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To what extent did industrial expansion influenced by the Penrhyn family during the nineteenth century support the growth of the middle class in Gwynedd?

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Contents:

Page 3 Chapter 1: Introduction

Page 7 Chapter 2: Industry and Values-Industry and Management Style

Page 14 Chapter 3: The 'Middling Sort'- The Middle Class

Page 25 Chapter 4 : Conclusion

Page 27 Bibliography

Abbreviations

BU Archives and Special Collections Bangor University

GAS Gwynedd Archives Service

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To what extent did industrial expansion influenced by the Penrhyn family during the nineteenth century support the growth of the middle class in Gwynedd?

Chapter 1- Introduction

The Pennant family, later the Lords Penrhyn, owned significant slave plantations in Jamaica from the 1700s onwards.¹ By the early 1800s this took the form of absentee ownership, employing plantation managers. These later owners never visited Jamaica. Richard Pennant, later the first Lord Penrhyn, used plantation profits to acquire and develop slate quarries in Gwynedd. These in turn generated substantial profits for the family throughout the 1800s. Trevor Burnard writes about the flow of profit from Jamaica for the Penrhyns, which he contends, in conjunction with ‘managerial techniques and organisational skills’ acquired from running a plantation, accelerated the industrialisation of North Wales.² This supported the view of Eric Williams, writing in 1940, who stated that slave-trade profits ‘provided one of the main streams of accumulation of capital in England which financed the Industrial Revolution’.³ Burnard however gives little attention to the industrial innovations and the effect these had on the local area. This dissertation will seek to answer what impact the Penrhyns, their money, business style and innovations, had for the emerging middle class in this area of North Wales.

Considering the importance of the slate industry to North Wales throughout this century there is little published to add to the seminal book by Merfyn Jones’.⁴ Peter Ellis Jones does address questions about the residential origins of the slate quarriers and their movement around the North Wales area for work. His study also provides some comments on social structure.⁵ Barrie Lill’s Doctoral thesis provides some detail on industrial advances made in the Penrhyn Estate in the first half of the century and this also sheds light on some entrepreneurial finance arrangements for the time.⁶ There is however nothing to compare with the range of writing there

¹ The Jamaican plantations were retained by the family until c.1940.

² Trevor Burnard, ‘From periphery to periphery: the Pennants’s Jamaican plantations and industrialisation in North Wales, 1771-1812’ in *Wales and the British overseas empire Interactions and Influences, 1650-1830* ed.by H.V.Bowen (Manchester, 2016), pp.114-142.

³ Eric Williams, ‘The Golden Age of the Slave System in Britain.’ *The Journal of Negro History*, 25.1 (1940), pp.60-106.

⁴ R. Merfyn Jones, *The North Wales Quarrymen, 1874-1922*. (Cardiff, 1981) Quoted extensively on the subject in many journals and books. I have not been able to access a complete copy.

⁵ Peter Ellis Jones, ‘Migration and the Slate Belt of Caernarfonshire in the Nineteenth Century’ *Welsh History Review*, Vol. 14 (1988), pp.610-629.

⁶ Barrie Lill, Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, Bangor University, *Richard Pennant, Samuel Worthington and the mill at Penlan a history of the Penrhyn Mills on the Lower Ogwen* (2019)

has been in recent years about industrialisation in South Wales. It is hoped the inquiries into industrial management styles in this study will add something to the learning for North Wales.

In 1988 Neil Evans concentrated on the question of towns and how industrialisation impacted these. As he states, 'By the end of the nineteenth century industry, not land, was the pulse of Wales.'⁷ The focus on writing about industry grew out of the developments in the 1960s on 'history from below' and this was supported in Wales by the formation of Llafur in 1970-71 as summarised by Andy Croll. He ponders whether even the direction of Welsh labour history should be questioned.⁸ Evans and Harlech identified a need to consider a regional approach to building a history of Wales.⁹ The development of a new direction in urban history was formally introduced by Peter Borsay, Louise Miskell and Owen Roberts following on from a conference in Swansea in 2003. They identified 'large and important gaps in the historiography of modern Welsh towns' and specifically that 'The slate-quarrying towns of Gwynedd should also be fruitful subjects for future research.'¹⁰ Neil Evans concentrates too on the need to think of 'urbanisation as a process which influences all areas of society'.¹¹ Despite this encouragement there have been no published research articles on Gwynedd, nor indeed the wider North Wales area. The closest in geographical terms is Lewis and Wheatley's case study on middle class suburbanization into Aberystwyth, 1870-1930. This includes useful criteria for middle-class categorisation, however it does have a narrow focus on residential dwelling types which may not translate directly for reviews of towns in North Wales.¹²

Possibly inspired by the new direction set out by Borsay et al in 2005, there have been several studies into the middle class, specifically directed at South Wales. In 2009 Julie Light followed her earlier study into three small towns with more in depth research into urban elites in South Wales.¹³ In 2006 Louise Miskell turned her attention to Swansea with a full-length study of its'

⁷ Neil Evans, 'The Urbanisation of Welsh Society', in *People and Protest: Wales 1815-1880*, ed. by T. Herbert and G. E. Jones (Cardiff, 1988), p.1.

⁸ Andy Croll, 'People's Remembrancers' in a Post-Modern Age: Contemplating the No-Crisis of Welsh Labour History', *Llafur*, 8.1 (2000), pp.5-17.

⁹ Neil Evans and Coleg Harlech, 'Writing the Social History of Modern Wales: approaches, Achievements and Problems', *Social History*, 17.3 (1992), pp.479-492.

¹⁰ Peter Borsay, Louise Miskell and Owen Roberts. 'Introduction: Wales, a new agenda for urban history', *Urban History*, 32.1 (2005), pp.5-16.

¹¹ Neil Evans, 'Rethinking urban Wales', *Urban history*, 32.1 (2005), p.130.

¹² C Lewis and S Wheatley, 'The beginnings of middle class suburbanization in a small town: a case study of Aberystwyth, c. 1870-1930', *Welsh History Review*, 31.1 (1999), pp.45-64.

¹³ Julie Light, 'The Middle Classes as Urban elites in Nineteenth-century South Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 24. 3 (2009), pp.29-55; Julie Light, '...mere seekers of fame?': personalities, power and politics in the small town: Pontypool and Bridgend, c. 1860-95' *Urban History*, 32.1 (2005), pp.88-99.

urban history.¹⁴ She has also written separately about scientific institutions and associations based on Swansea, showing the links with the middle-class elements of society.¹⁵ Studies into towns elsewhere in Wales provide methodologies which have opened up learning about urban localities of varying sizes. Applying the research and conclusions reached to the circumstances of this corner of North Wales, stretching from Bethesda to Bangor, identifying any similarities and differences, will add to the available pool of overall knowledge for the historian about Welsh towns. John Smith in his article based on English towns and cities recommends that there should be continued study of a range of towns 'which represent as wide a diversity of urban categories as possible.'¹⁶ There thus is a consensus for the direction of study irrespective of the country. As Light summarises, it is important that historians do not neglect the urban localities and the middle classes who acted as urban elites. If they do, there will be both a loss to Welsh history and the potential to miss adding Welsh historiography into the broader British sphere.¹⁷ Martin Johnes in his short review in 2010 of the historiography in Wales, reiterates that the middle class are 'shamefully understudied'.¹⁸ There is an overall gap in the study of the middle class in Gwynedd.¹⁹ This review seeks to start to rectify the position, in a small way.

Chapter 2 will consider the way in which relevant innovations introduced by the Pennants to improve their slate quarry business had longer term consequences for the area. It will explore whether they accelerated or hindered development towards urbanisation. What effect did their management approach have for any middle-class growth? Considering these questions should provide a re-evaluation of the industrial benefits, drawing out details not emphasised by Burnard. There is a valid need for some reinterpretation if we are to consider how these contributed to commercial development and a consequent fertile location for the middle class. This dissertation will explore the varied business styles of the Penrhyns throughout the nineteenth century and how these may have impacted local development in what was becoming the modern era. Both Bangor University and Gwynedd Archives hold a considerable volume of data. A selection of

¹⁴ Louise Miskell, 'Intelligent Town: An Urban History of Swansea, 1780-1855', *Studies in Welsh History*, 24 (2006).

¹⁵ Louise Miskell, 'The Making of a New 'Welsh Metropolis': Science, Leisure and Industry in Early Nineteenth-Century Swansea', *The Historical Association* Vol.88, 289 (2003), pp.32-52.

¹⁶ John Smith, 'Urban elites c. 1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27.2 (2000), pp.255-275.

¹⁷ Light, 'The Middle Classes', p.54.

¹⁸ Martin Johnes, 'For Class and Nation: Dominant Trends in the Historiography of Twentieth – Century Wales', *History Compass*, 8.11 (2010), p.1263.

¹⁹ Peter Ellis Jones wrote a study of the working class based on Hiracl in Bangor. There is only a review available. 'A working Class History in the mid-nineteenth century: A case study of Hiracl, Bangor, Gwynedd' *Welsh History Review*, 91 – 15. 1-4 (1990); he also wrote a study into municipal government in Bangor which is not accessible; *Bangor, 1883-1983: a study in municipal government* (Cardiff, 1986).

available letters and documents relating to Penrhyn local business affairs will be reviewed. Reports in both national and Welsh newspapers provide useful summaries of business activity. Except where needed to evaluate management style, it is not intended that this Dissertation will focus on the various Penrhyn Quarry strikes.

Chapter 3 will consider whether the innovations and management styles discussed in Chapter 2 led to the commercial development needed to support the growth of the middle class in Gwynedd. Evidence from Bangor and Bethesda will be studied. These were two very contrasting areas within the geographical reach of Penrhyn influence. Light's methodology applied to consider the scope of the middle class in South Wales should be equally useful in the study of these towns to find the evidence which may be available to support this change to society in Gwynedd. Available information from the Census Records, supported by newspaper reports and Trade Directories, will form the basis of the research. Given the limited scope of this dissertation, there should not be a need to study evidence of residential suburbia in the manner of Lewis and Wheatley's study of Aberystwyth.

The final chapter will summarise the findings and present the conclusion to the principal question. In doing so this dissertation should perhaps encourage more in depth learning about the under researched area of the middle-class existence in North Wales.

Chapter 2 'Ideas and Values' - Industry and Management style.

Trevor Burnard remarked that "Richard Pennant brought not just money but also ideas and values from the West Indies to North Wales."²⁰ How did this first Lord Penrhyn convert these ideas into a profitable business. Did he set the scene for subsequent generations to capitalise on the further technological advances available in the second half of the century. Did his successors adopt similar management styles and did any such family traits assist in any way with the culture needed for the development of a middle class?

The Penrhyn family owned the third largest estate in Wales, increased by substantial profits from the slate quarries. Slate quarrying became critical to the North Wales economy.²¹ Arthur Redford reflects AH Dodd's view that industrialisation in nineteenth century Wales was helped by English capitalists who were encouraged to invest in Wales because the people there were already very poor. This poverty meant that unlike other areas of Britain, industrialists arrived to take advantage of the poverty in Wales and did not cause it.²² Richard Pennant was an astute businessman who took advantage of this available and inexpensive workforce. At the same time, he invested in the modern assets and methods needed to increase business profits and value.²³ Richard was comfortable having a manager looking after his assets on the slave plantations and he replicated a similar system of management in his expanding slate quarry business. As Burnard summarised, 'Managing slaves was hard work and it took a hard man to do it.'²⁴ The absentee slave owner was not the hard man - it was the appointed manager, and this characterisation may be applied to Penrhyn quarry management. The method of communication between absentee owner and manager on the plantations involved copious amounts of correspondence.²⁵ Richard may have been absent from his plantations, but he was very present at his quarry; he lived in the neighbouring foothills and his successors followed suit. This essay will show that such proximity was reflected in his close involvement with the business and how that Penrhyn personal control over a workforce, instigated by Richard then continued in varying degrees by his successors during the nineteenth century, impacted on the social structure of the surrounding area of Gwynedd.

²⁰ Trevor Burnard, *'From Periphery to Periphery'*, p.136.

²¹ Geraint Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales*, (Cambridge, 2007), p.183.

²² Arthur Redford. 'The Industrial Revolution in North Wales', *The Economic History Review* 4. 3 (1933), p.369.

²³Barrie Lill, *'Richard Pennant, Samuel Worthington and the Mill at Penlan: A History of the Penrhyn Mills on the Lower Ogwen'*. Ph.D.Thesis, Bangor University, 2019. p.3.

²⁴ Trevor Burnard, *'From Periphery to Periphery'*, p.128.

²⁵ Extensive collection of papers held in the Bangor University Archive, many yet uncatalogued. PBRA 'Penrhyn B.R.A. Bangor University Archives 'The Papers of the Pennant Family and Wicken and Penrhyn Estates; PFA, 'Penrhyn Castle Further Additional'

Improved communications provided by the roads and railways, advanced the pace of change throughout Britain in the nineteenth century. Penrhyn involvement had a direct impact for North Wales. In the late 1700s there was much debate both locally and in the Houses of Parliament about the need for an effective crossing between Anglesey and the mainland, making journeys from Ireland easier. Richard commissioned a report which he received into ‘the practicality of making a passage from the island of Anglesea into Carnarvonshire, due attention being paid to the Navigation.’ This work was estimated at a significant cost of £8,019.²⁶ Demonstrating his direct participation to bring progress to the area, Richard Penrhyn was one of a committee appointed to consider a proposal for a stone bridge. He was also involved because an improved crossing would benefit his business as it would make Penrhyn slates more competitive in the Liverpool slate market.²⁷ It would achieve a local advantage as the journey for those quarrymen who made long journeys home every weekend to their families who lived on Anglesey would be less complicated.²⁸ Richard built a new road which helped everyone travelling through North Wales as it cut the journey to Holyhead by 10 miles and avoided the inconvenience of the Conwy Ferry. The road also provided a better link to the Capel Curig Inn, another of Richard’s business interests.²⁹ Richard’s primary purpose was a more efficient route to transport slates between the quarry and Port Penrhyn.³⁰ This would therefore improve the process of despatching slates to customers.

In 1793 Richard Pennant organised a report on the advantages of a ‘much better mode of Conveyance’ to transport the slates overground from the quarries to the Harbour. A canal was not recommended on the basis that ‘it would be more expensive than profitable’. The report goes into the detail of a cast-iron, narrow-gauge railway which would be laid on a bed of stone. Full costings are set out together with the anticipated savings over the current practice of carrying on horseback. The engineer, Jessop, points out the additional benefit of using local water flows as a counterbalance to transport buckets of waste slate materials, saving the workmen carrying them.

²⁶ Unknown Author Report to Richard Pennant costs and study crossing at Menai Straits. N.d. BU. PFA/12/7b

²⁷ Paul Stafford, ‘The First Menai Bridge Project: Politics, Commerce and Communications in Wales, 1782-86’, *Welsh History Review*, 79.9 Nos.1-4 (1978), pp. 288-289; pp.315-317.

²⁸ Rhian Bower, ‘Bariscio: the slate quarrymen’s barracks of North-West Wales’, *The Journal of Architecture*, 23.1 (2018), p.149.

²⁹ Anon., ‘Wednesday & Thursday’s Post’. *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* (1809) 27 July 1805. p.2. Available at https://go-gale-com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Newspapers&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&retrievalId=f6e7c89c-05cc-4f9c-92b6-f864474520d6&hitCount=1&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm¤tPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CY3202641635&docType=Article&sort=Pub+Date+Forward+Chron&contentSegment=ZBLC-MOD1&prodId=BNCN&pageNum=1&contentSet=GALE%7CY3202641635&searchId=R1&userGroupName=tou&inPS=true, Accessed 26 April 2023.

³⁰ Barrie Lill, ‘Richard Pennant’, p.5.

The engineer's initial meeting was with Mr Wyatt, Pennant's manager but the detailed report is addressed to Lord Penrhyn, evidencing both the interest he took in the fine detail and his readiness to adapt to the technical innovations available.³¹ The railway design was a major advancement from the existing system- 'the plateway's flaws had also become clear by 1801, and the Penrhyn Quarry Railway was based on a unique style of edge rail, designed to overcome these shortcomings'. Implementing the new system of rails had a unique impact wider than North Wales. It was a national innovation which was adopted throughout Wales and in England.³² The Penrhyn business approach took the lead in supporting what was new. It is shown as being proactive and not simply reactive, to the surrounding business and industrial changes.

Richard knew that he needed a compliant workforce. Evidence of his care during a period of hardship is acknowledged in an effusive letter from workmen dated 18 July 1800 'You only stepped forward and exhibited a Christian Example for which the whole County rings with your deserved praises which never can be too much' signed by thirty-three men and marked by thirty-two others.³³ He continued to follow a philosophy of caring management of his quarry assets, in a similar manner to maintaining his slave numbers.³⁴

Edward George Douglas Pennant, the next Lord Penrhyn to be considered, also appears to be concerned about the welfare of the men.³⁵ A plan to cover the requirement for the employer to fund the provision of financial support for widows because of quarry accidents illustrates both the continued tendency towards close control over detail and underlines the continued Penrhyn focus on profitability. The tone of the correspondence seems harsh, as any human concern is lacking. The very comprehensive report dated in 1838 on 'Proposed Regulations for the relief of Widows and Children of Men killed at the Quarry' was probably prepared by the quarry manager who would have been obligated to reduce costs. It proposed that there should be a distinction providing annuities where the deceased had been in the workforce for 'say 5 or 7 years' but for those with shorter service 'it is proposed to give a donation only.' Under the plan 'the annuities and donations would then average about £250 a year.' This is a saving of £50 a year compared to

³¹ Letter from Jessop to Lord Penrhyn re stone road and rail system dated 21 Jul 1793. BU. PFA/12/14a

³² Rowan Patel, 'The Permanent way of the 1805 Congleton Railway: New Evidence from Fieldwork' *Industrial Archaeology Review*, 42.1 (2020), p.68.

³³ Quarrymen, various. Letter to Lord Penrhyn thanks for assistance. 18 July 1800. BU. PFA/12/7/a

³⁴ Trevor Burnard, 'From Periphery to Periphery', p.128.

³⁵ Edward D.G. Pennant, 'Pennant family Landowners and industrialists.' J. Davies, N. Jenkins, M. Baines, & et. al., *The Welsh academy encyclopedia of Wales*. (2008.) Available at

http://libezproxy.open.ac.uk/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/waencywales/pennant_family_landowners_and_industrialists/0?institutionId=292 Accessed 15 May 2023.

the existing system of Annuities for all.³⁶ This assistance should be set into overall industrial context as it predates the 1840 Royal Commission into Mining. Slate extraction was above ground but nonetheless equally dangerous for the workers. Thus, by comparison, the Penrhyn's management of workers may be seen to be ahead of its' time as a more caring employer.

Cannadine quoted in Fletcher said, 'Land was wealth: the most secure, reliable and permanent asset. Land was status: its ownership conferred unique and unrivalled celebrity. And land was power: over the locality, the county and the nation.' Fletcher asserts the influence of the landowning elites remained dominant in North Wales until the end of the 1900s.³⁷ Edward's actions support this position; he welcomes the benefits to his business of railways, providing his estate is not encroached on more than necessary.³⁸ His ability to network and use local landowning political connections is visible in his correspondence attempting to persuade Lord Newborough to become a director of the new Railway company.³⁹ Edward's reputation is linked to the new Penrhyn Castle, and this supports the inference Cannadine made of 'celebrity'. His networking, now effected within aristocratic circles, even attracted Queen Victoria to stay.⁴⁰ Edward however did more than use a castle to glorify the family's reputation within the upper echelons of society. He added a longer pier at Port Penrhyn to assist ship access.⁴¹ In 1854 he 'granted certain privileges and rights with reference to the construction and maintenance of a filter tank reservoir and works'⁴² These rights were granted to the Bangor Water and Gas Works Company, which was subsequently taken over by Bangor Corporation. The plan was designed to provide a water supply for the Bangor town area by forming a reservoir on Penrhyn land. Local reports note that often such improvements (which helped the local population and economy) were paid for by Lord Penrhyn and often initiated by him to solve obvious problems. The

³⁶ Unsigned Report (assumed) to Lord Penrhyn re Annuity proposals. Dated 17 January 1838. BU. PFA/15/67(3)

³⁷Allan Fletcher. 'The role of landowners, entrepreneurs and railways in the urban development of the north Wales coast during the nineteenth century', *Welsh History Review*, 16. 4 (1993), p.515.

³⁸Anon., 'Railroad through or near Bangor, &c.' *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 1 March 1836, p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4460315/4460318/18/?=>, Accessed 21 March 2023.

³⁹ Pennant, Edward G. Letters to Lord Newborough re railway director. n.d. GAS XD2 21187

⁴⁰ Anon., 'The Queen's visit to Penrhyn Castle.' *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*. 22 October 1859, p.10. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4465350/4465360/120/>, Accessed 20 March 2023.

⁴¹ Anon., 'Improvement of Port Penrhyn', *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 13 June 1837, p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4460650/4460653/18/?=>, Accessed 21 March 2023.

⁴²Indenture Deed Conveyance of Land re Bangor Water Works. Signed A.H. Pritchard. Town Clerk, Bangor and Lord Penrhyn. Dated 2 September 1896 GAS XB9/15/

activities evidenced illustrate he continued with his predecessors' approach of expanding the industrial infrastructure.

Edward's management style also followed Richard's. He maintained a very close interest in minutiae to the extent of writing explaining his objections to the appointment of a tenant for the Capel Curig Hotel. In this instance, after encouragement from his son George, he did rescind personal character and solvency remarks, but stubbornly upheld his other objections.⁴³ Insistent obsessive control therefore continued to be a family feature. It is displayed by George, less than two months before Edward's death. He corresponded with a solicitor discussing methods to allow the new manager, E A Young, only limited access to banking facilities. It was proposed that Col. West, a member of the local gentry, would provide supervision to ensure some comfort that there could be no attempt to embezzle from the quarry business, as ultimately had been the case with Wyatt, a former manager.⁴⁴ This earlier experience may have justified, for good business reasons, this resort to micromanagement, however the example demonstrates the family tendency of fundamental control.

George, inheriting on his father's death, almost immediately cancelled Penrhyn Quarry business compliance adherence to the Pennant Lloyd Agreement,⁴⁵ writing to Lloyd Pennant explaining 'you would see my reasons for now declining to submit to its interference between employer and employed.'⁴⁶ He then quickly responds to a consequent Memorial sent by 'Six Quarrymen'. The level of detail demonstrated is again characteristic, as is the friendly but unbending tone. He appears to show care for the men with hopes to 'advance the posterity of all concerned'.⁴⁷ Ultimately this set out the path towards the 1900-1903 quarrymen's strike.⁴⁸ The industrial conflict is only of interest here to underline the type of business approach George applied. It is apparent that his family's focus on managing people reflected more how they had managed Caribbean slaves, not Welsh quarrymen. He stated 'all that I do object to is a committee which attempts to

⁴³ Penrhyn, Lord. Letters to Thompson re non suitability of tenant, Capel Curig Inn. 8 December 1872. BU PFA/8/21

⁴⁴ H.Barber, Letter to George S. D. Pennant. Proposal re A. Young's use of bank account. 4 February 1886. BU PFA/12/35 v

⁴⁵ Cygnus, *The Story of Penrhyn Quarries 1865-1902 in Fortnightly Review, May 1865-June 1934*, 73 (438) (1903), p.1021.

⁴⁶ George S.D. Pennant, Letter to Lloyd Pennant explaining withdrawal from Agreement. Dated 30 May 1885.GAS M/1647120

⁴⁷ George S.D. Pennant, Letter to Quarrymen in answer to their Memorial. Dated 20 May 1885. GAS. GAS XPQ 96/2/4

⁴⁸ Jenkins, *'A Concise History'*, p.289.

interfere between master and man.'⁴⁹ His personal approach was very autocratic - 'But what I do dispute and cannot allow is that anyone in the quarry should be considered to have such authority that it can over-ride my authority'.⁵⁰ Even when under scrutiny in the House of Commons he refused to bend, confirming 'it would establish a precedent for outside interference with the management of my private affairs'.⁵¹ Taken together these instances show that George was prepared to upset anyone, from upturning a nationally agreed slate industry working agreement to ignoring the instructions of the Industrial Relations Committee of the British Parliament.

There was a short timeframe for the industrial implementation phase for North Wales as Evans analysed. The first half of the century was the period of fast growth which generally reached peak development by 1880 and is supported by Carter' statistics.⁵² Evans discusses the challenges of social mixing with growth in the trades and professional groups together with the need for civic governance to ensure people could be protected from both crime and disease.⁵³ This concurs with the studies elsewhere in Wales demonstrating that town management was important.

Investigation shows that Penrhyn influence in Bangor remained strong, regardless of personality or style. When the town achieved Borough status in 1883, George was asked to be the first Mayor.⁵⁴ This was not an empty title as he maintained the Penrhyn involvement in civic affairs. His assistance in 1885 arranging for land near Garth Point, Bangor, to be available to provide a place for pleasure and recreation, demonstrated his networking skills and influence in London.⁵⁵ The site originally identified for a reservoir to provide Bangor with a good level of water supply was not needed as a result of engineering advances. Instead, a pool of available water, once again on Penrhyn land, would be made available. But such Penrhyn support for the community only extended so far. The compulsion to protect the Penrhyn assets was paramount and ensured the previously conveyed surplus land was swiftly conveyed back to Pennant ownership.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ North Wales Quarrymen's Union, *The Struggle for the Right of Combination (Penrhyn Quarry Dispute)*, 1 January 1897, p.9.

⁵⁰ North Wales Quarrymen's Union, *The Struggle*, p.12.

⁵¹ Lord Penrhyn to Sir C. Boyle, North Wales Quarrymen's Union, *The Struggle*, Frontpage, p.2.

⁵² Neil Evans, 'The Urbanisation of Welsh Society', in *People and Protest: Wales 1815-1880*, ed. by T.Herbert and G.E. Jones, 1988, p.3.

⁵³ Neil Evans, 'The Urbanisation', p.7.

⁵⁴ Anon., 'Incorporation of Bangor.-Official Information' *The Times*, 10 July 1883, p.5. Available at <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CS86426858/TTDA?sid=bookmark-TTDA&xid=c6db8654>, Accessed 4 March 2023.

⁵⁵ George S.D. Pennant, Document between Bangor Aldermen and London owners re use of land near Garth Point, Bangor for 30 years Dated 20 November 1885. GAS XD19/8

⁵⁶ Indenture Deed Conveyance of Land re Bangor Water Works. Signed A.H. Pritchard. Town Clerk, Bangor and Lord Penrhyn. Dated 2 September 1896. GAS XB9/15/1

The civic interest displayed by the Penrhyns does appear to have been driven by a genuine involvement in local affairs and not solely for aggrandisement of the Penrhyn family. Newspaper reports record many instances of charitable giving (by all Lords Penrhyn) and schools and churches were founded and thereafter maintained financially.⁵⁷ In contrast Elizabeth Fayrer-Jones has contended that the Bute and Beaufort families in Cardiff and Newport were involved primarily to benefit themselves.⁵⁸ Throughout the course of this research there have been no indications of corruption of this nature by any of the Pennants. There was potential for influence to be brought to bear on those Penrhyn tenants who qualified to vote, as both their employment and their homes were controlled by the Penrhyns. This concurs with Fayrer-Jones' wider position that most people would argue members of the British elite were able to use their wealth and authority to increase their influence.⁵⁹ Penrhyn influence in rural North Wales was generally comparable with events in Welsh towns and cities elsewhere in the country and should be distinguished from the Butes and Beauforts.

The support and investment made by the Penrhyn family into the notable new innovations such as the port, road, railways and civic infrastructure, including the quarry business, which was the industrial lifeblood of the entire region, did plant the seeds for an environment suitable for the new 'middling sort', the middle class so elusive in North Wales. However even allowing for behaviours comparable with the 'manipulating elites' of their time, it appears possible that the Penrhyn 'master-slave' style of management did not provide an attractive working regime for the management class. Did their behaviour provide an environment such as one contested by Evans where 'Few towns were so much in the sway of a major landlord'.⁶⁰ The Penrhyns, as owners, possibly held too much direct control and how, if at all, this affected growth in the middle class should be reviewed.

⁵⁷ Barrie Lill, 'Richard Pennant', p.7; Anon., 'Lady Penrhyn', *The Cambrian*, 10 December 1808, p.3. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3321855/3321858> Accessed 21 March 2023.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Fayrer-Jones, "'Make Him an Offer He Can't Refuse": Corruption, Coercion and Aristocratic Landowners in Nineteenth-Century, Urban Wales' in *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 14.2 (2019), p. 65.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Fayrer-Jones, "'Make Him an Offer He Can't Refuse", p.64.

⁶⁰ Neil Evans, 'The Welsh Victorian City, the Middle Class and Civil and National Consciousness in Cardiff, 1850-1914', *Welsh History Review*, 12. (1984), p.352.

Chapter 3 The 'Middling Sort' - The Middle Class

Within the format of social history as pioneered by Asa Briggs in the 1960s and 1970s, Dror Wahrman has claimed the middle class was a product of the campaign for the vote during the 1820s and 1830s. At this time the 'middling sort' argued that their interest in enfranchisement resulted from their places in society as 'employers, businessmen and traders'.⁶¹ Julie Light pursues this theme in her study on South Wales. She makes a connection to the Bangor area by referencing David Pretty's acknowledgement that there was by the middle of the nineteenth century in Menai Bridge a 'distinctive stratum of traders and merchants'.⁶² Evaluation of this characteristic should be applied to a wider area in North Wales to expand, even in some small way, the study of Welsh towns which remains obscure due to lack of research.⁶³ Consideration will be given to the small town of Bethesda and the surrounding local parish of Llanllechid, which was centred on the Penrhyn Quarry.⁶⁴ The review will extend to the larger cathedral town of Bangor and thus provide an overall base of study local to the Penrhyn hereditary seat. Within the limited time constraints of this paper, is there evidence of activities which would signify that either of the two towns to be researched may be classed as, per Miskell's findings, 'intelligent' towns.⁶⁵ It will seek to answer whether there was sufficient commercial growth to support a middle group, falling between the two more commonly studied strands in Welsh society, workers, and elites.⁶⁶ In addition, it should identify what impact the identified Penrhyn activities and attitudes had on this under researched group.

Tremenheere, as reported by Thomas, discusses the paternalistic approach of elites, aligned to a distrust of trade unions. He was convinced that by the 1850s in South Wales what efforts had been made by employers to improve the lives of workers in some ways, had transformed industrial and social relations.⁶⁷ Richard Pennant is recorded as having what he felt was a caring approach, possibly paternalistic for that time, to the Caribbean slaves. As noted in correspondence from one

⁶¹ Bob Morris and Donna Loftus, Unit 12 'The making of the British middle class', *Confidence and crisis, 1840-1880*, ed. by Donna Loftus (Milton Keynes, 2017) p.234. A225 The British Isles and the Modern world, 1789-1914, The Open University.

⁶² Julie Light, 'The Middle Classes as Urban Elites in Nineteenth-century South Wales', in *The Welsh History Review*, 24. 3 (2009), p.33.

⁶³ Louise Miskell, *Intelligent Town: An Urban History of Swansea, 1780-1855* in *Studies in Welsh History*, (2006), p.160.

⁶⁴ Neil Evans, 'The Urbanisation', p.3.

⁶⁵ Louise Miskell, 'Intelligent Town', p.160.

⁶⁶ Neil Evans and Coleg Harlech, 'Writing the social history of modern Wales: approaches, achievements and problems', in *Social History*, 17. 3 (1992), p.481.

⁶⁷ Steven Thompson, From Paternalism to Industrial Partnership The Evolution of Industrial Welfare Capitalism in South Wales, c.1840-1939 in Louise Miskell, *New Perspectives on Welsh Industrial History* (2020), p.110.

of his attorneys in Jamaica, 'Your people are worked moderately, have abundance of food and are treated with care and kindness.'⁶⁸ Late in 1830 Edward may have shown evidence of his slavery connections in his management techniques through his organisation of hard labour machines to be used by convicts in Caernarvon jail, all provided at his own expense. The correspondence with Lord Newborough shows the Penrhyn focus on maximising output as these machines were designed to permit rotas of men working without being able to talk to each other.⁶⁹ It also shows his characteristic single-minded manner as he placed the order before getting Lord Newborough's agreement.

This early Penrhyn interest in law and order is representative of one of the cornerstones of society which, as discussed by Chris Williams, allowed a middle class to develop.⁷⁰ There was a need to protect both the people and their homes. In a logical step following enactment of the Police Act 1839, enabling counties in England and Wales to set up police forces, Edward was involved in the establishment of a police force for the County. In December 1856 Col. Cartwright provides him with a comprehensive report of recommendations, including full financial implications, on the range and required grades of police personnel, from Chief Constable down, considered essential to provide an adequate force. The report, part of a scheme to be sent to the Home Secretary, includes in the post script 'I still think that Llanberis and Bethesda should be doubled, that they should have 2 constables and it is more on the principle of precaution', simply because if there was one Constable in each village such a solitary individual might behave inappropriately and 'form friends with Beerhouse men'.⁷¹ Edward thus continued to demonstrate a detailed interest in the structure of a changing society as it expanded in the mid-century; at the same time he was protecting his own property as the family owned most of the land and housing.

However, the 1861 Census does not record any formal police presence in the Llanllechid area although 3 police constables are in place by 1881.⁷² Bethesda (later shown as the area of

⁶⁸ Trevor Burnard, 'From Periphery to Periphery', p.134.

⁶⁹ Richard Pennant, Letter addressed to Lord Newborough stating he had ordered the hard labour machines. Dated November 1830. GAS.XD2 23307; Richard Pennant, Letter to Lord Newborough explaining how hard labour machines are used. Dated November 1830. GAS XD2 23308

⁷⁰ Chris Williams, Unit 5, 'The birth of the modern state', *Ambition & Anxiety, 1789-1840*, ed. by Paul Lawrence, (Milton Keynes, 2017), pp.217-228. A225 The British Isles and the Modern world, 1789-1914. The Open University.

⁷¹ Col. Cartwright letter to Lord Penrhyn requirements for a Police Force. Dated December 1856. GAS. XD2 14113

⁷² Census Enumerator Books Available at https://www.findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/search/results?datasetname=1881+england%2c+wales+%26+scotland+census&sid=103&occupation=police*&keywordsplace_proximity=5&parish=llanllechid Accessed 4 May 2023.

Llanllechid in the census data) is recorded as having a population of 1,964 in 1821, rising to 4,957 by 1841 in line with industrial development of the Penrhyn Quarry. By 1861, following the introduction of the railway, the population has risen to 7,346 and following additional quarry growth, to 8299 in 1881. Conducting a limited review of the commercial classes by occupation, following Light's approach, indicates a comparable situation to her findings for South Wales.⁷³ The 1861, 1881 and 1901 Census Data for Bethesda / Llanllechid, shows growth in the range of occupations some of which may indicate a potential middle-class as displayed in Table 1.⁷⁴

Table 1 LLANLLECHID/BETHESDA	1861	1881	1901
Census Data 1861-1901			
Returned Results - Llanllechid	5,078	8,299	
Returned Results - Bethesda			5,282
Selected Occupations	1861	1881	1901
Accountant	0	7	1
Baker	5	14	16
Bank	0	5	3
Bookseller	1	2	4
Builder	0	0	2
Chemist	0	4	4
Clerk	1	1	2
Grocer	10	38	54
Hotel Keeper	2	4	6
Housekeeper	6	34	16
Joiner	23	34	23
Laundry	0	1	1
Milliner	5	26	18
Nurse	4	6	1
Physician/Surgeon	0	2	2
Police	0	3	2
Publican	4	11	3
Railway	1	1	12
School Master/Teacher	13	12	19
Servant	18	23	48
Slate Quarryman	997	941	697
Solicitor	1	0	5
Tailor	5	53	24

Table compiled from Occupations as per Census Enumerator Books analysed for Llanllechid.

⁷³ Julie Light, *The Middle Classes*, p.40.

⁷⁴ This table was compiled from a review of Occupations as per the Census Enumerator Books analysis for Llanllechid 1861;1881 and Bethesda 1901.

https://www-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/search/results?datasetname=1861+england%2c+wales+%26+scotland+census&sid=103&keywordsplace_proximity=0&parish=llanllechid Accessed 4 May 2023

https://www-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/search/results?datasetname=1881+england%2c+wales+%26+scotland+census&sid=103&keywordsplace_proximity=0&parish=llanllechid Accessed 4 May 2023

<https://www-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/search/results?datasetname=1901%20england%2c%20wales%20%26%20scotland%20census&parish=bethesda&sid=999> Accessed 4 May 2023

Light also considered reviewing income levels and the existence of domestic servants as possible indicators of middle-class status. Within the scope of this study, attempting to obtain income details for people in the Bethesda area is impracticable. Census data shows a few households with domestic servants with a small increase in numbers between the two dates. Servants are also often connected to businesses and there was often duality of purpose, as the servant worked in both the business and the home. In any case, F.K. Prochaska, cited in Light, warns against accepting the employment of domestic servants as an indicator of wealth.⁷⁵

Data for Bethesda reflects a slower pace of growth than was found by Light, whose work reviewed larger towns. Light makes comparisons to statistics for England and Wales in total for 1861 where 4.5% of the population was in the 'commercial class' compared to the two towns of Pontypool and Bridgend where she calculated the number was around 2%.⁷⁶ The total available statistics for similar occupation categories in Bethesda are even smaller and therefore insignificant within overall household numbers. This is understandable given the considerably smaller area represented. It also suggests that social development within this area of rural North Wales was running chronologically behind the south. The towns in South Wales also grew alongside one dominant industry, coal mining, not the slate mining of North Wales. Slate extraction, critically important as it was for the local area, only ever directly employed a maximum of circa 14,000 men.⁷⁷ Direct statistical comparisons with South Wales towns are therefore not meaningful. These towns had considerably greater populations and significantly higher numbers of working men.⁷⁸ The socio-economic data extracted in Table 4 (page 24) does show that over the longer period to the end of the century, the potential middle-class group has expanded.

Support for this position may be seen in the range of facilities developing, similar to South Wales. Mr E R Thomas, a chemist, opens cocoa rooms as reported in early 1881, replicating developments in the larger established town of Bangor.⁷⁹ Banks were significant pointers to support the development of the commercial class. Facilitated by local accountant Mr Jones, the North

⁷⁵ Julie Light, *The Middle Classes* p.38.

⁷⁶ Julie Light, *The Middle Classes* p.39.

⁷⁷ A. Davidson, G. P Jones and D. Rh.Gwyn Gwynedd Quarrying Landscapes (Gwynedd,1994) p.5.

⁷⁸Harold Carter, *An Urban Geography of England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century*. (London, 1990), pp.55-56.

⁷⁹ Anon., 'Bethesda. New Cocoa Rooms.' *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 1 January 1881.p.5. Available at [https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4516995/4517000/24/Bethesda?=&](https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4516995/4517000/24/Bethesda?=) Accessed 25 April 2023.

Denbighshire Benefit Building Society, was reported to be opening an agency and several commercial changes in Bethesda in recent months were also summarised, featuring inter alia, additional banking facilities and changes in hotel landlords.⁸⁰ Activities such as these indicate the existence of, as Light potentially demonstrated, the beginnings of a middle class. In Bethesda a literary and scientific society existed by 1884 and there were thriving concert programmes in the Assembly Rooms.⁸¹ These cultural and indeed scientific groups also point to a nascent middle class as was identified for other regions of Wales by both Light and Miskell. It is expected that this would have been boosted by subsequent railway developments and the opportunity for further commercial services needed to support any future tourist trade.⁸² Samuel Smiles writing in his 'self-help' books focussed on the potential for upward mobility within the middle classes.⁸³ Examples of such mobility are evidenced by data obtained from the Bethesda Census. In 1881, Edwin R. Thomas was a chemist.⁸⁴ By 1891 his son, also Edwin R, features as a Medical Student. Elias Davies, another chemist, has one son John Elias, listed as a Professor of Music and by 1891 another son, Elias K, is following in his father's footsteps as a druggist.⁸⁵ Thus Census data provides some additional historical learning about the middle class in Bethesda.

Trades Directory data for 1880 still includes Bethesda within the Bangor heading. The brief information published records the presence of 2 Bank branch offices, 2 Building Societies, 3 Booksellers & Stationers, 3 Chemists, 1 surgeon and 1 accountant (a branch office of a Bangor firm). By 1895 it has a separate listing including 3 banks, 5 booksellers, 1 chemist, 1 dentist, 4 accountants, 4 surgeons and 2 firms of solicitors.⁸⁶ Light found that Trade Directories are often potentially incomplete, and this is the case for a very small town such as Bethesda. The limited

⁸⁰ Anon., 'The North Denbighshire Benefit Building Society.' *The North Wales Express*, 18 February 1881. p.7. Available at [https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3559443/3559450/75/Bethesda?=&](https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3559443/3559450/75/Bethesda?=), Accessed 25 April 2023.

⁸¹ Anon., 'Conversation of Bethesda Literary and Scientific Society.' *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 12 April 1884, p.6. Available at

[https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4451767/4451773/50/Bethesda?=&](https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4451767/4451773/50/Bethesda?=), Accessed 25 April 2023;

Anon., 'Bethesda. Local Board.' *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent* 11 May 1888, p.6. Available at [https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3600159/3600165/52/Bethesda?=&](https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3600159/3600165/52/Bethesda?=), Accessed 25 April 2023.

⁸² Anon., 'Bethesda. The Attractions of Bethesda.' *Llangollen Advertiser Denbighshire Merionethshire and North Wales Journal*, 17 February 1882, p.2. Available at

[https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3289863/3289865/6/Bethesda?=&](https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3289863/3289865/6/Bethesda?=), Accessed 25 April 2023.

⁸³ Samuel Smiles in Morris and Loftus, *Self-help* Unit 12: The making of the British middle class in *Confidence and crisis, 1840-1880* p.246. A225 The British Isles and the Modern world, 1789-1914.

⁸⁴ Census Enumerator Books 1881 and 1891 Available at Findmypast.co.uk <https://www.findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1881%2F0025893306> Accessed 7 May 2023

⁸⁵ Census Enumerator Books Available at <https://www.findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1881%2F0025892717> Accessed 7 May 2023

⁸⁶ I. Slater, Slater's Royal National Commercial Directory of North & Mid Wales, 1895, (Manchester, 1895), pp.101-104. Available at <https://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/349518/rec/4>

Trade Directory information available indicates confirmation that there does appear to have been some limited growth in Bethesda's middle class in the last quarter of the century. Additional research may be warranted to identify a greater range of potential middle class Bethesda householders to consider if more people carried out any civic duties, following Light, than the three councillors noted in the Directory.⁸⁷ Such data may help identify where there was further middling sort growth.

Considerable additional information about Bethesda society has been obtained from reports in a range of local newspapers. These inevitably project a positive image as the editors wanted to encourage commercial growth. Even in this small rural area industrial and commercial changes in the second half of the century had generated a good range of the essential services needed to foster a middle class. It is however important to consider what negative forces may have existed to impede consolidation or growth of the 'middling sort'. For example, the reporter's wish for the future that 'these changes and improvements may prove an universal success, and that prosperity and life be again infused into the pulse of Bethesda commerce' refers to the universal British economic downturn of the 1870s.⁸⁸ It is also impossible to ignore the demoralising effect sporadic disputes between the Lords Penrhyn and the quarrymen in the period from the mid-1800s, may have had on the pace of commercial development. The effect of the 1900-1903 strike on local 'social and trade disturbance' was commented on during Parliamentary debate.⁸⁹ It would take courage to make an investment either of money or skills into a locality where the business' customer base was dependent on a single employer who did not intend that his workers should ever be able to influence their own progression. This business environment was further impacted negatively by the obsessive, intransigent approach of George Sholto Douglas Penrhyn. Writing to him in September 1874, he encouraged his father to take a much harder line with the men, possibly forming a company to deal with them in 'the new fashion'.⁹⁰ Here was an early indication of what became 'the forbidding presence' attributed to George, a man who referred to the Welsh as 'a nation of liars' and had nothing but contempt for quarry workers⁹¹

⁸⁷ Julie Light, *The Middle Classes*, pp.44-47.

⁸⁸ Anon., 'The North Denbighshire Benefit Building Society', p.7.

⁸⁹ Bryn Roberts, 'The Penrhyn Quarry Dispute' in Hansard, HC Deb 05 March 1903, vol 118, cc 1654. Available at <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1903/mar/05/the-penrhyn-quarry-dispute> Accessed 22 February 2023.

⁹⁰ Lord Penrhyn, Letters to Thompson re non suitability of tenant, Capel Curig Inn. Dated 8 December 1872. BU. GAS XPQ 1200

⁹¹ Jenkins, *A Concise History*, p.198.

Should this approach be considered a differentiating factor for commercial and social development in the area compared to the environment elsewhere in Wales? Feyhrer-Jones asserts that Lord Bute is an example of an aristocrat who may have exerted control over Cardiff's Corporation.⁹² The Penrhyns also exerted similar control. MPs from time to time, they were involved in civic affairs, particularly in Bangor. It is possible that they exerted silent coercion before the 1867 Reform Act significantly increased the electoral numbers and the secret ballot introduced in 1872 removed opportunities to apply overt pressure.⁹³ The Lords Penrhyn, despite owning homes in London and elsewhere in Britain, remained present in the area, as may be seen by reports of familial participation in a range of local activities.⁹⁴ Their obstinacy and persistent hands-on control added an additional negative layer which may have stifled entrepreneurship in a small area the size of Bethesda during the second half of the century.

The basic quarry working system of *partneriaid* (partners) was based on bargains accepted by crews of men. Management held full control of the price and thus the crew's wage. Despite this, quarrymen retained some vestiges of the idea they had independent control as workers. Paul Manning's views on both the strong division generated by the almost uniform Welsh speaking workforce and the capital and labour division inherent in the bargain system are relevant. There were 'relatively invariant and stable elements in the quarriers' ideology that served as a backdrop, a stable set of cultural presuppositions.⁹⁵ This 'class apart' attitude from the workers may have made it difficult for any layer of middle management to succeed in the Bethesda area and was possibly a drawback for the potential development of a middle class. Evidence overall suggests this fundamentally rural locality close to the slate quarry, remained a paternalistic fiefdom of the Penrhyn family, effectively continuing with a society divided into two layers- aristocratic elites and working men.

⁹² Elizabeth Fayrer-Jones, "Make Him an Offer He Can't Refuse" p.64.

⁹³ Stuart Mitchell, Politics and the people. Unit 14: The making of the British middle class in *Confidence and crisis, 1840-1880* p.366. Unit 12: A225 The British Isles and the Modern world, 1789-1914.

⁹⁴ Examples of activity over the period ; Lady Penrhyn present for the consecration of a new Chapel built for the slate quarry Anon., 'Swansea, Friday August 5 1813', *The Cambrian*, 7 August 1813. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3323055/3323058/10/?=>, Accessed 21 March 2023; The International Geological Congress. Lord and Lady Penrhyn gave an 'At Home' in the evening to about 70 Members of the Congress after a day inspecting the new Menai Suspension and Tubular Bridges, surrounding area and the Penrhyn Quarry reported in 'BYE-GONES', 10 October 1888, p.243. Available at <https://journals.library.wales/view/2092910/2096296/12#?cv=12&m=191&h=Lady%20BOR%20Penrhyn&xywh=-1893%2C-214%2C6619%2C4248>, Accessed 13 May 2023

⁹⁵ Paul Manning, English Money and Welsh Rocks: Divisions of Language and Divisions of Labour in Nineteenth-Century Welsh Slate Quarries in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 44.3 (2002), p.486.

Turning to Bangor, an established cathedral town which, as recorded by Carter, appeared in the top ten towns in Wales in 1841 and 1851 with populations of 7,232 and 9,564 (32% increase) in comparison to the Merthyr population data (34,977 and 47,378 and a 35% increase).⁹⁶ Bangor Census entries for 1861 show 10,721 households and by 1881 this was 11,562 and 11,432 for 1901.⁹⁷ These returns suggest the town's significant growth featured in the first half of the century.

The town summary provided in the Trade Directory by Slater's for 1880 details the existence in Bangor of facilities conducive to the middle class as identified in the various studies of South Wales- the new residential area of Upper Bangor, the opening of the Chester and Holyhead Railway, several churches in addition to the cathedral, schools, a hospital and Penrhyn Hall, notable for the very generous donation of £2,000 made by Lord Penrhyn towards its' construction. The town at that time was governed by a Local Board of Health and has a gas and water company.⁹⁸ There was a skating rink by 1883 and plans were well underway for a new College.⁹⁹ There are facilities for tourists even if it is not a seaside town to compete with its Gwynedd neighbour Llandudno. Gwen Parry explains it was essential to have additional commerce to support the middle-class tourist. Additional tourism should generate some growth in the middle class.¹⁰⁰ Bangor did not hold a prominent position amongst the new holiday resorts along the North Wales coastline. However, Trade Directory entries make it clear there was some hotel trade. In another example of good business foresight, several hotels were acquired by the Penrhyns in the early 1800s.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Harold Carter, *An Urban Geography*, pp.55-56.

⁹⁷ Census Enumerator Books for Bangor 1861, 1881 and 1901, Available at <https://search-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/search-world-records/1861-england-wales-and-scotland-census?parish=bangor> <https://search-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/search-world-records/1881-england-wales-and-scotland-census?parish=bangor> <https://search-findmypast-co-uk.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/search-world-records/1901-england-wales-and-scotland-census?parish=bangor> Accessed 7 May 2023

⁹⁸ I. Slater, *Slater's Royal National Commercial Directory of North & South Wales, 1890*, (Manchester, 1890), pp.36-47, Available at <https://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/89819/rec/5> Accessed 25 April 2023

⁹⁹ Anon., 'North Wales College meeting of Governors', *The Cardiff Times*, 3 May 1884, p.8. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3390320/3390328/184/?=>, Accessed 23 April 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Gwenfair Parry, 'Queen of the Welsh Resorts': Tourism and the Welsh Language in Llandudno in the Nineteenth Century, *Welsh History Review*, 21. (1) (2002), p.129.

¹⁰¹ BU CV 2066 Lease dated 7.2.1868 between Lord Penrhyn and Edward Humphreys, inn keeper, Royal Hotel, Caernarvon; 'Quarry Slatesside, Proprietors – The Penrhyn Dynasty', *Slatessite* Available at <http://www.llechicymru.info/IQPPenrhyn.english.htm>. Accessed 8 May 2023

Table 2 shows increased numbers for similar occupations which may be considered as pointing to a middle-class development.¹⁰²

Table 2 BANGOR	1861	1881	1901
Census Data 1861-1901			
<i>Returned Results - Bangor</i>	10,721	11,562	11,432
Selected Occupations	1861	1881	1901
Accountant	16	11	2
Baker	16	34	35
Bank	8	12	16
Bookseller	10	18	5
Builder	14	17	16
Chemist	2	10	10
Clerk	26	42	24
Grocer	46	72	108
Hotel Keeper	8	18	19
Housekeeper	45	155	44
Joiner	79	104	74
Laundry	4	9	8
Milliner	23	38	42
Nurse	43	30	28
Physician/Surgeon	6	4	1
Police	12	6	10
Publican	20	35	28
Railway	69	86	355
School Master/Teacher	25	9	12
Servant	97	111	198
Slate Quarryman	202	212	103
Solicitor	14	23	36
Tailor	96	111	117

Table compiled from Occupations as per Census Enumerator Books analysed for Bangor.

The rate of increase in these representative categories, within a stable population, suggests the second half of the century witnessed a greater proportionate increase in 'middling sort' numbers in Bangor. The critical indicative professions for consideration, such as solicitors, chemists and banks demonstrate the growth needed to support the increase in commercial concerns such as grocers, bakers and construction businesses, for example, builders and joiners. These appear commensurate with a business population which has more disposable money to pay others for services together with indications of moving towards new or improved housing.

¹⁰² This table was compiled from a review of Occupations as per the Census Enumerator Book analysis for Bangor. Available as per data for Table 2, see above. Accessed 7 May 2023

It is possible, in a limited fashion, to apply Light's consideration of civic service to Bangor. The results of successive Council elections in 1883 and 1886 as reported in the local newspaper are set out in Table 3.¹⁰³

Table 3 BANGOR TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1883 and 1886			1883	1886	
Number of Votes Cast					
<i>North Ward</i>			1,017	649	
<i>South Ward</i>			476	322	
<i>East Ward</i>			480	368	
<i>West Ward</i>			1,243	688	
			<u>3,216</u>	<u>2,027</u>	
Ward	Address	Occupation	1883	1886	
North	Hugh Jones	7, Eldon Terrace	210	176	
North	Richard W Rowlands	Gwynfryn	184	224	
North	K.W.Doulas		172		
North	Thos. Hathawaye		165		
North	Hugh Savage		153		
North	John Evan Roberts		133		
North	John Price	V. P. Normal College		249	
South	John Pritchard	Bodhyfryd	Auctioneer	175	151
South	W.A. Dew			159	
South	T.J.Humphreys		Builder	142	
South	Meshach Roberts			Chemist	171
East	Robert Roberts			209	
East	Meshach Roberts			146	
East	William Rowlands			125	
East	Dr. Grey Edwards		Doctor		200
East	Edward Jones				168
West	Samuel Evans			219	250
West	John Richards	374 High Street		213	
West	Joseph Willman			211	
West	J.R. Brown			210	
West	Edward Jones	254 High Street		210	
West	Josiah Hughes			180	
West	T E Harris				240
West	J. Glynne Jones				198

Where occupations have been noted, these are comparable with Light's findings. One example is Meshach Roberts, a chemist, of 345, High Street who was an Alderman who tried to switch to become a councillor.¹⁰⁴ Newspaper reports show he was on the Board considering the Incorporation of Bangor, the planning for New College and was a member of the Bangor School Board. He displayed characteristics of civic value which Light considers were demonstrated by the urban elite. John Price, later Principle of the Normal College, a training facility, gave an exceptional

¹⁰³ Anon., 'Municipal Elections Bangor', *The North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser for the Principality*, 6 November 1886, p.5. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4452974/4452979/37/bangor%20borough>, Accessed 6 May 2023.

¹⁰⁴ Anon., 'Municipal Elections', Bangor, p.5.

47 years of service to the College. He also gets regular mention in the local newspapers in respect of a similar range of civic duties, as summarised in his Obituary.¹⁰⁵ Two individuals alone are insufficient to use as a basis to prove there was a group of urban elites in late nineteenth century Bangor. They do however support the existence of an active middle class which appears to have been consolidated and strengthened in Bangor in the final quarter of the century as per Table 4.¹⁰⁶

Table 4					
Analysis of Working Age Men by Socio-economic Class					
Census Data 1861-1901					
Year	Area	No.	SES 1	SES 2	SES 3
1861	Bangor - Bangor	14,043	4.05%	14.39%	23.31%
	Bangor - Llanllechid	9,127	1.18%	2.91%	15.81%
1881	Bangor - Bangor	14,969	4.58%	17.08%	23.06%
	Bangor - Llanllechid	10,779	2.80%	6.29%	14.40%
1901	Bangor - Bangor	13,539	5.91%	23.36%	26.83%
	Bangor - Llanllechid	9,222	4.09%	10.73%	15.03%

SES 1 : non-manual high skilled
SES 2 : non-manual low skilled
SES 3 : manual high skilled

Table compiled from data held on Populations Past- Atlas of Victorian and Edwardian Population.

The data for Bangor town indicates there was a clear increase over the period in the lower skilled non manual category. This is the sector most likely to behave as the middle class. The professional category reflects only a small increase and the manual high skilled, which is considered the group in which there may be most upward mobility, confirms the steady growth in the support services. Therefore, the occupational, civic and socio-economic analysis all supports the foregoing detailed research findings of an established and growing middle class in Bangor.

¹⁰⁵ Anon., 'Death of Ex-principal, John Price, Bangor', *The Aberystwith Observer* 8 November 1906. p.2. Available at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3049782/3049784/19/>. Accessed 16 May 2023.

¹⁰⁶ Populations Past- Atlas of Victorian and Edwardian Population, data compiled for geographical areas as described. Available at <https://www.populationspast.org/hc2/1881/#5/55.199/-8.250/bartholomew>, Accessed 13 May 2023.

Chapter 4-Conclusion

This research set out to explore further the direct involvement of the Penrhyn family, together with the industrial and social innovations which were of benefit to the Penrhyn locality and the wider area of Gwynedd. Motivation may never, in historical terms, be proved beyond doubt, however the substantial collections of Penrhyn correspondence held in two North Wales archives assisted to give greater insight than perhaps was recorded by Burnard. As discussed, his attention was directed at the slave plantations, the initial source of the family's wealth prior to acquiring the slate quarry, not on making the links to the innovative industrial achievements. Writing in 1885 about Richard Pennant, Elias Owen may be quoted, 'Such was the gentleman who developed the quarry; changed the face of the country, and introduced a commerce which has enriched Carnarvonshire' and with a greater sweep of sentiment 'and the whole country transformed by the slate trade which Lord Penrhyn was the means of introducing'.¹⁰⁷ This therefore provides an informed opinion from an earlier time. Copies of original letters and reports have provided evidence of a wide range of innovations introduced or supported by the various Penrhyns and enabled more exploration of their involvement in expanding the industrial age into a rural area. These modern developments of roads, rail, bridge, and port opened up the area to both the rest of Wales, England, Ireland and beyond. Combined with the social innovations such as hospitals, schools and housing, the overall effect was to consolidate towns from villages and small towns into modern urban areas. There is therefore some synergy between Mr Owen's considered view in 1885 and how Richard, Lord Penrhyn's input may be analysed today.

For this study, evidence of Penrhyn motivation is irrelevant in considering whether these undoubted innovations fostered growth in the elusive group that is the middle class, in Gwynedd. The research has shown that even in unsophisticated Bethesda there was, by the last quarter of the century, evidence to support a middle class, albeit numerically this was a small group. Penrhyn influence has been shown to extend strongly into Bangor where there is good evidence to support that a middle class existed by mid-century. In this instance the available data indicates further consolidation of the middle-class group as the percentages applying as part of the overall population is demonstrated to have increased during the last quarter of the century. It is suggested that a further in-depth study should be made of Bangor for these years to explore if the identified

¹⁰⁷ Elias Owen, 'The Penrhyn Slate Quarry', Red Dragon, 7.4 (1885), p.331. Available at <https://journals.library.wales/view/2062893/2067022/43#?xywh=-1559%2C-2%2C5204%2C3340>, Accessed 23 February 2023.

and growing middle class may be distinguished as 'civic' as described by Ieuan Gwynedd Jones 'for mobilizing popular opposition to the dominant power of the major industrialists'¹⁰⁸ There is therefore still potential to discover the extent of an urban elite in Bangor.

The Dissertation has demonstrated that the commercial and civil infrastructure modernisations into which the Penrhyns invested either money, time, or both, did have a direct impact on what were foundations for a middle-class in both towns. Clear traits of a discernible management style have been identified within the Penrhyn family which may possibly be 'learned behaviour'. The autocratic behaviour is demonstrated with workers. Further research outside the scope of this work is needed to fully evaluate the effect of this management style on wider society. The behaviours focussed on what are today accepted as general good business practice- innovation, investment into capital infrastructure and networking skills- certainly worked to increase Penrhyn profits. The behaviours also directly influenced the public reputations of the Penrhyns', indelibly marking them as intransigent, particularly in the last quarter of the century. Identification of the extent to which the Penrhyn management style affected commercial development, as at least a precursor to supporting the middle class, requires additional study.

In concluding, this study has taken a very small step to fill the overall gap in the study of the middle class in Gwynedd.¹⁰⁹ It has demonstrated the industrialisation that the Penrhyns invested in and supported created circumstances which would support the development of a middle class. Penrhyn interest in civic matters would also support that. In contrast, their autocratic management style, including networking at an aristocratic level, might well have hindered the development of the middle class in Gwynedd.

¹⁰⁸ Neil Evans, 'The Welsh Victorian City', p.351.

¹⁰⁹ Martin Johnes, 'For Class and Nation', p.1263.

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