

WAYNE family, industrialists, Glamorgan

MATTHEW WAYNE (c. 1780 - 1853), iron-master and coal-owner

came into prominence as the furnace manager of **Richard Crawshay**, ironmaster, Cyfarthfa, Merthyr Tydfil. **Richard Crawshay** thought so highly of Matthew Wayne that he left him £800 in his will. By means of this large sum (**Crawshay** died in 1810) he was enabled to become a partner with **Joseph Bailey** in purchasing the lucrative iron-works at Nant-y-glo, which they took on lease 28 March 1811. The two partners soon made a success of this enterprise, which enabled Matthew Wayne, when he retired from the partnership (c. 1820, to make room for **Sir Joseph Bailey's** brother, viz. **Crawshay Bailey**), to save a considerable sum of money with which to commence a business of his own. Wayne then seems to have returned to the Cyfarthfa district. In 1823 he was a freeholder at Gelli-deg, Merthyr, and a prominent and generous member of the Old Meeting House (Hên Dy Cwrdd) at Cefn Coed y Cymer. He and his wife, Margaret, daughter of William Watkyn, a farmer of Penmoel-allt, Cwm-Tâf, in the neighbourhood, were both buried in the burial-ground of this chapel.

In 1827 Wayne established iron-works of his own at the Gadlys, Aberdare, in conjunction with George Rowland Morgan and Edward Morgan Williams, the latter of whom retired in 1829. For a time Wayne retained the management of the company in his own hands, while his sons were engaged elsewhere. The works were quite small compared with those at Aber-nant, Lliwydcoed, etc., but they were compact, consisting of only one blast furnace for a considerable time, with the necessary adjuncts. In 1828, the company sent 444 tons of iron by canal down to Cardiff, and this was increased to 1291 tons in 1836, though the works had been put up for sale the previous year in London. It was about this time, on account of the father's increasing age, that the sons came to assist him in the management. A writer in the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, 12 March 1853, commenting on the death of Matthew Wayne, claimed that ' Wayne was the first man that ever sent coal to Cardiff from the Aberdare basin, being thus the first to open that traffic from which this port (Cardiff). ... the T.V.R. and the parish of Aberdare have received an impetus which is quite unparalleled in the history of the coal trade. To him, more than to anybody else, Aberdare owes unquestionably its present prosperity, as he it was who first found out and brought to the notice of the public, the valuable properties of its steam coal ... ' Yet this claim to be the pioneer of the steam coal trade in the Aberdare valley is generally attributed to his son, Thomas Wayne (below), who is said to have urged his father and his elder brother to sink for the celebrated four foot seam of coal, as had been done by **Lucy Thomas** of Waun-wyllt, Merthyr. With the David family of Abernant-y-groes, Cwm-bach, Matthew, with his two sons, Thomas and William Watkin Wayne, formed the Wayne's Merthyr-Aberdare Steam Coal Company, and commenced sinking the colliery in June 1837. By December of the same year, having sunk a distance of forty-nine yards, they had reached the coal, and despatched and exhibited a quantity in London on 13 December. From now on, father and sons were busily employed with the iron-works at Gadlys, with their associated coal-pits (Pwll Newydd, and the Graig Colliery), and the new colliery at Cwm-bach. For example, in 1839 they sent, by the canal, 1,081 tons of iron, and 3,373 tons of coal; in 1845, they raised 38,000 tons of coal from Cwm-bach, and in the following year, 48,000 tons. By this time they were able to despatch iron and coal by rail as well as by canal to Cardiff. By 1850, there were four blast furnaces at Gadlys, and that same year they established the Gadlys Tin Works.

Matthew Wayne died 7 March 1853, aged 73. He left four sons to carry on the works, together with a daughter and a sister. The sons were:

(1) WILLIAM WATKIN WAYNE (1808 - 1863),

Plasnewydd, Lliwydcoed. Early in life he was at Maesteg as an official of the Llynfi Valley iron-works. He married, 1837, Gwenllian, daughter of Rees Jenkins of Glyncorrwg.

(2) THOMAS WAYNE (1810 - 1867),

who was for many years the agent of the canal company, and acted as treasurer and trustee of the Aberdare Turnpike Road Trust. He took a prominent part in building S. Elvan's church at Aberdare. He gave evidence before the Royal Commission on the Turnpike Roads, after the Rebecca Riots of 1843. On the death of his father in 1853, he became the manager of the Gadlys iron-works, which he enlarged and improved, building new forges and mills. He died 29 March 1867.

(3) MATTHEW WAYNE (1812 - 1852), owner of the Carmarthen tin works

He was married, but left no issue; he died in January 1852.

(4) WATKIN WAYNE (1815 - 1869),

Tŷ Mawr, Rhondda, was for many years a proprietor of the Carmarthen tin works. He died 16 April 1869.

Author

Watkin William Price, (1873 - 1967)

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Further reading

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