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Site Name: **CARDIGAN GASWORKS.**

PRN: 31516

My Site File Ref. No.: CARD/CGSW

Site Type: Gasworks

N. G. Ref.: SN 1751 4601

Period: Post-Medieval; Modern

History:

In 1856 a Mr. Edge applied to the Cardigan Borough Council for consent to build a gasworks in the town at Bridge End near Castellsidan. In 1858 he was in negotiations with architect Robert Jewell Withers regarding the scheme. In March 1859 an agreement was made by the Borough Council for the erection of a gasworks at Netpool Bank. The proposed gasworks was referred to on June 15th 1859 and the proposed location seems to have switched back across the river again to the site which would later be occupied by the railway station. Mr. Edge was in financial difficulties by that date and had fallen out with his partner, Mr. Cornwall, and recommended Morley Stears as an experienced and competent person to build a gasworks for the town. Morley Stears was duly employed and was given a lease of the gasworks site at Netpool on July 29th 1859. He surrendered his lease in June 1862 due to financial problems.

In 1862 the Cardigan Gas & Coke Company was formed. On September 26th 1862 the following item appeared in the '*Welshman*':

“...CARDIGAN—GAS WORKS.

There appears now great probability that the long contemplated project of lighting this town with gas, will in the course of a few months be accomplished. Another public meeting of the inhabitants was to be held on the 24th instant, at which the formation of a company would be resolved upon, and shares taken for the purpose. The capital of the proposed company is to be £2000, consisting of shares of £ 2 each, no call to exceed 2s a share, and the company to be enrolled under the limited liability act. It is estimated that a large return will be paid on the shares...”

On January 30th 1863 the following article appeared in the '*Welshman*':

“...CARDIGAN.

Friday has been the day appointed for the shareholders of the Cardigan Gas and Coke Company to elect their Directors—the nine gentlemen having the largest

number of votes to form the Board. The meeting was well attended by the shareholders, and at the close the scrutineers appointed declared the nine following gentlemen duly elected, with the votes recorded in favour of each:- Thomas Davies, Esq., mayor, 525; Mr. Thomas Parker, Lion Hotel, 472; Mr. Levi James, ironmonger, 405; John Griffith, Esq., Treforgan, 402; J. R. Griffith, Esq., Pantgwyn, 401; Mr. J. S. Evans, druggist, 397; David Davies, Esq., Castle Green, 346; Mr. David James, draper, 337; James Smith, Esq., attorney, 280..."

On March 1st 1863 the streets of Cardigan were lit by gas for the first time. Laurence Murphy, formerly of Swansea, became the first manager of the company that year. Trustees included David Griffith Davies, Castle Green (Cardigan Castle), and his cousin Thomas Davies, Bank House, High Street. About the year 1866 Edward Murphy, the son of Laurence and Jane Murphy, was born here. About the year 1868 Catherine Murphy was born to the same parents. On January 14th 1870 the Company was fined for providing poor quality gas. On April 2nd 1871 the following persons lived at Gasworks House at the time of the Census: Laurence Murphy, aged 38 years, the manager of the Gasworks, born in Dublin; Jane Murphy, aged 33 years, his wife, born in Swansea; Thomas Murphy, aged 11 years, their son, born in Swansea; Maryanna Murphy, aged 9 years, their daughter, born in Swansea; William Murphy, aged 7 years, their son, born in Swansea; Edward Murphy, aged 4 years, their son, born in Cardigan; and Catherine Murphy, aged 2 years, their daughter, born in Cardigan. Launcelot Lowther was the company secretary from at least 1871 until 1895. At some point between 1871 and 1875 Laurence Murphy and his family left the Gasworks. In 1875 the manager was Herbert Pike.

From 1875 until 1902 Jabez Newman (1825-1909) was the manager. On April 3rd 1881 the following persons lived here at the time of the Census: Jabez Newman, aged 45 years, a gasworks manager, born at Bishop Stafford, Essex; Mary Newman (nee' Smith), aged 42 years, his wife, born in Essex; Frederick John Newman, aged 20 years, their son, a commercial clerk, born in Essex; Louise Newman, aged 16 years, their daughter, born in Essex; William Henry Newman, aged 14 years, their son, a boot & shoe maker, born in Essex; Priscilla Sarah Newman, aged 11 years, their daughter, born in Essex; Mary Emily Newman, aged 8 years, their daughter, born in Essex; and James Joseph Newman, aged 6 years, their son, born in Essex. In 1881 Lilian Gertrude May Newman, the daughter of Jabez and Mary Newman, was born here. On July 30th 1886 William Henry Newman, the son of Mary and Jabez Newman, died at Bahia, Brazil, aged 20 years. On April 5th 1891 the following persons lived here at the time of the Census: Jabez Newman, aged 56 years, the gas manager, born at Bishop Stafford, Essex; Mary Newman, aged 52 years, his wife, born in Essex; James Newman, aged 16 years, their son, a chemist's apprentice, born at Harlow, Essex; and Lilian M Newman, aged 9 years, their daughter, born at Cardigan.

On July 27th 1893 Christopher J Stubbings married Harriet Newman, the eldest daughter of Jabez Newman of the Gasworks. On May 4th 1900 it was proposed to build a landing stage here. On May 16th 1900 Priscilla Sarah Newman, the third daughter of Jabez Newman, married Walter Foster Davidson. At the time of the Census on March 31st 1901 the occupiers were: Jabez Newman, aged 65 years, a gasworks man; and Mary Newman, aged 62 years, his wife. Both of them were English-speaking. On July 4th 1902 Jabez Newman resigned after 27 years as the

manager of the gasworks. He and his wife moved to Plasnewydd Cottage, Longdown Bank, St Dogmaels.

In 1902 Richard James Rankin, formerly of Glamorgan, became the manager and lived here from 1902 until 1937. In October 1902 the company secretary Launcelot Lowther resigned after forty years service. On February 19th 1904 tenders were being sought for building a jetty at the gasworks to facilitate the unloading of coal from ships. The contract went to J. P. Bailie of the Mwldan Foundry. On June 6th 1908 there was a minor fire here. In 1910 Richard Bennett Rankin, the son of Ada and Richard James Rankin was born here. At the time of the Census on April 2nd 1911 the following persons lived in five rooms here: Richard James Rankin, aged 37, the Manager of the Gas Works, born at Aberdare; Ada Rose Rankin, aged 35 years, his wife for 14 years and the mother of their two children, born at Glastonbury; Ann Rankin, aged 11 years, their daughter, at school, born in Glamorgan; Richard Bennett Rankin, aged 8 months, their son, born in Cardigan; and Maggie Griffith, aged 17 years, a domestic servant, born in Cardigan, bilingual in Welsh and English. Except where noted otherwise, all of them were English-speaking. On May 8th 1911 the Cardigan Borough Council fell out with the Cardigan Gas & Coke Company, and the town was left without lights for over a month. From 1914 until 1920 Griffith Huw Mathias was the Company Secretary. On April 9th 1916 a daughter was born to Mrs. & Mr. Richard James Rankin of the Gasworks. In 1918 Richard James Rankin and Rose Rankin lived here. On July 28th 1923 Amy Rankin, the eldest daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Richard James Rankin of the Gasworks, married Albert Peck of London. Permission was granted for building extensions on February 13th 1925. In 1925 Richard Rankin and Rose Rankin, both minors, lived at Gasworks House. The 'Cardigan Gas & Coke Consumers' Company' continued to operate the gasworks in 1926. In 1933 Cardigan switched to electricity for street lighting – a great loss to the Company.

In January 1937 Mr. D. J. Young succeeded Richard James Rankin as manager. In the autumn of 1939 the following persons lived at Gasworks House: Thomas W Jones (b. December 1898), a gas fitter; Rachel J Jones (b. 11/10/1904), his wife; Elizabeth Hannah Jones (b. July 1928), and three other members of the household. In February 1940 Mr. T. G. Jones of Gasworks House was serving in the merchant navy. On January 24th 1941 the body of former gasworks employee and labourer, Owen Evans of Netpool, aged 71 years, was found here. In 1941 the very last commercial cargo entered the once-bustling port of Cardigan, with a cargo of coal for the gasworks, which was about to switch their transport to rail. By August 13th 1943 the erratic gas supply was causing much annoyance. On 1st April 1949 the industry was nationalised and the Gasworks passed to British Gas. The gasworks is marked on the 1953 O. S. map.

In January 1972 the Cardigan Borough Council intended to have the gasworks demolished. The forthcoming demolition of the old gasworks was announced on February 24th 1978. The building was subsequently demolished. Today only fragments of the lower portions of walls remain.

Description:

None available.

Sources:

Cardigan Borough Records Vol. III

The Welshman 26/09/1862; 30/02/1863

Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser 1870; 1893; 10/02/1894; 1900; 04/07/1902; 1904; 09/02/1906; 1908; 1911; 1914; 12/03/1915; 1916; 1923; 10/03/1924; 1937; 1940-41; 1943; 1949; 24/02/1978; 08/09/1999

Census Returns 1871; 1881; 1891; 1901; 1911

Post Office Directory 1871

Kelly's Directory of South Wales & Monmouthshire 1875; 1884; 1895; 1914; 1920; 1926

Cardigan Observer 10/02/1877

List of Voters – Cardigan 25/07/1910; 1918

War Census, 1939

O. S. Map 1953 etc

The Gateway to Wales, W J Lewis 1990

Those Were The Days: Vol. 1, Donald Davies 1991.

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Images:

IMG_2743 from SE (1869 J T Mathias)