gentry, R.D.Jenkins would have carried out a range of important duties including supervising the various departments of the estate, settling boundary disputes, fixing and collecting rents and fees, and settling his masters' debts. See: R.J.Moore-Colyer, 'The landed gentry of Cardiganshire', in *Cardiganshire County History*, vol.3, *Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H.Jenkins and I.G.Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), pp.61-3.

<sup>27</sup> Davies asserts that for centuries south Cardiganshire had been dominated by powerful landowning families known as the 'Tivyside gentry'. They had a 'tradition of leadership and public service to the locality'. They belonged to two groups: the native Welsh, which included the Lloyds of Coedmore and Cilgwyn; and the 'settlers', including the Miles of the Priory, who had come into the area as rich merchants or industrialists. For more details, see: Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People*, vol.2, pp.63-5 & 75.

<sup>28</sup> Neil Evans, 'The Welsh Victorian city: the middle class and national and civic consciousness in Cardiff, 1850-1914', *Welsh History Review*, 12 (1985), pp.350-87; Ian Pincombe, 'From pit to paradise: Porthcawl's changing identity, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century', *Welsh History Review*, vol.25, no.4 (2011), pp. 520-50; Gwenfair Parry, "'Queen of the Welsh resorts": tourism and the Welsh language in Llandudno in the nineteenth century', *Welsh History Review*, vol.21, no.1 (2002), pp. 118-48.

powerful landowners and industrialists, and address the social and moral impact of industrialisation in terms of poverty, crime, sanitation and public health.<sup>29</sup> However, Borsay and Evans warn that Welsh urban case studies have a tendency to be too parochial, to miss the wider perspective<sup>30</sup>, including the 'profound interconnection' of town and country which can 'mask the reality of capitalist social relations'<sup>31</sup>. These warnings support this study's consideration of the interconnection of town and country in the research questions.

This introductory chapter will be followed by three chapters in which the theme of planning and leadership of the Guildhall and market-house project, and the railway and harbour ambitions, will be examined and the key research questions addressed, in the light of primary sources and secondary literature<sup>32</sup>. Chapter two will focus on how the Guildhall and market-house scheme was conceived and financed, and how the objective of rail connection and harbour renewal was initially pursued. Chapter three will focus on the Guildhall and market-house design, Parliamentary approval and construction. Chapter four will consider the building's opening and impact on the town, and the progress of rail and harbour ambitions. The identity and motives of the leaders will be explored in all three chapters. A concluding chapter provides a summary of the main findings as they relate to the key research questions, and an evaluation of the study's contributions to the historiography.

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<sup>29</sup> Evans, 'The Welsh Victorian city: the middle class and national and civic consciousness in Cardiff, 1850–1914', pp.351&369. However, a weakness in Evan's case was his admission that the two prominent middle class champions of civic consciousness In Cardiff (John Cory and William Bushell) were exceptional men 'quite untypical of the city of "dreadful knights"'(p.353).

<sup>30</sup> Borsay, 'Welsh seaside resorts: historiography, sources and themes', pp. 94&96; Evans, 'Rethinking urban Wales', pp.127&130.

<sup>31</sup> Evans, 'Rethinking urban Wales', p.127.

<sup>32</sup> The closure of national and county archives during the covid-pandemic has inhibited access to minutes of Council meetings as sources of data and increased the study's reliance on newspaper reports, as well as other primary sources.

## CHAPTER TWO

## THE LONG GESTATION OF THE GUILDHALL AND MARKET-HOUSE SCHEME AND GROWING AMBITIONS FOR A RAIL CONNECTION

From its formation in 1836<sup>33</sup>, Cardigan town Council had wanted to appropriate the 200 acres of commons to the north of the town<sup>34</sup> to finance improvements to the market place and harbour, and to repair and light the streets, but had been thwarted by P.J.Miles, Lord of the Manor and major landowner in Cardigan, who claimed an ancient right to the commons and refused consent<sup>35</sup>. This situation changed in 1845 when P.J.Miles died and his land passed to Rev.R.H.Miles who agreed to relinquish his rights<sup>36</sup>. A public meeting was subsequently held, at which a proposal by Alderman R.D.Jenkins was unanimously carried, to canvass the opinions of all 'freemen' in the town before requesting the Enclosure Commissioners 'come to Cardigan to value and apportion the rights of all parties'<sup>37</sup>. Jenkins visited the Commissioners in London shortly afterwards and the enclosure application process began<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Cardigan Common Council was formed in 1653 and continued until its replacement with a new Corporation and constitution following the Municipal Corporations Act 1835. Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>34</sup> For the most recent map of Cardigan for the period 1845-65 see: J.Wood, Plan of Cardigan 1834, (Edinburgh, 1834). Available at <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/maps-1/town-plans/john-woods-welsh-town-plans/cardigan-1834#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=1391%2C1564%2C4860%2C4936>, Accessed 10 April 2021.

<sup>35</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.15; Anon, 'Public Meeting', *The Cambrian* (1 January 1842), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3330230/3330233/11/>, Accessed 8 April 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan', *The Welshman* (17 October 1845), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4364571/4364573/12/>, Accessed 7 April 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Anon, 'Enclosure of Cardigan common', *The Welshman* (26 December 1845), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4364630/4364633/30/>, Accessed 7 April 2021.

<sup>38</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan Commons', *The Pembrokehire Herald* (3 July 1846), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3052238/3052241/18/>, Accessed 8 April 2021.

However, there was a long delay from 1846 until 1855 before an enclosure award was confirmed by the Commissioners<sup>39</sup>. The reasons for this delay are unclear, but eight different mayors in eight years suggests that a lack of Mayoral continuity may have been a contributing factor<sup>40</sup>. There were competing claims of rights and interests in the commons from burgesses and commoners that had to be resolved by the Commissioners, but why did they only begin their work in earnest in 1852<sup>41</sup>? The deprivation of the traditional 'rights' of the lower orders to use the commons for grazing, fuel and living space was controversial at this time in Cardiganshire and could lead to bitter resentment and the fear of destitution that could erupt into rioting<sup>42</sup>. There were reports of *ceffyl pren* activity in Cardigan during this period that resulted in violent confrontations between large crowds and the authorities<sup>43</sup>. Although this study can find no evidence of specific *ceffyl pren* activity or other crowd protests against the enclosure of the commons, the fear of this seems likely to have been present for the town Council because a detachment of soldiers was garrisoned

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<sup>39</sup> Anon, Inclosure Commission, Eleventh Annual Report of the Commissioners (London, 1856), p.10. Available at [https://parlipapers-proquest-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/parlipapers/result/pqpre-sultpage.gispdfhitspanel.pdf?link=\\$2fapp-bin\\$2fparliamentary-paper\\$2f2\\$2f6\\$2f3\\$2f0\\$2f1856-032285-complete.pdf/Inclosure+Coms.+eleventh+Report\\$40\\$2fapp-gis\\$2fparliamentary-paper\\$2f1856-032285\\$40Parliamentary+Paper\\$40null\\$40January+01,+1856?pgId=1c7aca32-2237-4618-9c13-fcaf438907e6&rsId=17816D6FD04](https://parlipapers-proquest-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/parlipapers/result/pqpre-sultpage.gispdfhitspanel.pdf?link=$2fapp-bin$2fparliamentary-paper$2f2$2f6$2f3$2f0$2f1856-032285-complete.pdf/Inclosure+Coms.+eleventh+Report$40$2fapp-gis$2fparliamentary-paper$2f1856-032285$40Parliamentary+Paper$40null$40January+01,+1856?pgId=1c7aca32-2237-4618-9c13-fcaf438907e6&rsId=17816D6FD04), Accessed 8 April 2021. The details of the enclosure award are on a map at the National Archives, Kew which is closed at the time of writing. An unconfirmed award 'plan' is provided in Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.16, showing an allocation of three quarters of the commons' acreage to the town Council.

<sup>40</sup> G. Johnson, Mayors of Cardigan (n.d.). Available at <http://www.glen-johnson.co.uk/mayors-of-cardigan/>, accessed 10 April 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan commons enclosure', *The Welshman* (20 October 1852), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4347740/4347742/13/>, Accessed 10 April 2021.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, *Petticoat Heroes: Gender, Culture and Popular Protest in the Rebecca Riots*, p.55-6; Moore-Colyer, 'Agriculture and land occupation in eighteenth and nineteenth century Cardiganshire', p.21-2; Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural-Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*, p.25. The commons not only provided free or cheap grazing but also clay that was mixed with culm (anthracite dust) to make cheap fuel for fires See: Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.15.

<sup>43</sup> Anon, 'The wooden horse', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (2 June 1848), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3052733/3052735/13/>, Accessed 8 April 2021; Anon, 'Ceffyl pren' at Cardigan', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (26 April 1850), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3053143/3053145/15/>, Accessed 8 April 2021; Jones, 'Popular culture, policing, and the disappearance of the ceffyl pren in Cardigan, c.1837-1850', pp.19-40. Jones asserts that the suppression of the *ceffyl pren* was 'part of a general "attack" on the more "vulgar" and "licentious" manifestations of popular culture....linked to wider social and political questions of class struggle.....based on the rule of law, the sanctity of property and individual-as opposed to communal rights....' (pp.19-20).

in Cardigan from 1842-3, during the Rebecca riots, until at least 1853 specifically for the suppression of the *ceffyl pren*<sup>44</sup>.

During the period 1845-55, there was growing concern about Cardigan's deplorable sanitation, in particular the lower-Mwldan district near the harbour with its poor quality, overcrowded housing, made worse by the keeping of livestock, and foul workshops and slaughterhouse that drained directly into Mwldan brook, posing a serious risk to public health<sup>45</sup>. Other than a Council order in 1857, following a report from the newly formed Board of Health, for residents to whitewash their houses and remove heaps of manure, the Council appears to have done little to improve the situation<sup>46</sup>.

Having finally achieved the much delayed award of commons enclosure in 1855 and a large acreage allocation, the Council now had the ability to raise the finances to address the need for improved market and slaughterhouse facilities. The existing facilities, leased by the Council since 1822, were cramped and poorly sited amongst the insanitary industrial and semi-industrial premises in the Mwldan, on Market Lane<sup>47</sup>. The idea of building a new market-house had been talked about for several years. Indeed a private landowner, had unsuccessfully sought parliamentary approval in 1842 to build a market-house on an

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<sup>44</sup> Jones, 'Popular culture, policing, and the disappearance of the *ceffyl pren* in Cardigan, c.1837-1850', pp. 21 and 32.

<sup>45</sup> Anon, 'Public improvements in Cardigan', *The Welshman* (31 July 1846), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4364785/4364788/16/>, Accessed 10 April 2021; Anon, 'Unwholesome meat', *The Welshman* (2 July 1847), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4346379/4346382/22/>, Accessed 10 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan', *The Pembroke Herald* (26 November 1847), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3052603/3052605/9/>, Accessed 13 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan', *The Principality* (22 June 1849) p.8. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3614220/3614228/57/>, Accessed 10 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan Borough - unwholesome meat', *The Welshman* (9 June 1854), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4348170/4348173/32/>, Accessed 10 April 2021; Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.85; R.F.Walker, 'Tourism in Cardiganshire, 1774-1974, in *Cardiganshire County History, vol.3, Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H.Jenkins and I.G.Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), p.305.

<sup>46</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.85. Whitewash with lime was frequently used as a disinfectant in the nineteenth century. It was eventually outlawed as harmful to animals.

<sup>47</sup> Wood, *Plan of Cardigan 1834*; Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.19.

unsuitable river-side site prone to flooding<sup>48</sup>. There had also been an intriguing anonymous letter from 'A commercial traveller' to the editor of the Cambrian newspaper in 1842 with a credible suggestion for the Council to build a new market-house on the very site on which one would eventually be opened in 1859<sup>49</sup>. But it would be another 12 years, 1854, before the Council appears to be actively planning for new facilities, during the Mayoralty of Thomas Davies, as the enclosure process neared completion<sup>50</sup>. And the site being considered for a market-house, as suggested by the anonymous 'traveller', was land already owned by the Council in the middle of the town centre and High Street.

The sloping site was known as 'The Free School Bank', because the Council had responsibility, dating back to 1653, for Cardigan's endowed Free Grammar School that provided free places for 6 pupils (as well as about 40 fee payers), and from 1810 the Council allowed the school to occupy this site<sup>51</sup>. The large site was ideally situated for a market-house in the main commercial district, in the centre of town on the busy High Street<sup>52</sup>. A suitable site for a new slaughterhouse was more problematic, but eventually a site was found in Upper Mwdan, on the north-west outskirts of town, that was owned by the Board of Guardians of the Cardigan Poor Law Union, and available for sale<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.19.

<sup>49</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan market house', *The Cambrian* (3 December 1842), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3330470/3330473/19/>, Accessed 10 April 2021.

<sup>50</sup> Anon, 'New market house', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (28 April 1854), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3054153/3054155/13/>, Accessed 11 April 2021.

<sup>51</sup> W.Gareth Evans, 'Education in Cardiganshire, 1700-1974', in *Cardiganshire County History, vol.3, Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H.Jenkins and I.G.Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), pp.544-5; Lewis, *The gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.115-6.

<sup>52</sup> Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People, vol.1, p.2, 5-6*. A town plan for 1855 is not available, but plans for 1834 and 1880 show clearly the site's central location: Wood, *Plan of Cardigan 1834*; Anon, 'Map of Cardigan', *Digimap* (1880). Available at <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/roam/map/historic>, Accessed 12 April 2021.

<sup>53</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.19.



This study can find no records of the planning discussions in 1854-5 that led to the complex specification for a Guildhall and market-house scheme but there was an obvious need behind most of the components. The need for a new market-house to replace the cramped, insanitary and poorly sited existing facility was evident and echoed in the historiography by Lewis and Wheatley, and Lewis<sup>54</sup>; a new Grammar School was needed to replace the one to be demolished to make room for the new Guildhall and market-house<sup>55</sup>; dedicated facilities were needed for the town council which, with its growing municipal responsibilities, had outgrown its shared use of the courthouse on the upper floor of the Shire Hall, a fine building at the river end of the High Street; permanent facilities were needed for the Scientific and Mechanic's Institute, that had thrived since its establishment and promotion by Mayor R.D.Jenkins in 1847<sup>56</sup>. Perhaps the two components that lacked a clear rationale were the corn exchange and a public meeting hall, which had both been accommodated in the Shire Hall. However, the operation of the former on market days suggests the logic of locating it alongside the main market, and the increasing number of public meetings and the opportunity for receipts from private hire, provided a case for a dedicated public hall<sup>57</sup>. In any event, the scope of the specification for the Guildhall and market-house scheme was extraordinary and far more complex than normal at that time<sup>58</sup>. In August 1855, during the Mayoralty of W.G.George, the Council took the decision to

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<sup>54</sup> Anon, 'New market house', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (2 February 1850), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3053103/3053105/14/>, Accessed 14 April 2021; Anon, 'New market house', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (18 April 1854), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3054153/3054155/13/>, Accessed 14 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan commons', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (13 July 1855), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3054481/3054483/20/>, Accessed 18 April 2021; Lewis and Wheatley, 'The towns of Cardiganshire, 1880-1995', p. 225; Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.19 & 85.

<sup>55</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.116.

<sup>56</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan literary institution', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (26 November 1847), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3052603/3052605/9/>, Accessed 13 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan literary, scientific and mechanics' institution', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (7 January 1848), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4346514/4346517/17/>, Accessed 13 April 2021.

<sup>57</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.17 & 20.

<sup>58</sup> White, 'The secular urban architecture in context', p.290; Anon., 'Public buildings and markets, Cardigan', p.830; Anon, 'History of the Guildhall', Cardigan Guildhall (n.d.). Available at <http://www.guildhall-cardigan.co.uk/history/>, Accessed 14 April 2021.

commission the whole Guildhall, market-house and slaughterhouse scheme and 'for once, the Council moved fast'<sup>59</sup>. Financial plans were quickly drawn up. The initial estimate of projected capital expenditure was £4500, including the cost of an enabling Act of Parliament, and the Council sought a loan on the security of the council's allocated commons land<sup>60</sup>. The estimated costs soon escalated to £6000 and a loan was secured from The Provident Clerks Mutual at 4.5% interest<sup>61</sup>. The plan was to pay off the loan through leasing and selling northern sections of the commons, and levying an improvement rate on the Borough<sup>62</sup>.

The second initiative to preoccupy Cardigan Council in the period 1845-55 was an attempt to bring a railway connection to the town. Although this study can find no record of discussions by the Council to identify this as a priority, socio-economic adaptation to two significant threats to the district was needed and has already been considered in the literature (see page 2), namely, the continuing decline of the port and shipbuilding, and the rural population exodus, and certainly the first would have been well known to the Council. A railway connection offered opportunities to cut the costs of the major imports of coal, culm and limestone, and to open up new markets with reduced transport costs for the main exports of corn, butter and slate<sup>63</sup>.

So, in 1845 the Council convened several, well attended public meetings to promote the Great North and South Wales and Worcester (GNSWW) railway which intended to link

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<sup>59</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.19.

<sup>60</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan market place', *The Welshman* (24 October 1856),p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4349158/4349163/42/>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>61</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.19.

<sup>62</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.16.

<sup>63</sup> Lewis, *The gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.47; Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural–Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*,p.111; Howell, 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in nineteenth century Wales',pp.44-59.



Worcester with the towns of North and South Wales and construct a branch line from Carmarthen to Cardigan<sup>64</sup>. Representatives of the company addressed the meetings to promote the financial and commercial benefits of the line. They were enthusiastically supported by R.D.Jenkins, the Mayor, who declared at one meeting, to great cheers, that he was 'instructed to say on behalf of two wealthy and extensive land owners, that they were perfectly willing that the line should pass through their estates'<sup>65</sup>. Although Jenkins was speaking in the role of Mayor, the use of the word 'instructed' suggests that he acted professionally for the landowners as their agent or solicitor, and it is questionable whether his declaration fully revealed his financial interest in the initiative.

These meetings came at the height of the national 'Railway Mania' of 1843-5, when railway share prices doubled and hundreds of new railway lines were petitioned to Parliament, before share prices declined dramatically and the railway industry 'suffered a sustained downturn....as investors found it difficult to make the required payments, and many schemes were abandoned'<sup>66</sup>. Indeed, nothing appears to have come of the GNSWW line to Cardigan until its resurrection in 1852, when another public meeting was convened by the Council and a revised scheme was presented by the company<sup>67</sup>. The new proposal had added credibility because the South Wales Railway had just reached Carmarthen. Again the proposal was strongly supported by wealthy landowners, especially E.C.Lloyd Fitzwilliams a prominent member of the 'Tivyside gentry', who shortly afterwards invested

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<sup>64</sup> Anon, 'Proposed railroad from Aberystwith to Cardigan, *The Welshman* (11 July 1845),p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4364501/4364504/17/>, Accessed 14 April 2021; Anon, 'North and South Wales and Worcester Railway', *The Welshman* (17 October 1845),p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4364571/4364574>, Accessed 14 April 2021.

<sup>65</sup> Anon, 'North and South Wales and Worcester Railway',p.3. Interestingly, R.D.Jenkins did not say that the landowners he represented would actually invest in the railway, only that the line could pass through their estates.

<sup>66</sup> Gareth Campbell, 'Railway mania' (n.d.). Available at <http://www.railwaymania.co.uk>, Accessed 14 April 2021.

<sup>67</sup> Anon, 'Meeting at Cardigan', *The Welshman* (10 September 1852), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4347707/4347709/8/>, Accessed 15 April 2021.

a large sum in another struggling railway company<sup>68</sup>. The GNSWW company included tempting promises of commercial success and, with a degree of desperation, sought investors from the people of Cardigan, without whom, they said, 'people in the money market would not consider it a good and solvent scheme'<sup>69</sup>. A 'large number of shares' were apparently bought at the meeting....but again this railway proposal would come to nothing<sup>70</sup>.

In 1852, another promising railway opportunity for Cardigan emerged with the formation of the Carmarthen and Cardigan Railway Co. with a proposal to build a line from Carmarthen to Cardigan (34 miles), and the construction of a deep-water harbour 5 miles west of the town, at Camaes Head, with a view to establishing a trading route with Southern Ireland<sup>71</sup>. Again, the Council convened several large public meetings to present the scheme, and again the major landowners, merchants and investors in the district who stood to gain most were enthusiastically present<sup>72</sup>. At the meeting on 25 Nov. 1853, powerful speeches from the company directors and E.C.Lloyd Fitzwilliams (a major investor) outlined the

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<sup>68</sup> The 'Tivyside gentry' was the name given to the powerful landowning families that had dominated south Cardiganshire for centuries. See: Davies, *Those Were the Days: A History of Cardigan, The Locality and its People*, vol.2, pp.63-5. In 1855, E.C.Lloyd Fitzwilliams 'burdened' and 'compromised' himself and his estate with a debt of £40,000 which he had invested in another failed struggling venture-the Carmarthen and Cardigan Railway: Anon, 'Cilgwyn estate records', National Library of Wales (5 May 2017),p.4. Available at <https://archifau.llyfrgell.cymru/downloads/cilgwyn-estate-records.pdf>, Accessed 15 April 2021.

<sup>69</sup> Anon, 'Meeting at Cardigan', p.2.

<sup>70</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.94.

<sup>71</sup> A deep-water harbour, with a pier and breakwater was intended to overcome the problems of the sand bar at the entrance to the Teifi and the excessive silting of the river which limited the size of vessels entering the port. See : Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.48-9 & 94. A deep-water harbour would also provide a refuge to shipping in Cardigan Bay during storms. The case for a refuge is well argued in a letter to the Pembrokeshire Herald: Anon, 'Carmarthen and Cardigan railway', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (14 January 1853), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3053811/3053814/18/>, Accessed 15 April 2021.

<sup>72</sup> Anon, 'Carmarthen and Cardigan railway', *The Welshman* (14 January 1853),p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4347800/4347802/17/>, Accessed 15 April 2021; Anon, 'Carmarthen and Cardigan railway and Cardigan harbour improvement company: meeting at Cardigan', *The Welshman* (25 November 1853),p.4. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4348027/4348031/30/>, Accessed 15 April 2021.

many benefits of a rail connection for the whole community<sup>73</sup>. Mayor Thomas Davies, Alderman R.D.Jenkins and the directors urged landowners and tenant farmers to buy shares in the railway company with the inducement of handsome returns<sup>74</sup>. Within a matter of months Davies and Jenkins were in front of another public meeting to explain to a remarkably understanding audience that the line would now only extend to Newcastle Emlyn, and not to Cardigan as promised.....but would 'no doubt' do so very soon<sup>75</sup>. There was much more expression of dissatisfaction a year later when Jenkins and Davies had to explain to shareholders that the line would in fact get no nearer to Cardigan than Llandyssil - 19 miles away<sup>76</sup>.

Although there were considerable benefits of a railway connection for the whole population of Cardigan that warranted enthusiastic promotion by Cardigan's civic leaders during the period 1845-54, they failed to explicitly and publicly declare their own financial interests, as investors, entrepreneurs, and agents for wealthy landowners, or warn inexperienced small investors that share prices could fall as well as rise.

## CHAPTER THREE

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<sup>73</sup> The benefits included greater sales and higher prices for farm produce, lower costs of lime and everyday provisions, higher land values, higher wages and more jobs. See: Anon, 'Carmarthen and Cardigan railway and Cardigan harbour improvement company: meeting at Cardigan', p.4.

<sup>74</sup> Anon, 'Carmarthen and Cardigan railway and Cardigan harbour improvement company: meeting at Cardigan', p.4.

<sup>75</sup> Anon, 'Carmarthen and Cardigan railway: meeting at Cardigan', *The Welshman* (3 February 1854), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4348080/4348083/25/>, Accessed 15 April 2021.

<sup>76</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan railway', *The Pembroke Herald* (13 April 1855), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3054410/3054412/15/>, Accessed 17 April 2021.

## THE GUILDHALL AND MARKET-HOUSE SCHEME'S DESIGN, PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL AND CONSTRUCTION.

During the discussions to determine the specifications for the new Guildhall and market-house in 1854-5, Cardigan Council commissioned Joseph Jenkins, architect and carpenter from Haverfordwest to draw up detailed plans<sup>77</sup>. He does not seem to have had any experience in designing a building of this complexity, having worked mainly on small-scale church restorations, and it is not clear why he was commissioned<sup>78</sup>. At a Council meeting in September 1855 his plans were 'adopted'<sup>79</sup> but a year later, after he had died, his plans were again presented to the Council for approval and 'certain alterations were suggested', and with the need for a new market-house now considered a 'crying evil', it was decided to approach London-based architect, R.J.Withers, for his advice<sup>80</sup>. Shortly afterwards, in October 1856, his appointment as the new architect for the project was confirmed<sup>81</sup>. This study has not been able to find Mr J.Jenkins' original plans, nor the details of the required alterations.

R.J.Withers was a successful Ruskinian neo-Gothic architect of some national renown who built or restored nearly a hundred churches in the United Kingdom and established a large practice in West Wales, where it is said 'he imparted to many a barn-like structure

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<sup>77</sup> Jenkins was listed as a carpenter in Pigots Trade Journal 1844. Anon, 'Haverfordwest', Pigots & Co South Wales (1844). Available at <https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/PEM/Haverfordwest/Pigot1844>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>78</sup> Anon, 'Jenkins, Joseph', An index of architects, engineers, surveyors, builders, working in Wales (2009). Available at <https://www.coursehero.com/file/p266eq2/1859-House-Brynmawr-Brec-MS-JENKINS-JAMES-J-Porth-Glam-1917-enl-Cwmaman-ch-Glam/>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>79</sup> Anon, 'Council meeting', *The Welshman* (14 September 1855),p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3054526/3054528/7/>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>80</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Welshman* (26 September 1856), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4349122/4349127/45/>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>81</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan market place' (24 October 1856),p.5.

some semblance of life and feeling'<sup>82</sup>. In 1857 his early plans for the Guildhall and market-house were published in the national architectural journal, *The Ecclesiologist*, as an example of best architectural practice<sup>83</sup>. The internal design of the building combined and integrated a range of civic functions and institutions which represented the social cohesion and communalism of the secular strand of neo-Gothic architecture<sup>84</sup>. The external surface of the building displayed structural polychrome brick and stone banding and arcades, naturalistic sculpture, Italian style pointed arches, and a polychrome patterned slate roof that represented the range of human faculties involved in physical labour that was the spiritual essence of Ruskinian architecture<sup>85</sup>. Whether the members of Cardigan Council deliberately selected Withers and his architectural style because of these features and representations, or whether they were attracted by a neo-Gothic style as a marker of their status<sup>86</sup>, or as a symbol of civic authority and urban renewal, is not known. In any event, the building has acquired a reputation as an example of secular Gothic revivalism at its best<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> Anon, 'Robert Jewell Withers', *Architects of Greater Manchester, 1800-1940* (n.d.). Available at <https://manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/architects/robert-jewell-withers>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>83</sup> *The Ecclesiologist* was the journal of the Ecclesiological Society that advocated a return to a medieval style of church architecture and from 1843 promoted the Early Middle Pointed style of Gothic architecture. See: Lewis, *The Gothic revival*, pp.91-3. In 1857, *The Ecclesiologist* featured Withers' early plans for the Guildhall and market-house as an exemplar of building construction and drawings. The drawings included a spire that was not included in the final plans. See: Henry Lawton, 'Example of building construction, vol.3-4', Ecclesiological Society (1857), pp. 228,236,242,252. Available at <https://archive.org/search.php?query=R.J.Withers&sin=TXT&and%5B%5D=subject%3A%22Building+construction%22&sort=-week&and%5B%5D=subject%3A%22Working+Drawings%22&and%5B%5D=subject%3A%22Architecture>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>84</sup> Lewis, *The Gothic revival*, pp.83-6; Sutton, *Western architecture*, pp.274-7.

<sup>85</sup> Lewis, *The Gothic revival*, pp.113-15; James Stevens Curl, *Victorian architecture* (Newton Abbot and London, 1990), pp.49 & 55. For a CADW building report and Coflein image of the building, see: Anon, 'Full report for listed buildings, CADW'; Iain Wright, 'Colour transparency showing the Guildhall at Cardigan', Coflein (2004). Available at <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/archive/6183152?type=archive&term=Cardigan%20guildhall>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

<sup>86</sup> Basina, Rybalka and Popova, 'Gothic and neo-gothic in the architecture of modern European cities', pp. 1-6.

<sup>87</sup> The Architectural Heritage Fund considers the Guildhall and market-house to be 'of national importance' and one of the finest examples of Ruskinian Gothic revivalism: Anon, 'Cardigan building preservation trust', Trustees report, *The architectural heritage fund* (2019), p.18-19. Available at <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/554207b8e4b01b6210bbfd56/t/5de8ede6cf364a1186f5ab8e/1575546349556/AHF+Trustees+Report+and+Accounts+19+FINAL.pdf>, Accessed 18 April 2021.

The detailed planning of the Guildhall and market-house did not progress entirely smoothly. Having had his plans accepted by the Council in May 1857, four months later Withers fell out with them over his fees and was temporarily dismissed, but reinstated within a few weeks<sup>88</sup>. At one point, the Council suggested that his plans 'were totally inadequate to the wants of the town'<sup>89</sup>, and too elaborate, ornamental and expensive, and he was required to make amendments, before they were eventually accepted in May 1858<sup>90</sup>.

Wither's plans for the Guildhall and market interior closely followed the Council's specifications. Being built on a hillside, enabled him to economise space by designing on three levels. He situated one market place over another to create a total market area of 11,000 square feet, the upper level entered from the High Street and the lower one from the side road. Also on the High Street level were the corn exchange, Free Grammar School and divinity library. Above these areas, overlooking the High Street, was the magnificent Guildhall itself, alongside the Council chamber and a public room for reading newspapers and holding meetings of the Scientific and Mechanics Institute<sup>91</sup>. The slaughterhouse, situated 300 metres northwards, contained one 'spacious apartment....fitted with all necessary gear and appurtenances for the slaughtering of animals.'<sup>92</sup>

Whilst the detailed plans for the new public buildings were being produced by Withers, Parliamentary approval for the whole project had to be obtained in order to provide the

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<sup>88</sup> G.Johnson, Guildhall and markets; Cardigan free grammar school (n.d.), Available at <http://www.glen-johnson.co.uk/guildhall-cardigan-free-grammar-school/>, Accessed 20 April 2021.

<sup>89</sup> Johnson, Guildhall and markets; Cardigan free grammar school.

<sup>90</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Welshman* (14 May 1858), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4349885/4349890/33/>, Accessed 20 April 2021.

<sup>91</sup> Anon., 'Public buildings and markets, Cardigan', *Building news* (16 Sept. 1859) pp.830,840-1. Available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112004352867&view=1up&seq=854&q1=Cardigan>, Accessed 4 April 2021; Anon, Cardigan Guildhall-history: twentieth century (n.d.). Available at <http://www.guildhall-cardigan.co.uk/history/twentieth-century/>, Accessed 20 April 2021; Anon, Cardigan Guildhall-history: the rooms (n.d.). Available at <http://www.guildhall-cardigan.co.uk/history/the-rooms/>, Accessed 20 April 2021.

<sup>92</sup> Anon., 'Public buildings and markets, Cardigan', p.830.

Council with authority to erect the buildings, compulsorily purchase land in certain circumstances, borrow up to £6000, prevent the sale of 'marketable commodities' or the slaughter of animals in any other buildings, and levy charges and an improvement rate. The Council also sought powers to construct and improve the town's infrastructure regarding water supply, sanitation, lighting, and paving, and to levy rates on owners and occupiers<sup>93</sup>. Seeking Parliamentary approval was expensive and cost £900, but on 13 July 1857, approval was confirmed and a detailed, 31 page Act of Parliament was published<sup>94</sup>.

By the end of May 1858, changes to the building plans and specifications had been finalised, and tenders received and contracts awarded to local builders to construct the Guildhall and market-house, and slaughterhouse, with deadlines for completion of 12 and 6 months respectively<sup>95</sup>. The foundation stone was laid on 8 July 1858 by Mayor R.D.Jenkins accompanied by members of the Council and R.J.Withers, with a grand procession amidst great rejoicing through the decorated town streets, the ringing of church bells, the firing of the town canon, a brass band, and a nine gallon cask of porter for the workmen<sup>96</sup>.

Work on the slaughterhouse finished on time, but the Guildhall and market-house were behind schedule and the builders were penalised<sup>97</sup>. With work on the Guildhall buildings continuing, the Council took the decision to open the market-house as soon as completed, and on July 9 1859, Mayor R.D.Jenkins declared the market-house open. This took place

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<sup>93</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan markets and improvements', *The Welshman* (7 November 1856), p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4349176/4349178/2/>, Accessed 21 April 2021.

<sup>94</sup> Act of Parliament, Cardigan markets and improvements Act, UK Parliament, catalogue entry. The full Act was unavailable from UK Parliamentary archives but was provided in digital format from the personal collection of G.Johnson on 17 March 2021.

<sup>95</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Welshman* (4 June 1858),p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4349912/4349915/16/>, Accessed 21 April 2021.

<sup>96</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Welshman* (16 July 1858), p.6. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4349966/4349972/48/>, Accessed 21 April 2021; Anon, Laying the foundation of the Cardigan Guildhall and market: Glen Johnson collection (1858). Available at <https://images.app.goo.gl/4114RWnNypBsWFBt8>, Accessed 21 April 2021; Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.20.

<sup>97</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.20.



without public celebrations and with some critical comments in the press about the unfinished work<sup>98</sup>. Nonetheless, as all the buildings approached completion, local<sup>99</sup> and national<sup>100</sup> accolades began to appear as their beauty<sup>101</sup> and functionality were acknowledged.

There is strong evidence that the driving force and leadership for the architectural planning, Parliamentary approval, and construction of the Guildhall and market-house scheme, was R.D.Jenkins, the Mayor during the period November 1855 to November 1860. Both the *Illustrated London News* and the *Building News* praise his untiring energy and attribute chief credit to him for the project's successful completion<sup>102</sup>. At a Council meeting held in November 1859 when R.D.Jenkins was re-elected Mayor, several members attested that he had had to cope with 'numerous difficulties' since the enclosure of the commons and

<sup>98</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.20; Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Welshman* (22 July 1859), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4350443/4350448/26/>, Accessed 21 April 2021.

<sup>99</sup> Anon, 'Public buildings and markets, Cardigan', p.830; Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Welshman* (17 February 1860), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4350713/4350718/31/>, Accessed 22 April 2021.

<sup>100</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Illustrated London News*, (8 October 1859), vol.35, Iss.997, p.358. Available at [https://go-gale-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Newspapers&result-ListType=RESULT\\_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=1&searchType=AdvancedSearch-Form&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CHN3100052336&docType=Article&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZILN-MOD1&prodId=ILN&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CHN3100052336&searchId=R1&userGroupName=tou&inPS=true](https://go-gale-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Newspapers&result-ListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&hitCount=1&searchType=AdvancedSearch-Form&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CHN3100052336&docType=Article&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZILN-MOD1&prodId=ILN&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CHN3100052336&searchId=R1&userGroupName=tou&inPS=true), Accessed 22 April 2021; Anon, 'Public buildings and markets, Cardigan', *Building News* (16 Sept. 1859) pp.830,840-1. Available at <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112004352867&view=1up&seq=854&q1=Cardigan>, Accessed 4 April 2021.

<sup>101</sup> Additional contemporary images convey the beauty of the building: Anon, 'Market square: Cardigan, Glen Johnson collection (1860). Available at [https://www.google.co.uk/search?sxsrf=ALeKk02-bVc7\\_rLPzuXcXBHywnN3UnVfyA:1619083597611&source=univ&tbm=isch&q=glen+johnson+collection,+images+of+Cardigan+guildhall&hl=en-gb&client=safari&fir=uWeNUcZGSMC7sM%252C5mGoAcX3pQsvnM%252C%253BkM8\\_0wAxjlkPM%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253By1wqWyWSuZh8DM%252CpdsSINlgDhT5jM%252C%253BeTmw21WymAM-FUM%252CpdsSINlgDhT5jM%252C%253BZWiJhbUXtyHv2M%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253BKktsTyZgN6xUKM%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253B7lw4eR-tONbD7CM%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253BxjWvxt9FAxO0pM%252C5mGoAcX3pQsvnM%252C%253Blxj4ZduBtgm39M%252C5mGoAcX3pQsvnM%252C&usq=AI4-kSs-jxXpKFSNitQJQqaAMSSCNJwHSA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwilxsm1xJHwA-hUDI1wKHSqVBiMQ7AI6BAgDEAg&biw=1024&bih=625#imgrc=cUCS2N8amdakVM](https://www.google.co.uk/search?sxsrf=ALeKk02-bVc7_rLPzuXcXBHywnN3UnVfyA:1619083597611&source=univ&tbm=isch&q=glen+johnson+collection,+images+of+Cardigan+guildhall&hl=en-gb&client=safari&fir=uWeNUcZGSMC7sM%252C5mGoAcX3pQsvnM%252C%253BkM8_0wAxjlkPM%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253By1wqWyWSuZh8DM%252CpdsSINlgDhT5jM%252C%253BeTmw21WymAM-FUM%252CpdsSINlgDhT5jM%252C%253BZWiJhbUXtyHv2M%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253BKktsTyZgN6xUKM%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253B7lw4eR-tONbD7CM%252CrPMU-KT8pa-4WM%252C%253BxjWvxt9FAxO0pM%252C5mGoAcX3pQsvnM%252C%253Blxj4ZduBtgm39M%252C5mGoAcX3pQsvnM%252C&usq=AI4-kSs-jxXpKFSNitQJQqaAMSSCNJwHSA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwilxsm1xJHwA-hUDI1wKHSqVBiMQ7AI6BAgDEAg&biw=1024&bih=625#imgrc=cUCS2N8amdakVM), Accessed 22 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan town hall and market, google search (n.d.). Available at <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=images+cardigan+guildhall+and+market&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&hl=en-gb&client=safari#imgrc=FjWivu0scSqpjM>, Accessed 22 April 2021.

<sup>102</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan new market', p.358; Anon, 'Public buildings and markets, Cardigan', p.830.



during the erection of the new buildings, and he had written 'scores of letters' in respect of shortfalls in Council finances, and had even made substantial personal loans to the Council, generously waving interest payments<sup>103</sup>. In November 1860, he was honoured with an effusive testimonial from his fellow Council members for his 'untiring exertions' in obtaining enclosure of the commons and erection of the new public buildings<sup>104</sup>. His colleagues were particularly appreciative of the commons enclosure which had increased the Council's entire income from £3pa. to £500pa. However, this study has been critical of the Council collectively, including Mr Jenkins, for the long delay in progressing the enclosure procedure. Nonetheless, for the complexity of the buildings project, reasonable adherence to timescales and budget, and the highly successful outcomes, the praise for his leadership was surely justified.

There was, though, a contentious issue that arose during the project that raises some questions about Jenkins' absolute probity. In November 1858, the Council had met for the annual election of Mayor. R.D.Jenkins was re-elected but it was revealed that, in the previous week, a number of serious allegations had appeared in *The Carmarthen Journal* and *The Telegraph*. The most serious of these were that the Council was coerced and dictated to by the Mayor, and that members of the Council had been paid expenses for personal loans they took out for the new public buildings, which would result in additional rates for ratepayers<sup>105</sup>. Mr Jenkins and his colleagues strongly refuted all allegations. Mr Jenkins

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<sup>103</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan Borough', *The Welshman* (11 November 1859), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4350587/4350592/57/>, Accessed 23 April 2021.

<sup>104</sup> Anon, 'Presentation of a testimonial to the Mayor of Cardigan', *The Welshman* (16 November 1860), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4351001/4351006/29/>, Accessed 22 April 2021.

<sup>105</sup> The allegations were published in the *Carmarthen Journal* and *The Telegraph* on 5 November 1858. It has not proved possible to access the original reports, which were themselves reported in the *Welshman* a week later. Other allegations included: hostility by some senior Council members towards a newly elected member; the requirement of Mr Withers to revise his building design to save money; impropriety in the tendering process and award of contracts to builders. By way of explanation, R.D.Jenkins asserted that some opponents of the Council wished to 'impart a political character to the Council...which they (had) studiously avoided...although it was well known that many of the members were of opposing political principles' (Mr

asserted that members of the Council had in fact saved the Council money by taking personal liability for loans for the new buildings, and the costs incurred were more than offset by the savings. This study has found no corroboration for the allegations of coercion or dictatorship by Mayor Jenkins, but neither is there evidence that the Mayor instigated an independent audit to answer the serious financial allegations.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE OPENING OF THE NEW PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND THE PROGRESS OF RAILWAY AMBITIONS

Although the new market-house had been opened in July 1859, it was another year of growing expectation and admiration from the townsfolk and visitors before all construction work was finished, and the whole Guildhall and market building could be officially opened on 10 July 1860<sup>106</sup>. This was apparently marked by 'considerable rejoicing in the town', although it is surprising that this study can find no newspaper reports of celebrations<sup>107</sup>.

One of the first tasks for the Council after the opening of the new market-house was to make a raft of bye-laws, rules, orders, regulations and penalties for the good governance

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Jenkins supported the Conservatives). Mr Jenkins complained that the complainants would not come forward 'and boldly state their grievances'. Anon, 'Election of Mayor at Cardigan', *The Welshman* (12 November 1858), pp.4-5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4350119/4350123/26/>, Accessed 22 April 2021.

<sup>106</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan new market', *The Welshman* (17 February 1960), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4350713/4350718/31/>, Accessed 24 April 2021.

<sup>107</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.20.

of public markets, as authorised by the enabling Act of Parliament. There had been bye-laws relating to the old market, particularly the selling of meat, since the town Council was reformed in 1836<sup>108</sup>. These old bye-laws had prohibited the sale of 'unwholesome meat', and the exposure of meat for sale or the slaughtering of animals in the street; market traders were required to use proper scales, and those caring for the old market and slaughterhouse were to wash them clean after use. There were stiff fines for breaching these rules ranging from 5s. to 40s. for each offence. The new bye-laws, rules and regulations were listed in a long document that contained 40 paragraphs, ran to 2,800 words, and was displayed in the market-house and slaughterhouse<sup>109</sup>. It is likely that it was only displayed in English since this was generally the language of officialdom, which would have disadvantaged the Welsh monoglot majority in the town and district<sup>110</sup>. The document was also written in legalistic terms and would not have been easy for poorly educated people to comprehend. Although there is evidence of initial leniency by magistrates while people became familiar with the new rules, it is unlikely that this leniency would have lasted long<sup>111</sup>. Most of the regulations applied to sellers and the penalties were punitive, 20s. or 40s. for each offence, with court costs on top<sup>112</sup>. A superintendent was employed by the Council to enforce the rules and apprehend miscreants. It has not been possible to find a copy of the old bye-laws, rules etc to allow a comparison with the new rules, nor has it been possible to obtain records of petty sessions, to see how often people were prosecuted. However there are indications that the new market-house and slaughterhouse were regulated to a

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<sup>108</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.19.

<sup>109</sup> Anon, 'Borough of Cardigan: bye-laws, rules, orders and regulations', *The Pembrokeshire Herald* (30 September 1859), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3055366/3055369/21/>, Accessed 24 April 2021.

<sup>110</sup> J.W.Aitchison and Harold Carter, 'The Welsh language in Cardiganshire, 1891-1991', in *Cardiganshire County History, vol.3, Cardiganshire in modern times*, G.H.Jenkins and I.G.Jones eds. (Cardiff, 1998), p. 570-1.

<sup>111</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan Petty sessions', *The Welshman* (4 November 1859), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4350578/4350583/39/>, Accessed 25 April 2021.

<sup>112</sup> Some of the rules and regulations applied to everyone in the market eg. smoking, bringing dogs or carts, smoking tobacco, or committing a nuisance were not allowed: Anon, 'Borough of Cardigan: bye-laws, rules, orders and regulations', p.3.

significantly higher degree than previously. For example, there was some opposition to the payment of tolls among country people who brought their produce to sell in the market, and the Council had to employ someone to stop the sale of produce in the streets<sup>113</sup>.

As a crude measure of the new market-house's and slaughterhouse's impact on the town's level of commercial activity in servicing its urban and rural catchment, this study has compared the number of traders in key categories between 1844 and 1868 from 2 trade journals: Pigot & Co.(1844)<sup>114</sup> and Slaters (1868)<sup>115</sup>. The population of the town was about the same in both years (2900) and both journals included the small village of St.Dogmells. Table 1 shows an increase in traders in 6 of the 9 categories<sup>116</sup>. This suggests that the improvements of the guildhall and market-house scheme may have had a beneficial impact on the level of commercial activity amongst some of Cardigan's trades, countering the negative impact of the decline of the port and shipbuilding, and the rural population exodus.

The new Guildhall was also a significant cultural and social boon to the town and was 'much in demand for meetings, concerts, plays, dances and dancing classes, religious meetings and occasionally, as a chapel'<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.20.

<sup>114</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan', Pigot & Co's Royal national and commercial directory and topography (1844), pp.434-7. Available at <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/231778/rec/2>, Accessed 26 April 2021.

<sup>115</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan', Slater's Royal national commercial directory (1868), pp.779-782. Available at <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/91190>, Accessed 26 April 2021.

<sup>116</sup> A confounding statistic is the reduction in the number of inns. This is surprising since an increase in commercial activity from the new market-house might be expected to have led to increased custom for inns. Perhaps this represents the impact of a fall in the rural population around Cardigan between 1851-71 as young farm workers out-migrated to the iron works and coal mines of South Wales or emigrated. See: Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural-Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*, pp. 89 & 95.

<sup>117</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.20.

TRADERS	PIGOTS (1844)	SLATERS(1868)
Bakers	4	7
Blacksmiths	10	12
Boot/shoe makers	14	20
Butchers	3	6
Corn merchants	5	5
Grocers	22	34
Inns	64	50
Ironmongers	5	7
Tailors	12	12

Table 1: Comparison of the number of traders in Cardigan as listed in trade journals for 1844 and 1868<sup>118</sup>.

The opening of the market-house coincided with efforts by the Council to introduce gas street lighting. From 1854 the Council had tried to facilitate private investment in gas works without success. In 1859 Mayor R.D.Jenkins invited Morley Stears, a gas engineer who had erected gas works in Aberystwyth and Cardiff, to address a public meeting in Cardigan and propose setting up a gas company<sup>119</sup>. The Council helped Stears to secure investors, leased him land to build the works and contracted for 25 public lamps and a gas

<sup>118</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan', Pigot & Co's Royal national and commercial directory and topography (1844), pp.434-7. Available at <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/231778/rec/2>, Accessed 26 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan', Slater's Royal national commercial directory (1868), pp.779-782. Available at <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/91190>, Accessed 26 April 2021.

<sup>119</sup> Anon, 'Cardigan gas works', *The Welshman* (2 September 1859),p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4350497/4350502/38/>, Accessed 26 April 2021.

supply<sup>120</sup>. However by 1862 Stears was in financial difficulties and the gas works unfinished. Mayor Thomas Davies convened several public meetings and facilitated the formation of another local gas company with new investors and enticements of large returns<sup>121</sup>. In March 1864, amidst great excitement among the townsfolk, many of whom had never seen gas light before, the gas works were completed and several streets, the Guild-hall and market-house, trade premises, and some private houses, were at last lit by gas<sup>122</sup>.

The opening of the new public buildings also coincided with renewed concern from the Council and towns people about the 'squalor' and risks to public health caused by the 'open surface drains, or no drains at all', and in particular 'the filth from the open drains (that) was seeping into the Bridge End well (in the south of the town), which was then that area's only source of drinking water'<sup>123</sup>. Although construction of a town sewerage system was not started until 1886<sup>124</sup>, the Council did at least take some steps to improve the supply of clean water. In 1862 the Council commissioned a new reservoir to be built, to the NE of the town<sup>125</sup>. After difficulties with the contractors, the new pipes were said to have brought 'superior quality water' to all the 'principal houses' in town<sup>126</sup>. However, the improvements appear to have been modest because a report by 'an inspector of sanitation' in 1873 reveals that 214 out of 400 houses in 24 streets in the town centre still had no water, and 142 had no 'privy'<sup>127</sup>. In 1866, with the increasing threat of Cholera, the Council

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<sup>120</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.99.

<sup>121</sup> Anon, 'Gas works', *The Welshman* (5 September 1862),p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4351793/4351798/24/>, Accessed 27 April 2021; Anon, 'Cardigan-gas works', *The Welshman* (26 September 1862),p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4351820/4351825/18/>, Accessed 27 April 2021.

<sup>122</sup> Anon, 'The gas works', *The Welshman* (4 March 1864),p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4352495/4352500/16/>, Accessed 27 April 2021.

<sup>123</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.85 & 98.

<sup>124</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.86.

<sup>125</sup> Anon, 'New water works', *The Welshman* (16 April 1862),p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4351613/4351618/15/>, Accessed 27 April 2021.

<sup>126</sup> Anon, 'Gas works and water works', *The Welshman* (25 December 1863),p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4352405/4352410/20/>, Accessed 27 April 2021.

<sup>127</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.85-6.

ordered houses to be lime-washed inside and out, and banned the keeping of pigs from high risk areas, which many people defied because of its importance to the local economy<sup>128</sup>.

While the town was getting used to its new public buildings, improved water supply, and new gas works, the Council was again attempting to bring a railway connection to the town. But now there was no mention of building a deep water harbour. This might appear perplexing, not least because the Mayor from November 1861, Thomas Davies, was a shipping owner, merchant and industrialist and would have been very aware of the limitations of Cardigan's port for larger steamships, and the continuing decline in trade, shipbuilding and ancillary industries<sup>129</sup>. The outward trade of south Cardiganshire's corn and slate was increasingly from Aberaeron, and by rail from Carmarthen, and ships were frequently leaving Cardigan in ballast<sup>130</sup>. However, it seems likely that, with continuing problems of securing capital investment for a railway connection to Cardigan, and facing fierce competition from the more suitable ports of Milford Haven and Fishguard for the lucrative south Ireland trade, the idea of a deep water harbour near Cardigan was now considered unachievable<sup>131</sup>.

But a clamour for a rail connection to the town continued, and in 1861-2, public and shareholder meetings were held in Cardigan and other local towns to explain the slow progress

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<sup>128</sup> The banning of pigs was a 'serious blow to the traditional economy of Cardigan householders' and many people defied the order 'even keeping them concealed in their homes' and 'to help the poor, five lime brushes were hung (by the Council) outside the Guildhall for the use of those who could not afford to buy them'. See: Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.85. See also: Michael Sigsworth and Michael Worboys, 'The public's view of public health in mid-Victorian Britain', *Urban history*, vol.21, part2 (1994), pp.242 & 244. Available at <https://www-cambridge-org.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/99DACDB6503272A553D2F353AD16771C/S0963926800011044a.pdf/the-publics-view-of-public-health-in-mid-victorian-britain.pdf>, Accessed 21 May 2021.

<sup>129</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.68.

<sup>130</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.48.

<sup>131</sup> Anon, 'Progress of Welsh railways and its results', *The Pembroke Herald* (23 November 1866), p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3294588/3294591/26/>, Accessed 16 May 2021.



of the Carmarthen and Cardigan railway, which had completed only seven miles from Carmarthen to Conwil in five years. The railway company, strongly supported by Mayor Davies and Councillor R.D.Jenkins, and local newspapers, criticised wealthy landowners and farmers for failing to buy shares, forcing the company to go to 'capitalists' for their finance, resulting in higher fares and freight charges, and they declared that further work on the line was dependent on local investment<sup>132</sup>. They argued that landowners and farmers would benefit from railway access to buoyant markets for dairy products and meat in south-east Wales and London, as well as significantly lower costs for lime and coal, and economical personal travel. An additional inducement offered by the Carmarthen and Cardigan Railway Company to investors was that share money would not be taken until work had started on the line from Newcastle Emlyn to Cardigan<sup>133</sup>.

In the event, the Carmarthen and Cardigan railway reached Llandyssil in 1864 but with continuing difficulties in raising capital it went no further until leased to the Great Western Railway in 1891 who eventually extended the line to Newcastle Emlyn in 1896; but the promised extension to Cardigan was never built<sup>134</sup>. Meanwhile, Cardigan would eventually be reached by railway....but not until 1886, via the tortuous and slow Whitland and Cardigan branch line from Whitland instead of from Carmarthen<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>132</sup> For company and Council criticism of landowners, see: Anon, 'Carmarthen and Cardigan railway', *The Welshman* (17 May 1861), pp.4-5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4351181/4351185/27/>, Accessed 5 May 2021. Local newspapers added their editorial criticism, see: Anon, 'the Carmarthen and Cardigan railway', *The Pembroke Herald* (7 June 1861), mp.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3294728/3294731/29/>, Accessed 5 May 2021. Of course, not all farmers were wealthy and able to invest in railways. Many farmers had small holdings and were suffering low income, high rents and poor housing, with living conditions that were often worse than farm labourers, see: Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural–Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*, p.75.

<sup>133</sup> Anon, 'Important railway meeting', *The Welshman* (17 October 1862), p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4351847/4351852/22/>, Accessed 5 May 2021.

<sup>134</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, p.94.

<sup>135</sup> Lewis, *The Gateway to Wales; a history of Cardigan*, pp.94-5.



Although the robust exhortations for railway investment by Mayor Davies and R.D.Jenkins may have been partly motivated by self interest, it would be wrong to deny that a railway connection offered the wider population of Cardigan and its hinterland greater prosperity from improved agricultural output and incomes, a general increase in economic activity, reduced costs of provisions, railway construction jobs and associated employment, and a new era of personal opportunity. Indeed this is supported by the secondary scholarship of Howell and Cooper reviewed earlier<sup>136</sup>. Moreover, Jenkins' implied criticism of the gentry landowners' avariciousness in their reluctance to invest in the railway ventures risked the loss of patronage as their agent and solicitor. However, Davies and Jenkins again neglected to declare their financial interests or remind inexperienced investors of the risk of market fluctuations. It may also be reasonable to criticise them for again underestimating the difficulty of attracting adequate railway investment in such a sparsely populated area without Government support, notwithstanding the dominant economic paradigm of free-market capitalism.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

A summary of the main findings, as they relate to the key research questions, begins with the factors behind the two major developments in the period 1845-65: the opening of Car-

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<sup>136</sup> Cooper, *Exodus from Cardiganshire: Rural–Urban Migration in Victorian Britain*, p.111; Howell, 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in nineteenth century Wales', pp.44-59.

digan's remarkable guildhall and market-house building and slaughterhouse; and the frustrated efforts to secure a railway connection and deep-water harbour. A simple answer would be that these developments were necessary improvements to the town. However, a more nuanced synthesis of primary and secondary data reveals urban *and* rural adaptation in response to a combination of socio-economic threats and opportunities.

With Cardigan's generally appalling sanitation and a particularly urgent need for hygiene improvements to its inadequate market facilities and slaughterhouse, a cost effective opportunity for the Council emerged to renew and amalgamate key civic facilities, including a large market-house, in a single modern structure with good sanitation in a central location; hence the broad scope of the Guildhall and market-house building. The construction was financially dependent on the Council gaining control of the town's commons through the process of enclosure. There was, perhaps, a surprising lack of opposition to the enclosure, given the hostility in other parts of Cardiganshire to the perceived attacks on the traditional rights of commoners, and the history of Rebecca and ceffyl pren activity in Cardigan itself. Maybe the long drawn-out process over a period of some eight years 'drew the sting' from grievances. In the event, enclosure provided security for a large loan for the development project, generated income from land lease and sale, and justified levying an improvement rate.

A key factor behind the attempts to secure a rail connection and deep-water harbour was the steady decline of Cardigan's traditional and prosperous maritime trade and shipbuilding from the 1840's, owing to the limitations of Cardigan's port for larger ships due to its sand bar and silted river, exacerbated by the transition from sail to steam and the extension of the rail network into Carmarthenshire in the 1850's. A rail connection offered Cardigan's merchants and local farmers rapid and cheaper rail transport to prosperous markets in the industrial areas of south east Wales and onwards to London, for exports of corn, dairy products and meat, and significant cost savings on imports of coal, culm and lime. The opportunity for securing lucrative Atlantic trade from a new deep-water harbour faded with competition from more suitable ports of Milford and Fishguard, and the anticipated difficulties of attracting investors.

The distinctive Ruskinian neo-Gothic aesthetics of the Guildhall and market-house were, and still are, striking. The design over three levels makes excellent use of space and the central location is accessible and commanding. The appointment of a neo-Gothic architect is interesting. There is no evidence that this was a deliberate choice. However, the accolades which the design attracted, appear to have earned the Council, and Mayor R.D.Jenkins in particular, widespread plaudits and probably boosted his and their status. The secular representation of the supposed communalism and social cohesion of the Middle Ages can be detected in the building's combination and integration of civic functions and institutions.

The response of the townspeople and visitors to the opening of the Guildhall and market-house seems to have been somewhat muted. Perhaps this was due to the copious rules and regulations (and fines), displayed in English and not Welsh, and strictly enforced by a new superintendent. Nonetheless, there is tentative evidence that, despite the impact on town business of local farm workers' out-migration and the decline of maritime industries, the number of traders may have increased after the opening of the new market. Although the opening prompted the Council to commission its first gas street-lighting and a modest improvement to the water supply, sadly the Council made no appreciable improvement to the general sanitation or public health of the town.

Despite the undoubted agricultural, commercial and social benefits that a railway connection would have brought to Cardigan and its rural hinterland, unfortunately the Council's robust efforts to secure a connection proved illusive. Of several proposed lines, a link with Carmarthen emerged as the most feasible and beneficial, but amid recriminations against avaricious gentry landowners for failing to invest in the railway company, the line was always hindered by inadequate capital, and a link soon became a distant aspiration. Meanwhile, the idea of a deep-water harbour to capture Atlantic trade rapidly disappeared, due to the more realistic ambitions of Milford and Fishguard.

And so to the identity and motives of the civic leaders of the town's developments. Without doubt, the key men were Thomas Davies and R.D.Jenkins. Whilst both were members of Cardigan's interconnected network of power-brokers, Davies was a representative of the capitalist entrepreneurial class, an urban 'businessman', whilst Jenkins represented an emerging middle-class professional group who bridged the interests of businessmen and the 'Tivyside' landed gentry. Jenkins was at his leadership best during his Mayoralty from 1855-60 when he showed considerable determination and public service commitment to steer the architectural planning, Parliamentary approval, construction and opening of the Guildhall and market-house. The leadership to promote a railway connection was shared by Jenkins and Davies, and here there is some ambiguity as to their true motives. Whilst they were quite justified to promote the communal benefits of railway transport, their encouragement to invest in struggling railway companies without warning inexperienced investors of possible losses, and their failure to openly declare their own professional and financial stakes, smacks of self interest.

It could be argued that, in this case study, R.D.Jenkins emerges as a representative of

an emerging independent middle class in Cardigan, as Evans claimed in Cardiff in the 1880's, to challenge the domination of powerful landowners and industrialists, and champion civic responsibility and pride<sup>137</sup>. Perhaps the evidence of R.D.Jenkins' ambiguous motives supports Evans' admission that civic champions were 'exceptional' and 'quite untypical of the city of "dreadful knights"'<sup>138</sup>.

Finally, for an evaluation of this study's contribution to Welsh historiography of the nineteenth century, it might be reasonable to commend the findings of this study regarding: the communal and socially cohesive symbolism of secular neo-Gothic architecture; the particular cluster of factors exerting pressure for urban adaptation and renewal; the interconnection of town and country in an urban case study; and the interrelated network of the ruling elite, and the emergence of a middle class champion of civic consciousness albeit with ambiguous motives.

Word count: 7700.

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<sup>137</sup> Evans, 'The Welsh Victorian city: the middle class and national and civic consciousness in Cardiff, 1850–1914', pp.350-387.

<sup>138</sup> Evans, 'The Welsh Victorian city: the middle class and national and civic consciousness in Cardiff, 1850–1914', p.353.