

DENNIS, HENRY (1825 - 1906), mining engineer, colliery owner, etc.

Name: Henry Dennis

Date of birth: 1825

Date of death: 1906

Gender: Male

Occupation: mining engineer, colliery owner, etc.

Area of activity: Business and Industry; Engineering, Construction, Naval Architecture and Surveying

Author: George Geoffrey Lerry

Born 1825 at Bodmin, Cornwall, he was educated at the local grammar school, where one of his contemporaries was Mark Guy Pearse. From school he entered the office of the Bodmin borough surveyor as an articled pupil. He joined the engineering staff of the old Cornwall Railway Company, a concern later taken over by the Great Western Railway Company. About the year 1850 he accepted an appointment with John Taylor and Son, mining engineers, who entrusted him with the work of constructing a tramway from the Llangollen slate quarries to the Shropshire Union Canal at Llangollen. After spending a short time in Spain, where he was engaged in lead mining, he returned to Denbighshire and became manager of Bryn-yr-owen colliery, near Rhosllannerchrugog, then owned by John Taylor and Son. He relinquished this post in 1857 and entered into partnership with his brother-in-law Glennie, as surveyors and mining engineers. The partnership ended in 1870 and Dennis carried on alone. He sank Legacy colliery and worked it for a few years. On leaving Bryn-yr-owen, he lived at Hafod-y-bwch, subsequently moving to New Hall, Ruabon. For half a century or more Dennis took a leading part in sinking new coal mines, reorganizing old collieries, establishing terra-cotta works, water-works, and gas-works, chiefly in Denbighshire, but his activities extended into Merioneth and across the border into Shropshire, where he was chairman of the Snailbeach lead mines. He was also managing director of the Glyn Valley tramway and a director of the Minera Mining Company. His chief colliery interests, however, were at Westminster (Broughton, near Wrexham), Wrexham, and Acton (Rhos-ddu, Wrexham), and Hafod (Ruabon). When he was at the zenith of his career the various concerns under his control gave employment to over 10,000 people. He was a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, chairman of the North Wales Coalowners Association, and president of the Mining Association of Great Britain (1901). Immersed in business, he found little time for local government work, and he declined to stand for Parliament, but when the Denbigh county council was formed he was elected one of the first county aldermen 'in recognition of his wonderful business aptitude and as a pioneer and captain of industry.' He died 24 June 1906 at his Cornish residence, Laninval, Bodmin, where he had arrived a few days earlier from his Welsh home at New Hall, Ruabon, and was buried in Wrexham cemetery, 5,000 people attending his funeral.

Author

George Geoffrey Lerry

Sources

Dennis manuscript in N.L.W.

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