

Some mining engineers from South Wales and their role in Australian coalmining

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A considerable amount has been written about the work and social life of Welsh mining communities in the Australian goldfields. However, bearing in mind their ubiquity over the same period in so many of the coal fields in New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and Victoria, there has been very little about the Welsh coal mining engineers and managers, who sank several of the most important mines across the country. This article examines members of a coal mining family from the Merthyr area of South Wales¹ describing how several of them followed each other through chain and stage migration, across different states, and over several generations. They were also associated in one way or another with the three largest mine disasters in Australia, Mount Mulligan, Bulli, and Mount Kembla. They operated in communities where their compatriots played key roles in the getting of coal and opening up coalfields in Wales, the USA and across at least four Australian states. It chronicles their activities, their backgrounds and experience, some aspects of their involvement in mining and subsequent migration and their effect on the mines and communities they served.

Rees Bevan, senior 1821-1892 and David Bevan, senior 1825 - 1871

The Bevan brothers of Hirwaun, in Wales seemed unlikely candidates to invest in a coal mine. The former was a successful draper and grocer with a substantial property portfolio, and the latter an enterprising grocer, builder and cabinet maker. Though without any background in coal, they started, in the period before 1868, to prospect leases in the Aman valley, near Aberdare. After a number of fruitless attempts, one which involved paying reparations for a Non-conformist chapel that collapsed when they drove a level under it, in 1868 they sank a pit below the Globe Hotel in Fforchneol, further down the valley from their unsuccessful first efforts.

It was never a very successful colliery, very wet and producing more clay than coal. Worse, in sinking the up-shaft, David, the younger and more entrepreneurial of the brothers, was killed in mysterious circumstances on 16 January 1871.² Rees ran the business for the next six years, having obtained his first class mining certificate in 1873, before going into bankruptcy in 1879.³ As a result he lost everything, including his Swansea-based barquentine, the *Donna Maria*, which carried coal out of Swansea, which was sold in October 1876 to buy out his dead brother's family's share of the mine.⁴

Rees Bevan, senior's sons, David, 1853 - 1925 and Rees, 1860 - 1933

These two had also caught the coal mining bug. David worked at Fforchneol as a colliery clerk, though showing his unruly side when charged with assault on a workman who had apparently stolen some company property.⁵ When he left Hirwaun, never to return, he

abandoned his wife of six years, and their six-year-old son, confirming his reputation as the 'black sheep' of the family. The younger son, Rees Bevan attended the Normal College in Swansea from the age of 16. This vocational and technical college ran mining courses, though better known for training teachers.

Figure 1: *Rees and David Bevan, with Welsh contingent, Denver, Colorado, 1882. Rees front left with gun, David right.*



Source: Author's collection

David went first to the USA, while his brother Rees obtained further training before following. A photo of them in Denver, Colorado, in 1882, in the company of other Welsh friends confirms that they had both emigrated, following the coal [Fig. 1]. They worked at the King coalmine, Park County, in Como; though Como was better known at that time for its gold mines, it is certain that it was coal rather than gold that drew them there, a census return describing Rees as 'pit boss'. However, both returned to Wales after May 1885, probably following a downturn in Como production. Rees received further training as a mine engineer in London, before both emigrated to Australia.

In a classic example of 'chain migration' they followed John Evans (*q.v.*), the husband of their cousin Martha, the daughter of the David Bevan (*q.v.*) who had been killed at Fforchneol

Colliery. Rees, who arrived in New South Wales in 1887, was to follow John Evans' footsteps for much of his life; first working for him at the Mount Kembla mine, and subsequently joining the staff of the Bulli Company, also under Evans. He married well, to Margaret McCauley, daughter of a Scottish Presbyterian family of landowners and farmers, whose land covered two large sections north of the township of Bulli, where both he and Evans were to manage mines. By 1899, Rees had followed Evans once more, this time to Colliefields in Western Australia, where by 1903 he was his surface manager at the Proprietary Colliery in Collie.⁶ He gained his mine manager's certificate on 29 April 1904, taking over as manager of the Scottish Collieburn mine. He soon clashed with John Evans, who accused his fellow manager of 'black-legging' during the 1905 labour troubles in Collie. Evans claimed Rees had come to an agreement with the unions that differed from the arbitration award to which the Proprietary and Cardiff mines had agreed. However, he was praised in local papers for the pragmatic way he tackled the strike, since his agreement recognized the different working conditions between the Cardiff area where Collieburn was situated, and Collie itself.⁷

In 1906 a miner assaulted him in an attack in which he lost nine teeth, and he was subsequently to suffer from some deafness as a result.⁸ It was as manager of the Collie

Cardiff mine that he showed the party led by WA Premier, Newton J. Moore around the mine later that year.⁹ He was still there in early 1907, when he gave evidence at the trial of one of his engine drivers for perjury.¹⁰

In September of the same year, he managed both the Scottish Collieburn colliery, and the declining Proprietary mine for his former colleague, Reginald St Chad Young (*q.v.*), who had taken a tributary lease.¹¹ The General Secretary of the Collie District Union of Mineworkers soon afterwards complained in a letter to the *West Australian* that he had been refused permission to inspect the Collieburn mine by Rees Bevan, on the grounds that he was not a practical working miner.¹² The last reference to him as manager of that colliery is in March 1908.¹³ Throughout Rees' time in Western Australia, his wife Margaret had remained in NSW, where her family had extensive farming property around North Bulli, which became the town of Thirroul.

Figure 2: Rees Bevan, colliery manager, *Excelsior Colliery*, 1912.



Source: Author's collection.

Returning to Thirroul in 1909, he was appointed manager of the Excelsior Colliery [Fig. 2], and lived near the McCauley family properties, in nearby Mount Gilead Road. He remained there until he again followed John Evans, succeeding him at the New Greta in the Newcastle area in August 1918.¹⁴ This was a large mine with 156 underground and 55 surface workers. He fitted well into the substantial Welsh mining population in the area. The Welsh community at Greta had long been active; in 1875, a letter from a certain 'Th.N'. to *Yr Ymwelydd* [The Visitor], a Welsh religious journal printed in Smythesdale, Victoria, records two pits there giving work to several hundred workers in a community of six hundred; a great number of these were Welsh miners who had come over from the Victoria goldfields.¹⁵ A further

Ymwelydd article chronicles the appointment of 'personau neilltuol' [designated persons] who collected contributions for the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist cause in their communities. They brought their non-conformist religion and coal mining skills together from South Wales!¹⁶ The area's collieries had a strong Welsh management tradition, and this was further reinforced in 1919 when Rees' son, David Grier Bevan, joined him in New Greta as a mine clerk.

By 1922 his status was such that he was appointed a JP in Greta. He apparently also held mining leases in his own name, but family stories say that he lost heavily on them in the Great Depression, as a result of not laying off workers despite operating at a loss. When he moved his home to Lorn, he lived near John Evans, with whom he remained close all his life; John attended Rees' funeral.¹⁷ His obituary stated that he 'left an indelible mark on the [coal mining] map of Australia.'¹⁸

His brother David had also moved to Collie as a mining engineer, and in 1903 lived on Harvey Street, Collie, close to John's home.¹⁹ In 1902 David and two others sued the Mechanical Coal Cutting Company for £50 for work opening up the Moira Colliery; judgment of £17.12.6d was given in the plaintiffs' favour.²⁰ David and his partners reflected the practice that endured until the 1940s in the Collie coalfields, where coal was won on a contract basis by small teams of colliers, consisting of hewers, who cut the coal, fillers and hand wheelers who filled the skips, and pony wheelers who were responsible for moving the train of skips. These contracts were allocated on a system of drawing lots for areas of the coalfaces; this was known as 'cavilling'. The teams supplied their own tools, but purchased other equipment including explosives, from the company. Undercutting was initially done by hand and hand drills were used to bore shot holes. The mines operated on the 'bord and pillar' method, (or 'pillar and stall'), where coalface compartments (stalls) or roadways (bords) were excavated with cross cuts, leaving pillars of coal to support the roof. When the seam had been depleted, the pillars were removed to allow the face to settle. However only about 40% of the available coal was initially extracted, the remainder holding up the roof, where necessary reinforced with timber. This wasteful method of extraction, persisted in Collie much later than New South Wales because of the often saturated and friable condition of many of the Collie seams – though, even in New South Wales, it long remained the preferred method for miners, who opposed mechanisation.

David was certainly not as successful as his younger brother Rees, probably a result of his drinking problems.²¹ He disappeared from public view for many years. until a final reference in his death certificate, to his decease from dementia in the Rookwood Asylum, Lidcombe, New South Wales at the age of 72. The certificate still stated that his father was a 'colliery proprietor'; bearing in mind his father's long-past bankruptcy, this somewhat over-inflated his status!²²

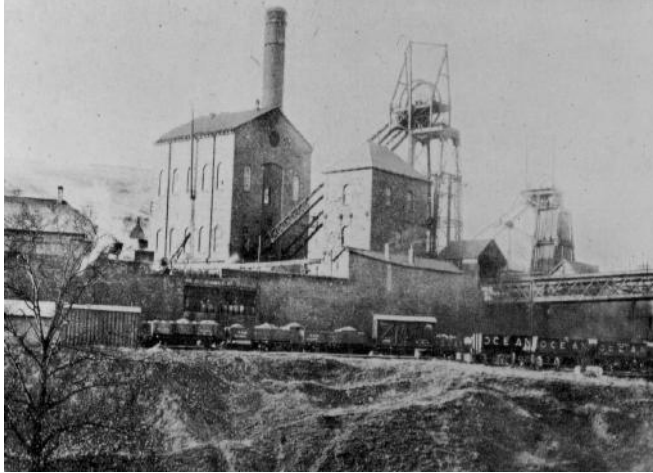
Thomas John Evans 1839 - 1911

Unusually, it was Thomas John (T.J) Evans' son, John, who first ventured to Australia, with his father following suit two years later. T.J. Evans was vastly experienced already when he emigrated, having worked as a colliery overman in 1871 for the Dowlais Iron and Coal Company. T.J. was himself the son and grandson of mining men from Merthyr. By 1881, shortly after other managers completed sinking of the mine between 1872 and 1879, he was manager of the Harris Navigation Colliery. There is little surviving written record of his activities there, apart from a census listing him as 'mine manager', resident at Bargoed House, Treharris; this mansion always housed the manager of the Navigation.²³ This was the deepest pit in Wales at the time, its two shafts being 180 metres deeper than anywhere else in Wales when it was taken over by the Ocean Coal Company and re-named the Deep Navigation Company [Fig. 3]. By then, in 1890, it had raised almost a million tons of coal.

T.Js's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, also kept coal mining in the family; before her father left Wales, she married Henry Davies, a young ex-miner, now instructor at the Technical College in Trefforest, near Pontypridd, who, by the 1911 census, was 'Director

of Mining Instruction' for Glamorgan County Council at that establishment. Davies authored several mining books including *The Coal Mines Act, 1911 – How to remember it*, and *Coal Mining, a Reader*. The latter was used as a standard textbook for children up to the age of 14 who aspired to progress in mining, but also for evening classes for older mining engineer students at the college, which was to become Wales' first school of mines in 1913.²⁴ Rachel, Elizabeth's sister, married a mine manager from the English Midlands coal belt.

Figure 3: *Deep Navigation Colliery, South Wales.*



Source: Author's collection.

T.J. Evans reached Sydney on the S.S. 'Garonne', on 18 November 1887 with his wife Mary, four other daughters, and two sons. He worked in mines in the Newcastle area, becoming first the manager of the West Wallsend Colliery, Newcastle until he moved in 1889 to become manager of the East Lambton colliery.²⁵

In addition to his mining expertise he was a significant member of the Newcastle

Cambrian Society, and both he and his daughters were prominent as performers and accompanists in Welsh events and Eisteddfods.²⁶ He was well-known as an adjudicator for musical competitions, and was a notable soloist, singing at his own presentation farewell when he left the West Wallsend, and at many subsequent Welsh social gatherings.²⁷

In 1892, he was appointed manager of Bellambi colliery, between Woonona and Wollongong. Though initially expressing considerable doubts about the viability of the Illawarra deeper reserves, by December of that year his own company, T.J. Evans and Sons, had sunk a successful shaft to a 5-foot seam behind the Royal Hotel in Bulli.²⁸ This he floated in 1895 as the Bulli B Company.²⁹ It was he who first discovered the excellent clay subsequently used in the nearby Bulli Pottery Works and in 1898 he also experimented successfully with machinery castings using ore from the Port Stephens iron deposits, which were used in his mines.³⁰

Earlier, in 1892, he spoke at the retirement of W.D. Bedlington when the latter left the manager's post in the Northern Colliery, Teralba, on Lake Macquarie, emphasising that Bedlington had been a reliable assistant manager to him at the Deep Navigation Colliery back in South Wales. It was obvious that the network of Welsh mine managers supporting each other was being maintained! In 1905 T.J. took charge of the Morriset mine at Lake Macquarie, before managing the nearby Lymington Colliery in 1908 at the age of almost 70.³¹ He had also pioneered the Newcastle Belmont Colliery Company which he floated as a public company, remaining one of its directors until his death in 1911, at Redfern. He was buried back in Bulli, where his wife Mary, who had

died relatively young in 1893, was interred, and where both he and his son John Evans (*q.v.*) had lived at that time.

John Evans 1860 - 1950

John Evans was closely linked to the Bevan family as his wife, Martha, was the daughter of David Bevan, senior (*q.v.*), who had come to an untimely end at the ill-fated Fforchneol Colliery. Despite T.J. Evans' prominence in New South Wales, it was undoubtedly John Evans, his eldest son, in the tradition of three previous generations of Merthyr and Hirwaun mining men, who was the key to widening the family influence in coal mining over several Australian states. John was a young, but already well-experienced, mining engineer and manager when he emigrated with Martha and his children, two years before his father. In later life, he recalled working underground at the age of eight, when an Act of Parliament prevented those of that age being employed, causing 400 like him to be laid off, and their fathers to go on strike.³² Educated at the Bristol School of Mines, he had worked as an overman and under-manager in the Merthyr area, and at the age of 21 in 1881, was employed by his father as overman in the Deep Navigation Colliery.³³

He landed in Sydney on the SS 'Cuzco' on 17 June 1885 with a heavily pregnant wife, and two other children, in the company of fellow-Welshman Timothy Griffiths, who had also been overman for his father at the Harris Deep Navigation mine.³⁴ He, his family and Griffiths moved initially to Newcastle NSW, where both worked at the Wallsend Cooperative colliery. Evans then went to work on the development stages of the Stockton colliery; after just six weeks, he was appointed manager, and Griffiths joined him as under-manager. Griffiths was to stay in the town of Stockton all his life, becoming mayor on no fewer than eleven occasions.³⁵

Evans, in contrast, moved in 1886 to the Mount Kembla mine, in Illawara. In later life he stated that while at Mount Kembla he introduced the 'long wall' system of mining to Australia. In this system, after undercutting by machine over a face of some hundreds of feet, the coal would be picked down, and afterwards pit props removed to allow the roof over that sector to collapse.³⁶ Hitherto Australian mining had used the more wasteful British 'bord and pillar' method, which continued long in the Newcastle coalfields. Both miners and management resisted technological innovation in coal extraction, as Birrell says,

the miners because they feared reduced employment, and the managements because they considered the capital costs of machines would not be economical in the bord and pillar system in use in their mines.³⁷

However, Birrell also chronicles the use of a coal-cutting machine in Joadja Creek shale oil mines in 1878 by Alexander Russell, a Scottish engineer, which, 'preceded the use of similar machines in the Hunter Valley coal mines by more than 20 years'.³⁸ If John Evans' claim is to be believed, the actual gap was less than a decade and it is certainly feasible to believe that, as he said, he was the first in the state to use mechanical extraction methods in a coal mine.

The Mount Kembla mine afterwards featured in 1902 as the scene of one of the great Australian coal mining disasters. Its manager, another Welshman, William Rogers, not fluent in English, (he was monolingual Welsh until his 20s), was interrogated mercilessly by the judicial inquiry, and made the scapegoat. His licence was suspended for 12 months, though the inquiry acknowledged he was a competent practical manager, and that it was his misfortune that the mine had exploded under his managership. His adopted son, Tom Hughes, was also killed in the explosion.³⁹

When the Bulli mine disaster occurred in 1887 with the loss of 81 men, John Evans distinguished himself in the rescue work. He was also credited with identifying the seat of the explosion and the causes of the disaster. Following work to recover and reinstate that mine, he became manager there from February 1889, until it was sold eight-and-a-half years later. Socially, he was as active as his father, being appointed conductor of the Bulli and Woonona Philharmonic Society, where T.J. was a committee member.⁴⁰ In 1896, John Evans added an unusual career direction, taking over the licence of the Denmark Hotel in Bulli, renamed the Tourist Hotel. This was short-lived, as an auction of the hotel's contents in Bulli in June 1897 suggests that it was then that he sold it and moved to Colliefields, WA.⁴¹

His first employment in Western Australia was as manager with Atkinson at the Coalfields West Coal and Fireclay Proprietary Co., Collie. When it proved unsatisfactory because the coal seam was interspersed with shale, he spent a few months sinking the Collie Coal Trust shaft in shared management with his father's retired colleague, W.D. Bedlington, who became another major figure in Collie as a coal mine investor, manager and local JP.⁴² By November 1897, Evans was being quoted in the new Colliefields mining area as 'an acknowledged authority on mining' whose company, the Collie Coal Trust, had already sunk a 60-foot shaft two miles north-east of the government mine.⁴³ The young coalfield had seen five years of unsuccessful and rather haphazard prospecting, before testing in 1894 proved that the local produce, though inferior to NSW's Newcastle coal, could be used economically on local railways.⁴⁴ Sir John Forrest, local MLA and Premier of Western Australia, was a keen supporter of the railway line from Bunbury on the coast to Collie, and this was completed in 1898, providing not only means of transport, but a ready-made market for the local coal.⁴⁵ With the WA Legislature having opened up 102,000 acres for lease applications in March 1896, Evans brought with him to Collie the reputation as an experienced and successful mine manager, who was not scared to voice his opinion. In December 1897, he commented on a railway trial using his mine's coal that the quality was good, that it produced little ash and contained a low level of sulphur. He gave evidence to a Royal Commission in 1898 and two Select Committees in 1901.⁴⁶ He was also principal witness to Robert Logan Jack's Royal Commission in late 1904, stating authoritatively that though Collie coal was good household and steam coal, its calorific value diminished if exposed. He considered that it could be used by vessels but tended to spontaneous combustion if stacked too high. Difficulties could be avoided by storing it under cover. His comments would not have been popular in Collie but were certainly believed by the Commission's members.⁴⁷

His initial estimation was that the quantity of coal in the lease area would be 2,560,000,000 tons; an astonishing figure that would certainly have made headlines, but was totally unprovable at that time!⁴⁸ As the Collie Coal Trust failed to find further financial backing, he was immediately recruited as manager for the forceful businessman Henry M. Deakin, who had successfully acquired the first government lease in Collie on 9 November 1898, and with it, a contract to supply the Railway Department with 30,000 tons of fuel a year.⁴⁹ With Deakin's backing, Evans took on the renamed Westralian Wallsend (originally Old Proprietary Government Mine).⁵⁰ This name echoes the New South Wales mine on Lake Macquarie, the West Wallsend, which his father T.J. had managed. Under Evans it was in full production – 400 tons a day – by the end of 1898.⁵¹ In 1899, he produced 54,336 tons of better-quality coal than his first Collie mine, which the previous year had produced only 3,503 tons. Deakin was to die suddenly in late 1899, but Evans continued, with Bedlington as under-manager.⁵² After the Wallsend also closed down following a fire in 1901, the Proprietary Coal Co. purchased its lease, leaving Evans in charge of the only serious producer in the field, working the Wallsend and Proprietary together as a combined colliery.⁵³ His path as manager was not always easy, being threatened with Supreme Court action by engine drivers for employing uncertificated drivers, and a major dispute over a sliding scale of wages in 1901.⁵⁴

From the start, Evans was prominent in the new town of Collie's civic affairs; he was a member of the first elected civic body in 1898, the Coalfield Progress Committee, and elected councillor in the first municipal elections in July 1901.⁵⁵ On the council he frequently clashed – but also co-operated when it suited both – with Davy Jones, another Welshman who served several times as mayor of Collie. It was D.W. (Davy) Jones a Welsh-speaking miner, resident locally since 1892, who built the first house in Collie (a humpy nicknamed 'Caernarvon Castle') followed by the first slab-board, and then the first brick-built house. Evans' family had soon followed him to Collie, and all were active in the growing town, including religious and cultural developments.⁵⁶ Jonathan Ceredig Davies, yet another Welshman, the Anglican minister who built St David's, the first church in Collie, said in his *Life and Reminiscences* that John Evans was the person who invited him there to establish St. David's church. Two Welsh gold mining entrepreneurs, George W. Hall and Alfred Morgans also contributed £10 each towards its building costs.⁵⁷

Evans had set up his 'tearaway' son (either Glyndwr or Thomas J.) in a partnership to run a shop, the Wallsend Store, with Deakin's similarly minded offspring.⁵⁸ He refused to run as mayor since he said he was too busy with mining. Nevertheless, he was vice-president of the first Chamber of Commerce from 1900, and president of the Mechanics' Institute, being appointed a trustee in 1901.⁵⁹ He was also treasurer of the first Collie Pioneer Masonic Lodge, and secretary of the Coal Owners' Federation.⁶⁰

He installed an electric power plant for the coalfield and introduced an electrical ventilation system to the Proprietary in 1903. His innovations included introduction of the use of the electric-powered Jeffrey Coal Cutter in 1904, which mechanized the undercutting process to substantially increase profitability. Mechanisation also extended the contract system by providing powered borers and machine miners, but miners had

fears that electrical coal cutters could cause sparks, especially in mines where gas was prevalent. Unions also feared that contract workers would be put out of work, and such machines were part of the reason for unrest in these coalfields from 1903 onward.⁶¹

Another reason for this unrest was the practice of allocation of workplaces by 'cavilling', where the stalls in the mine were balloted by lot every three months, but with the manager reserving the right for special arrangements for some work such as driving headings. Miners considered that they were unfairly treated when some were 'cavilled' out of a mine, and there were accusations of bias against single men in allocation of piecework on the bords. John Evans stressed that more economical production methods were needed and that no industry could carry on where six men could subsist on the work carried out by four; agreement was finally made in June 1903.⁶²

Ralph Birrell adequately chronicles the contribution to technology in copper of Welsh smelters but fails to realize the degree of Welsh management expertise in Australian coal, suggesting there was English and Scottish leadership.⁶³ The Proprietary during this period was managed almost entirely by Welshmen, or by those closely associated with Welshmen. This was understandable, since in Western Australia, a colony that had only recently achieved self-government in 1890, the expertise of men already well-trained 'back home' in practical mining, meant that they placed their trust in people with the same backgrounds as themselves and whom they might well have known in Wales. Similarly, many early lead and copper miners in South Australia were from Cornwall, resulting in Cornish managers dominated mining in South Australia using the technologies they had learned in the Cornish copper and tin mines.⁶⁴ So also, the Welsh of Western Australia, as in New South Wales, stuck to their own tried and tested methods. Furthermore, increasing numbers of these Welsh managers and senior staff had attended trade schools or colleges with technical mining departments such as Bristol Trade School, and the technical college in Pontypridd, later the South Wales School of Mines. Word-of-mouth recommendations and letters, meant that the network of Welsh managers was in constant touch, and communication across the oceans, or from one state to another, through the relatively new telegraph system, improved rapidly.⁶⁵ When Reginald St Chad Young married Bronwen the daughter of his boss John Evans, in 1903, not only was he electrical engineer for the 'Proprietary' but his best man, Alun Jones, another Welshman, was clerk to the mine. John's son, Tom (or T.J, like his grandfather) Evans (*q.v.*) was also at that time the mine's surveyor and Rees Bevan, (*q.v.*), (John Evans' wife's cousin), was surface manager.

By the time John Evans left Western Australia in 1905-6, he had also been manager of the Coalfields of Western Australia Co-operative mine, so he had managed virtually every important coalmine in Colliefields. In 1900, when he met the premier of Western Australia in a deputation calling for a railway to connect to the goldfields line, he stated, 'He was entirely in sympathy with the Colliefields, and claimed to know more of their possibilities and the demand existing for coal than any other man in the colony'.⁶⁶ But by 1905 he had become frustrated in his efforts to innovate and increase production, being continually thwarted by workers' restrictive practices, high miners' wages and low government contract prices. A shortage of trucks and high railway freighting charges led to Collie's mines working at only half capacity; the state government's refusal to pay

what he considered a fair price for locally produced coal left him short of capital for further mechanisation.

With conflicting demands on him from the Collie Health Board, the Roads Board and other public offices adding to his frustration, the final straw was a letter in the *Collie Miner* by controversialist local auctioneer Herb E. Wells, accusing him of malpractice in appointment of a Roads Board Secretary, a post for which Wells himself had applied.⁶⁷ This scurrilous and prolific letter writer, (later mayor and JP for Collie,) regularly came into conflict with coal-mining people, and in this case it had the direct result of John Evans resigning in May from both the Roads and the Health Boards.⁶⁸ Following a further standoff between the Proprietary and Cardiff management and the miners, who refused to work under the terms of the new pay award, and his accusation of blacklegging against Rees Bevan, manager of the Collieburn mine (and his wife's cousin!), who had interpreted the award as a minimum rather than a maximum, he abruptly quit his post as manager of the Proprietary Company in August 1905.⁶⁹ A further *West Australian* interview was illuminating; he regarded the condition of coal-mining in Collie as critical and stated 'there has been a series of labor difficulties, and I feel sure that the country is sick of it' – he himself certainly was! He argued that the State splitting contracts between a number of collieries was unsustainable, as was the level of wages compared to the price for coal contracts. He described the Collie collieries as 'on the brink of a precipice', as the arbitration agreement had made men's wages and conditions more favourable there than anywhere else in Australia. Also competition with the mines in the East of Australia, the large mines there being equipped with more modern machinery and coal cutting machines, was exacerbated by lack of State support.⁷⁰ A further news report confirmed that the State had reneged on the sole contract for 90,000 tons with his Proprietary mine, and had split this between four collieries, making all four contracts unviable.⁷¹

When he left Western Australia, he could certainly be described as the pre-eminent pioneer of the first ten years in Colliefields, and one of the most significant public figures in the growth of the town of Collie. This was reinforced by the tribute paid to him at the Town Council [Fig. 4] where his old sparring partner, Mayor Davy Jones, praised his services to the community. Other councillors added that he 'had battled with his head while others worked with their hands', that he 'was able to express himself in such a manner that other Councillors dared not', and that 'long after Mr Evans left they would recognize his worth more than they did now, and his place would be hard to fill'.⁷² It was upon him that the two key entrepreneurs in the early days of Colliefields, H.M. Deakin and Zebina Lane, had depended to turn their investments into cash returns. After his departure the problems of the field continued, with high labour costs, persistence of contract mining and restrictive practices, causing the coalfield to lag behind other Australian coalfields in modernisation and efficiency.

By February of the following year, Evans, with his son Tom, was opening up a new field in the San Remo/Wonthaggi area of Victoria, having sunk trial borings using a 'government diamond drill' to hit a new seam 3 ft wide at a depth of 136 feet.⁷³ By November a Collie paper reported that the Victorian Government had accepted a large contract for supply of this coal.⁷⁴ His son-in-law, St Chad Young, also held investment interests in these workings. John Evans' wife Martha, after oscillating for a while

between her husband's new work area and her daughter Bronwen's Collie home, finally settled in Victoria.

Figure 4: *Collie's first Town Council 1901. John Evans seated is 2nd from the right.*



Source: Author's collection.

Father and son had to develop not only the Wonthaggi mine itself, but also rapidly to lay an 80-mile section of railway track to connect it to the main line. Thus, their new mine could fill the gap in the market caused by labour unrest and strikes in the Newcastle area. However, later in life, John Evans recalled that though the London-based company he represented had initially been allocated a lease on 10,000 acres, the State Government had subsequently confiscated all but 320 acres of it to form the State mine – the very mine he had initially sunk and worked with his son Tom.⁷⁵

Tom had moved permanently to Victoria in 1909, having previously been underground manager at the Proprietary for his former colleague, Reginald St Chad Young, who had taken over that mine's lease.⁷⁶ Early in that year both father and son were also engaged in sinking a shaft in the abundant brown coal of the Altona field, to supply Melbourne's electricity needs. However, lack of later news suggests that this was no more successful than previous Altona efforts, which had suffered water incursions because of proximity to the coastline.⁷⁷

Late in 1909, John Evans, by now proprietor of the San Remo Colliery, which he had bought for £8,000, gave evidence to the Railways Standing Committee of Victoria on the advantages of San Remo as a safe harbour suitable for development as a coal port, and also its proximity to the Wonthaggi railway line.⁷⁸ By August 1911 the State mine that he had pioneered was taking workers from the North Woolamai Colliery, which he was also managing, during a stoppage caused by over-production of slack coal. However, Evans predicted that when the Woolamai washery plant for slack coal was completed

later that week, this would enable work to restart.⁷⁹ By October he had added a second electric coal cutter to that mine's equipment, and said it provided high wages for miners filling after the machines, and was maintaining a high output.⁸⁰

Having moved back to New South Wales in 1914, in May he registered a company (Coal, Limited) jointly with Austin Chapman MHR, with capital of a thousand £25 shares. Chapman was a prominent Protectionist minister who had won the Eden-Monaro seat at the first Federal election of 1901 and served in several ministries until 1909 when he suffered a stroke and returned to the Liberal back benches. He is best remembered for his influence on the choice of the site of Canberra, the Australian National Capital, near Queanbeyan in his constituency. He had previously invested heavily in several Araluen Valley gold dredging companies and was director and chairman for several. Using his considerable lobbying influence in the Federal Parliament, 'Coal, Limited' was formed to develop a tract of land in Illawarra, under the Sydney Water Reservation behind Thirroul, and immediately adjacent to the catchment area of the Bulli Colliery, where John Evans himself had previously been manager.⁸¹ This company's shares were immediately over-subscribed.

This vast area of some 40 square miles could not be developed on the surface because of the risk to water resources. So, Evans leased 1,638 acres adjoining the Reservation, and he, by now a Fellow of the Geological Society of London, set out to prove the rich Illawarra upper seam mined in the coastal collieries extended across this land. His geological knowledge proved accurate, and his boreholes proved the seam at 1,619 feet, within 40 feet of his prediction.⁸² The same development work found that three lower seams on the coast also extended thus far. Besides this, fireclay of a high quality was found, and Abraham Baxter, a brickmaking and railway entrepreneur with interests in New South Wales and Victoria was enlisted as a director to exploit this commodity in proposed brick, tile, pipe and cement works. Coal, Limited, was converted to a limited company of the same name, based in Sydney. Original shareholders, including Chapman and Evans, benefitted to the extent of 105,000 fully paid up one-pound shares, with a further 165,000 shares offered of a £300,000 nominal capital with initial calls on shareholders two shillings in the pound.

By 1916, Evans was living in Randwick, near Bondi.⁸³ He remained influential in the New South Wales' mining hierarchy during the First World War period; the following year his positive opinion on coal measures at Sassafras was quoted.⁸⁴ His company's progress, however, was restricted by the hostilities, which adversely affected all Australian mining. Because of the difficulty in obtaining capital, John Evans as company chairman gave evidence to Wollongong Warden's Court in 1917, when the company applied for labour suspension on the leases. He stated that £250,000 was needed to carry through the planned developments, but capital of £75,000 would enable the company to sink two shafts to the coal and 'then wait the war being over'. He name-dropped several influential company shareholders, such as Western Australia's Sir John Forrest, and Austin Chapman, together with Senator George Fairbairn whose business interests spanned Victoria and New South Wales. Evans admitted that though the mine headgear had been erected in 1915, no shafts had been sunk. After submission by a miners' union representative that some work could be provided for some of his

unemployed members, suspension of the lease conditions of labour employment was granted for three months on condition of 41 men being employed.⁸⁵ By this date, shareholders had been called to pay up 11 shillings on each pound share.

Figure 5: *John Evans, aged 86.*



Source: Trove.au – Newcastle Morning Herald, 26 July 1946.

In May 1918, on the border between New South Wales and Victoria, as consulting engineer for the Australian Development Company, he was evaluating a new mine at Coorabin, near Wagga Wagga, saying the development was convenient to feed Melbourne's coal requirements.⁸⁶ He also promised to take samples to Sydney for the Commissioners for Railways to test the coal. However, Coal, Limited still had prime place in his activities, as on 19th August 1920, he as chairman led the company into voluntary liquidation, and subsequent restructuring.⁸⁷ Despite these major financial losses, by 1923 he had re-energised his career, as general superintendent for the Gretamain Collieries Ltd. This company's massive undertaking was the Greta-Main drift mine, with two tunnels into the outcrop and extensive double roadways on a gantry to ferry the full skips out and the empty ones back. At least £20,000 had been invested over the preceding 18 months.⁸⁸

Yet, even at this busy period, the resurrected Coal, Limited was still active; six days after the Gretamain report, John Evans, its managing director, was applying for suspension of labor conditions on between three and four thousand acres of leases in the Coorumbung parish in Northumberland. He said further capital, on top of the £10,000-plus expended, needed to be raised for a five-and-a-half-mile railway connection to the leases. He confidently expected the Broken Hill Proprietary Company to invest, and that directors had expended thousands of pounds with no return so far.⁸⁹

He sold out his Gretamain interest in 1924 to the company of the same name, but remained a director, inspecting that company's Maitland Main mine even in 1939 at the age of 79.⁹⁰ After Greta-Main as general manager and then managing director of Central Greta Colliery Limited he supervised the unwatering of the water-filled old workings of Anvil Creek and the Old Greta Collieries to access 450 acres of virgin coal. This process lasted three years, only to fail ultimately because of over-production and low market demand during depression years. Afterwards he preserved an interest in this, the last big colliery to work in Greta, until it was destroyed by fire on 26 April 1932.⁹¹

At the Royal Commission inquiry into Mines Safety in March 1926, he gave his views that there were no really 'gassy' mines in New South Wales, and that the main danger came from coal dust.⁹² He dismissed workers' objections to machine working,

stating these were really because of the lower rates of pay for working on machines, rather than any safety fears. Unlike other witnesses, he regarded universal introduction of safety lamps and exclusion of coal-cutting machines as the ‘nails in the coffin’ of the mining industry, stating that naked lights could be used in non-gassy mines and that uncontrolled shot-firing was the greatest factor of danger in the industry. If machines were excluded from mines, ‘grunching’ with explosives,⁹³ a much more dangerous proposition, was the only alternative.⁹⁴ His Sydney connections remained; in 1926, nine Sydney aldermen visited Central Greta with a view to investment, to report to the Sydney council on the Central Greta, and the Awaba mine near Lake Macquarie. John Evans’ graphic account during the visit of the disastrous roof fall and the three deaths at the pit in 1898 probably influenced the aldermen, of whom only half availed themselves of the opportunity to inspect underground, and this inspection lasted only half an hour!⁹⁵

At the age of 70 he conducted an inspection of the Bulli Colliery at the request of its directors. Having lost his wife Martha in 1941, by 1946 he had made his home at ‘Cartref’ [Welsh for ‘home’] in Roxborough Street, Lorn, West Maitland, NSW. Here newspaper reports commented on his having distinguished himself as a prominent local watercolour artist even in his 90th year.⁹⁶ He died at the age of 90 on 24 October 1950, having made his mark on the coalfields of three states.⁹⁷

Glyndwr David Evans 1884-1917

Glyndwr, John Evans’ eldest son, was born in Treorchy, Wales.⁹⁸ He spent three years at the Ballarat School of Mines, gaining a First Class Mine Manager’s certificate of competency in 1905.⁹⁹ After Ballarat he worked at a Victoria gold mine, but when he enlisted in the Australian armed forces, he was working as a coal mine metallurgist in Victoria. After officer training in Sydney from April to July 1916 he passed all examinations, holding the rank of Sergeant Major, in the Miners’ Rifles, a tunnelling unit.

By 15 October, he was gazetted Second Lieutenant, Miners’ Rifles, and was shipped to France. There he worked as leader of a team of sappers, digging tunnels deep under enemy lines, which were used to set massive explosive charges to blow up vast areas of the opposing forces’ trenches. The German sappers were similarly engaged in equally deep undermining of these tunnels, in a deadly game of ‘cat and mouse’, where stethoscopes were used to detect the enemy’s digging, which when detected, were blown up. However, it was in a dugout on Hill 60 near Ypres, that he, two fellow officers and six of their ‘batmen’ (officers’ servants) were, killed by a mortar shell on Anzac Day, 25 April 1917, at the age of 33.¹⁰⁰

Thomas John (Tom) Evans 1885 - 1921

Tom Evans was born in Wallsend three weeks after his parents arrived in Sydney. He first came to Collie on holiday from school in Perth in 1897 and went there to work in 1902. He was his father’s under-manager in the Proprietary Mine in Collie, and subsequently worked there for his brother-in-law Reginald St Chad Young (*q.v.*) at the Proprietary, whose lease Young took over. He stood in for Young at a valedictory party for Bronwen as she left Collie, bound for San Remo.¹⁰¹ It was he who hosted the

celebration of the Proprietary's tenth anniversary, so clearly his duties included overall managerial responsibility when Young was away.¹⁰² Soon, he himself left to take up a post with his father on the brown coal of Altona Bay, near Melbourne.

His farewell social showed his popularity, having played for the Wallsend Football Club and being described as 'practically in charge' of the Proprietary. One speaker referred to his readiness to do 'everything in the mine from clearing a gutter to management ... he would wheel or fill, or put in a bit of road... anything that was necessary to facilitate the work'.¹⁰³ A graphic letter from Altona in 1909 chronicles how he and his father in three months had erected head gear, brought in a winding engine and electricity, built a dam, installed a pump in the shaft and bricked 10 feet of the shaft; he foresaw that they would now be sinking at 50 ft a week to the 75 foot thick seam 330 feet below.¹⁰⁴ Subsequently he was also involved with his father in other developments of the Victoria coalfield between Kilcunda and Wonthaggi, including serving as underground manager at the Wonthaggi mine.¹⁰⁵ He also acquired a wife, marrying Edith Kate Akhurst, daughter of the mayor of Caulfield, Melbourne, in 1915.¹⁰⁶

If his father had been involved in one of Australia's major mine disasters in Bulli, when managing Mount Kembla mine, then Tom featured even more prominently at another, namely the Mount Mulligan mine in Queensland. He arrived there after gaining his manager's certificate in 1916, taking with him a group of 13 miners from Wonthaggi and their families, to open up the new mine. Officially he was underground manager, though effectively carrying out all the functions of manager. He, and every one of the workers who accompanied him from Victoria, died there, along with all others underground, 74 in total, as a result of a series of coal dust explosions on 19 September 1921.¹⁰⁷ He was brought out alive, but died of his injuries on 26 September aged 36. His general manager, or superintendent engineer, Watson, testifying to the the Royal Commission inquiry, tried to blame him for the safety deficiencies. It had been Watson himself who introduced the Sullivan cutting machines that added to the already dusty conditions in this mine. It quickly became apparent to the Commission that safety was Watson's own responsibility. He was an evasive witness, and his lack of effective safety procedures, including his opposition to stone dusting to render coal dust inert, together with miners' general carelessness in what was considered a 'safe' mine, had contributed significantly to the explosion.¹⁰⁸ Tom Evans was described in the report as a strict disciplinarian 'who would not tolerate any dangerous practices'.¹⁰⁹ His father, sadly and ironically, had inspected the mine on behalf of the owners eighteen months previously finding it 'dry and dusty'.¹¹⁰ Tom Evans' wife was still living in Elsternwick, Victoria, and his son, Glyndwr David, was only three.

Reginald St Chad Young 1878 - 1967

He started his career as an electrical engineer, installing lighting and power schemes in Kalgoorlie and Collie, and was the Proprietary electrical engineer when he married John Evans' daughter, Bronwen, in December 1903.¹¹¹

After John Evans had left Collie, Young took over the Proprietary mine lease on a tributing basis from 1907 and may have done well financially from it, though he excited the ire of the *Collie Mail* editor who accused him of being the 'St-Cad like' master of the

mine.¹¹² As a result he was prosecuted for threatening to horse-whip the journalist and was bound over to keep the peace. He and Bronwen were prominent social figures in Collie, though making less favourable news headlines after leaving the town, with a Perth newspaper accusing him of ‘tearing the reserves and pillars out of the [Proprietary] mine, practically ruining it’, and saying that at a farewell event, he ‘when being tendered a send-off, boorishly replied to a toast to the effect he was glad to be leaving Collie’.¹¹³

He continued to be involved in mining, unsuccessfully making application to prospect for coal in Wallarah, New South Wales. He stated that though he had finance for the prospecting, he was not sufficiently financially capable to pay the wages of the 64 men that regulations would have required of him to take on over 200 acres of leases. His application was refused without costs.¹¹⁴ Another pair of his mining leases in Mulbring, West of Lake McQuarie were inactive in 1923.¹¹⁵ He clearly had private means, however, as he then became a prominent landowner and highly successful rice farmer in Yanco, NSW; he won the Yanco growing competition with 200 bushels per acre in 1930.¹¹⁶ He was elected chairman of the Rice Growers’ Co-operative Mills Company during the 1950s, and distinguished himself as the oldest holder of a student flying licence in Australia at the age of 74.¹¹⁷

Idris Evans 1892 - 1959

Mining was clearly in Idris Evans’ blood, since by 1913 he was in Tasmania at the Pioneer gold and tin mine, where he was secretary to the tennis and rifle clubs.¹¹⁸ But in 1916, Idris, like his elder brother Glyndwr, enlisted with the Pioneers of the 1st Division as an engineer and sapper.¹¹⁹ He served in the France and Belgium, where the Division suffered severe casualties, but he was unharmed. After cessation of hostilities, he was responsible for parties of engineers who inspected the Nord/Pas-de-Calais coalfields. Before he returned to Australia, he took the opportunity to study mining at the South Wales School of Mines, where his aunt’s husband, Henry Davies, was Director of Mining. On return to Australia, he joined the North Bulli Company as surveyor and draughtsman, and was in this post at the time of his brother Tom’s death in Mount Mulligan. By 1924 he managed the Abermain Colliery on the South Maitland coalfield, near Greta.¹²⁰ He acted as consulting engineer for the East Greta Coalmining Company, until the merger of the J. and A. Brown’s Abermain and Seaham Collieries. From 1925 onward, he managed the Paxton Colliery, otherwise known as the Stanford Merthyr No. 2, a name which reinforces the family’s South Wales connections. There, his second cousin, David Grier Bevan, one of the younger Rees Bevan’s sons, became his under-manager. Idris was also best man for his relation, Fred Young, in 1934, and often played golf with his fellow colliery manager.

In 1939 he started to replace wooden skips in Stanford Main No. 2 with iron skips, but soon met trouble, when miners who assisted the wheelers with their heavier loads demanded additional payment. When this was unforthcoming, and miners withdrew their assistance, wheelers were instructed to shunt skips into bords rather than ‘coping’ them (tipping them off the rails, so that they did not block full loads). When they refused, they were laid off. Following a complaint in 1942 that Idris Evans had

altered a regular mine custom, a convoluted case was eventually brought to a special court, which fined him £5.¹²¹ This fine and the attached costs were quashed in High Court the following December.¹²²

While at Paxton, Idris Evans was a prominent local figure: a keen golfer who became president of the Cessnock golf club in 1933; he even merited a golfing tribute booklet published in 2003.¹²³ From his early days in Tasmania, like his father and grandfather before him, he would perform in concerts, as well as being a keen tennis player.¹²⁴ He was appointed as one of two engineer members of the Queensland Coal Board in 1948 and left Paxton to take up that prestigious position, inspecting mine safety and efficiency across the state and negotiating with Union representatives.¹²⁵ He promoted the export market for Queensland coal to Pakistan, and also the use of new coal-cutting equipment.¹²⁶

The court case brought against him was typical of the kind of conflict between owners and miners, accustomed over the years to working in quasi-independent teams, which frustrated change during the 1930s and war years. The development of technology in most extractive industries led to significant innovation over the years, notably in copper and gold; the one exception was Australian coalmining. This was subject to far more industrial disputes and lack of mechanization until after 1945. As Birrell says,

By 1914 27 percent of the 10 million tons of coal mined in New South Wales was machine cut. However, due to miner resistance and no clear economic advantage over hand methods, little progress was made on increasing this percentage and in 1939, [only] 32 percent of the coal was cut by machine.¹²⁷

For many decades coal industry managers and companies were held back by a combination of industrial disputes, owners' reluctance to invest and over-production. This was particularly true in bord and pillar-dominated New South Wales, which, between the Newcastle and Maitland fields, provided the lion's share of Australia's coal. Dinstang suggests that the key turning point was the shortage of coal during the war brought about by 'the abuse of the industry's resources, antiquated technology and ... the diminution of the workforce'.¹²⁸ Together with mine safety and welfare considerations, owner/miner conflict was certainly one of the major motivators which led the Federal and New South Wales governments in 1947 to establish the Joint Coal Board to facilitate change and innovation in the industry.

Subsequent generations

Tom Evans's son, **Glyndwr David Evans**, had his education paid for by his uncle Idris, and though he started work in mining for the Broken Hill Proprietary, after the Second World War he spent his life working in an oil company. Young's son, **Reginald St Chad Young jnr**, pursued an engineering career on the staff of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. Both his sons **E.G. Young**, and **Fred G Young** followed their great-grandfather and grandfather's mining tradition, the former managing the Bloomfield Main Colliery.¹²⁹ The latter managed the Waratah Colliery, Charlestown in 1946, but by 1950 was manager of the Killingworth mine, near Lake McQuarie.¹³⁰

Rees Bevan Junior's son **David Grier Bevan** followed in his father's management footsteps as an under-manager to John Evans at New Greta colliery. **David Howard Bevan**, David Grier Bevan's son, became a ship's engineer. Rees Bevan's other son, **Rees Hirwaun Bevan** wounded in the First World War, began working at his father's Excelsior mine as a fitter, but subsequent to his father's departure for New Greta, a downturn in coal saw him laid off, and he subsequently worked at a railway maintenance depot. His grandson **William Bevan**, initially an electrical engineer at Port Kembla steel works, later followed the family path down a coalmine as an electrician. Another grandson **Raymond B. Bevan** also trained as a mechanical engineer at Port Kembla steelworks, though he afterwards qualified as a marine engineer, working as ship's chief engineer carrying millions of tons of coal from Australia to Japan and Korea. Though Rees Bevan Jnr's son, Victor William Bevan broke the family tradition by becoming a headmaster of a school in Maitland, his grandson **Dafydd Arthur Bevan** continued the family link to coal mining, as a director of a magnetite production company, which provides the essential material for coal washeries.

Conclusion

This was only one family of Welsh mining engineers who significantly influenced Australian coal mining. David Lucas suggests that often the Welsh were concealed under a conglomerate Anglo-Saxon heading.¹³¹ A rich field of research awaits anyone who tries to unearth the many other such families and individuals of Welsh descent who contributed so much to Australian coal.

Endnotes

¹ Merthyr at this time included the mining towns of Hirwaun, Aberdare and Treharris within its electoral constituency.

² *Aberdare Leader*, 20 January 1871, says that he fell down the mine in circumstances that were unclear. The author's family stories suggest he was pushed down when a union representative backed a horse into him. An alternative was that, worried by mounting debts, he himself rode his horse into the shaft. David Lloyd (Dewi Cynon) in his *History of Cwmaman* suggests erroneously that when sinking the shaft, after setting the charge, he had pulled on the wrong rope to signal he needed to be hauled up and had been killed in the blast from the charges that he had himself set. The newspaper report on the other hand, states unequivocally that he fell, however propelled.

³ *Bristol Mercury*, 5 March 1789.

⁴ Ship's records, *Donna Maria*, No. 45392, Swansea Archives Office.

⁵ *Western Mail*, (Wales), 2 January 1878.

⁶ Electoral Rolls, Swan District, Collie, 1903.

⁷ *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 10 July 1905; *West Australian* (Perth), 11 July 1905; *Western Mail* (Perth), 15 July 1905.

⁸ *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 18 August 1906.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 29 September 1906.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 20 April 1907.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14 September 1907.

¹² *West Australian*, 1 October 1907.

¹³ *Southern Times*, 21 March 1908.

¹⁴ *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 31 August 1918.

¹⁵ *Yr Ymwelydd*, vol. 1, no. 8, 18 May 1875, pp. 189-90.

¹⁶ 'Y Cymry yn South Australia', *Yr Ymwelydd*, vol. 2, no. 5. p. 119. Caleb Jones was the 'designated individual' for Greta.

¹⁷ *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 24 June 1933.

- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17 June 1933.
- ¹⁹ Electoral Rolls, Swan District, Collie, 1903 and 1906.
- ²⁰ *Western Mail* (Perth), 27 December 1902.
- ²¹ *Southern Times*, (Bunbury), 26 September 1903; *ibid.*, 18 October 1904.
- ²² Granville District, New South Wales, death certificate, record 11194/1925.
- ²³ Census return, Merthyr 1881, RG11/5311/9.
- ²⁴ Henry Davies, *Coal Mining, A Reader*, Welsh Educational Publishing Co., Merthyr Tydfil, 1904; *Aberdare Leader*, 13 February 1915.
- ²⁵ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner's Advocate*, 4 July 1888; *ibid.*, 23 May 1889.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 30 January 1888; *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 28 January 1889; *ibid.*, 23 January 1890.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 12 December 1891; *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 21 January 1892.
- ²⁸ *Illawarra Mercury* (Wollongong), 27 August 1892; *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 2 December 1892.
- ²⁹ *Illawarra Mercury* (Wollongong), 19 October 1895.
- ³⁰ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 12 June 1911.
- ³¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1911.
- ³² *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 11 November 1924.
- ³³ 1881 Census, 66 Fell Street, Treharris, Glamorgan, RG11/5311, folio 26/49.
- ³⁴ Inward Manifest, SS 'Cusco', 17 June 1885. At the age of 80 he said it was July 1884, but Griffiths in 1931 had confirmed it as June 1885.
- ³⁵ *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 14 March 1931; *ibid.*, 26 January 1935.
- ³⁶ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 28 September 1940; *ibid.*, 26 July 1946.
- ³⁷ Ralph Winter Birrell, 'The Development of Mining Technology in Australia 1801 – 1945', Ph.D. thesis, University of Melbourne 2005, p. 155.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Henry Lee, *A Reflection of the Mount Kembla Disaster*, vol. 3 issue, *Illawara Unity*, Journal of the Illawara branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History.
- ⁴⁰ *Illawara Mercury*, 5 October 1893.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2 June 1897.
- ⁴² William David Bedlington, coal mine manager of the Northern Colliery, Teralba NSW, prosecuted in 1891 for false accounting, but the case was dropped. He won a subsequent slander case against his successor Morgan Jones in 1892, but who also filed for bankruptcy in Bulli in 1896. See *Illawarra Mercury*, 21 April 1896. He had accompanied John Evans' father, T.J. Evans, to Australia after having been his under-manager at the Deep Navigation pit in Wales, and both he, T.J Evans, and John Evans were resident in Bulli in 1896.
- ⁴³ *Bunbury Herald*, 30 November 1897.
- ⁴⁴ Harold W. Williams, *One day in Collie*, Shire of Collie, 1979, pp. 12-21.
- ⁴⁵ *Southern Times* (Bunbury) 18 March 1897.
- ⁴⁶ Denis Cumming and Richard G. Hartley, *Westralian Founders of Twentieth Century Mining: Career Biographies of Mining Engineers, Mine Managers and Metallurgists who worked in the Western Australian Mining Industry 1890-1920*, Richard Hartley, self-published, 2014, p. 46.
- ⁴⁷ *The West Australian* (Perth), 17 November 1904; *Southern Times*, 19 November 1904.
- ⁴⁸ *Bunbury Herald*, 18 January 1898; *ibid.*, 12 April 1898.
- ⁴⁹ *Western Mail* (Perth), 25 December 1909.
- ⁵⁰ *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia*: pp. 314-317: the 'Westralian Wallsend Colliery, Thiel & Co, 1901' (no author), facsimile ed., Hesperian Press, 2000; *Western Mail* (Perth), 9 December 1898; *ibid.*, 16 December 1898.
- ⁵¹ *Bunbury Herald*, 2 February 1899.
- ⁵² *Southern Times* (Bunbury) 19 June 1900. However, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Western Australia*, p. 318 suggests Zebina Lane had already installed Bedlington as manager from 1899.
- ⁵³ Catherine Stedman (ed.) *100 years of Collie Coal*, pp. 25-31, Curtin University of Technology, 1988; *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 27 February 1902.
- ⁵⁴ *Bunbury Herald*, 29 December 1900; *Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth), 8 February 1901.
- ⁵⁵ Williams, *One day in Collie*, pp. 32, 36.
- ⁵⁶ *Bunbury Herald*, 1 June 1899.
- ⁵⁷ J.C. Davies, *Life, Travels and Reminiscences of Jonathan Ceredig Davies*, self-published, Llanddewi Brefi, 1927, pp. 138, 141-2; see also, Susan Hart, Hiraeth, *A History of the Welsh and the Welsh Free Church in Western Australia*, The Welsh Free Church of Western Australia (Inc.) in association with the Centre for Western Australia History at the University of Western Australia, 2009, pp. 28, 29, 37, 77.

⁵⁸ E-mail to author from Dr Richard Hartley, 1 February 2016, quoting H.M. Deakin's letter book, MN 1088, ACC 3340A, Battye Library SLWA, to J. Evans, Collie Fields, 22 May 1899, p. 162. Evans to be partner with H.M.D. in Wallsend Store, Collie Fields township, 'I trust will be able to spare a few moments to see that the two boys are attending to their business'; *ibid.*, p. 163, 'Evans to be equal partner with H.M.D. in hotel to be erected on Lot 1, Collie Fields township'; to C.F. Deakin, son of H.M.D., at Collie Fields., 22 May. 1899, p. 164, 'C.F.D. to operate Wallsend Store for one-third of the net profit; This is a start to you in life.'

⁵⁹ *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 8 September 1900.

⁶⁰ Catherine Stedman (ed.) *100 years of Collie Coal*, Curtin University of Technology 1988, p. 205; Williams, *One Day in Collie*, p. 48; *The West Australian*, 15 June 1900.

⁶¹ *Western Mail* (Perth), 21 January 1905.

⁶² *The West Australian* (Perth), 4 April 1903; *Western Mail* (Perth), 20 June 1904.

⁶³ Birrell, *The Development of Mining Technology in Australia 1801 – 1945*, pp. 30-33, 100-106.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁵ Collie's first Post and Telegraph office was established 1 August 1897.

⁶⁶ *Bunbury Herald*, 19 June 1900.

⁶⁷ *The Collie Miner*, 29 April 1905.

⁶⁸ *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 6 May 1905.

⁶⁹ *Collie Miner*, 15 July 1905; *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 1 August 1905.

⁷⁰ *West Australian* (Perth), 5 September 1905.

⁷¹ *Western Mail* (Perth), 9 September 1905.

⁷² *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 16 September 1905.

⁷³ *Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney), 28 February 1906.

⁷⁴ *Southern Times*, 24 November 1906.

⁷⁵ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 28 September 1940.

⁷⁶ *Bunbury Herald*, 11 February 1909.

⁷⁷ *Williamstown Chronicle*, 3 April 1909.

⁷⁸ *The Age* (Melbourne), 27 November 1909; *ibid.*, 15 February 1911.

⁷⁹ *The Argus* (Melbourne), 22 August 1911.

⁸⁰ *The Age* (Melbourne), 12 October 1911.

⁸¹ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 29 May 1914.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 9 April 1915; *The Shoalhaven Telegraph*, 14 April 1915.

⁸³ Glyndwr David Evans, Application for Commission in the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force, 24 March 1916.

⁸⁴ *Shoalhaven News and South Coast Districts Advertiser*, 12 August 1916.

⁸⁵ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 13 November 1917.

⁸⁶ *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 26 October 1917.

⁸⁷ *Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales*, 27 August 1920.

⁸⁸ *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 17 August 1923.

⁸⁹ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 29 August 1923.

⁹⁰ *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 14 February 1939.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 11 November 1924; *The Maitland Daily Mercury*, 26 April 1932; *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 28 September 1940.

⁹² His son Tom had been killed in a dust explosion at Mount Mulligan less than five years before.

⁹³ According to Mindat.org, 'Grunching' is blasting coal out of a solid face, as opposed to blasting coal that has been undercut by hand or with a coal cutter

⁹⁴ *South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus*, 19 March 1926; *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 10 March 1926.

⁹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 November 1926.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 27 July 1950.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 25 October 1950.

⁹⁸ Glyndwr David Evans, Australian Imperial Force, Attestation papers for persons serving abroad, 24 March 1916.

⁹⁹ Ballarat School of Mines Mine Managers' Certificate book, 1912,

<https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/59aeb57421ea6a063066cf7c>

¹⁰⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 May 1917; Australians on the Western Front,

<http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/151093/201806121148/anzacportal.dva.gov.au/history/conflicts/australians-western-front-19141918/australian-remembrance-trail/toronto-avenue-0.html>

¹⁰¹ *Southern Times* (Bunbury), 5 May 1908.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 14 November 1908.

- ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 6 February 1909.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 10 April 1909.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 1 October 1921.
- ¹⁰⁶ *The Argus* (Melbourne), 22 May 1915.
- ¹⁰⁷ *The Herald* (Melbourne), 20 September 1921.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry, Mount Mulligan Mine Disaster*, Brisbane 1922; Peter G. Bell, 'The Mount Mulligan Coal Mine Disaster, 1921', Honours thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland 1977, pp. 97-117.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.
- ¹¹⁰ *Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 23 September 1921.
- ¹¹¹ *The Collie Miner*, 19 December 1903.
- ¹¹² *Ibid.*, 18 June 1910.
- ¹¹³ *Truth* (Perth), 27 May 1911.
- ¹¹⁴ *The Newcastle Sun*, 10 July 1919.
- ¹¹⁵ *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 1 December 1923.
- ¹¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 May 1930.
- ¹¹⁷ *The Farmer and Settler* (Sydney), 18 August 1950; *The Age* (Melbourne) 18 September 1952.
- ¹¹⁸ *Examiner* (Launceston), 10 October 1913; *ibid.*, 29 July 1916; *North Eastern Advertiser* (Scottsdale), 19 September 1916.
- ¹¹⁹ *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 21 December 1948.
- ¹²⁰ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 23 August 1924.
- ¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1943; *Examiner* (Launceston, Tasmania), 4 October 1943.
- ¹²² *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 10 December 1943; *The Telegraph* (Brisbane), 7 December 1943.
- ¹²³ Janice Williams, (researcher and compiler), *Idris Evans Esq. 1892-1959 Mine Manager*, Tribute booklet for Idris Evans, donor of the Evans Challenge Cup to the Cessnock and District Lady Golf Associates 1929, Cessnock 2003; Idris Evans was manager of Stanford Main No.2 Colliery 1936-49.
- ¹²⁴ *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston), 9 December 1913; *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 18 September 1925.
- ¹²⁵ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 17 December 1948; *Cessnock Eagle and South Maitland Recorder*, 1 February 1949.
- ¹²⁶ *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 21 September 1950.
- ¹²⁷ Birrell, *The Development of Mining Technology in Australia 1801 – 1945*, p. 232.
- ¹²⁸ Donald Pierre Dingsdag, *The Restructuring of the NSW Coalmining Industry 1903-1982*, University of Wollongong, Ph.D. thesis, 1988.
- ¹²⁹ *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 28 September 1940.
- ¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 27 July 1950.
- ¹³¹ David Lucas, *The Welsh, Irish, Scots and English in Australia*, Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs, Canberra, 1987, p. 20.

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The Evans and Bevans in Australia

Date	Who	Mine, or Company	Position
1887	Rees Bevan jnr	Mount Kembla, south of Bulli/Thirroul NSW	surveyor
1896		Bulli,	Under-manager, then manager
1897		Proprietary, Collie,WA	Surface manager
1904		Scottish Collieburn, Collie	Manager
1905-6		Cardiff, Collie	Manager
Until 1908		Collieburn and Proprietary	Manager
1909		Excelsior, Thirroul, NSW	
1918		New Greta, Newcastle area, NSW	
1902	David Bevan jnr.	Moir, Collie	Sinking team
1887	T. J. Evans	West Wallsend, Newcastle area	Manager
1889		East Lambton, Newcastle area	Manager
1892		Woonona colliery, Bellambi Co., south of Bulli/Thirroul	Manager
1892-5		Bulli B	Director/Manager
-1911		Newcastle Belmont	Director
1885	John Evans	Wallsend Co-operative, Newcastle area	Development
1885		Stockton, Newcastle	Development/Manager
1886		Mount Kembla, south of Bulli/Thirroul	Manager
1889		Bulli	Manager
1897		Coalfields West Co., Collie	Manager
1897		Coal Trust Co., Collie	Joint Manager
1898		Westralian Wallsend, Collie	Manager
1901		Wallsend & Proprietary = Proprietary, Collie	Manager
1905		Coalfields of WA Co-operative, Collie	Manager
1906-9		Kilkunda and San Remo/Wonthaggi , VIC	Development work
1909		Altona, Melbourne,	Field development /sinking
1909		San Remo	Owner/manager
1911		North Woolamai, nr Wonthaggi	(also) manager
1914		Coal Company Ltd – Illawarra	Director/Development
1917		Coal Company (Sydney) Ltd	Company Chairman
1921		Mount Mulligan	Mine Inspection
1923		Greta-Main, Greta, Newcastle area	General Superintendent
1924		Maitland Main, Greta	Mine Inspection
1926-9		Central Greta Colliery Ltd & Awaba, Lake McQuarie, nr Newcastle	General Manager/ Managing director
1930		Bulli	Mine Inspection
1902	Tom (T.J.) Evans	Proprietary, Collie	Surveyor/undermanager
1907		Proprietary, Collie	Acting manager
1908		San Remo/Wonthaggi	Development and railway
1909		Altona, Melbourne	Field development, sinking
1912		Wonthaggi State Mine	Assistant Underground Manager
1916		Mount Mulligan, QLD	(Underground) Manager
1903	Reginald St Chad Young	Proprietary, Collie	Electrical Engineer
1907		Proprietary, Collie	Leaseholder/manager
1919	Idris Evans	North Bulli	Surveyor
1924		Abermain No 2 , South Maitland, Newcastle area	Manager
1925		East Greta	Consulting Engineer
1925		Paxton/Stanford Merthyr No 2 , Newcastle area	Manager
1948		Queensland Coal Board	Engineer Member
1946	E. G Young	Waratah, Charlestown	Manager
1950	Fred G Young	Killingworth, West Wallsend	Manager
1950		Bloomfield Main, Newcastle area	Manager
1919	David Grier Bevan	New Greta	Mine clerk
1936		Stanford Merthyr no 2	Under-manager