

**CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION
1842.
South Wales 2**

**REPORT by RHYS WILLIAM JONES,
Esq., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in
Monmouth and the Pontypool and Merthyr Districts,
Blaenavon and Clydach Iron Works near Abergavenny,
Nantyglo and Beaufort, Sirhowy and Ebbw Vale, Tredegar and
Rhymney and Bute Iron Works in the County of Monmouth,
Dowlais, Penydarran and the Aberdare Iron works near
Merthyr Tydvil, Cwmavon Iron, Tin and Copper works and the
Collieries and the Oakwood Collieries, near Port Talbot. The
Iron Works in Bridgend, Neath and Swansea, The Copper
Works at Swansea and Llanelly, and the Collieries in the
Western part of Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire, and on the
State, Condition and Treatment of such Children and Young
Persons.**

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RHYMNEY IRON WORKS with COAL and IRON MINES, in the counties of Brecon, Monmouth and Glamorgan, belonging to the Rhymney Iron Company.

Estimated statement of the number of persons employed.

	Males	Females
Adults	1900	110
Children and young persons	390	94
Total	2290	204

Summary of Children and Young Persons.

Engineers, blacksmiths, fitters up, masons, bricklayers &c:-

24 males under 13 years of age, 42 males and 7 females between 13 and 18 years of age.

At the blast furnaces:-

6 males, 1 female under 13 years of age 13 males and 3 females between 13 and 18 years of age.

At the colliery:-

47 males, under 4 years of age 18 males and 6 females between 13 and 18 years of age.

At the mine works:-

Under ground:-

58 males, 11 female under 61 years of age 17 males and 47 females between 13 and 18 years of age.

Above ground:-

19 males, 2 female under 61 years of age 8 males and 31 females between 13 and 18 years of age.

At the forges:-

23 males, 4 female under 61 years of age 71 males and 8 females between 13 and 18 years of age.

Estimated total population dependent on the works, 5000.

No.87. Lewis Redwood, esq.

I consider the physical condition of the children employed in these works to be generally good and unimpaired by their occupation or domestic circumstances. Those not so employed who have come under my notice are too few to enable me to compare the respective state of the two classes. They are for the most part rather robust, the girls more especially in consequence (no doubt) of their spending so much of their time in the open air. The young men brought up in the place and who have been employed from childhood in the works are in most instances a rather fine and athletic race but there certainly is to be observed some physical deterioration consequent on underground labour.

I believe that the children and adults can, with few exceptions, command good nutritious food. Their clothing is almost always sufficient and suitable. They are usually clean. I am not aware of the children employed being more subject to sickness than those who are unemployed. The surgical diseases enumerated by you seldom occur. There is nothing in the children's manner of life to induce them. Fever is a prevalent disease here but chiefly among adults. Chronic ailments such as those you allude to are not present themselves with peculiar frequency nor especially under circumstances leading to the supposition of their being directly or indirectly occasioned by the children's occupation in the works.

(Signed) **LEWIS REDWOOD**, surgeon.

Rhymney Lawn, Sept. 2nd. 1841.

Examination taken at RHYMNEY.

No.88. George Evans, aged 41, collier overman.

I have been here about 26 years. I have the charge at present of a coal level and of the mine cleaners and fillers on the mine banks. I have about 80 people under me in the colliery level and about 40 on mine banks, 30 of whom are women and girls and 27 are between 13 and 18 years of age. Their average wages are 6s. per week. All the girls work out on the banks. I have no girls underground in the colliery but I have about 25 boys. There are in my level eight under 13 years old, keeping doors with the cutters who are mostly their fathers at 5s. per week, two between 13 and 18, hauliers or driving horses at 14s. per week, nine between 13 and 18 years old, cutting coal and helping the cutters from 10s. to 15s. per week. None of them work at night. They begin to work at five o'clock in the morning and leave off about for o'clock in the evening and in general take one hour and a half for their meals out of that time. I have known boys taken down the collieries by their fathers at four years old in order to have a tram (or waggon) more allowed them on account to bring put their coal, a man and a boy having an extra tram allowed him. There may be seven or eight cases of this sort in my level. These little boys do not stay in the works many hours and are only taken down as an excuse for the men to get the dram more. Most cutters can get more coal in

their turn that the trams allowed for bringing it out can take away and as they work by the ton, an extra dram enables them to get more wages in the day. Of the 52 persons under 18 years of age under my charge, seven can read English and 14 can read Welsh and two only can write. I have never heard any complaints of the children being beaten or ill used by the men and believe that very seldom takes place. Their fathers often beat them slightly because they are very wicked and fight and swear.

No.89. John Evans, aged 15, Thomas Price, aged 13, William Morris, aged 8 and John Morris, aged 14.

We are working in the colliery helping the colliers. John Evans works with his brothers and has seven trams a week allowed him. He gets 10s. per week. Thomas Price's master is no relation of his. He is allowed the same number of trams as John Evans. William Morris carries his tools to him and helps his father and is allowed four trams per week. John Morris (his brother) also works with his father. In our level we all go down from four to five o'clock in the morning and mostly come up from twelve to one o'clock in the day but sometimes we are in until six or seven o'clock. We take bread and cheese with us and eat it when we have time, generally about eleven o'clock. We do not work the night turn but we often go down at twelve or one o'clock in the morning. There has been no night work in these mines for the last years. Our work is sometimes very hard. We have to fill the trams at the heads and when they go out brisk we have it hard but that seldom lasts long. We are paid by the day. Accidents very often happen from falls and from driving the horses. Thomas Price was hurt by a fall two years back and lost two months off work. His father was killed by a fall three years ago. John Evans broke his leg three years and two months back at Tredegar by driving the horses. He was a haulier then. Driving is worse work than helping the colliers. We are all quite well now. We go to the Methodist's Dissenters' Sunday Schools. John Morris can read English, Thomas Price and John Evans can read a little Welsh. William Morris is beginning to spell.

No.90. David Evans, aged 12 and David Powell, aged 7.

We work in the forges raising the door and the balling furnaces. David Evans has been working three years. David Powell had only been working a fortnight. His father has three children and has another boy working in the forge. We work from six to six and take our meals between the heats. We have enough time to eat. We work at nights every other week. David Evans gets 4s. 3d. per week and David Powell 3s. We like to be at work very well and are very seldom sick. We have not lost many days from work since we began. We have both been a little in school and go to one on Sundays but cannot read.

No.91. Joseph Richard, aged 14 and John William, aged 12.

We drag out hot bars at the forges. Joseph Richard has been working six years and John William four years, all the time at the forge and refinery. We work 12 hours and change turn at six o'clock morning and evening and work at night every other week. We take our dinners between spells and by getting some one to work a few minutes in our places. We generally manage to get time to eat but are often obliged to eat our dinner bit by bit. We work until nine o'clock on Saturday nights and our work is very hard when the works are busy and they drive on fast. We work for the men and get 7s. per week each. If anything breaks and the works stops for three hours, they "crop" or stop a quarter of a day from us. This does not happen very often. We have not had many bad accidents but we burn ourselves very often. Joseph Richard burned his foot some time ago and lost three weeks from work. Neither of us can read. We go now and then to the Sunday Schools.

No.92. Elizabeth Evans, aged 11.

I keep a door in the collieries at Evan Jones's pit. I have been working for a year. My father is a collier and he come from Llanidloes. He has four children. I was in school at Llanidloes and could read Welsh but I cannot read much now. I have a brother working. He drives out cinders. I get 6d. per day, Evan Jones pays me. He is the master of the pit. I do not know exactly how long I work in the day. I go at six in the morning or sooner and come home before six in the evening. I have met with no serious accidents but my father was hurt in the pit where I am. The trams broke his arm by the horse going rash. He was driving it. I was with him at the time. It was four months ago and he is not quite well yet. The door I keep is nearly a mile from the pit but I come down to the pit with the trams and hauliers four of five times a day. I would rather go to school than to the works if I could. There are no good schools here. I was in one for four months and that is all the school I had for four years except the Sunday Schools. I go to them every Sunday. There are more girls in the pit with me.

No.93. Thomas Williamson, aged 12.

I was working the week before last in the coal level, filling trams. I worked with my brother-in-law but he does not want me now. I have another older than me working with him. My father and mother are dead. I have two brothers and one sister. She is married to a collier here. We came from Hay. I was in the National School there. I was afterwards in service at a shop there. I have been three months here. I expect to go to work again next week. When I went to work I left the house at four o'clock or from that to six and came back about four in the evening. I took some bread and cheese with me and eat it when I liked. My sister will not let me go to Sunday School here. I have got no clothes that are good enough. I can read a little English but not much.

No.94. Mary Jones, aged 14.

I work in the mine level with my father. I have been working two or three years. I fill the mine and rubbish into the trams but I do not push the trams out but sometimes help to do so. There is only one girl besides myself working in the level with me. There are girls in the other levels who push the trams in and out. I go to work at six o'clock in the morning and remain in the level until six or seven at night. I may perhaps come up once or twice in the day with the trams. I take bread and cheese with me and eat it when I like. There is no dinner hour in the level. I do not work at night. I work for my father. I suppose I get about 5s. per week. I am very seldom ill and do not lose much time from sickness. The work agrees with me very well. I was never in a day school and cannot read but I go sometimes to the Sunday School.

No.95. Daniel Elias, aged 13, Joshua Jones, aged 11 and David Thomas aged 13.

Daniel Elias and David Thomas. - We work in the mine levels with our fathers and have for three or four years. We help to bore holes for blasting and to fill rubbish and mine into the trams. The air is good enough.

Joshua Jones. - I keep a door in the colliery and have been at it for six months. We work in the level constantly but find time to eat our bread and cheese. We work from six o'clock in the morning to six or sometimes seven in the evening. We work the same hours summer and winter and we work two or three hours longer very often when the trams come out slowly and we cannot get the coal and mine out in time. This is very often the case. We have no night work. Our work is always hard but we get used to it and we do not get very tired. We sometimes play for an hour after work in the summer but we are often too tired for that. The boys that drive the horses say that they work harder than us. Keeping a door is not hard. He has a lamp to burn and the door boy is paid by the company 3s. 6d. per week. Daniel Elias works for his father and gets about 6s. per week for him. They work together. David Thomas works for the man who pays him between 5s. and 6s. per week. The man (who is his master) never beats him. He does very well for that and he does not scold him much either but complains a little sometimes. The powder and candles they use are paid for out of the ages. They do not know how much, it may be from 6d. to 1s. per week. Daniel Elias's father had a large family, seven children. We are not ill often. Our work does not hurt our health but we work as hard as we can. Joshua Jones got lame from a tram hurting his legs but it did not break them. He filled trams before he went the door.

[Daniel Elias can read Welsh a little but the other not at all. They do not go to school but sometimes attend Sunday School.]