

## A Remarkable Man and his Legacy

This month marks the arrival of a remarkable family to Llanelly, 200 Years ago. It was in October 1804 that Charles and Richard Janion Nevill came to Llanelli to set up a works for the manufacture of copper products.

Within a week they had decided on a site at Penrhos in Seaside.

Plans were made for a works and dock for the importation of copper ore from Cornwall. The first job was the protection of the works from the sea. The great embankment was commenced also known as the Bulwarks, 200 men were employed to construct it at the rate of 3 and one halfpenny a cubic yard. The company was up and running within two weeks and a letter was sent to the London Bankers with the details. The enterprise took less than a year to be in production with the dock also completed and ready to receive vessels.

Charles Nevill came to live at Vauxhall House, his son Richard Janion Nevill moved nearer to the works in Seaside and lived at Field House or Glanmor House where the present Nevill St stands today. A map of Llanelly in 1878 in existence today shows the estate he also had a farm in Machynys.

He rode everywhere on his horse visiting collieries outside Llanelly to obtain supplies of coal for his works. He kept his horses, including his carriage horses needed for his wife's use. Also the draught horses used in the works at nearby Bryn Fields, farmed by Mr Jonas Davies of Bryn Farm located at the present day junction of High St, Albert St and Queen Victoria Rd. It was six acres in extent his son Evan Davies was still there in 1851. By then it was much reduced Nelson Terrace was being built and the railway had cut through it. In 1845 the Nevill Family were prospering. They started to own collieries to safeguard supplies to their works. Pits They Owned In Town Were The Wern Pit, The Bigyn Hill Pit, The Meadow Pit, The Pwllmenin Pit, And The Tregob Pit.

They were in the coal business for one hundred years starting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 1807 and ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 1808. One year they produced one thousand ounces of silver as well as lead from the smelting of copper ore, the silver was kept in a building known as "Ty Arian". They had an engineering works on the Wern where they made steam engines for the ships they built at Seaside.

The Nevills Copperworks is still with us at Seaside, the same buildings, the same boundary walls. They built well in those days. The houses for their workers, the school for the children, they even provided a midwifery service. A supply of free coffins was available. Hatch and Dispatch. Nothing was forgotten.

200 Years on, and The Copperworks is still producing copper products in Seaside. A member of my family is recorded on the 1851 census as living at the Copperworks Barracks. His occupation is given as Copperman.

At the Wern was an engineering works which was involved during the war of 1939-1945 in constructing welded steel products for the invasion beaches of France. On D Day, June 6th 1944, they made "Spudding Legs" steel fabrications 20ft long which were fixed to jack up barges, one at each corner. The legs which were powered by winches were let down to the seabed. The barge or pier head would rise and fall with the tide enabling ships to be unloaded at all states of the tide.

Another credit to our Town.

By Gerald Grant  
Local Seaside Historian

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