SEAPORT, SOCIETY AND SMOKE: SWANSEA AS A PLACE OF RESORT AND INDUSTRY c.1700 to c.1840

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to examine the process of development of Swansea from Norman planted town, with a market and a harbour, to an industrial centre and port of international significance. It will consider the impact of industrial and commercial growth on the infrastructure of the medieval settlement, and the pressures and stresses on life in the town arising out of the influx of a largely Welsh-speaking body of immigrants in search of work. It is argued that Swansea was special in the Welsh urban context, because of the strategies it was forced to develop at the end of the eighteenth century to cope with enforced change, and also because of its multifunctional nature. Additionally, the town is of considerable interest because of the presence of two apparently conflicting functions - industry and resort - the interaction between which may illuminate the relative importance of each.

These issues are approached in this thesis as follows. First, an attempt is made at estimating the rate of growth of the population of Swansea from about 1700 (the consequence of economic and industrial development) and the proportion and provenance of immigrants. Secondly, the motivation of those leaving the land and the difficulties awaiting them in a Swansea ill-equipped to receive them are examined, as are the strategies adopted by the town to assimilate them. Next, the incidence of disease and causes of death in conditions of urban overcrowding, or food shortage, are investigated. Lastly, a modest evaluation of the appearance and economy of the town, and its marketing strategy, is attempted through an examination of contemporary plans, pictures, topographies and trade directories; and these sources are considered in the wider context of an emerging consciousness during the eighteenth century of the culture, language and history of Wales.
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List of Abbreviations

Arch Camb, Archaeologia Cambrensis
Bad, Badminton Collection (Beaufort Estate)
BBCS, British Board of Celtic Studies
Glam Hist, Glamorgan Historian
GRO, Glamorgan Record Office, Cardiff
HDMB, Hall Day Minute Book
Mont Colls, Montgomeryshire Collections
NLW, National Library of Wales
PRO, Public Record Office
RISW, Royal Society of South Wales, Swansea
Trans Hon Soc Cymm, Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion
UCLS, University College Library, Swansea
WGAS, West Glamorgan Archive Service, Swansea
WHR, Welsh History Review
Frontispiece

Gabriel Powell, 'King of Swansea', 1787
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Why study Swansea?

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that Swansea deserves a special place in any account of Wales' modest urban development in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It will be argued that, of all the towns in Wales, the present capital of the Principality not excepted, Swansea's character had become, by the late eighteenth century, the most multifaceted. There was, however, a price to pay and the town's medieval infrastructure proved to be totally inadequate (and this was the experience in many other towns) to cope with a growth in population in the eighteenth century from under 2,000 to more than 6,000; and thereafter (to 1841) to over 19,000. This thesis will consider, so far as the sources permit, the extent and process of immigration and population growth, and the effects of the influx on the town's infrastructure and on the indigenous population, including the stresses arising out of the impact of the Welsh culture and language of the immigrants on the predominantly English character of the ancient town; this, in turn, was complicated by the desire of the Corporation to sell Swansea as a place of resort to English visitors. The evidence is that, from about 1750, Swansea was attempting to accommodate immigrants and visitors (whose objectives in coming to the town were obviously very different), whilst responding to the not unrelated demands of industrialists, and the town had to develop, in the face also of aristocratic obstruction, a strategy to resolve these conflicts. The Corporation appears not to have shown, or perhaps was stopped from showing, much initiative in this process until 1789; after that date the contribution of the Harbour and Paving Trustees also has to be considered in the progress towards the new regime heralded by the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835. Even after 1835, many problems remained to be resolved but, by that date, the town's destiny was clear.
It may be helpful to consider briefly Swansea in the context of its long-standing rivalry with Cardiff. Historically, Cardiff, as ancient administrative capital of the Lordship of Glamorgan and head port of south Wales, and by virtue of its close connection with the important episcopal see of Llandaff, claimed superior status over Swansea. But, in 1801, Cardiff was little more than a modest port and market town of some antiquity on the banks of the river Taff some distance from the coast with a population of about 2,000 compared to Swansea's multifunctional centre of 6,000.¹ That Cardiff outstripped Swansea in terms of population and status during the nineteenth century can be attributed principally to the efforts of the second Marquess of Bute, who poured a vast fortune into developing Cardiff's docks, so enabling him to take a levy on coal transported by canal and, after 1841, by railway, from the Valleys. The first major extension of its docks in 1839 gave Cardiff an economic advantage over Newport and Swansea, and there was surplus capital for further expansion. But the source of capital responsible for Cardiff's early lead also acted as a brake on its later development as a town: unlike many other ports, including Swansea, Cardiff did not possess a harbour trust but relied entirely on Bute, and when Bute became increasingly reluctant, after 1850, to pump further money into docks which had given him no more than a modest return on capital already expended, the facilities became inadequate to meet the increasing volume of trade - one result of which was David Davies' construction of new docks at Barry. The very volume of the trade in coal retarded Cardiff's development as a port and a town, the congestion at the docks discouraging the development of manufacturing, such as shipbuilding

¹ In 1685, Swansea was raised by Royal Commission from a 'creek in the Port of Cardiff' to 'member of the Head Port of Cardiff'. The elevation made Swansea for all practical purposes independent of the mother port and gave her jurisdiction over the creeks of Newton Neath or Briton Ferry and South Burry. Legally, however, Cardiff retained at least nominal supremacy in maritime terms: John Hobson Matthews (ed.), Records of the County Borough of Cardiff, 5 vols. (Cardiff, 1898-1911), 2, ch.11. Matthews indulges in an elaborate exercise to show that in 1901 Cardiff deserved, on historical grounds, to be considered the capital of Wales: Matthews, Cardiff Records, 5, pp.264-9.
and engineering; most of the industries, for example, ship repair, foundries for marine castings and rope and cable making were dependent on coal and shipping. Cardiff was, therefore, essentially a one-industry town, with the docks servicing the products of the Valleys; and the town was able to survive and expand, in spite of its losing, after 1914, its status as 'coal metropolis', only through developing a role as regional and administrative centre and, increasingly from the 1880s, becoming an important service and commercial hub, all of which was reinforced by the construction, on land purchased from Bute in the early twentieth century, of the magnificent Civic Centre.2

Swansea's experience was very different, and this thesis will try to show the extent to which it owed its transformation from about 1700 through its efforts at exploiting its location on a natural harbour at the mouth of the river Tawe near the scenic Bay of Swansea which in turn adjoined easily worked reserves of coal, convenient for the smelting of Cornish copper ore. The effective exploitation and marketing of these natural endowments began to attract settlers and visitors from an early period, and led to the development of a manufacturing sector, including (unlike Cardiff) an important shipbuilding industry on the banks of the Tawe, a port described by Defoe as early as the 1720s as 'thriving', a commercial sector and a polite seaside resort actively promoted by the town's Corporation. It was the struggle for the survival of the resort function in the face of the increasing success of copper-smelting which is perhaps the most singular aspect of Swansea's history, and a consideration of the different demands of each, and the effect of each activity on the other, may help to throw light on how each developed, and ultimately (in the case of the resort function) failed. It should, however,

be noted that, for at least two decades, Swansea's smoking and flaming copper works were firmly on the list of the town's tourist attractions.

To be properly understood and appreciated, Swansea's growth and transformation from borough and castle town of the medieval period to the relatively small Welsh port and market town of 1700 and then to multifunctional resort, industrial and commercial centre of 1800 should, additionally, be considered in the context of Wales' urban experience and economy as a whole, and particularly the political, geographical and topographical factors which influenced or impeded that economy. It is only by examining the wider Welsh, and indeed British, context can Swansea's contribution to urbanisation be appreciated. This chapter suggests that, notwithstanding natural disadvantages, Wales has a surprisingly long established tradition of urban living, with its principal towns showing all the characteristics of English towns of equivalent status but much greater population. But the evidence also indicates that this view of Welsh urban history is incomplete, for many Welsh towns owed their genesis not to native foundation at strategic or nodal points (although these did exist) but to deliberate plantation by the Norman-English designed to subjugate the native race. To this extent, therefore, it may be argued that urban life in Wales up to the Industrial Revolution was artificial; but to what extent the founding of the castle towns and boroughs had affected, on the eve of the Industrial Revolution, the distribution, nature and social and economic well-being of the native settlements is not easy to determine. Whatever the position, Swansea by 1800 was undoubtedly a successful town in at least Welsh terms and, over the next forty years, was not infrequently referred to by contemporaries as the leading town in Wales. This thesis proposes that Swansea merits study because its heterogeneity, and experience of growth and adaptation under pressure, may be utilised to illumine the development of most other towns in Wales, and many in Britain.
In the first part of this chapter, the origins of Welsh towns will be briefly considered, particularly those planted by the Normans, many of which survived to become thriving modern urban centres. Whilst the evidence indicates that the Welsh were originally not natural town dwellers (the terrain discouraged it), they quickly discovered the advantages of urban life and became assimilated with the Norman-English settlers. The English influence remained of critical importance to the Welsh urban economy with goods shipped or transported for sale through towns such as Bristol, Shrewsbury, Chester and Liverpool. Exports to Ireland, the Channel Islands and France, as well as coastwise were important to the economy of the south Welsh ports. But growth in Welsh towns remained unimpressive compared to their English counterparts although improvements in communications in the eighteenth century encouraged the rise of modest resorts and gentry towns such as Tenby, Aberystwyth and Swansea on the coast, and Wrexham, Haverfordwest and Carmarthen inland. In certain towns, including Swansea, Wrexham and Holywell, the exploitation of minerals from the early eighteenth century was another source of native economic advantage which led to a wholesale and dramatic transformation in the urban fabric to accommodate workers and visitors. In some towns, individual landowners such as the Beauforts in Swansea and the Butes in Cardiff exerted, through their stewards and their control of land, an influence over the development of towns. Rapid growth, for whatever reason, put an immense strain on the resources of a town. In the second part of this chapter, the parallel urban development in England is briefly summarised and contrasted with the Welsh experience, particularly the urban metamorphosis experienced in the south Wales valleys after 1800. The last part of the chapter will outline the main themes in the literature of Welsh towns and of Swansea in the context of the treatment of Swansea in this thesis.
2. Welsh towns: imposition, assimilation, adaptation, disruption.

Wales has been called a country of many boroughs but few towns. Gerald of Wales (1147-c. 1220) wrote that urban life was strange and foreign to the Welsh: 'non urbe, non vico, non castris cohabitant'. According to Gerald, towns to the Welsh meant the English language, the courts and an alien way of life. Early fourteenth century Wales was perceived essentially as a rural society but, with a population estimated at about 300,000, 15% of which lived in approximately one hundred and ten 'towns' or chartered boroughs, Wales had a higher urban density than England - albeit only about 20% of these urban dwellers were of Welsh descent. Superficially, therefore, urban life in Wales appeared artificial in nature. Almost every town in medieval Wales was planted, and about one-third of these even today have a clear rectilinear grid pattern, most the work of Edward I in the late thirteenth century following the pattern of the bastides of Gascony. Referring to the Norman lords of south Wales, George Owen the Pembrokeshire historian wrote in the early seventeenth century:

And the said lorde, att their first coming to those lordships by conquest, espying out the fertile partes in each countrye, builded their castles for themselves and townes for their owne soldiars and countryemen which came with them to remayne neere about them as their guarde, and to be allayes ready to keep under such of the countrye inhabitantes as wolde offere to rebell......and by this means all the townes and castles in most part of Wales......were first built.

3 The Description of Wales (1194); see Lewis Thorpe (trans.), (Harmondsworth, 1984), pp.251-2: They do not live in towns, villages or castles, but lead a solitary existence deep in the woods. It is not their habit to build great palaces, or vast and towering structures of stone and cement. Instead they content themselves with wattled huts on the edges of forests, put up with little labour or expense, but strong enough to last a year or so'.


5 M. Beresford, New Towns of the Middle Ages (Gloucester, 1988), pp.150, 268.

6 Quoted by Beresford, ibid, pp.527-8, and see B.G. Charles, George Owen of Henllys: A
In contrast, Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (1611), shows that most English towns were organic rather than planted, with the town plan centred on and growing around a triangular or rectangular market place. The organic, pre-Norman towns of Wales were found mostly where the English occupation was longest, especially Pembrokeshire, but these settlements came well down an urban hierarchy dominated by the castle towns and their burgage plots. The main boroughs in Wales in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were Cardiff, Chepstow, Usk, Trellech and Haverfordwest.⁷

Whilst, however, Welsh towns until after the beginning of the nineteenth century were certainly 'small' towns (by 1801 only twelve towns had more than 2000 inhabitants, and none more than 7500),⁸ Gerald of Wales may have exaggerated the claimed antipathy of the Welsh to the urban way of life. The evidence appears to show that, although the act of foundation of many of their towns may have been hostile, and the immediate result artificial and alien, the Welsh quickly grew to appreciate the commercial advantages of trade at market centres and, by the end of the thirteenth century, were well assimilated with the English settlers to the extent of having become respected members of the community, and burgesses. But urban growth in Wales certainly remained attenuated: the combination of Glyndwr's rebellion, the Black Death and subsequent epidemics drastically reduced the Welsh population from the mid-fourteenth to the early fifteenth centuries resulting in the contraction and, in some cases, demise of Welsh towns. John Leland mentions fifty-eight Welsh towns in his *Itinerary* (1536-43) and, from his description of thirty of these, economic stagnation or decline may be inferred. Some towns, for example, Brecon, Carmarthen,

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⁸ P. Clark, 'Small towns 1700-1840' in *Cambridge Urban History*, pp.735 and 741; P. Jenkins, 'Wales' in *Cambridge Urban History*, pp.133-4.
Haverfordwest and Wrexham, held their own and, assisted by their location and role as economic, legal and administrative centres, flourished in relative terms with an abundance of trades and crafts such as tanners, curriers, corvisors, glovers and tailors recorded in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By about 1600, there is evidence (for example, the building of new town and market halls, and the grant of charters) that Welsh urban life was reviving with increased economic activity in the countryside, in markets and in the ports. Because of the mountainous nature of the Welsh interior, communication by sea early assumed great importance with links especially to Bristol, Chester and Liverpool, and between Swansea and the Pembrokeshire ports and southern Ireland, particularly the towns of Cork, Lismore and Munster. The largest Welsh towns of the southern littoral - Haverfordwest, Tenby, Swansea, Carmarthen, Kidwelly and Cardiff - conducted an extensive trade with each other and also with the English Bristol Channel ports of Minehead, Ilfracombe, Barnstaple and Bideford; and links to the lesser south Welsh ports of Chepstow, Usk, Newport, Neath, Llanelli and Pembroke also contributed to this maritime trade. In the north, towns such as Wrexham, Denbigh and Caernarfon regarded Chester as their regional capital whilst Shrewsbury and, to a lesser extent, Ludlow and Hereford, served the same function for the towns of mid-Wales. The trade was mainly in agricultural produce, particularly cattle and woollen cloth. By the 1670s, according to Blome, of the twenty four larger settlements in Wales, about half were multifunctional centres but only five supported specialist mining or industrial activities; a similar number were ports and others had legal and other service functions.

10 Jenkins, 'Wales', p.137.
Despite the quickening pace of industry during the eighteenth century, urban populations in Wales when compared to those of England, remained modest. By 1811, only three of the old small towns (including Swansea) exceeded a population of 5000, and most were much smaller. The reasons for this may perhaps be sought in the artificial nature of the original foundation of the castle towns (once the countryside was pacified the original purpose disappeared); the fact that Wales, agriculturally, is of limited economic wealth with only isolated pockets of fertile land able to support or sustain urban centres; and the difficulty of travel and communication. The settlements which did survive, and in some cases flourish, were those which were naturally well sited on important routes, and on river or coast, or which served an agriculturally rich hinterland, and so were able to develop, through interaction with other market towns, as market centres; or ports with the wider trading links mentioned above; or those which possessed assets, built or natural, attractive to entrepreneurs or visitors. And this process was by no means predetermined by a former grant of borough or market status. These towns constituted a basic system of separated settlements and formed a matrix for a Welsh urban system albeit of modest proportions. Notwithstanding their modest size, the more important Welsh towns had an impact on their surrounding regions: aside from their administrative and economic contributions, towns such as Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Swansea and Cardiff were centres of Puritan and later nonconformist teaching; and Hearth tax and probate evidence reveal them to have supported a significant social elite - lawyers, merchants, clergy and, from the first quarter of the eighteenth century, industrialists - and a gentry contingent who came to dominate town life.

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12 Many towns in England and Wales with a market or borough charter declined into insignificance (eg Adpar, facing Newcastle Emlyn across the river, and Llawhaden, Pembs.) or disappeared altogether (eg Trefnant, near Welshpool): see I. Soulsby, _The Towns of Medieval Wales_ (Chichester, 1983) pp.73, 177 and Beresford, _New Towns_, p.565.


It has already been implied that the towns with perhaps the most influence over the Welsh economy until the development of industry from the end of the eighteenth century, were not Welsh at all. In the north, Liverpool, and especially Chester, provided market outlets for cloth and agricultural produce, and settlements on the eastern borders of Wales, had much more connection with English towns such as Shrewsbury, Worcester and Gloucester than with those of the western interior.\(^1\) Given the difficult terrain of the central Wales massif, this is hardly surprising. From about 1600 Wrexham grew in importance at the expense of Denbigh owing to the former's location at a nodal point on a major north-south route. From the early nineteenth century there were daily coach services between Wrexham and Chester which helped the former develop into an important social centre. The exploitation of the north Wales coalfield from the late eighteenth century confirmed Wrexham's status and sealed Denbigh's decline from regional importance to little more than local significance.

Bristol was by far the most significant of the extraterritorial 'Welsh' towns and was crucial to the development of the economy of south Wales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Enjoying easy access by water, ships from the south Wales ports carried from 'the Welsh Market-House' large quantities of goods including grain, dairy produce, poultry, vegetables, fruit, cattle and pigs, wool, cloth and coal to the 'Great Metropolis of the West'. By the early eighteenth century, a covered market had to be erected on the Welsh Back at Bristol to cope with the volume of Welsh poultry, fruit and other commodities.\(^1\) The people of south Wales flocked to the two great Bristol fairs on March 1 and October 1 to buy and sell and settle

\(^1\) Shrewsbury (declared a staple town in 1327) dominated the Welsh woollen cloth trade from the fourteenth century and in large part owed its growth and prosperity to the monopoly it exercised over Welsh towns such as Welshpool, Newtown and Llanddowro until 1624: J. Geraint Jenkins, *The Welsh Woollen Industry* (Cardiff, 1969), pp.100, 119-125. The trade continued to be of importance until the nineteenth century.

obligations. Bristol, in turn, shipped to south Wales all manner of consumer goods for resale in local shops and markets. All this trade, inevitably, was pre-eminently important to the economy of the south Wales towns and provided a stimulus for improvement in agriculture to increase output to meet the demand. And it also provided motivation to specialisation. Welsh cattle drovers contributed by providing currency for the developing Welsh economy and links with, and news from, Bristol and London. And, of course, Bristol entrepreneurs were of crucial importance from the end of the seventeenth century to the development of industry in south Wales, providing capital, enterprise and active participation in the exploitation of iron, copper and coal. In practical terms, therefore, and because of the difficult terrain and relatively poor hinterlands, Welsh towns in the eighteenth century and earlier were part of an urban system whose regions were centred on the English towns of Liverpool, Chester, Shrewsbury and Bristol. In a parallel development, the gentry of south and north Wales looked to English landowning families for social interchange and marriage with the result that Welsh estates often passed to families from outside Wales who thereafter sought to exploit their new property.17

The increased economic activity in south Wales from about 1600 encouraged the development of a number of towns into commercial and service centres; also, from the end of the eighteenth century, Swansea and Tenby evolved into seaside resorts, with Cowbridge and Monmouth assuming the role of local social and gentry centres. In mid-Wales, Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells had become modest spa towns before 1800. In 1801, the woollen-cloth producing districts of Montgomeryshire were among the most industrialised regions of Wales with important outlets through Welshpool and Newtown and thence to Shrewsbury.18

17 Jenkins, *History of Modern Wales*, pp.3-5.
From about 1790, Aberystwyth (already a noted outlet for metal ore) was striving, with a degree of success, to turn itself into a seaside resort.\(^{19}\) In north Wales, Wrexham and Holywell were notable industrial and social focal points by this time, and Conwy, Ruthin, Denbigh, Bangor and Beaumaris were centres of social activity. Many Welsh towns, from about 1770, appear to have benefitted from the introduction of turnpiking and the improvement in communications which resulted. The south Wales coastal towns enjoyed the additional advantage of location on the Bristol Channel, and were able to develop further the coastal trade to Bristol, Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Continent. But ease of communications was not necessarily a selling point for the resort towns: the very remoteness of Tenby and Aberystwyth underpinned their claim to exclusivity.\(^{20}\)

Growth, when it came to the settlements of the Glamorgan and Monmouthshire valleys, was spectacular. This development was linked to the demand for, and the relative ease of exploitation of the mineral wealth of south Wales, and a strong impetus for the increased demand for minerals such as iron, copper and coal arose out of the successive wars and international crises in which Britain was embroiled between 1740 and 1815.\(^{21}\) The settlements grew or, in some cases, were founded, in response to the need for labour for the new industries, and men and women were sucked in from the Welsh speaking country areas to the west and north and also from the West Country, from the Midlands and from Ireland. Some of the new ‘towns’ thus engrafted onto the original settlements, where any had existed previously, were arguably artificial in form and in social structure. They appear to have lacked a middle class or ‘middling’ group commensurate with their size in terms of


\(^{20}\) Borsay, 'Health and Leisure Resorts' p.794.

\(^{21}\) Jenkins, 'Wales', p.143.
population, and they appear also to have lacked a sense of community. Industrial settlements such as Merthyr Tydfil have been compared to frontier towns where, from the middle of the eighteenth century, lawlessness was hardly checked by the ironmasters except when profit was at risk. Merthyr was a town singularly lacking urban amenities (even by 1822 there was only one shop for every 400 inhabitants compared with one for every seventy in York), a town of miners, ironworkers and labourers, far outnumbering their managers, many housed in deplorable conditions, the housing scattered and dispersed in conformity with the location of the ironworks and coal fields rather than with urban logic and order:

...the paucity of Merthyr's urban credentials was ramified on every side: by the paucity of the urban tradition in Wales as a whole; by the anti-urban heritage of the old charcoal iron industry; and by the very nature of the town's iron industry, wedded to capital goods production and incapable of stimulating ancillary urban functions.

Merthyr society was notoriously polarised with ironmasters at the pinnacle and most of the rest firmly at the bottom. And, for more than four decades from the end of the eighteenth

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22 Although Gwyn A. Williams suggests that, by 1831, the 'worst case' Merthyr Tydfil was perhaps not quite as primitive as has been painted: Williams, *The Merthyr Rising* (London, 1978), pp.55-7, and particularly Table 2.1 'Shopocracy' in 1831 on p.56. There is little doubt, however, that when compared with older established towns such as Swansea, Merthyr suffered deprivation; for example, the *Cambrian* on the 17 September 1831 reported that Merthyr had 259 houses worth over £10 whereas Swansea, at half Merthyr's size, had 599. In assessed taxes, Merthyr paid £1,588 in 1830 to Swansea's £3,012: Williams, ibid. Settlements such as Ebbw Vale and Blaenavon, situated at their valley head where no town would normally be found, were even more deprived in terms of urban structure and characteristics.


24 Evans, 'Merthyr Tydfil in the Eighteenth Century', p.15.
century, Merthyr was the largest town in Wales in terms of population. Defoe had commented in 1728 on a particular class of English town which perhaps may be compared with Merthyr a century later. This class, which included Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham, although 'full of wealth and full of people occasioned by the mere strength of trade and growth of manufactures in them', nevertheless lacked resident gentry and formal institutions of government. Merthyr's undoubted importance in the development of techniques in the production of iron and steel was, however, to count for nothing when local supplies became exhausted and the industry collapsed. A 1930s report even suggested that the town should be abandoned, a situation which paralleled the decline of some of the Welsh medieval castle towns. Thus, where the raison d'être of a town was solely or mainly industrial, it appears that the concept of continuity could be threatened, and the idea of urban rank order become meaningless, when the engine of growth (in Merthyr's case, iron ore) failed, or where improvement in communications meant that the industrial works could be sited with greater advantage elsewhere.

In many Welsh boroughs, the chief landowners were able to retain, until the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, a powerful political influence over 'their' town, and thereby over the pace of growth of industry: examples include Bute in Cardiff, Beaufort in Swansea and Mackworth in Neath. The Mackworths took a direct interest in the production and

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25 D. Defoe (1728), quoted by B. Trinder, 'Industrialising towns 1700-1840' in Cambridge Urban History, pp. 807-8. These towns, however, developed out of pre-existing settlements.
26 H. Carter and C.R. Lewis, An Urban Geography of England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1990), p. 56. The main ironworks at Dowlais were moved to Cardiff in 1891.
export of coal from Neath and controlled the economic development of the town; in contrast, Beaufort's steward, Gabriel Powell, hindered economic advance in Swansea until the late 1780s. Whilst it is unlikely that such families seriously impaired industrial growth in the longer term, there is evidence that they were influential in the development and form of the industrial towns. The appearance at Neath in the 1690s of the entrepreneurial Sir Humphrey Mackworth appears to have been the catalyst for rapid expansion, in response to the demand for iron and other metals for the French wars, of industry and commerce in the area, and for the forging of links with the sources of ore in Cornwall, with finance in Bristol and with the latest technology in the Midlands. In Swansea, the exclusion from political power of successive Catholic dukes of Beaufort for most of the period 1640 to 1770 may have had the effect of freeing them to pursue the industrial exploitation of their estates and, especially after Powell's death in 1789, these activities contributed to Swansea's rise to metallurgical prominence in the nineteenth century.

Merthyr at the beginning of the nineteenth century may have been Wales' most populous town but population is not the sole determinant of status or position in the urban hierarchy, especially at times of rapid change or transition. It may be argued that industrial and manufacturing towns were most likely to flourish where there was a variety of activity and where growth stimulated the establishment of new activities, whether social, commercial or both. The old towns of the south Wales coastal fringe, particularly Cardiff and Swansea, which, unlike Merthyr Tydfil, possessed those qualities which in England, and elsewhere, traditionally defined a town, never lost their place in the urban hierarchy, and certainly never surrendered it to Merthyr. By 1841, 35% of the older Welsh towns including Swansea,

Cardiff, Caernarfon and Carmarthen had a population of more than 5000, with Swansea racing to 19,000 and achieving the status of capital of a local region in south-west Wales,
whilst the population of some of the minor centres fell substantially. And the new, burgeoning, industrial settlements of the valleys, formed without connection to the surrounding countryside, did not long remain in a state of economic and social dislocation, and soon attracted complementary regions to themselves with some towns, for example Pontypridd, situate at the confluence of the rivers Rhondda and Taff, assuming a true urban role as local central places.

The available evidence suggests, therefore, that the Welsh people have had a surprisingly long tradition of dwelling in small 'towns', many of which were of artificial (English) foundation, and which served, and had influence over, a limited agricultural hinterland. The modest urban system which had developed over about 500 years may have reached an equilibrium when the demand for and exploitation of minerals (with capital from outside Wales) from the eighteenth century had a dramatic effect on the urban structure, and served as a catalyst for the development of ports and systems of transport and communication. Immigrants were attracted to the new industries and towns, particularly those of south Wales, resulting in an urban explosion. And, in a strange symmetry, Wales' new industrial towns, like the medieval plantations, were in essence artificial; although the modern 'conquerors' were English entrepreneurs rather than Norman freebooters the distinction might not have been too apparent to contemporary Welsh workers under the yoke of a Crawshay or a Mackworth. It did, however, mean that the Welsh economy could, at last, begin to break

30 Jenkins, 'Wales', pp.140, 145.
32 Although Gwyn A. Williams suggests that relations between men and master were worst when the latter was Welsh - for example, in the small collieries of Monmouthshire which operated on a shoestring: Williams, 'The Emergence of a Working-Class Movement' in A.J.
away from the dominance of English towns and cities, and a native urban system evolve, but
the price paid, particularly by the urban poor, for rapid, unplanned and unstructured urban
expansion (and this affected both the industrialising old towns and the new communities)
was ill-health caused by a complete absence of adequate sanitary provision and the lack, at
least until after the Public Health Act 1848, of anything approaching an effective programme
of public health. The fact that the Welsh industrial towns of south and mid-Wales were to
prove to be breeding grounds of the urban and political radicalism of the 1830s and 1840s,
with Merthyr Tydfil leading the way, was not unconnected with the conditions endured by
many urban working people at the time, although the condition of the urban poor would
gradually improve throughout the nineteenth century, even in Merthyr Tydfil.

3. The English town: Welsh urban exemplar?

(i) The English urban experience

Late medieval English towns have been characterised by urban historians as introspective,
perhaps inhibited by the rapid growth and dominance of London. England is considered not
to have been an urban nation as late as 1700 on the basis that over three-quarters of the
population of between five and six million lived in the countryside. In the later seventeenth
century, after a period of economic crisis for some towns, which corresponded with a decline
in real incomes, change can be detected (particularly in those towns having more than purely
market functions), driven by an increasingly buoyant internal and external trade and

Roderick, (ed.) Wales Through the Ages, 2 (Swansea, 1975), p.141. The overwhelming
majority of industrial and business leaders in Wales were, however, English.
33 Jenkins, 'Wales', pp.147-8; Evans, 'Merthyr Tydfil in the Eighteenth Century', pp.14-18; and
see below, Chapter 3.
34 Williams, The Merthyr Rising.
35 P. Clark and P. Slack, English Towns in Transition, 1500-1700 (Oxford, 1976), pp.30-1,
62-4.
identifiable by rising real wages, an increasing awareness of outside influences, a readiness to compete and a tendency to specialisation of function. The obvious location for secondary and tertiary economic functions generated by increased economic activity was the urban one, and urban population growth was the natural consequence of increased employment opportunities fuelled, it will be argued (in Swansea's case) more by immigration than by natural increase.

Towns and cities categorised as 'demographic graveyards' throughout most of the eighteenth century, with mortality rates consistently exceeding birth rate, would not have been able to function effectively or grow in size without the lifeblood of immigration. It is argued that this process of change had consequences both positive and negative. On the positive side, competition encouraged economic betterment resulting in an increase in prosperity of those members of urban society with the talent and energy to take advantage of the opportunities on offer. Many English towns changed physically through improvements to buildings and streets made possible by the surplus capital available for building works. These improvements also reflected a greater urban self-awareness, and self-confidence, and a realization that survival and prosperity were conditional upon effective competition. As towns developed economically, gentry and 'pseudo-gentry' began to be attracted who, in their search for diversion and entertainment, provided the catalyst for the evolution, from the end of the seventeenth century, of a distinctive urban culture which, when combined with the


increase in trade serviced by a growing multitude of merchants, manufacturers, lawyers and tradesmen large and small, and the gradual improvement in the physical fabric of the town, led to what has been described as a 'renaissance' in English urban life.\textsuperscript{39} The availability of luxury goods, the latest fashions and 'polite' diversions and entertainments, paralleled new tastes and ideas derived from London and Bath, and all increased in proportion to the growth of surplus wealth of the gentry and middling classes. The obverse, it is argued, was that eighteenth century urban change tended to result in a fracturing of society, with town life dominated by the gentry, wealthy merchants and the professions resulting in the erosion of a sense of community and traditional ceremonial to the detriment of the poorer classes. The migration to towns of rural dwellers, either driven by economic desperation, or attracted by the prospect of employment, resulted in overcrowding, disease and 'immiseration', especially in industrialising towns. This apparent polarisation of society led in turn to physical segregation, or social zoning, and a 'flight to the suburbs' by the better-off, and occasional riots by the poor.\textsuperscript{40} Nevertheless, there were factors which helped promote social integration within towns, including clubs and societies, alehouses and inns.\textsuperscript{41} Religion, and especially nonconformity, also could be a unifying factor. Despite these developments, it appears that, in 1700, most English towns, except London, the regional centres and major industrialising towns, remained of modest size with only one town outside London exceeding a population


\textsuperscript{40} Clark and Slack, \textit{English Towns}, pp.57-8, 91-6; Borsay, \textit{Eighteenth Century Town}, p.19.

of 25,000 (Norwich, 30,000). Real growth, building on eighteenth century foundations, came in the nineteenth century, especially in industrial centres such as Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds, and port towns such as Liverpool and Portsmouth. A substantial number of towns were, however, to remain 'small' towns (having a population under 2,500), but nevertheless were important owing to their ubiquity and thereby their influence in the propagation of urbanisation as a way of life. The small town was often the rural immigrant's first experience of town dwelling. Many English provincial towns were able to absorb these pressures and turn them to advantage, and their success and increased prosperity, and influence in relation to London, laid the foundation after 1688 of the world's first urban society.

(ii) Were Welsh towns different?

In the wider British context also, urban society had a strong bias towards the smaller county towns: in England, those towns with a population of about 5000 to 6000; in Scotland, those with about 3000; in Wales and Ireland, the figure was about 2000. Many Welsh market towns shared with their English equivalents a remarkable vitality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, responding to the growth of internal trade and tending to specialise. In the following century, Welsh ports such as Swansea and Cardiff, benefitting from the expansion of trade, also flourished (in relative terms) mirroring the increased prosperity of the English ports, regional centres and industrial towns. As noted above, other Welsh towns

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42 According to Chalklin, there were about 500 towns with a population of 500 to 1,800 with market functions; 40 to 50 of 2,000 to 5,000 with additional administrative or industrial functions; 24 of 5,000 to 10,000 with specialised and industrial functions, and 7 regional capitals of more than 10,000 with important religious, administrative, market or industrial and manufacturing functions: Chalklin, * Provincial Towns, p.5.


in the eighteenth century began to emerge as seaside resorts (Swansea, Aberystwyth and Tenby), gentry towns (Cowbridge, Monmouth and Montgomery) and inland spas (Llandrindod Wells, Builth Wells and Llanwrtyd Wells) again reflecting a similar development in England. But Welsh towns were, in the English context, 'small' until after 1800 owing mainly to a combination of history and geography. According to Clark there were, in 1700, perhaps fifty Welsh towns with a population of less than 2500, with only Carmarthen and perhaps Wrexham and Monmouth exceeding this figure. The comparable figure in England was 730. Nevertheless, in both England and Wales, 12 per cent of the population lived in towns of this size at this period. It is arguable that the larger Welsh towns had developed for precisely the same reasons as their English equivalents (disregarding, of course, the influence of London): some had economic, legal and administrative functions; others were ports or market centres, or had incipient industries. The population of these Welsh towns, the argument continues, was smaller than those of England because their agricultural hinterland was less extensive, poorer and more sparsely populated, and consequently the economy less dynamic. There was weak demand for industrial or consumer products and the technological resources for the exploitation of minerals was limited. The urban network was fragile because communications were poor, the terrain difficult, and the cost of inland transport high. Economic growth, when it came, was in part stimulated by the removal, in varying degrees, of these impediments. Whatever the arguments, however, it is indisputable that some of these Welsh towns of county or market status - Brecon, Carmarthen, Pembroke, Tenby, Cardiff and Swansea - possessed an air of

45 Clark, 'Small towns', pp.735-6.
prosperity and importance sufficient to impress some eighteenth century English travellers.\textsuperscript{47} And they certainly impressed the Welsh country-dwellers.

If these points regarding the impediments to development of Welsh towns are valid, it is not easy to fit the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Welsh pattern of urban settlement, nor the later 'system' of industrial towns and settlements of the valleys of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, comfortably into the central place model favoured particularly by geographers.\textsuperscript{48} The central place theory holds that, given a homogenous ('isotropic') plain, a hierarchy of towns within a region will arise based on the demand for and supply of goods and services, towns of the same rank being equally spaced from each other. It follows from this that no town should be considered in isolation but as part of the system, and that the economic growth or decline of one town will affect the system as a whole. It has already been mentioned that the mountainous nature of most parts of Wales gave rise to dispersed small settlements with often infertile hinterlands and, in south Wales particularly, the populations of towns grew in the modern period for reasons other than the servicing of the tributary area, ie, industry and/or the development of port and resort functions. Auerbach's rank size rule probably also has little application for the same reasons.\textsuperscript{49} Similarly, Lewis' examination of the system of Shropshire's small towns in terms of centrality, function, connectivity and nodality by hierarchical ranking utilising the central place methodology is probably of little utility in any analysis of Welsh towns in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

\textsuperscript{47} See below, Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{48} Probably the towns of south-west Wales, centred on Haverfordwest and Carmarthen, provide the closest fit.
centuries.\textsuperscript{50} Given the poor internal communications obtaining until the late eighteenth century, it is unsurprising that seven out of eleven of the main Welsh towns were ports lying on the edge of the regions they served.

With the possible exception of the nineteenth-century urban townships of the industrial valleys of south Wales, it is difficult to claim that there ever developed an urban form or plan, or style of architecture, which could be called distinctively or recognisably Welsh. Indigenous or native settlements, such as Tregaron, Holywell and Llanelli, tended to develop in association with a religious foundation but since this type of nucleus was much less dominant than the castle, the settlement tended to lack form - except where the ecclesiastical influence was strong, as at Bangor.\textsuperscript{51} The buildings in Welsh towns of medieval foundation, such as Montgomery, Haverfordwest and Monmouth were, in the English fashion, remodelled in classical style in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, albeit on a miniature scale compared with the activity at Bath, Harrogate or Ludlow where the local economy was able to support spending on a fairly lavish scale; and lack of capital was also the reason for the failure of Builth Wells, after its destruction by fire in 1691, to be rebuilt on the same opulent scale as a Warwick or Blandford Forum: the survival in High Street, Builth of three houses in classical style in a sea of mostly nondescript Victorian structures arranged without recognisable plan can hardly stand comparison with Blandford's characterisation, following rebuilding, as the 'most perfect small town in Georgian England'.

\textsuperscript{50} S. Lewis, 'An historical and geographical study of the small towns of Shropshire 1600-1830', Univ. of Leicester Ph.D. thesis (1990). For a recent critique of the central place theory see P.M. Hohenberg and L.H. Lees, \textit{The Making of Urban Europe 1000-1994} (2nd edn., London, 1995), pp.50-59 (Christaller's model 'rests upon assumptions not found in the real world'). The authors also observe that capitals of large regions (eg, Cologne, Toledo and Prague) and ports (eg, London and Barcelona), often lie near the edge of a region and act as 'gateways or portals into the region not as distance-minimising central places', ibid., p.58.

The point remains valid, however, that, allowing for scale, Welsh towns in layout and appearance were not distinctively different from their English counterparts. Welsh castle towns perhaps have a more individual form, but those which became regional capitals - for example, Brecon, Haverfordwest and Caernarfon, and to some degree, Swansea - are characterised to this day by narrow central streets adjoining the remains of the castle, the streets lined (for the most part) by neo-classical or early Victorian buildings, of a style indistinguishable from that found in many English towns, erected or rebuilt (or existing buildings re-facaded) from the late eighteenth centuries. Not even the minor towns, such as Bala, Dolgellau and Tregaron, can be characterised as 'Welsh' in terms of townscape (albeit social life, focused on the chapel and the language, was certainly Welsh) although the distinctive appearance of Dolgellau, resulting from the extensive use of the dark local building stone, usually prompted comment (not always favourable) by travellers in the early nineteenth century. There were, of course, regional variations based on building materials: for example, the timber framed buildings of north-east Wales and the eastern borders of Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire, and the mudstone of the Machynlleth area reflected what was available locally but, prior to the coming of the railways, this was also the English experience. Rail transport resulted in the slates of north-west Wales, and the blue Pennant grit building-stone of the south Wales coalfield becoming more than of a purely local occurrence, but there was a parallel development in especially the industrial towns of the English midlands and north, where the use of brick and slate became almost universal. From about the 1830s, Welsh nonconformist chapels of classical and then gothic style (and unlikely mixtures of the two) began on the road to ubiquity, as did the genuinely distinctive linear, multi-nucleated mining settlements of the south Wales valleys built of Pennant stone and north Wales slate.
If Welsh towns lacked a distinctive urban 'footprint', it was also to be many years before the Principality was to have anything approaching an homogenous urban consciousness and identity: the trite observation may be made that Cardiff was not designated Wales' capital until 1955. Even today, those living in the south and the north of the Principality hardly consider themselves to be part of a unified whole with the latter continuing to look towards Liverpool rather than Cardiff for urban identity, and harbouring a resentment, with perhaps some justification, that the south receives more than its fair share of public largesse.

The Acts of Union 1536-1543 had little effect on Wales' attenuated and undeveloped urban system and it would take a combination of trade and commerce with the English towns and overseas, the exploitation of the mineral resources and the development of some Welsh towns as resorts before a Welsh urban system of sorts emerged. And, crucially, these developments, particularly those affecting resorts, were brought to the notice of the English tourist through the published works of travellers and topographers from outside the Principality, starting with Defoe in the 1720s. Wales in the later eighteenth century, especially after the closure of the Continent because of war, became a fashionable and 'picturesque' place to visit, and the urban Welsh became aware, probably for the first time, of the economic advantages of a tourist trade, and the need to improve the fabric, appearance and attractions of a town to compete effectively; and the necessity also of developing a marketing strategy. Thus, the larger Welsh towns became conscious of the advantages of emulating the advances of their English neighbours; and, in probably exactly the same way as the provincial towns of England, Welsh towns at the end of the eighteenth century, benefitting from the development of commerce and industry, and influenced by London and

provincial towns such as Bristol and Bath, were able to offer luxury goods previously available only to the upper classes, and provide 'polite' diversions such as balls, races, the theatre, circulating libraries, sea bathing and boat trips.\textsuperscript{53} Significantly (although many eighteenth and nineteenth travellers to Wales would disagree), Dr Johnson in 1774 felt able to remark that 'Wales is so little different from England that it offers nothing to the speculation of the traveller'.\textsuperscript{54} This period was, however, to be a time of transition for many Welsh towns, and the 'equilibrium' achieved over a period of 500 years was about to be shattered by the next stage of industrialisation.

(iii) Metamorphosis: the south Wales towns

The accepted view is that, throughout the eighteenth century, Wales was sparsely populated and that this was an impediment to economic and industrial expansion, and to the development of towns. As we have seen, however, urban specialisation in Wales, after about 1750, was regionally specific, with most activities - industrial, commercial and the provision of services, concentrated in the south. This region was the most populous and urbanised in Wales and its towns - from Haverfordwest, Carmarthen, Swansea and Neath in the west to Cardiff, Abergavenny Newport and Monmouth in the east - were well established before 1700. These were all castle towns and ancient boroughs, served by good hinterlands and reasonably good communications. With the exception of Abergavenny and Monmouth, they were lowland towns located on or near the coast. The Glamorgan towns were well sited to benefit from the exploitation of mineral wealth which was, in the case of Swansea, situate on its doorstep. As market centres, the towns of south Wales serviced the surrounding countryside drawing in farmers to sell their produce and seek out the services of craftsmen

\textsuperscript{54} Boswell's \textit{Life of Johnson}, quoted in Jenkins, \textit{The making of a ruling class}, p.250.
and the professions. Migrants from the countryside to the rapidly expanding industrial settlements of the region tended to bring their own culture and language, but the nature of the topography in Glamorgan and Gwent - parallel valleys running roughly from north to south - gave rise to self-contained, rather introspective communities, characteristics which survived industrialisation and traces of which can still be detected today in the antipathy, now more ceremonial than real, between valley and valley.

The development of the non-ferrous industries in Swansea and Neath from the early eighteenth century, and the iron industry in Merthyr Tydfil from the 1760s, led directly to the commercial exploitation of coal, improvements to port and harbour facilities and, from the 1790s, construction of the canals so important to the opening out of the interior of the region. For the first time, mining, smelting, port and maritime activities were becoming fully integrated and the potential for urban development could be fully realised. The four ports of Newport, Cardiff, Neath and Swansea became major urban centres in the nineteenth century - but also developed as centres of manufacturing, trade and commerce. This development in turn stimulated other industries and activities, such as farming, which was obliged to expand to feed the growing populations of the south Wales towns, and the production of consumer goods and services, again to meet the demands of urban growth. This was an experience shared with the industrialising towns of England such as Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield. And it should not be forgotten that much of the capital which stimulated the growth of Welsh towns came from England. Swansea's story was, however, different from probably all other Welsh towns and most English towns:

55 Carter, Towns of Wales, pp.30-3; Jenkins, History of Modern Wales, pp.34-5; G.E. Jones and Dai Smith (eds.), The People of Wales (Llandysul, 1999), p.112.
whereas the foundation of its modern success in the nineteenth century was built on the
exploitation of mineral resources on both sides of the Bristol Channel, it is arguable that the
absence of those resources would not have impaired its growth and economic development as
a port, resort and regional centre. Whilst unlikely to have challenged the claim to capital
status of the more accessible Cardiff, Swansea without the copper-smoke may conceivably
have become, and remained, Wales' premier resort.

4. Has the study of Welsh towns been neglected?

(i) The Welsh town in literature

The Welsh town came late to the notice of the historian. No town history of any quality was
produced in Wales before the mid-seventeenth century: most Welsh towns had to await a
proper treatment until the second quarter of the nineteenth century when industrialists,
businessmen and clerics began to replace country gentlemen in the role of recorder of civic
and borough history. Even after this, there have been few attempts at producing
comparative or theoretical studies of Welsh towns and the Welsh urban system. The
foundation and early growth of planted medieval Welsh towns, has, however, received
attention from modern historians and the pace and degree of development of individual

58 The historian of the Bulkeley family, William Williams, produced a history of Beaumaris,
Anglesey at this time: see Griffiths, 'The Study of the Welsh Medieval Borough', pp.1-17.
Nineteenth century studies include Lewis Weston Dillwyn, Contributions towards a History
of Swansea (Swansea, 1840); G. Grant Francis Copper Smelting in the Swansea District
(Swansea, 1867).

59 Recent works on single towns include A.H. Dodd (ed.), A History of Wrexham,
Denbighshire (Wrexham, 1957); W. Rees, Cardiff (Cardiff, 1969); K. Kissack, Monmouth:
The Making of a County Town (Monmouth, 1975); H.P. Richards, A History of Caerphilly
(Cowbridge, 1975); Lewis, Born on a Perilous Rock; G. Eaton, A History of Neath (Swansea,
1987); L. Lloyd, The Port of Caernarfon, 1793-1900 (Caernarfon, 1989); W.S.K. Thomas,
Georgian and Victorian Brecon: Portrait of a Welsh County Town (Llandysul, 1993); E.L.
Chappell, History of the Port of Cardiff 2nd edn. (Cardiff, 1994); D. Miles, The Ancient
Borough of Newport in Pembrokeshire (Haverfordwest, 1995); Miles, A History of the Town
and County of Haverfordwest (Llandysul, 1999). Davies' Cardiff and the Marquesses of Bute
is an interesting examination of Cardiff as a location of aristocratic power and control.
towns examined in an attempt to explain a town's relative position in the urban hierarchy through time. An adequate water supply and an effective means of communication were obvious prerequisites for future success. A settlement, whether of English or native origin, without at least town walls (albeit these were later built as much for status as defence), or a market place enjoying franchise rights, or a quay or other effective means of interchange of goods, or a reasonably productive hinterland, was always going to find difficulty in surviving once the military imperative had disappeared.60

The changing nature of the settlement pattern in Wales has been considered by Matthew Griffiths who concurs with the view that many Welsh towns were artificial in nature and that once the original reason for the creation of the military borough had gone, a town could decline and even disappear.61 Using Leonard Owen's figures for seventeenth century urban population, Griffiths draws attention to the small scale of even the most economically successful Welsh towns.62 By the late seventeenth century, Wrexham was the most populous centre with about 3,200; Carmarthen, Brecon and Haverfordwest each had about 2,000, and Caernarfon, Cardiff and Swansea about 1,700 each. Many 'towns' during this period were much smaller, the larger centres such as Cowbridge, Cardigan, Montgomery and Newtown having populations of between 500 and 1000. Even the most populous Welsh town would thus rank at the bottom of the English urban hierarchy, although, arguably, function rather than size is a more accurate indication of regional and local importance in the Welsh context.

Thus, to refer to 'urban' history in the Welsh context before the nineteenth century is perhaps to misuse the term: the very modest size of Welsh towns limited their political and economic influence and facilitated gentry interference with corporate life and borough affairs.63

In one of the few studies of Welsh urban life and institutions in the Tudor period, the gradual absorption of the Welsh into urban life is rightly stressed, as is the recognition that the cramped conditions in towns required amelioration by the expansion of the town beyond walls originally built as defence against the Welsh. The first factor enabled the second and resulted, for those towns favourably sited, in an improvement in trading facilities, in a general revitalisation and in 'Cymricisation' as more Welsh people were attracted to, and appreciated the advantages of, urban life. The Welsh language began, for the first time, to enjoy a degree of equality with English, and started to make itself heard in commercial life, the Church and local government.64

Harold Carter's valuable contribution to the scholarship of Welsh towns is, of course, well known, and he is one of the few commentators to consider Welsh urban development from a theoretical standpoint. In his *Towns of Wales*, and in various other books and essays, Carter examines the processes of urban change through time, and notes the persistence in some towns of certain features:

The physical structure of the town clearly reflects its industrial character, for the varied regions, the commercial core, the terraces of nineteenth century cottages, the deteriorated zone, the industrial region itself and the modern estates are all

fundamentally products of the town's industrial history in the last two centuries.

But the physical plan of the town still largely reflects its origin as a planned bastide.65

Carter considers the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Wales to be a period (following
the vicissitudes of the previous two centuries) of repositioning of the roles of particular towns
in the local and regional economies of Wales with some towns surviving and flourishing, and
others declining and disappearing once the original reason for their foundation had faded and
in the absence of an economically viable hinterland. No sooner had a period of stability been
reached by the early eighteenth century, and a pattern of service or market centres
established, than the industrial and urban revolutions of the late eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries wrought disruption. Whilst he is concerned to ask why an urban settlement is where
it is, why it has survived, in what form it has survived and developed, and its relationship
with the outside world, Carter also considers the geographical and spatial analysis of
settlements and their rank-order, and recognises that one of the 'problems' of urbanisation, or
rather industrialisation, in Wales concerned the effect of the process on the Welsh language
and culture, and the transformation of a way of life which had developed in a rural
environment, and in small, closely-knit communities. Here, Carter agrees with Brinley
Thomas that, far from later urbanisation destroying or damaging the Welsh language and
culture, it helped preserve it in that rural settlements were effectively 'transported' into an
urban environment through the tendency of migrants to the new industries to group together
and so preserve their former way of life as a means of defence against the effects of new and

65 Carter, Towns of Wales, p.247 (referring to Flint). See also (eg) Urban Essays: Studies in
the Geography of Wales (1970); ‘The Growth and Decline of Welsh Towns', in D. Moore
(ed.) Wales in the Eighteenth Century (Swansea, 1976), pp.47-62; Transformations in the
spatial structure of Welsh towns in the nineteenth century 'Trans Hon Soc Cymm (1980),
pp.175-200; 'Urban and Industrial Settlement in the Modern Period, 1750-1914' in D. Huw
Owen (ed.), Settlement and Society in Wales (Cardiff, 1989), pp.269-296; (with C. Roy
Lewis), Urban Geography of England and Wales; Growth of the Welsh City System.
alien surroundings.\textsuperscript{66} A recurrent theme of Carter's work, especially his \textit{Towns of Wales}, is the lack of a true urban tradition in Wales - exemplified by the building, separate from its commercial core, of Cardiff's administrative centre Cathays Park: 'buildings in parkland' rather than a 'concentrated urban precinct'.\textsuperscript{67} An examination of Swansea's history does not suggest that this view is open to serious challenge.

English towns were important to the Welsh economy - and had a profound effect on them in cultural terms. Philip Jenkins' examination of the role of local gentry in bringing new ideas and fashions from London, Bristol and Bath is of relevance to the transformation of Welsh towns, particularly the impact on the built environment of the phenomenon referred to by urban historians as 'the commercialisation of leisure'. Ease of communication by water with Bristol and Bath was an important factor in the assimilation of these new ideas and fashions, and the adoption of 'polite' entertainments and attitudes, and their dissemination throughout the middling classes and lower down the social scale.\textsuperscript{68} The claim is made that, as a result of this process, Swansea became, from about 1800, capital of the new economic region of south Wales (and, in the process, unshackled its economy from that of Bristol), a status apparently strengthened by the founding there, in 1804, of the \textit{Cambrian}, Wales' first newspaper; and the construction of public buildings and houses for the elite in the fashionable areas of the Burrows and overlooking Swansea Bay. The integration of the Welsh urban system with the English, hardly started in the sixteenth century following the Acts of Union, was taken forward by these processes affecting Welsh towns in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

\textsuperscript{67} Carter, \textit{Towns of Wales}, p.262.  
centuries. Additionally, according to Jenkins, the demographic crisis affecting the Glamorgan gentry in the seventeenth century had contributed to an anglicisation of this elite, and financial difficulties forced them to exploit the minerals under their lands.

The fortunes of ordinary working people and the poor are not, however, much considered in these works. This class, essential of course to the conduct of industry, constituted a large proportion of those dwelling in town and country, and their lives were a daily battle for food, warmth and shelter, and against an early death. Their conditions and prospects appear gradually to have improved throughout the eighteenth century, particularly through the agency of nonconformity and education. This class of people tends to emerge in contemporary records only when the status quo of the better-off is threatened: for example, the riots of the 1790s caused by a general rise in prices from the 1750s, especially in wheat and barley.69 The rise in the cost of living outpaced wages and moved the Swansea copper workers to petition local magistrates in 1793 that 'the advance upon Corn, Cheese, Butter, Shoes and every article necessary for our Sustenance is two Thirds dearer than what it was some years back when the wages was equal to what it is at this period'.70 The urban poor were dangerously vulnerable to increases in the price of corn, and the resentment caused by the perceived antisocial activities in the market place of badgers, forestallers and engrossers was a catalyst to rioting. Urban rioters appear, for the most part, to have been industrial wage earners, artisans and small property owners and their anger was directed against farmers, corn suppliers and bakers - in other words, the controllers of the staple food supply, and those sections of society seen as being responsible for high prices. By 1810, the target had been

70 Quoted in Jones, *Before Rebecca*, pp.229-30.
widened to include the local gentry and the view is that, by about 1830, the urban working class in parts of south Wales had become radicalised. The 'community solidarity' thereby encouraged developed later into the Rebecca and Chartist movements and, as referred to above, helped to preserve the Welsh language and culture imported from the countryside. The change corresponded with industrialisation and the resulting rapid growth of many Welsh towns which appeared to affect the incidence of crime as workers and their families were crowded together in often appalling circumstances, many turning to drink as a solace.\textsuperscript{71}

The necessary pre-conditions for the industrialisation and urban development of south Wales - a favourable social structure, capital accumulation, market demand, confidence - were, it appears, delayed for most of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{72} Industrial development and growth seem to have arrived after the 1760s with the improvement in communications, advances in technology and increase in the availability of capital and labour. Most of the individuals responsible for the early south Wales enterprises came from outside - mainly from Bristol and the Midlands. They were able to recognise that the area had an unbeatable combination of a plentiful supply of accessible coal within reasonable distance of the existing, if undeveloped, ports. Taking Cornish ore to Swansea and Neath to be smelted resulted indirectly in the development of the coal export trade: vessels could avoid a return journey in ballast. Also, it was considered that coal and labour in the Swansea area were cheap, giving the region a substantial advantage. In 1727, Robert Morris gave the price of coal at Holywell

\textsuperscript{71} G.A. Williams, \textit{The Merthyr Rising} (London, 1978); Williams, \textit{When Was Wales?} (Harmondsworth, 1985); D.J.V. Jones, \textit{Crime in Nineteenth Century Wales} (Cardiff, 1992). Jones concludes from the evidence of criminal statistics that, in the first half of the nineteenth century, there was both a genuine increase in delinquent behaviour and less tolerance of it - the latter arising in part out of anxiety over the rapidly increasing population and uncontrolled urban expansion: Jones, pp.48, 59.

\textsuperscript{72} The effect of this process was referred to by historians of some twenty or thirty years ago as 'take-off'.

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as three times greater than at Swansea. Labour was mostly recruited locally. In 1740, fewer
than 200 persons were employed; by 1750, 500 were employed in smelting with the number
employed in coal mining substantially increasing, so that by the 1750s smelting was
described by the traveller Richard Pococke as the 'great support' of the Swansea area.73
Whilst the number of persons employed in smelting was perhaps never very great, those
indirectly dependent on the industry made up a significant proportion of the increasing urban
population of south-west Wales. In 1823, it was estimated that smelting on the river Tawe
employed about 1,000 but supported from 8,000 to 10,000. And about 80% of the coal
leaving Swansea was shipped in vessels which brought the copper ore.74

The industrialisation of south Wales has probably received more attention from historians
and industrial archaeologists than any other aspect of modern Welsh history, the general view
being that the metal industries were the main generators of economic growth in the
eighteenth century, bringing economic 'take-off' and stimulating the development of the coal
and ancillary industries leading in turn to the passing at the end of the eighteenth and
beginning of the nineteenth centuries of Acts of Parliament for the construction of canals and
improvement of harbours for the south Wales ports.75 For the first time, mining, smelting,
port and maritime activities were becoming integrated and the potential for urban
development for the four main ports of Cardiff, Swansea, Neath and Newport could be fully

73 J.J. Cartwright, 'Pococke's Travels through England', (1734-64), Camden Soc. 2, (London,
1888-9).
74 Roberts, 'Industrial Expansion', pp.115-7; Roberts, 'The Development and Decline of the
Copper and other Non-Ferrous Metal Industries in South Wales', Trans Hon Soc Cymm
(1957), pp.84-9; Davies, Economic History of South Wales pp.133-8; W. Rees, Industry
75 For example, Roberts, 'Development and Decline', pp.78-115; 'Industrial Expansion',
pp.109-126; Enterprise and capital for non-ferrous metal smelting in Glamorgan, 1694-1924',
Morganwg, 32 (1979), pp.48-82; A.H. John, The Industrial Development of South Wales
(Cardiff, 1950); Davies, Economic History of South Wales; W.G. Thomas, 'The Coal Mining
realised. The process in Swansea was not dissimilar, although complicated by powerful competing interests and the town's other aspirations apparently antithetical to industrial development. One obvious, and devastating, effect of industry, little commented by upon contemporaries but which must have detracted from Swansea's attractions as a resort, was the indiscriminate siting of the works in and the dumping of waste on open countryside and in close proximity to existing houses, with seeming indifference to the consequences, an attitude which reflected a new ethos: 'Mineral wealth was at a premium, and was to be sought at the expense of the countryside. The stage was set for the coming despoliation of the natural beauty of Glamorgan'. This was an ethos the effects of which Swansea (and much of the remainder of industrial south Wales) was not able finally to shake off until the later decades of the twentieth century.

There is, therefore, a not insubstantial body of literature concerning Welsh towns although much of it relates to Welsh urbanisation as a consequence of events such as medieval plantation and nineteenth century industrialisation. Wales has, however, been neglected by contemporary English urban historians. Jonathan Barry considers that it is only since about 1980 that attention has been given to towns in the remainder of the British Isles, utilising models developed in relation to the study of English towns. This appears to be the reason (apart from lack of space) for not including any examination of other than English towns in his volume. Penelope Corfield's contribution to this work (albeit written in 1976), mentions not a single Welsh town, despite the title of her essay, and the assumption appears to be that

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77 K.J. Hilton (ed.), *The Lower Swansea Valley Project* (London, 1967), and see below the references to S. Hughes, *Copperopolis* (Aberystwyth, 2000).
the models for English towns have equal applicability in Wales. Corfield reviews the definitions of 'town' and concludes that it is difficult to accord settlements with fewer than 5000 inhabitants the dignity of being fully urban (despite having a number of attributes of a town) 'since their size was so small'.\textsuperscript{79} No urban settlement in Wales at this period, and none until the end of the eighteenth century, qualified as a town according to this definition. In addition, the proper study of 'small' towns has, until recently been neglected.\textsuperscript{80} The reasoning for the neglect of the study of the towns of Wales, Scotland and Ireland appears to be, therefore, that first, they were not large enough to merit attention, and secondly, they are not English. As Barry points out, however, such study would surely cast light on the development of English towns, especially those towns (for example, Chester, Shrewsbury and Bristol) with strong trading links with Wales.\textsuperscript{81} And in the same way that the work of Jan de Vries provides, through a comparative study, insights into how the English urban network can be explained by factors specific to England, so a study of Welsh towns can perhaps identify those circumstances which made the development of the Welsh urban system peculiarly Welsh.\textsuperscript{82}

(ii) Swansea: history and literature

It has been suggested that Swansea merits study because of its special place in the history of the development of Welsh towns. This is not an opinion advanced with the benefit of hindsight: travellers and residents in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries clearly recognised that the town was distinctive because they wrote about it extensively. And one

\textsuperscript{80} P. Clark, 'Small Towns in England 1550-1850: national and regional population trends' in P. Clark (ed.), Small Towns in Early Modern Europe (Cambridge, 1995), pp.91-2; Clark, 'Small Towns', p.734.
\textsuperscript{81} Barry, 'Introduction', pp.5-6.
distinguished nineteenth century resident in particular went to great pains to ensure, through
the preservation of municipal and other records threatened by the depredations of mice and
damp, that Swansea's history would be more accessible to future historians than that of
probably any other town in Wales, and many in England.83

Two of Swansea's earliest historians were Lewis Weston Dillwyn (1778-1855) and George
Grant Francis. Dillwyn came from one of Swansea's most prominent families and was a
scientist, member of Parliament and owner of the Cambrian Pottery. His privately published
Contributions towards a History of Swansea (1840) drew on the town's rich source of
original documents surviving from medieval times and consists of extracts from early
charters and parish and Corporation records and accounts, with commentary.84 Contributions
is a good starting point for a historian of Swansea as are the works of George Grant Francis
(1814-82), soldier, businessman and antiquarian, and founder of the town's Royal Institution
of South Wales. Grant Francis' The Smelting of Copper in the Swansea District is a
miscellany of material illustrating the smelting of copper over a period of three hundred years
and its main interest lies in the fact that Grant Francis knew many of the individuals involved
in the industry in the nineteenth century and records their conversations and quotes from their
letters.85 He is informative on J.H. Vivian's attempts to find a remedy for the ill-effects of the

83 Source material may be found at the NLW, Aberystwyth; in Swansea, at the West
Glamorgan Record Office, University College, Swansea (the records here are particularly
valuable); the Central Library, the Guildhall and the Royal Institution of South Wales; in
Cardiff, at the Central Library. There are a number of helpful websites relating to Swansea's
history, including www.genuki.org.uk/big/wal/GLA/Swansea. Source documentation and
literature relating to Swansea are usefully summarised under topic headings in R. Griffiths
(ed.), The City of Swansea: Challenges and Change (Stroud, 1990), pp. 318-329 (hereafter,
Swansea Challenges).
84 Dillwyn's diary covering a period from 1817 to 1852 provides a glimpse of his busy life
centred on Swansea: see H.J. Randall and W. Rees (eds.), 'The Diary of Lewis Weston
Dillwyn' South Wales and Monmouth Record Society Publication 5, 1963.
85 Francis, Smelting of Copper (2nd ed.).
copper smoke on the atmosphere and vegetation of the region. It is to Grant Francis and his
efforts in preserving many of the town's municipal documents that urban historians owe a
debt of gratitude.

These histories are, however, essentially narrative and descriptive rather than analytical and
the same may be said of Swansea's other well known historian of the early twentieth century,
W.H. Jones, although Glanmor Williams has described his work as constituting 'one of the
most distinguished contributions to urban history written on any Welsh town during this
century'. The History of the Port of Swansea is the more useful work for the later period of
Swansea's history and is a detailed account culled largely from the records of the
Corporation, the Harbour Trustees and the Paving Commissioners. It describes the physical
development of the port and its infrastructure, shipping and shipbuilding, the trade of the port
and the industries of its hinterland. The work is particularly useful as a 'quarry' for material in
a more accessible form than the source documents, and for providing a narrative framework
onto which other events in Swansea's history may be hung.

Swansea's early history and development as a castle town and borough is summarised by
W.R.B. Robinson and Glanmor Williams; D. and M. Walker concentrate more on the people
attracted to and living in the early town and, using the evidence of surnames, the Walkers try
to assess, quite convincingly, how long the borough remained an alien Anglo-Norman
settlement before being settled successfully by the Welsh. W.S.K. Thomas provides a much

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86 W.H. Jones, The History of Swansea and the Lordship of Gower (Carmarthen, 1920);
Jones, The History of the Port of Swansea (Carmarthen, 1922); G. Williams, 'W.H. Jones:
87 W.R.B. Robinson, 'Swansea' in Boroughs of Medieval Wales, pp.263-288; G. Williams,
'Before The Industrial Revolution', in Glanmor Williams (ed.), Swansea: an Illustrated
History (Swansea, 1990), pp.1-28 (hereafter, Swansea Illustrated); Walker, 'Anglo-Welsh
Town' in Swansea Challenges, pp.1-16.
fuller narrative, relying heavily on the Corporation and church records from the mid-fifteenth century preserved by Grant Francis.\textsuperscript{88} The work does not, however, attempt to place Swansea in a wider context of urban development either in Wales or elsewhere. One of the primary reasons for Swansea's early success was, of course, its position on the coast and the income derived from its function as a port. Port Books are an important source of information on the basic economy of a port and the country and the Welsh Port Books covering the reign of Elizabeth I have been analysed by E.A. Lewis, W. Rees and D.T. Williams.\textsuperscript{89} The last two commentaries are useful for Swansea in that they provide a convenient tool for assessing the increase in trade over a period of a century. There appear to be no Port Books for Swansea surviving after 1719. In both 1607 and 1709, Swansea's chief export by far was coal and culm. In 1607 at least 930 tons of coal were shipped from Swansea; in 1709 this had increased to 9,861 tons (coastwise) and 2532 tons (to the Irish ports). Exports to the Channel Isles and the Continent were non-existent at this date because of the war in Europe; but, by 1714, following the treaty of Utrecht 1713, exports had recovered to 3,443 tons and continued to increase for each of the following years for which Port Books survive. The destinations for both 1607 and 1709 were mainly the west country ports and, by the latter year, the southern Irish ports had become important. Other cargo carried included (in 1607) Welsh friese and canvas; by 1709, the variety had greatly increased and included tallow, foodstuffs, leather, livestock, woollen cloth, stockings, hats, tobacco, copper and other metals. Imports were negligible.

\textsuperscript{88} The History of Swansea From Rover Settlement to the Restoration (Llandysul, 1990), based on Thomas' Ph.D. thesis 'The history of Swansea from the accession of the Tudors to the Restoration Settlement', Univ. of Wales (1958).

Intimately connected with Swansea's progress and ultimate success as a port, the exploitation of minerals in the Swansea and Neath areas from the early eighteenth century has received much attention from modern historians. As mentioned above, R.O. Roberts has written prolifically on the non-ferrous smelting industries of south Wales, examining both the technical and financial aspects. A glimpse of the later history of Swansea's copper industry is provided by W.R. Lambert based on the impressions of a visitor to the town in 1850. By this date, Swansea had long abandoned all pretensions to resort status, and it was to be some years before an effective remedy for the nuisance of copper smoke was discovered: '....inhabitants feel the necessity for endurance, and the copper masters have long since ceased to be harrassed with law proceedings on account of this nuisance'. Swansea had other industries, one of the most important of which was the manufacture of earthenware pottery and, for a short period from 1814, a soft-paste porcelain which quickly gained a high reputation. Whilst the coverage of this important topic is essential reading for an understanding of the reasons for Swansea's economic growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the effect on Swansea's development as a town and the physical effects on it of the

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90 For example, P.R. Reynolds, 'Industrial Development' in Swansea Illustrated, pp.29-56; T. Boyns, 'Industrialisation' in Swansea Challenges, pp.34-50; D.T. Williams, The Economic Development of the Swansea District to 1921 (Cardiff, 1940); Hughes, Copperopolis; R. Rees, King Copper (Cardiff, 2000)


influx of those attracted by the prospect of work in the copperworks, coal mines and Pottery has tended to be neglected in the studies of the town's industries.94

The growth of industry had other consequences. Although the villages of the lower Swansea Valley - for example Landore (Glandwr) and Morriston - legally became part of the borough of Swansea in 1835, in reality they remained separate self-contained communities linked to and dependent upon the local industrial works. Each township had its own shops, public houses, chapels and churches on which social and cultural life centred. A few, such as Morriston, were planned and constructed in the eighteenth century by industrialists; most grew in a haphazard manner in response to market demands; all came into existence to provide accommodation of varying (mostly low) quality for the workers so important to those who employed them. Until the coming of public transport workers, of necessity, had to live near the source of their employment and the development of a succession of nucleated industrial settlements running north along both banks of the river Tawe was the natural consequence. According to I.G. Jones, those who lived and laboured in the townships considered themselves independent of Swansea; their language and culture were predominantly Welsh, and their spiritual life centred on the nonconformist chapel of which there grew to be many. Numerous workers migrated over relatively short distances from adjoining parishes in Breconshire, Glamorganshire and Carmarthenshire, but were able to retain their ties of kinship and culture, so that the chapel and the Welsh language became the twin cornerstones of the new communities.95 Skills acquired in the copperworks were passed

94 Hughes' Copperopolis excepted.
from father to son and reinforced community solidarity over time. These factors, vividly described by Jones, defined the economic and cultural differences between the borough of Swansea and its townships, and exercised a decisive influence over the development of the latter. Swansea's urban culture at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries was of longer standing and more diverse than that of its related communities, and came to be increasingly well patronised by the middle and professional classes, industrialists and local gentry. Swansea became a place of business, trade and commerce, and the social mix and range of occupations appear to have reflected that fact. The contrast between original town and satellite villages in terms of social make-up, buildings and cultural life, whilst probably not uniquely found at Swansea was certainly an unusual feature of its urban history; and Morriston was probably the earliest planned industrial village in Britain. 

Swansea Bay was recognised by eighteenth century travellers and commentators as having exceptional natural beauty and Swansea's emergence as a fashionable seaside resort, a reputation which existed uneasily with the extension of the copperworks, corresponded with a similar development at Aberystwyth and Tenby. Sea bathing as a cure for a variety of ailments had been popularised from the 1720s although those who visited for this reason soon also sought and expected entertainment and amusement. Seaside resorts were, therefore, never exclusively health resorts, and Swansea and the other Welsh resorts were no exception. Swansea's elevation to resort status was delayed until the difficulty of access by road was partly overcome with the introduction of the turnpike system, but innkeepers were advertising in the Gloucester and Bristol newspapers by the 1780s, and mail coach services between Bristol and Swansea, with links to London, were becoming more regular at this time.

97 Jenkins, 'Wales', p.142.
as were boat sailings to the west country and beyond. Local innkeepers, and others, recognised the importance of being able to offer good accommodation at reasonable rates, and standards improved. From 1789, there is evidence that the Corporation played an increasingly active role in improving the town and its facilities. Amusements and entertainments were developed from the end of the eighteenth century including a theatre, walks and pleasure grounds, a bathing house, assembly rooms, libraries and races. Houses fit to accommodate upper class visitors were built on the Burrows, and elsewhere. The Cambrian, from its first appearance in 1804, lost no opportunity to extol the virtues of Swansea as a place of fashionable resort, printing lists of genteel visitors during the May to October season. Local guidebooks, directories and tidetables were equally fulsome in their praise. The descriptions of (the mostly English) travellers and visitors were usually complimentary, and almost unanimously so in relation to the natural beauty of Swansea Bay. Some travellers were, however, critical of the diversions on offer, when compared to other resorts; a number were disapproving of the effects of the copper smoke. But local industry was not always regarded in a negative light: the Cambrian Pottery and the copperworks were recommended as agreeable diversions or the latter even as a sublime experience - and there was an opinion that held that the claimed harmful effects of the copper smoke on the town were exaggerated.

By the 1820s, however, Swansea's pretensions to resort status were becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. The main primary sources for the story of Swansea's role as a resort are the Bristol and Gloucester papers and, from 1804, the Cambrian. As mentioned above, much useful, if quite often conflicting, material can be found in the accounts of travellers, in local guide books and directories, and the commentary in the annual tide tables. From 1789, when the Corporation became more involved in the development of the town, the Hall Day Minute
Books also contain much of interest. These sources are usefully brought together and linked by a narrative by David Boorman; Peter Stead draws on much the same source material and C. Price stresses the importance of Swansea as a centre for provincial theatre (it was here that Edmund Kean first earned popular acclaim). Bernard Morris' essays on the appearance, fabric and architecture of Swansea of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are also helpful since he often utilises contemporary views of the town and relates them to the modern city; Morris is also informative on working class housing and the expansion of the town from about 1820. The location, layout, construction and design of housing in the industrial villages are comprehensively covered by Hughes.

Given the relatively abundant primary sources for Swansea, there are surprisingly few theses or dissertations examining the eighteenth century. W.S.K. Thomas' work on an earlier period has been mentioned but there is no equivalent study dealing in its entirety with the most critical phase of Swansea's development. J.M. Davies considers the growth of Swansea and its environs from Roman times to the nineteenth century, and concentrates mainly on the growth of the town and its industrial villages at the end of his period, making the point that the rapid and uncontrolled expansion of the town from 1800 to 1845 overwhelmed the means

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available for assimilation, with predictable consequences.\textsuperscript{101} That those consequences were
not as serious as those found in many other industrialising towns in England and Wales could
perhaps be attributed to the efforts of certain of the industrialist families, notably the Vivians,
to provide decent (for the time) housing, and other social facilities. Davies provides a useful
breakdown by occupation, based on the census returns from 1811, of Swansea inhabitants.
Studies by others of a more than peripheral relevance to an examination of eighteenth and
nineteenth century Swansea include T. Ridd's analysis of municipal government in Swansea,
and R.R. Toomey's study of the Vivian copper firm.\textsuperscript{102} Elizabeth Parkinson's synthesis of the
Hearth tax records is an indispensable starting point for an assessment of the rate of growth
of population in the pre-census era.\textsuperscript{103} For the period after that under examination here,
J.C.M. Rees utilises the 1851 and 1871 Census Enumerators Books to show how the pattern
of residence evolved in Swansea in the mid-nineteenth century. Her analysis reveals (perhaps
unsurprisingly) that social status was the major factor in determining residential location with
the middle and upper middle classes leaving the town centre and congregating together in
areas such as the Burrows and on the western edge of the town, particularly on the lower
slopes of Townhill, resulting in a separation of home and work. Rees claims that the migrant
status distributions show (comparing 1851 and 1871) a distinct, although weakening,
linguistic and cultural divide between English and Welsh populations, and highly clustered
'ethnic communities' for Welsh and foreign-born sub-groups. In general, the English born
tended to be of a higher social status than the Welsh and other groups, and the residential

\textsuperscript{101} J.M. Davies, 'The Growth of settlement in the Swansea Valley', Univ. of Wales M.A.
(1942).
\textsuperscript{102} T. Ridd, 'The development of municipal government in Swansea in the 19th century',
Univ. of Wales M.A. (1955); R.R. Toomey, 'A study of the firm in the copper and related
industries, with special reference to Vivian and Sons, 1809-1924, Univ. of Wales Ph.D.
(1980).
\textsuperscript{103} E. Parkinson, 'Glamorgan Hearth Tax Records 1664-1673', Univ. of Wales M.A. (1994),
based on PRO, E179/221/294
standard of housing obviously reflected this. The Welsh migrants tended to cluster according to kinship, particularly in the industrial townships, with the chapel a particularly cohesive ingredient; the Irish where the housing was cheapest. This process of segregation clearly would have commenced much earlier than 1851.

Primary and secondary sources suggest, therefore, that for most of its history Swansea has been a major town by Welsh standards, surviving the transition from military base and planned town to market centre and port, and developing other functions with some degree of success. One of the consequences of the nature of its foundation was that, from the outset, English immigrants formed a significant proportion of its population and the English influence, reinforced by trading links with Bristol and the west country, never disappeared. From the fourteenth century, street names were English in form. From at least the sixteenth century, borough and parish records were kept in English albeit the influence of the Welsh language on the spelling of English words is unmistakable. English culture had a strong influence. The spelling of the names of burgesses and aldermen was often anglicised; the choice of Christian names, especially for females, showed a strong preference for the English, and especially the Biblical (the latter a direct product of the Puritan tradition).

Services in church and chapel in the town from the beginning of the eighteenth century were

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105 The Irish settled particularly Greenhill, to the north-east of High Street: see R.T. Price, 'The Origins of the Irish Community in Greenhill, Swansea', Univ. of Wales Dip. Local Hist. (1989); and see also the work of H. Carter, above, pp.38-9.
invariably conducted in English; lessons in educational establishments in the town were usually in English (although this was not the case in schools set up on the periphery, and in the satellite villages). From about the 1780s, and the start of Swansea's development as a resort, the English influence inevitably strengthened; the stock of circulating libraries was overwhelmingly English language; English language plays only were performed at the local theatre; the Cambrian newspaper, founded in 1804, was exclusively English language, services at St Mary's Church were conducted wholly in English. This cross-cultural fertilisation over many centuries may perhaps have imparted a distinctive character to Swansea. The English influence was not, however, all-pervasive; the villages which developed out of the need of English industrial entrepreneurs to provide homes for their workers in the coal and copper industries were overwhelmingly Welsh in character, language and culture, and the resulting tensions and interaction between 'inner' and 'greater' Swansea help to contrast these communities.

There is, however, lacking from the historiography of urban Wales an examination of the development of Swansea from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, and a proper evaluation, through the bringing together of the disparate economic strands, of the foundation of the town's success in the nineteenth century, and its importance to the economy of south Wales and the Bristol channel. Whilst the works considered in this chapter deal with separate aspects, or different periods, of Swansea's development, none considers in detail the overall picture and how each element reacted with or complemented others. And, with a few exceptions, none considers Swansea in the wider urban context.

CHAPTER 2: THE EXPANDING TOWN - THE EVIDENCE OF GROWTH

Contemporary commentators were undoubtedly impressed with the rate of increase of Swansea's population from about 1750 to the beginning of the nineteenth century, some estimating that the population of the town had doubled.¹ Modern historians, when they express any opinion at all, concur with this estimate.² The evidence for Swansea's demographic experience in the eighteenth century may be found in the records of the Hearth Tax and the Compton Census, and, most importantly, the parish records of baptisms, burials and marriages. It appears that no detailed examination has hitherto been undertaken of these sources, as they apply to Swansea, and they suggest a rather greater growth in population for the period than supposed (see Table 2.9 below). The purpose of this chapter is to examine critically the contemporary evidence of Swansea's demography in support of this assertion, and then to attempt to relate this to the depiction of Swansea on maps and plans of the period, so far as they exist, and so trace the physical effect of in-migration on the town and its fabric. In other words, what was the extent of Swansea's population growth in the eighteenth century, and how did the town seek to accommodate the newcomers?

1. Setting the scene

Throughout most of the sixteenth century, the population of England and Wales grew steadily. The later seventeenth century witnessed a decline in the growth rate with growth resuming in the eighteenth century. Following an apparent hiatus in the 1720s and 1730s, the rate of increase continued uninterruptedly from about 1750. The demographic pattern for Glamorgan substantially conformed with the model, but how far did that of Swansea? Many towns in England and Wales in the eighteenth century were magnets for a continuous flow of

¹ See below, for example, the comments of the Rev. Miles Bassett in 1804.
² For example, Jenkins, 'Wales' in Cambridge Urban History, p.140.
immigrants forced off the land by conditions of dire poverty, or attracted by the prospect of high wages on offer in the new industries. It is important to attempt to distinguish, using the available data, natural increase from growth attributable to in-migration: information on the number and provenance of immigrants will help paint a picture of economic growth of a town; natural increase is a pointer to improving social and economic conditions, and the efficacy of any measures for the amelioration of disease (see Chapter 3 below). The curves on a graph will not, of course, follow a smooth upward path; there were many 'blips' attributable to the visitation of contagious disease (often affecting small children most). Also, bad weather often meant poor harvests and a shortage of basic foodstuffs; lack of food lowered resistance to disease with a probable increase in mortality. From the beginning of the nineteenth century there began to emerge a greater understanding of cause and effect, and the vicious circle of poor nutrition, disease and death began to be broken.

In the mid-seventeenth century, settlement in the Swansea Bay area stretched in an insubstantial crescent from Oystermouth and Mumbles in the south-west to Llansamlet in the north-east. The concentration and pattern of population reflected the natural advantages of the locality: the easy working of coal, the growth of the export trade, the location of the ferry crossing over the river Tawe and the marketing of the products of the agricultural hinterland, particularly the Gower peninsular. The town itself, which corresponded to the parish of St Mary, was concentrated around the remains of the castle, the shape and irregular street plan determined by the surviving medieval town walls and ditches to the west and south, the escarpment on which the town is sited, and the location of the river Tawe below and to the east (Fig. 2.1).

3 Williams, Economic Development, p.20.
The core of modern Swansea follows this configuration, the settlement having spread gradually from the mid-eighteenth century in a south-westerly direction along the Bay and to the north-west and north-east respectively along the slopes (and eventually on the top) of Townhill, and up the valley of the river Tawe. By 1650, the town had already begun to extend extra-murally to the north towards the future locations of industrial development. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the northward extension housed the industrial workers; the gentry built and lived in the large houses overlooking the Bay whilst residences of 'the middling sorts' and professionals could be found in close proximity to the poorer housing in
the town, and more exclusively in the Burrows area (developed from the 1770s), and along the lower flanks of Townhill.

From 1717 (the date of foundation of the first copper-smelting works at Landore), the industrial development of Swansea was linked largely to the expansion of the non-ferrous metal industry, with an important contribution from the winning and exporting of coal. But neither copper-smelting nor the tinplate industry required a large workforce: during the eighteenth century the numbers employed in the copper industry increased slowly from 200 (1730s) to 500 (1770s) and to 1000 (1800), with similar numbers engaged in tinplating. The demand of these industries for workers during the eighteenth century was not, therefore, substantial and although the swelling of Swansea's population from 1750 to 1800 (arising also, of course, from the town's development as a port and increasing popularity as a seaside resort) was significant, it was not spectacular, and by no means of the same magnitude as the later demographic coal-induced explosion of urban south Wales from about 1840.

2. Pre-census evidence of population: Hearth Tax, Compton Census and parish registers

Establishing with any degree of accuracy the population of Wales before 1801 is, perhaps, 'a well-nigh impossible task', although the extant evidence of its substantial growth over the previous century is indicative of a developing economy. The available pre-1801 data for Swansea are found in the 1670 Hearth Tax returns and in the Compton Census (1676) and, most importantly, can be determined by an aggregate analysis of the numbers of baptisms, marriages and burials extracted from the parish records through time. Estimates based on the Hearth Tax, House and Window Tax, parish registers and extrapolating back the census data

5 D. Williams, 'A Note on the Population of Wales, 1536-1801, BBCS, 8 (1937), p.359.
give a population for Wales (excluding Monmouthshire) in 1690/1700 of 392,000, and for
Glamorgan, 49,700. Leonard Owen's estimate, based on the Hearth Tax returns (1670), of the
population of Glamorgan is just under 50,000 and of Swansea town 1,733, an increase (for
Swansea) of some 90% since the mid-sixteenth century (see Table 2.1 below).6 According to
Owen's Glamorgan tables, Swansea's population in 1670 fell just short of that of Caernarfon
(1,755) and Cardiff (1,771); some way short of Brecon (2,210) and Carmarthen (2,195); and
substantially short of Wrexham (3,225), which had displaced Denbigh as the regional centre
of the north-east. Swansea was, therefore, as the sixth largest town in Wales in 1670 in terms
of population, a not particularly significant town even by Welsh standards (see Table 2.9
below). In little more than a hundred years, the transformation in Swansea's status and
fortune would be startling.

Hearth Tax records have been used since the seventeenth century as a method of estimating
population. Successive commentators have questioned the reliability of the data but most
accept that the number of hearths assigned to a particular individual in a community is at
least a crude indicator of that individual's relative wealth and position in local society.7 The
tax was one shilling every six months on each hearth in England and Wales (excluding the
poor) and was levied over a period of twenty-seven years (1662-1689). The apparent
simplicity of the exaction is negated by the difficulty of interpretation of the surviving
documents, the changing methods of collection, the variations and errors in the instructions
for collection and the evasion evident from the extant assessments. Little has been published
on the administration and collection of the tax in Wales although this has been remedied to

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some extent recently in relation to Glamorgan. Parkinson considers the 1670 assessment as probably the most accurate and complete, and by applying a multiplier of 4.5 / 5 to the recorded number of households, arrives at a population for Swansea town in the range of 1,520 to 1,680 for an entry of 337 households, inclusive of seventeen not chargeable because 'under the value and poore'. Cardiff's population at the same date, and using the same data, is 1,530 to 1,700; Neath's is 950 to 1,060. A good comparative source for checking the accuracy of Hearth Tax returns is provided by the Compton Census. Whiteman's estimate of the population of Swansea town in 1676 is 1,500 or 1,792 if the term 'conformists' excludes the figure of 292 for nonconformists. At the time of the Compton Census an accurate count of nonconformists was impossible, and the requirement in the Census to return the number of those persons who 'either obstinately refuse or wholly absent themselves from the Communion of the Church of England at such times as by law they are required' caused incumbents a great deal of difficulty. This is likely to have been the case in Swansea, a town where, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, there is evidence of Puritan sympathy. By the reign of Charles I, sympathy had developed into radicalism and by the 1640s Swansea had become the centre of Dissent in Wales, and a town tolerant of nonconformism in all its various hues. It is suggested, therefore, that the return of 292 nonconformists under the Compton Census for Swansea is an under-estimate.

Population estimates from early contemporary sources are summarised in Table 2.1. The estimates are extremely approximate, but are probably the best available. Swansea's recorded population increase between 1550 and 1650 supports the view that Welsh urban life began to revive from about 1600, following the decline from the mid-fourteenth century.

**TABLE 2.1**

Swansea population estimates: early sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>No. recorded</th>
<th>Multiplier</th>
<th>Correction</th>
<th>Est. pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1545/6</td>
<td>Chantry cert.</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>x 1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1563</td>
<td>Bishop's cert.</td>
<td>180 (h'holds)</td>
<td>x 4.68</td>
<td></td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>Cromwell survey</td>
<td>162 (tenements)</td>
<td>x 4.5-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,458-1620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1670</td>
<td>Hearth Tax</td>
<td>337 (h'holds)</td>
<td>x 4.5-5</td>
<td>evasion +150</td>
<td>1,666-1855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1676</td>
<td>Compton Census</td>
<td>353 (adult c'fmsts)</td>
<td>x 4.25</td>
<td>nonc'fmists + 292</td>
<td>1,792</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The registers of baptisms, marriages and burials of St Mary's Church are reasonably complete from an early date although there is a gap for the years 1692 to 1716. There are other breaches in the data most of which can be closed by reference to the Bishop's Transcripts (at NLW). Remaining omissions within a particular year are infrequent and where occurring have in almost all cases been supplied by interpolation by taking the average of five months prior and five months after the missing figure. An early attempt to interpret the parish register data for St Mary's, Swansea was made in 1815 by the well-known local doctor John Charles Collins. Collins estimated the population of the town and parish in 1815 at 10,000 and, after making the unsubstantiated observation that no part of the kingdom was more prolific than Swansea, illustrated by means of a table the gradual increase in population over the preceding thirty five years in five year periods. His aggregated numbers of baptisms ('births'),

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11 The registers are kept at WGAS, Swansea.
12 J.C. Collins, *A Sketch of the Medical Topography of Swansea, South Wales* (London, 1815)
burials and marriages are reasonably accurate. Collins deduced from this data that 'the average of deaths' amounted to 1:84 compared to 1:36 in Middlesex, 1:73 in Cardiganshire and 1:36 in Glamorganshire. Collins' transparent intention was to demonstrate that Swansea was a healthy place to live, the effects of copper-smoke notwithstanding, the inhabitants enjoying a healthy climate, a good diet, reasonable housing conditions and low incidence of disease. This was, of course, substantially the line taken at this time by Swansea Corporation and the *Cambrian* in their attempts to sell the town as a seaside resort.

The only known modern study of eighteenth-century West Glamorgan parish registers is that by Brinley W. Jones. This is a useful comparative investigation of the register entries of the thirty five parishes (including Swansea town and hundred) which make up the present day County of West Glamorgan. Jones' article does not include annual totals of baptisms, marriages and burials for Swansea town and the following data (Table 2.2) have been extracted from the registers and aggregated for the years 1670 to 1800 at ten year intervals (the year 1713 has been substituted for 1710 because of the lack of data for 1710). It is evident from Table 2.2 and the graph in Fig.2.2, that Swansea's population was growing slowly, although somewhat erratically, from 1690 until about 1740 and thereafter steadily as population was drawn in apparently to meet the demands of industry. The high number of burials for 1800 (which, incidentally, corresponds to the substantial number of baptisms and marriages for that year, reflecting the spurt in population growth from the 1770s, and particularly from the 1790s) is atypical and represents a minor mortality crisis (see below).

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**TABLE 2.2**

St Mary's, Swansea: baptisms, burials and marriages, 1670-1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Burials</th>
<th>Marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1670</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33*</td>
<td>7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* interpolation

In Fig. 2.2 below, some of the data for 1692 to 1713 are missing and were reconstructed through interpolation. According to the graph, Swansea's demographic history appears to fall into three stages. First, over the period from 1670 to about 1730, the rise in the number of baptisms may be evidence of modest in-migration. But burials exceed baptisms from the beginning of the period until half way through the 1680s suggesting a major mortality crisis caused by disease.14

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14 A 'major' mortality crisis is deemed to be one where there are at least twice as many deaths as births.
Allowing for this crisis, and for the uncertainty arising out of the missing data 1692-1713, it appears that, during this first stage, the net increase of baptisms over burials points to a steady, if very small, increase in population. The second period falls between the years 1730 and 1760. Burials exceeded baptisms from the mid-1720s to the early 1730s indicating a minor mortality crisis (this crisis was shared by other parishes in west Glamorgan); according to the registers, in the period 1727 to 1731 there were fifty-six more burials than baptisms.\textsuperscript{15} This was, however, the last demographic reverse experienced in south Wales and, from the 1730s on, the gap between baptisms and burials began steadily to widen.\textsuperscript{16} The difference was not, however, spectacular: between 1713 and 1753 the excess of baptisms over burials was only 260, albeit this includes deaths during the minor mortality crisis 1727-1731 and another minor crisis centred on 1753. The overall trend, nevertheless, suggests a steady

\textsuperscript{15} A 'minor' mortality crisis is deemed to be one where there are at least one and one half as many deaths as births.

\textsuperscript{16} Jones, 'Population of Eighteenth Century West Glamorgan', pp. 189-90.

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increase in population especially from about 1750 when the baptism and marriage aggregates 
on the graph take an upward turn at the same time as the recorded number of burials declines. 
The trend corresponds with Swansea's increasing demand for workers in the coal and copper 
industries (as noted above, a high proportion of these workers would have been young with 
consequent effect on the marriage and baptism rates of growth), a demand which was to be 
sustained throughout the third stage suggested by Fig. 2.2: 1760 to 1800, which was, 
however, distorted by the relatively high number of deaths in 1800. The evidence of St 
Mary's parish registers from 1670 to 1800 suggests, therefore, a rising population caused both 
by a natural increase of the number of births over deaths and, particularly from about 1750, 
by in-migration. The process must have been all too obvious to local inhabitants even 
although, like the Rev Miles Bassett in 1804, they were unable to quantify accurately its 
extent and effects. Parish register data must, however, be treated with care and, as should 
become apparent below, the registers became increasingly unreliable after 1800.

The lack, in the eighteenth century, of statistical data comparable with the Hearth Tax returns 
and other national and regional surveys which have been used to derive broad indices of 
demographic change, is an obvious problem. Window Tax returns are unreliable because of 
increasing evasion and exemptions from charge, and similar difficulties attend the 
interpretation of the Land Tax returns. Attention must therefore be concentrated on the 
Anglican and nonconformist registers of baptisms/births, burials/deaths and marriages when 
attempting to extract demographic information such as that presented in Table 2.2 and Fig. 
2.2 above; but at all times the shortcomings of the data must be kept firmly in mind. These 
shortcomings may be summarised as follows. First, those responsible for recording the 
numbers: the parish priest, or his curate, were all too fallible. Mistakes were frequent,

17 See above, and Pryce, 'Parish Registers', p.272 and fn.4.
negligence hardly less so. A failure to record, or to keep the registers up to date, resulted obviously in under-registration. Secondly, many infants died before baptism and therefore were omitted from the register. This was especially serious at the time of high mortality - for example in 1685, of the 108 burials in Swansea, fifty-six were of infants. This problem was exacerbated by the increasing interval between birth and baptism throughout the eighteenth century. Before 1761, the period between birth and baptism in west Glamorgan is unknown, but after that date there is a complete run of data for the town and parish of Swansea. For the years 1761 to 1770 the average interval was eleven days, and by the 1780s this had increased to fourteen days, an interval which appears to be typical for west Glamorgan as a whole.

Some light can be cast on the problem of under-registration of baptisms and burials by comparing the number of male and female baptisms and burials. Under-registration was more likely to affect males because of their higher mortality rate earlier in life. Under-registration may, therefore, disturb the 'standard' ratio of 105 male births to 100 females, as Table 2.3 suggests.18

### Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1701-20</th>
<th>1721-40</th>
<th>1741-60</th>
<th>1761-80</th>
<th>1781-1800</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample of Gower Parishes</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The apparent low number of male births for the years 1741-60 suggested for Swansea owing to death before baptism does not, however, appear to be reflected in the number of baptisms

for those years recorded in Table 2.2 and Fig. 2.2 above, which must call into question the accuracy of the figure in Table 2.3 for Swansea for these years particularly since the figures for Neath and the Gower parishes hardly appear to deviate from the norm. But, nevertheless, Swansea must have experienced a lower incidence of under-registration of baptisms and burials than large adjoining rural parishes such as Llangyfelach where, in 1790, it was recorded that the vicar lived in Pembrokeshire and his curate in Swansea.\textsuperscript{19} The parishioners of the compact parish of St. Mary's, Swansea should not have experienced great hardship in attending church regularly, nor should their resident vicar have faced many obstacles in keeping the registers in reasonable order even although occasionally he would have had to christen infants at their parents' home 'in case of necessity'.\textsuperscript{20} The difficulties faced by parishioners and their often single-handed priest in large upland parishes, particularly in bad weather in winter and when roads were barely passable, are self-evident with predictable consequences for the accuracy of the registers.\textsuperscript{21} Delay in baptism, for whatever reason, increased the number of children buried unbaptised and therefore unregistered.

The recording of marriages was affected by a different problem. Prior to Lord Hardwicke's Act 1753, a valid marriage could be contracted by a man and woman exchanging vows before witnesses. The 1753 Act provided, in effect, that for a marriage to be valid, it must be carried out in a church in accordance with Anglican ceremony. Prior to the Act, many 'clandestine' marriages must have escaped registration, and there does not appear to be any obvious reason why Swansea's marriage records should not have been affected in this way. It is possible to test whether there has been an under registration of marriages by calculating the ratio of marriages to baptisms over a given period. The normal ratio is regarded as being one

\textsuperscript{19} NLW, SD, \textit{St David's Churchwardens' presentments}, 1717.
\textsuperscript{20} NLW, SD/CPD/21 \textit{Bishops' visitation returns}, 1705.
\textsuperscript{21} Jones, 'Population of Eighteenth Century West Glamorgan', p.183.
marriage to four or five baptisms; if higher (eg 1:7 or 1:8), this is an indication of under-registration. Table 2.4 sets out the ratio for Swansea.

### TABLE 2.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Aggregate marriages</th>
<th>Aggregate baptisms</th>
<th>Ratio ma:ba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1671-1690</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1109</td>
<td>1:4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721-1740</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>1295</td>
<td>1:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741-1760</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>1350</td>
<td>1:3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761-1780</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>2037</td>
<td>1:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781-1800</td>
<td>1095</td>
<td>2931</td>
<td>1:2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If it is assumed for these purposes that baptisms are not substantially under-recorded, then it appears that neither are the number of marriages; although the lower ratio of baptisms to marriages after 1760, at a time when the rate of growth of the population of Swansea was undeniably increasing, requires some explanation. Fig.2.2 above shows that the numbers of baptisms, burials and marriages were all increasing, as were the numbers coming to Swansea from outside to find work. Immigrants to Swansea would have been young; many single. It is likely that a significant number married each other (and so those marriages may have been endogamous) thus accounting for the notable increase in the number of marriages seemingly disassociated from the other register data from the 1780s. This is precisely the period regarded as being subject to the most serious problems of under-registration, especially of baptisms. According to Wrigley and Schofield, at the worst point in the 1810s, only 68% of all live born children received Anglican baptism with Anglican burial registers containing the names of barely two-thirds of those who died during the decade.22 This is borne out by a consideration of the Swansea St Mary's baptism register for the period. If it is assumed, therefore, that following the 1753 Act, the number of marriages recorded in Swansea is

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reasonably accurate (see Table 2.2 above), but that the records of baptisms (and burials) became, particularly after 1780, increasingly deficient, the ratio of marriages to baptisms will inevitably increase. The ratio of marriages to baptisms from 1671 to 1760 (Table 2.4) also fails to amount to evidence of under-registration of the former; perhaps the explanation for this is the compactness of St. Mary's parish, occupying geographically a small area with a relatively high population so that the demand, need or desire for 'clandestine' marriages was correspondingly small.

3. Parish registers: the effect of Dissent

During the Interregnum, and after 1660, Wales for the most part remained loyal to the established church. The country had not provided fertile soil for the plantation of Puritan clergy, ninety-three of whom were ejected following the Restoration and even before the passing of the Act of Uniformity in 1662. Buttressed by the Welsh language, which gave the Welsh a sense of separateness from their English neighbours, Dissent survived albeit mostly in the large remote and rural parishes of south Wales - but also in some of the towns of the region. For example, despite the passing of the Five Mile Act 1672 (which forbade Puritan clergy from living within five miles of a town) there is, in 1672, a record of Dissenting schools in Brecon, Carmarthen, Haverfordwest and Swansea. Many supporters of Dissent were independent freeholders, industrial workers and traders the latter two categories of necessity largely residing in towns. In England, Celia Fiennes in 1698 was impressed by the 'very rich trading town' of Liverpool and remarked, no doubt with approval, on the presence of a 'great many Dissenters'. Swansea was also of a strongly dissenting character in the seventeenth century and, from the 1640s, had became a place of refuge for Dissenters; the influence of Dissent here being closely connected with English regional centres such as

Bristol which had a powerful dissenting presence. In 1676, 292 Dissenters were reported in Swansea and, notwithstanding the provisions of the Five Mile Act, the town seems to have been prepared to shelter Puritan ministers. All appear to have ministered openly and actively, Marmaduke Matthews 'with the connivance of the magistrates', which suggests a tolerant attitude by the town authorities. By the late seventeenth century, however, townspeople were being cited for refusing to allow their children to be baptised in church; and because of the effect of Dissent (Dissenters were often denied burial in parish graveyards) it is difficult to quantify the extent of the omissions from the parish registers, either in Swansea, or elsewhere. But it does not necessarily follow that, because a parish had a dissenting population, the registration of baptisms, marriages and burials by Anglicans is bound to be substantially inaccurate, particularly before 1700. Swansea was undoubtedly tolerant of Dissent and Swansea Independents were among the very first to build chapels following the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689. Wrigley and Schofield's estimates of under-registration (whether owing to Dissent or otherwise) of births and deaths in England 1660-1700 show a range of 5.8 to 8.4% of the total for births (10 to 14% of these proportions attributable to Dissent) but only 1.2 to 3.2% for deaths (35 to 52% attributable to Dissent). Anglicans and Dissenters could work together and the latter could accept the former's rituals. It is, therefore, arguable that until at least the last decade of the seventeenth century Anglican registers were reasonably complete and accurate, and included a record of Dissenters. By the second decade of the eighteenth century, however, it has been estimated that Dissenters formed seven to eight per cent of the population of Glamorgan: the proportion of Dissenters in Swansea would have been higher with the numbers of Baptists and Independents increasing as the

25 Glanmor Williams, 'Religion and Belief' in Swansea Challenges, pp.24-5.
27 Wrigley and Schofield, Population history, p.561.
century progressed, supplemented by Quakers (although in very small numbers) and, later in
the century, Methodists (the number of Roman Catholics was never significant).28 With the
passage of time, Dissenters increasingly escaped registration in the Anglican registers, so that
by the 1780s register entries generally relate to baptisms and burials of the latter only.29 The
deficiencies increased with the imposition of a tax on each entry for the years 1783-1794
(extended to Dissenters' registers in 1786), despite provision for exemption on account of
poverty. From the 1790s, the number of the Welsh leaving the established church for
nonconformity rendered the registers increasingly unreliable as a basis for demographic
study.

For Swansea, the Bishop's visitation returns provide a hint of the increasing concern felt at
the spread of nonconformity. In 1705, the churchwardens of Swansea, Thomas Simpson and
Leyshon Morgan, recorded that 'conventicle preachers baptise children in their house or ....at
meetings in meeting houses including the house of David Simons and Jonathan Roper or
William Morgan'.30 The entry also states that there was 'no papacy'. Little concern over
nonconformity is evinced in 1705; by 1748 more anxiety seems apparent:

The dissenting teacher keeps a public school, [we] know nothing of his
qualifications or method of instruction but believe he does not teach his
scholars the catechism set forth by authority, nor cause them to repair to
Church.31

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28 Glanmor Williams, 'Religion and Education in Glamorgan, 1660-1675', in E.T. Davies, G.
30 NLW, Bishops' visitation returns, SD/CPD/21, 1705.
31 NLW, SD/CPD/22, 1748.
In 1787 the churchwardens record that the registers were:

carefully kept, and in good preservation, in which all Christenings and
Burials are duly entered and have been for nearly one hundred years -
Likewise a Register Book for Marriages according to the Late Act of
Parliament are duly entered, and returns of those Registers are made
yearly to the Register's office.\[32\]

No mention is made in this return of Dissenters but by 1799 numbers are listed as about 300
Presbyterians (teacher William Howells), about 200 Anabaptists (teachers Daniel Jones and
John Williams), and the adherents of the two chapels of Whitfield and Wesley. Surprisingly,
the vicar of St Mary's, the Reverend Miles Bassett, recorded his belief that the number of
Dissenters was decreasing, although this may have been intended for the consumption of his
bishop.\[33\] By 1804, however, the Rev. Bassett's discomfiture is evident:

There are many Dissenters from the Establish'd Church in my Parish.....
Anabaptists, several that espouse Whitfields Tenets and others those of
Westley's [sic]; and a Romish Priest who has a licenced Chapel where some
attend him. The Dissenters have increased of late years which I attribute to
the very great increase in ye population of this parish; the Town being in my
opinion twice as large at present as when I took possession of the Living in
the beginning of the year 1757.\[34\]

\[32\] NLW, SD/CPD/24, 1787.
\[33\] NLW, SD/QA/62, 1799.
\[34\] NLW, SD/QA/63, 1804.
In fact, as mentioned above, the evidence of the parish registers suggest that the population of Swansea had increased by a factor of about two and a half times during Bassett's incumbency. There is even perhaps a hint in this year that Dissenters were sabotaging some activities at St Mary's because there had been a Sunday school where, according to Bassett 'a vast number attended but owing either to a wicked or absurd report that then prevail'd that children were all to be sent to Bottomy Bay, they absented themselves; and it has never since been renew'd'. No further mention of Dissenters appears in the visitation returns: their presence had become a fact of parish life and they were to become particularly active throughout most of the nineteenth century particularly in Swansea's industrial villages to the north of the town. Swansea was not, of course, alone in recording the increasing influence of Dissent: similar records for the late eighteenth century exist for the neighbouring parishes of Neath, Cadoxton and Llangyfelach where particular note is made of the increase in numbers of the Presbyterians.

It is, however, impossible to quantify the extent of under-registration of burials in St Mary's Parish during the eighteenth century. Very few nonconformist burial records exist and none before 1781 and then only those of the Quakers for 1781 and Unitarians for 1783 - both minor sects. And there is no reference to the burial of a Dissenter in the Anglican burial registers. Evidence of nonconformist baptism is, however, a little less obscure; as referred to above, it is reported that, in 1705, conventicle preachers were baptising children at the houses of Swansea members. Some nonconformist baptism registers exist for Swansea for the second half of the eighteenth century, and the available data are summarised in Table 2.5.

35 NLW, SD/QA/63, 1804.
37 The Quaker records are found in WGAS, Swansea and those of the Unitarians in PRO, RG4 2295.
38 NLW, RG4 3890; RG4, 4097 and 3665.
TABLE 2.5
Nonconformist baptisms, Swansea: aggregated numbers, 1751-1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>High St Presbyt. Chapel</th>
<th>Countess of Huntington's Chapel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1751-1760</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761-1770</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771-1780</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781-1790</td>
<td>(incomplete - 42 to 1784)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791-1800</td>
<td>(no record)</td>
<td>(incomplete - 23 to 1798)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The only firm conclusion to be drawn from this incomplete data is that the number of baptisms which might otherwise have appeared in the Anglican registers was increasing over this period. In Table 2.6, the numbers of those baptised at High Street Presbyterian Chapel for the years 1751 to 1784 are expressed as a percentage of the St. Mary's baptisms:

TABLE 2.6
Baptisms at High St. Presbyterian Chapel expressed as a percentage of St Mary's baptisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>High St Chapel</th>
<th>St Mary's</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1751-1760</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761-1770</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771-1780</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1223</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781-1784</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>146</td>
<td>3240</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6 illustrates the increasing influence of Dissent corresponding to the industrial development of Swansea and, given that the High Street Chapel was one of four nonconformist communities in Swansea at the end of the eighteenth century (the others being those of the Congregationalists, Quakers and Unitarians), it is also clear that the numbers of baptisms unrecorded in the Anglican registers at the end of the eighteenth century must have been statistically significant. Additionally, St John's Church (which was rededicated in the
nineteenth century as St Matthew's), lay just to the north of St Mary's parish and, although most of its congregation during the nineteenth century came from the industrial villages to the north, at the end of the eighteenth century it is highly likely that some worshippers were drawn from the northern part of St Mary's parish. St John's registers commence at 1785, and unfortunately are incomplete (see Table 2.7). The ratio of marriages to baptisms at St John's at the end of the eighteenth century is 1:4.7, which does not suggest under-registration of the latter (see Table 2.4). The interesting aspect of the data in Table 2.7, apart from the fact that there appears to be no increase in baptisms, burials or marriages between 1785 and 1798, is the very high number of burials compared to baptisms. A tentative explanation is that the death/burial interval being, of necessity, shorter than that for birth/baptism, families from the north of St Mary's parish were choosing to bury their dead in St John's graveyard with those of the St John's families, rather than make the longer journey south to St Mary's. Also, the likely higher incidence of death through industrial accidents in St John's parish, and the fact that St John's inhabitants were lower down the social scale and had a shorter life expectancy than the (on average) better-off residents of St Mary's parish, may have been contributory. This is obviously speculation and it is perhaps more likely that the data is simply flawed for whatever reason. It is, however, likely that St John's was beginning to run out of burial space at this time, a problem which became acute from the 1830s.39

39 UCLS, HDMB, 27 August 1832.
### TABLE 2.7

St John's, Swansea: baptisms, burials, marriages - aggregated numbers, 1785-1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Burials</th>
<th>Marriages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 1800, therefore, it seems clear that nonconformity had affected significantly the accuracy of, in particular, the baptismal records of St Mary's, Swansea, and this must obviously be borne in mind when interpreting the parish register data.\(^{40}\) It ought to be repeated, however, that the data extracted from the parish registers and presented in tabular form in this chapter to represent population increase has been subjected to multipliers to provide for under-registration (see below). Table 2.8 below compares population estimates based on the registers from 1801 (when the problem of under-registration is considered to be at its

\(^{40}\) It will be noted that the estimated population at 1801, based on the parish registers (6,195) is very close to the enumerated population for that year (6,095): see Table 2.8. Given the factors affecting the accuracy of parish register data mentioned in this chapter, this probably owes more to coincidence than anything else.
worst) with the decennial enumerations, and the increasing gulf between each illustrates the increasing problem of under-registration from the beginning of the nineteenth century.

TABLE 2.8

St Mary's Swansea: comparison of estimated population based on parish registers with enumerated population, 1801-1831

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Est. pop.-parish registers</th>
<th>Enumerated population</th>
<th>Diff./under registration?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>6195</td>
<td>6099</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>6095</td>
<td>8963</td>
<td>2808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>5760</td>
<td>11,236</td>
<td>5476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>6538</td>
<td>13,256</td>
<td>6718</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Summary: the data in context

Table 2.1 above sets out the figures for the estimated population of Swansea according to the Hearth Tax 1670 (mean population 1,760) and the Compton Census 1676 (1,792).

Comparing these figures with the enumerated total for Swansea for 1801 (6,099 - see Table 2.9) indicates that the population of the town had increased by about 252% in 130 years. In the same period, the population of west Glamorgan as a whole had grown by between 88% and 110%.41 Whilst these figures are subject to a wide margin of error, they nevertheless represent clear evidence that Swansea's growth was due more than simply to natural causes, ie the excess of births over deaths. Table 2.9 sets out estimated population growth to 1791 based on the parish registers. T.H. Marshall's figures for crude birth (37.7 per 1000), death (28.6 per 1000) and marriage (17.2 per 1000) rates are adopted.42 A three year average centred on the aggregated number for the year was taken and Marshall's multipliers for under-registration of 1.243 (baptisms), 1.2 (burials) and 2 (marriages) applied.

42 Following Thomas, The History of Swansea, pp.82-3.
TABLE 2.9

Estimated population of Swansea based on parish registers (census figures from 1801)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Est. population</th>
<th>Other sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1661</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>2,022</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1691</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>1,813</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1731</td>
<td>2,284</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1751</td>
<td>2,384</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>2,434</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>3,736</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781</td>
<td>4,139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>5,098</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>6,099</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>8,963</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>11,236</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>13,265</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The resulting figures, representing the population based on the number of births, marriages and deaths, were averaged (compare Fig. 2.2 above).

Table 2.10 below compares the growth of Swansea 1670-1801 with other major towns in Wales and, to set the data in context, a comparison is made with three new English industrial/manufacturing towns and two other older established centres. Merthyr Tydfil is obviously a special case. In 1670 Merthyr existed only as an upland parish of a few scattered houses and owed its foundation and rapid growth to the presence of workable deposits of iron and coal in close proximity. Caernarfon, Carmarthen and Haverfordwest were long established regional centres with relatively good communications and Carmarthen and Haverfordwest possessed rich agricultural hinterlands. Caernarfon's growth gained impetus from the development of the slate industry from the late eighteenth century and Carmarthen and Haverfordwest were able to attract visitors in season to boost the local economy. Brecon was also an ancient regional centre but its development was inhibited by the dramatic growth
of towns to the south. Cardiff did not begin to burgeon until the construction of port facilities for the export of coal from the valleys.

The growth in population of the Welsh towns pales into insignificance before the spectacular development of the English industrial/manufacturing towns. It is little wonder that eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English travellers were, for the most part, underwhelmed by their experience of Welsh towns, and regarded as risible the idea of Carmarthen as 'the Welsh London'.

### TABLE 2.10

Population change Welsh/English towns, 1670-1801

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Est. population c.1670</th>
<th>Enumerated population 1801</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7705</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>6099</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbigh</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>2391</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmarthen</td>
<td>2195</td>
<td>5548</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caernarfon</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>3626</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haverfordwest</td>
<td>2137</td>
<td>3964</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>2502</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrexham</td>
<td>3225</td>
<td>4039</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brecon</td>
<td>2210</td>
<td>2705</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>1771</td>
<td>1870</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>83,000</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>74,000</td>
<td>1233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>1150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1801, Glamorgan was still distinctly rural in character. By 1831, the transformation to an industrial economy was well under way, with the bulk of the migrants required for the expanding industries gravitating to Glamorgan's towns, as illustrated by Table 2.11 below.

**TABLE 2.11**

Population of the main towns of Glamorgan, 1801-1841

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Swansea</th>
<th>Neath</th>
<th>Cardiff</th>
<th>Merthyr Tydfil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>6,099</td>
<td>2,502</td>
<td>1,870</td>
<td>7,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>8,963</td>
<td>2,745</td>
<td>2,457</td>
<td>11,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>11,236</td>
<td>2,823</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>17,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1831</td>
<td>14,931</td>
<td>4,043</td>
<td>6,187</td>
<td>22,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>19,115</td>
<td>4,970</td>
<td>10,077</td>
<td>34,977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% change

1801-1841 213% 99% 439% 354%

The rapid swelling of population, particularly after 1821, reflected the growth of industry in the region, especially the mining of iron and coal, and the construction of canals and ports to facilitate the transport and export of raw materials and finished products. The growth of Swansea and Neath, the earliest Welsh towns to be affected by the exploitation of minerals, took place more steadily and over a longer time period than that of Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff, the population of the former, following perfection of the process of smelting iron with coke, exploding from nothing from about 1760, and the latter remaining an insignificant town until the construction, in 1794, of the Glamorganshire Canal facilitating the development of the greatest coal port in the world.43 But even in 1841, the population of Swansea was almost double that of Cardiff.

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43 In 1782, the customs at Cardiff reported that 'we have no coal exported from this port, nor ever shall, as it would be too expensive to bring it down here from the internal part of the country'.
Table 2.12 provides a percentage growth comparison of Swansea with other major towns in Glamorgan; coal production was the primary cause of urban growth after 1801, and particularly after 1821, in succession to the ferrous and non-ferrous activity of Merthyr, Neath and Swansea; this is reflected particularly in the relentless growth of Cardiff after 1840.

**TABLE 2.12**

Percentage change in population in the main towns in Glamorgan, 1801-1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>% change 1801-1821</th>
<th>% change 1821-1851</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cowbridge</td>
<td>35.84</td>
<td>-3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llantrisant</td>
<td>50.73</td>
<td>61.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llantwit Fardre</td>
<td>50.62</td>
<td>571.48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdare</td>
<td>38.76</td>
<td>627.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td>125.88</td>
<td>166.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>12.83</td>
<td>104.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>84.23</td>
<td>115.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>88.29</td>
<td>421.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* reflects the growth of Pontypridd

Source: Boynes and Baber, 'The Supply of Labour' in *Glamorgan County History*, 4, ch. 7, p.192.

How far do contemporary maps and plans of Swansea reflect the physical growth and changes in the fabric of the town, commensurate with the demographic evidence? Until 1835, the boundaries of the ancient town and franchise of Swansea corresponded to the parish of St Mary, as the maps at Figs. 2.1 above and 2.3 below show. Between 1741 and 1801 the population of Swansea town increased by two and a half times, and between 1801 and 1831 more than doubled again (so that the make-up of the old, unreformed, corporation became even more unrepresentative). Swansea maps dating from 1771 show that, initially, the physical expansion of the town was limited, suggesting overcrowding particularly in the
centre of the town behind the main streets. This in turn implies residential segregation and social polarisation with the better-off inhabiting the newly built fashionable areas such as the Burrows and the vicinity of Swansea Bay, and the poorer sections of society making do in the cramped and malodorous courts and alleys behind Wind Street and High Street.

5. Swansea on the map: contrasting the demographic evidence

Examination of population data and demography alone will give an imperfect impression of a town, and an attempt must be made to close the gaps in understanding by consideration of sources such as contemporary maps and plans of successive dates, from which may be extracted a reasonable idea of the appearance of a town, and its growth and development. Even allowing for the eccentricities of the individual cartographer, a great deal of information on the topographical and geographical features of the site, and how these physical constraints affected the form and layout of the town, can be deduced, as may the internal layout and morphology and changes through time. Early maps should not, however, be taken at face value and ought to be checked for internal consistency and against other contemporary documents, such as drawings and engravings, and interpreted with care.\(^4\) Consideration must also be given to the reasons for the making of the map, and to the methods used. The topographical content of the map should be assessed critically: what has been included, and what excluded, and why. Map makers' main objectives were often a response to the demands of their employers, patrons, subscribers, or the market. The method of collection of data also limited the accuracy of maps; surveying methods did not begin to be refined until about 1750 and, as the process was time consuming, cartographers often produced successive editions of maps without checking adequately the changes since the last

\(^4\) Pictorial representation of Swansea is considered in Chapter 5.
edition. They also copied from each other, and errors were thereby compounded. But however imperfect a map, it is usually possible to extract from it some useful information.\textsuperscript{45}

Examination of extant contemporary maps and plans confirms that the siting of Swansea, and the form of its subsequent growth, was restricted by both natural and man-made barriers. The town's location at the mouth of the Tawe, which has a good tidal range, and its position adjacent to easily accessible mineral wealth almost guaranteed Swansea's development as a port and industrial town. The town's physical growth from the eighteenth century was, however, obstructed to the east and to the west by, respectively, Kilvey Hill and Townhill, and to the north by the presence of the copper-works and slag heaps which had accumulated from the early eighteenth century on the broader part of the Tawe valley encompassing an area from south of Landore to beyond Llansamlet, an area where settlements and communications might otherwise readily have developed. The area available for extension of the town itself was, therefore, limited physically by more than its medieval walls: these factors were to influence the availability, quality and location of accommodation for in-migrants from about 1750. Whilst there was physical expansion from the end of the eighteenth century to the north of the medieval core of the town, and further north in the form of nucleated industrial settlements, Swansea town itself was forced to expand, mostly after 1835, to the south-west towards Mumbles, and in terraces west along the steep slopes of Townhill. Medieval Swansea had fitted comfortably within its protecting walls, and archaeological excavation and modern re-development has determined with some degree of accuracy the layout of the original castle town and the position of those walls.\textsuperscript{46} In Fig. 2.3,

\textsuperscript{46} In 1924, W. Ll. Morgan was having to speculate as to the location of some lengths of town wall: The Town & Manor of Swansea (Carmarthen, 1924), pp.50-8.
Swansea's early streets and the town walls are shown superimposed on the modern street plan. It is notable how, despite the wholesale redevelopment of the nineteenth century, and the Second World War bombing, the street plan of the central core of the town remains reasonably intact even if the fabric of the town as it existed prior to about 1835 mostly does not.

Figure 2.3

Early Swansea

Source: Swansea Challenges & Change, p.146.
The first county maps were intended to be utilitarian, but were also political in intent. John Speed produced, between 1605 and 1611, fifty-four maps of the counties of England and Wales, which included bird's eye views of the leading towns. These town plans were Speed's most important contribution to British topography, despite the many obvious errors. The map of Glamorgan (1610) contained views only of Cardiff and Llandaff, the former because, as a former caput of the Lordship of Glamorgan it was, at least nominally, capital of the county; and the latter because it was one of the then four episcopal sees in Wales. Carter suggests that, at this date, Cardiff was a 'Grade 2' town possessing a market and an assize; Llandaff is not classified by Carter at all being effectively no more than a village near Cardiff with a cathedral. Carter categorises Swansea, at a time when the population was about 1000 (see Table 2.1 above), also as 'Grade 2' on the basis of its market and grammar school; other towns in this category included Ruthin, Bangor, Cowbridge and Abergavenny.

Speed unfortunately did not depict Swansea and one of the earliest surviving plans of the town (Fig. 2.4) was prepared much later by B. Jones in 1771, probably at the request of the Corporation in connection with its expressed interest in improving the trade and navigation of the harbour and river Tawe.

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49 Carter, *Towns of Wales*, pp.34-5. Carter places Brecon, Carmarthen, Denbigh and Caernarfon at the head of the hierarchy on the basis that the first two towns each possessed a market, an assize, a chancery and exchequer and a grammar school; and the latter towns all those facilities except a grammar school.
50 UCLS, HDMB, 27 October 1771. The Corporation, responding to the requests of the coal masters, masters of ships and others that the harbour required 'cleaning', resolved to appoint a committee to take all necessary steps, the burgesses declaring that 'we are greatly interested in the Trade and Navigation of the said harbour and think it our duty......to preserve and promote the navigation and to promote and encourage the trade thereof in all its branches and to that end and for the preservation of our rights.....'
Figure 2.4

'A Plan of the River of Swansea', B. Jones (1771)

Reproduced in W.H. Jones, The History of the Port of Swansea (Carmarthen, 1922), p.54
Jones' plan was drawn at a time when the population of the town was about 3,700 (see Table 2.9), is fairly crude and shows little of the town itself but is of interest in that it is one of the earliest representations of the banks of the Tawe from Fabian's Bay to Landore with docks and coal banks shown lining the west bank adjoining the town. The dock facilities at this date were primitive and the obstructions shown in the river and the extensive silting in the Bay meant that the size of ship was limited to not more than about forty tons. The port facilities had hardly evolved over centuries but from the 1790s pressure for improvement (mostly from the town's industrialists and traders) built up. It was, however, to be many years (and outside the period under examination) before Swansea could boast modern facilities, including a floating dock formed by cutting a new channel for the river. The Explanation to Jones' plan gives details of the ownership by individuals of the quays, banks and docks on the riverside and shows that, by this date, much of the riverside contiguous to the town was in private hands or under lease from the Corporation. The Corporation (which derived a substantial income from tolls) and, from 1791, the Harbour Trustees, took a close interest in the development of the port, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century the natural facilities had been enhanced by the construction of the canal and the building of the east and west piers to the harbour. By this time, Swansea had an enumerated population of 6,099 and was one of the leading coal exporting ports, but since minerals did not require complex handling procedures (staithes or drops were adequate), the facilities in these ports tended to remain unsophisticated, and be located on a canal or river above the town itself.51

The detail relating to Swansea from John Cary's map of 1792 (Fig. 2.5), although small scale, is useful because it shows Swansea at the same period as the views of the town by Thomas

51 Other leading coal ports at the time included Newcastle, Stockton, Sunderland and Whitehaven: G. Jackson, 'Ports 1700-1840' in Cambridge Urban History, p.711.
Rothwell and Paul Padley (see Chapter 5 below) and when its estimated population was 5,100 (Table 2.9). Cary was a prolific and well respected map maker active in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Exploiting increasing personal mobility consequent upon the improvement of turnpike roads and the development of coaching, his maps were aimed at the affluent market able to afford wheeled transport. With a shrewd eye to this market, Cary included details on his maps other than roads, including canals, industrial sites, parks and country houses and estates, thus ensuring that his work appealed to industrialists and the gentry. His 'Road from the New Port of Milford to the New Passage of the Severn and Gloucester' (1792) was, however, prepared for the South Wales Association for the Improvement of Roads and was intended to help in the rationalisation of the turnpike trusts in preparation for the planned packet service between Milford Haven and Waterford. Cary is considered to be one of the more accurate cartographers of the period but nevertheless his maps are not entirely reliable and his revisions not as thorough as they ought to have been. On Cary's map (Fig. 2.5), Swansea's medieval core remains almost intact, and the town does not extend north much beyond St John's Church even although its population had increased by two and a half times over the previous fifty years (Table 2.9). Areas behind the east and west sides of High Street, and behind the west side of lower Wind Street, appear to remain undeveloped. The extent of the surrounding agricultural land, including to the south-west of the town (shortly to be the site of extensive development) is striking although to the north and north-east of the town industry and housing for those employed in the works had already made substantial incursions into it.

52 Smith, Maps and Plans, p.118.
53 Ibid., pp.114-6.
54 Smith, Maps and Plans, p.127.
John Morris' Clasemont (centre top, Fig. 2.5) was still occupied by Morris, and some of his workers were housed in the architecturally and socially innovative (but probably uncomfortable and therefore short lived) 'Castlemorris' to the west of the house and northwest of the planned village of Morriston. Smith's (or Llansamlet) Canal is shown snaking across open farmland on the east of the river; it had been constructed privately in 1784 for the supply of coal to the riverside smelters. The commencement of the construction of the seventeen mile long Swansea Canal (1794-98) was two years in the future. In Swansea town, development on the Burrows (bottom left, Fig. 2.5) had begun with the construction (1776) of Union Row (later Somerset Place) and the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel (1789). To the
north-east of the Burrows development, and adjoining the bottom of Wind Street, the lime
trees of the Parade remain intact, as does the Mount.55 The 'Quay' appears no more developed
than in 1771. Apart from the ferry crossing adjoining the Burrows, the nearest river crossing
was up-river at Wychtree Bridge, Morriston, whose modern successor still crosses the Tawe
at this location.

Until the emergence of the Ordnance Survey at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the
county was the basic unit for mapping. Most English counties were well covered in a format
established by Saxton's Atlas (1579). Wales had to wait until 1795 and the publication of
Evans' map of the 'Six Counties of North-Wales'; in south Wales only Glamorgan (1799) and
Cardigan (1803) were mapped by, respectively, George Yates of Liverpool and Joseph Singer
before the coming of Greenwood and the Ordnance Survey. The extract from Yates' map of
1799 (Fig 2.6), when Swansea's population was almost 6,000, an increase of almost 1,000 for
the decade, illustrates subtle, but significant, changes to the scene since 1792. The presence
of the Swansea Canal on the western bank of the river is the most significant addition,
running northwards from the Pottery and skirting the expanding Morriston. Following the
passing of the Swansea Harbour Act 1791, piers at the entrance to Swansea Harbour were
planned, the western pier being completed in 1795. The draughtsman appears, however, to
have anticipated the construction of the eastern pier which was not, in fact, completed until

55 It was taken down and moved in 1760 to make the lower end of Wind Street 'more
commodious for persons coming to the said Town' and re-erected: UCLS, HDMB, 7 March
1759 and 13 February 1760; and see Bernard Morris, 'The Mount at Swansea: moving a
landmark in 1760' Gower, 42 (1991), pp.24-32. The Mount was removed for good in about
1804 to make way for the new Oystermouth Tramroad.
1809. The town appears to be expanding in a northerly direction, and to the south-west, and the development of Swansea as a resort may be adduced from the identification of the Bathing House, and by the delineation of a walk on the Burrows.

**Fig. 2.6**

Extract from George Yates' 'A Map of the County of Glamorgan' (1799)

John Morris' Sketty Park ('A' on Fig. 2.6) was also included: he was to move here from Clasemont in 1806 when the latter began to become encroached upon by copper smoke and his workers' housing. Other houses of the gentry are apparent between Sketty Park and the town, constructed away from the increasingly insidious effects of the copper smoke, and to take advantage of the spectacular views over Swansea Bay. This area was, in effect, an
extension to the fashionable Burrows and represents the start of the development of a semi-rural gentry suburb, which was to continue for many years. In 1834, the Swansea *Tide Table* was able to remark that the road to Mumbles 'is thickly studded with elegant seats and substantial dwellings'.

David Davies' 1803 map for the Duke of Beaufort shows the town expanding to the south-west, with the building of houses in part of Lower Calvert Street and Greenfield Row, and, to the north, a further extension of High Street. The plan and its key are illustrative of the Duke's substantial property holding (amounting to eleven acres) at the core of the town at the beginning of the nineteenth century although, with the demise of the Duke's autocratic steward Gabriel Powell, in 1789, and the increasing power of Swansea's industrialists, the influence over town affairs this implies was rapidly to diminish.

Three distinct zones were, therefore, forming in Swansea from about 1800 in response to the influx of new residents and visitors and their needs: in the centre of the town (Wind Street, Market Place, High Street and Castle Street) the commercial core; to the north of the central core (and as infill development behind the central streets), mostly substandard workers' housing; in the Burrows area and south west along the Oystermouth road, fashionable housing to accommodate visitors and gentry.

John Evans' plan of 1823 (Fig. 2.7) was probably Swansea's first modern large scale map (apart from the Harbour Improvement maps from about 1804).

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56 *Tide Table for Swansea 1834*, RISW, R66/109.
57 NLW, Gower and Kilvey D/D Beau E/1 map 1. The map is not reproduced as the original is of poor quality and reduction renders some of the detail indecipherable.
Figure 2.7
Plan of Swansea, John Evans (1823)
Key: 'A' Gas Works; 'B' Oystermouth Tramroad; 'C' Public (Assembly) Rooms

Note the apparent infilling (solid blocks of shading) behind the main streets: compare the 1835 Quarter Sessions plan (Fig. 2.8).
The population of the town was now over 11,000 and, since 1803, further, mainly residential, development is apparent to the south-west of the town (Lower Calvert Street, Greenfield Row, Nelson Place, Nelson Terrace), to the south-west and north of St John's Church (New Street, Queen Street, Pleasant Row) and in the Burrows area, although perhaps less than might have been expected for a developing industrial and commercial centre. If, however, the solid blocks of shading in the centre of the town on Evans' plan can be taken to represent buildings (compare, for example, the representation on this plan of the areas to the north-west and south-east of High Street), then it appears that there had been a substantial amount of infilling in the centre of the town since 1803, especially behind Wind Street and High Street. Consideration of the 1852 Board of Health plan (Fig. 2.10) suggests that the infilling behind Wind Street and High Street was likely to have been of a mixed nature (see below).

It is obviously risky to attempt to extrapolate back from the position shown on the 1852 Board of Health plan, and also on R.W. Jones' plan of 1851 (Fig. 2.9), to that as it might have been in the 1820s, especially at a time when Swansea's population was growing so quickly and new uses were no doubt being found for buildings originally constructed for other purposes. Also, if Evans' 1823 plan is compared with the (admittedly sketchy) 1835 plan deposited with the Quarter Sessions in relation to Swansea's proposed water supply (extract at Fig. 2.8) the infilling by 1823 theory is weakened since the 1835 plan shows no such infilling, although it does reveal further development in the Burrows in the form of Gloucester Place. Whatever the position, it is clear that, between the 1820s and the early 1850s, a period when the population grew from 11,236 to 31,139, there was, in response, a substantial amount of building, rebuilding and reuse in the core of the town, the development consisting of workshops and small factories and low grade housing.
Note the apparent lack of infilling behind the frontages to the main streets: compare Evans' 1823 plan (Fig. 2.7).

Evans' plan (Fig. 2.7) shows also the Gas Works ('A') at Dyfatty at the north end of New Street (a gas supply was brought to the town in 1820/1); the Oystermouth Tramroad ('B') (constructed in 1805 to transport livestock, coal and iron ore, but by 1807 adapted to carry passengers), and the Public (Assembly) Rooms ('C') on the Burrows: in gestation since 1805 and not finished until 1821, when Swansea's pretensions as a resort were all but done.
Figure 2.9

A Map of the Town of Swansea, R. W. Jones (1851)

It is evident from the 1852 Local Board of Health plans (an extract showing the area between Wind Street and Fisher Street is at Fig. 2.10 below) that the zones lying between the main streets of Swansea had been substantially covered by mostly small, substandard dwellings laid out in courts and in close proximity to a range of small-scale factory and workshop uses such as breweries and malt-houses, flour-mills, a candle factory, fishcurers, wheelwrights, smiths, coach factories and bakehouses. Elaborate formal gardens survive - for example south of Salubrious Place between Wind Street and York Street, and serving the late Georgian residences/shops fronting Wind Street (for example, numbers 46 and 51). This suggests that residence in this part of Wind Street had retained some social cachet. This was an area shown as undeveloped on Evans' 1823 plan so that the workers' housing running east from York Street (Rosser Court, York Court, Deusbury Court and Bennet Court) must have been built later and probably before 1835. According to Morris, most of the substandard housing in the town was built between 1803 and 1823 to accommodate Swansea's incomers (the population expanded from about 6,500 to 11,500 between these dates), with further building activity occurring in the 1830s and 1840s to the north and to the south-west of the town. Many of these houses were of the two-roomed type, with a shared earth closet in the rear yard.58

Figure 2.10

Swansea, 1852 (extract from the Local Board of Health survey plan, original 1/528 scale)
The town’s floating dock was opened in 1852, formed from the meander of the Tawe adjoining the Strand, and this redevelopment, and the consequent increase in maritime trade, no doubt helped affect the status of the contiguous residential areas, the facilities for seamen - brothels and public houses - making the locality an even less desirable place to live. ⁵⁹

Even as late as 1852, however, Swansea’s plan and extent remain recognizably that of the medieval settlement constructed around a meander of the Tawe - and the town continued to be surrounded by fields and parkland. The Tithe Survey of 1838 gives the names of sixty-seven landowners and 240 occupiers of this land, three of the most important owners being the Corporation, the industrialist John Morris II, and Lewis Weston Dillwyn (the Quaker scholar and owner of the Cambrian Pottery). On the Tithe Map of 1838 and the first Ordnance Survey map of 1830 (the surveys for the latter were done between 1814 and 1827) the extent and form of the town are as shown on the other plans mentioned above. It appears, therefore, that by the middle of the nineteenth century, most residential development had taken place in the new industrial townships to the north of Swansea (to accommodate the workers who needed to be close to their place of employment) with some in-filling (low status housing, small scale industry or workshop development, the conversion of houses to shops) in the centre of the town and some high class residential growth around the Burrows (in connection with the town’s resort function). To the north of the Castle, the spaces behind High Street and Upper High Street north of St John’s Church had been developed mostly for low grade housing; by contrast, the earliest developers to the south-west of the town along

⁵⁹ The number of public houses in the Strand appears to have risen from seventeen in 1830 (Mathew's Swansea Directory for the Year 1830) to twenty-three in 1852 (Local Board of Health Survey plans). Swansea historian W.C. Rogers estimated that, at this period, Swansea had over 300 public houses and 300 prostitutes; the first figure appears to be an exaggeration as the evidence of Mathew's 1830 Directory (Table 4.2 below) indicates a total of only seventy-five public houses, and it is not easy to imagine how the second figure was arrived at: Stead, 'The Entertainment of the People', in Swansea Illustrated, p.252.
the curve of Swansea Bay were gentry and industrialists (see Fig. 2.6), reflecting a desire to move out of the increasingly less desirable central area, or downwind of the copper-smoke. The space between the old town and the gentry housing began in turn to be infilled from 1830 with the construction of Oxford Street, comprising three storey houses. Union Street, built at right angles to Oxford Street, followed in 1832, with further residential development soon after (see Fig. 2.9). Significantly, the ground floors of the new houses in Oxford Street were quickly converted into shops and this, assisted no doubt by the removal in 1830 of the market from the top of Wind Street to a new site on the south side of Oxford Street, was the catalyst for the eventual transference of Swansea's main retail area from Wind Street to Oxford Street.60

The map evidence also shows that, from about the 1830s, Swansea's central residential area of high status began to be displaced by lower status housing and small scale industry as buildings lost their original, often residential, use and began to be converted to other uses. Wind Street, until about the middle of the nineteenth century, a fashionable shopping street, began to lose its status. Higher class housing continued to expand to the south-west (see Fig. 2.9) and, later, along the slopes of Townhill. Other developing industrial towns (for example, Neath) had a similar experience with the growth of industry impacting upon the central area and creating 'a zone of discard'.61

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61 Carter and Lewis, Urban Geography of England and Wales, pp.77, 78.
6. Conclusion

How may Swansea's demographic experience be summarised, and how far was this experience typical in comparison with other towns? The problem with attempting to present and interpret information on population growth for English and Welsh towns before 1801 is the lack of reliable data. The techniques employed are at best inadequate and at worst misleading. But if some sort of comparative study of the earlier development of towns is to be attempted, obviously the most must be made of the information available. When considering Swansea's population growth and development, perhaps the greatest surprise is the degree of growth between about 1740 and 1800: the evidence of the parish registers indicates that the number of town dwellers increased by more than two and a half times, rather than doubled, as has hitherto been the view. Prior to that period, and from about 1690, Swansea's population, like that of its neighbour Neath on a lesser scale, grew more slowly, if somewhat erratically. It is evident from the parish records (allowing for the fact of under-registration), that the growth from the middle of the eighteenth century was caused by more than natural increase: industrial activity was attracting immigrants seeking to better themselves. In this regard, Swansea's development was certainly more dynamic than that of the traditional Welsh urban centres mentioned above and, by the end of the eighteenth century, Swansea had outstripped them all and was reported as being a bustling port and industrial centre, with an air of commercial prosperity. Interestingly, this echoes Defoe's opinion of the place eighty years earlier although obviously there was a difference of scale. There are direct statements from some topographers, and in some directories (see Chapter 5 below) that the population had doubled over the previous twenty years; other observations, such as Swansea's need for a new, larger town hall, and the fact that the seating capacity of St Mary's Church had had to be increased, is indirect evidence in support of an increasing population in relative terms.
There is very little map evidence between John Speed's plans of 1605-11 and those of John Wood of the 1830s, but such plans which do exist, including several of Swansea from 1771, show little change in the size and layout of Welsh towns. There is, however, an enormous gulf between the quality of and detail shown on Davies' plan of 1803, and the Board of Health plan of 1852 (Fig. 2.10) or even Evans' plan of 1823 (Fig. 2.7), and it was not until the publication of the last that theories on the effect of population growth on the fabric of the town could begin to be advanced with any degree of confidence. Apart from the map evidence, and data from the Hearth Tax, Compton Census, and that extracted employing retrospective techniques on census data, there also exist commentaries of English travellers to south Wales at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries which provide contemporary evidence of the appearance and physical fabric and infrastructure of the more important of the towns visited, and therefore a pointer to the economic development and prosperity of those towns, and the well-being (or otherwise) of their inhabitants. The population data in Table 2.10 above demonstrate that between 1670 and 1801 the growth of these towns was hardly dramatic nor, indeed, was the growth of the industrial towns when compared to their English counterparts. By 1800, however, it was becoming clear that the old established Welsh towns were being forced down the urban rank-order by the growth and economic development of the industrial and multi-functional centres, with Swansea leading the way. The process would, however, involve conflict and stress for Wales' emerging major urban centres and their populations; and in the next chapter the effect on Swansea of such rapid and uncontrolled growth on the in-migrants themselves will be examined.

62 These subjects are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5 below.
CHAPTER 3: POPULATION GROWTH AND THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE

1. Introduction

Investigating the rate of births, marriages and deaths can assist in the understanding of the pace of development of a town and the difficulties experienced by that town arising out of the process of physical growth. Light may be cast on the bare statistics of parish registers by looking at incidence, seasonality and causes of death, which can provide a partial explanation for any hiatus or inconsistency in the data. Such data may also indicate the associated stresses imposed on a settlement in consequence particularly of the time-lag between the arrival of those seeking work and the development of an infrastructure sufficient to accommodate them.

Until the later seventeenth century, the incidence of births and deaths in England and Wales roughly cancelled each other out and after that any population increase was held at a low level by a fall in the number of births between 1704 and 1710, followed by an increase in mortality between 1719 and 1724, 1727-31 and 1740-2. The data for Swansea approximately corresponds with the national data (see Table 2.2 and Fig. 2.2, above). It was not until the mid-1740s, and particularly from 1800, that births in Britain consistently exceeded deaths, and the high rate of urban immigration in this period disguised the impact of high mortality caused by the conditions found in towns. As we have seen, the period from about 1750, in Swansea and elsewhere, was certainly one of demographic readjustment, an important element of which was a gradual decline in urban mortality, the reasons for which are not clearly understood, and which varied by region, but which are connected with a

better understanding of the causes of disease, a rise in housing and living standards and, after 1830, a dawning appreciation of the causal connection between unhealthy environmental conditions and diseases such as cholera and typhus resulting in a gradual improvement in the methods of water supply and sewage disposal.2

To modern eyes, the adoption and eventual implementation of 'sanitary' reforms appear an obvious pre-condition for improvements in health and life expectancy, but they were not obvious to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century town authorities which, in any event, usually possessed neither the administrative machinery nor sufficient funds to effect improvements of this nature within the short time-scale the problems ideally demanded. Nevertheless, although the urban death rate remained higher than in the country, towns ceased to be 'devourers of population'; for example, in Nottingham the 'age of massacre by epidemic' was over by the 1740s and, notwithstanding a temporary relapse in about 1800, towns did not again become locations of natural population decline.3 Improvements in public health were usually the result of political decisions and attitudes, often in the face of ignorance and prejudice, not to mention lack of funds, so that results were slow to come and hard to achieve - and ultimately owed much to the foresight and energy of mid-nineteenth century reformers such as Edwin Chadwick and his army of inspectors, and to the medical officers of health appointed by many towns from 1847.4

2 Wrigley and Schofield, however, argue that mortality ceased to be the most significant variable after 1750, reflecting the 'independent and unpredictable visitations of infectious diseases' from outside, rather than emanating from within the socio-economic system: see Daunton, Progress and Poverty, p.409.
3 Daunton, Progress and Poverty, p.410.
4 Liverpool, one of the most unhealthy towns in Britain, was the first, appointing Dr. W.H. Duncan in 1847: P. Laxton, 'Fighting for Public Health: Dr Duncan and his adversaries, 1847-1863' in S. Sheard and H. Power (eds.) The Body of the City (Aldershot, 2000), pp.59-88. There was opposition to Duncan's appointment from within the Corporation, and after his appointment he was subjected to accusations that he was a 'mere statistician'. It is, however, true that Liverpool's average annual crude death rate in 1842 was 33.8 per 1000
life expectation, of course varied according to social class and the type of town; smoke from
industrial works, for example, must obviously have had a deleterious effect on the lungs of
those subjected to it, and may have had a greater effect on incomers from the countryside
than on those indigenous urban dwellers who had perhaps become partly inured to it.

Immigrants from the country also had less resistance to infectious disease.

Reliable evidence for the causes of death before 1800 is hard to uncover and any attempt,
relying on the parish registers, must infer causes from the seasons in which death is
recorded as occurring. A variety of potentially fatal diseases remained after the last
visitation of plague to Britain in 1665, and some were season specific. For example,
airborne diseases such as influenza and whooping cough usually occur in the winter months;
typhus (from body lice) can strike at any time of the year but seems mostly to have occurred
in winter because people were discouraged by cold from washing or changing their clothes;
dysentery is spread by flies in the summer months. But, measles, tuberculosis, chickenpox
and smallpox, diseases spread by contact, and cholera, spread through the water supply, may
occur in any month, and although some evidence exists of seasonal variations in the
incidence of these diseases connected with temperature and the weather, there is a lack of
convincing proof of strong seasonal cycles. The worldwide epidemics of cholera did not
begin until 1817, and the disease, as did all great pandemics, followed the ocean trade
routes and coastlines, so that ports were always first affected. The decline in cholera in the
UK from the 1840s (attributed particularly to the work of Dr John Snow) corresponded to
improvements in municipal sewers and water supplies.\textsuperscript{5} The influence of medical science on

\textsuperscript{5} See, for example, H. Izurieta,\textquotesingle\textquotesingle Influenza: Basic Epidemiological Aspects for the

and in 1864 (after Duncan\textquoteright s death) 40.9 per 1000. But Duncan\textquoteright s meticulous work as a
statistician and diagnostician, and his energy and extraordinary attention to detail, laid the
framework for longer term improvement in living conditions in Liverpool: ibid., pp.84-8.
Swansea\textapos;s first medical officer of health was W.H. Michael, appointed in 1853.
the treatment of these diseases (with the exception of smallpox) was, however, negligible until the twentieth century. Young children and infants lacked immunity in particular to smallpox (adults, because of the nature of the disease, were much more susceptible to typhus), and the fall in the level of infant mortality from the mid-eighteenth century, possibly because of better child rearing practices, improved housing and heating, was a major factor in the reduction of mortality overall. But epidemics could and did erupt: for example, cholera in the 1830s and typhus in the 1840s when the death rate in Glasgow rose from 24.8 per 1000 in 1821-4, to 49 per 1000 in 1832 as a result of cholera, and to 56 per 1000 in 1847 because of typhus.  

Parish registers rarely mention the cause of death and descriptions, when given, can be difficult to identify with the etiology of known diseases. Parish registers may be supplemented with journals, letters and diaries, and sermons, which although not socially representative, reflected the preoccupation with death and disease, and can help illuminate the register data. In this chapter, mortality and mortality crises, possible causes of death and seasonality are examined, as they applied to Swansea in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, followed by an outline of the efforts to improve public health as the nineteenth century progressed. How far was Swansea's experience different from other towns?

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* Daunton, *Progress and Poverty*, pp.409, 413.
2. Mortality

(i) **Crude birth and death rates**

Crude rates of births, marriages and deaths are calculated by taking the number of each such event over a year, dividing this by the estimated or enumerated population producing them and multiplying by 1,000. The results are *crude* because the events are related to the entire population although it is only part of that population (e.g., women of child-bearing age, or the very young and the old) which contributes to the events. Table 3.1 illustrates the estimated numbers of births and deaths per 1,000 of Swansea's population for the years 1671 to 1831, and includes, for comparison, the national figures.

**TABLE 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Est./Enum. Pop.</th>
<th>CBR</th>
<th>Nat. CBR</th>
<th>CDR</th>
<th>Nat.</th>
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<td>19.81</td>
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<td>33.9</td>
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<td>22.87</td>
<td>40.0</td>
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<td>16.64</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>9.97</td>
<td>23.4</td>
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<td>1831</td>
<td>13,256</td>
<td>12.82</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>13.58</td>
<td>22.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sources: St Mary, Swansea parish registers; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population history*, pp.531-5.

According to Wrigley and Schofield, in most pre-industrial populations, crude birth rates are to be found in the range 28 to 40 per 1000 population, and crude death rates in the range 20 to 35 per 1000. Swansea's rates to 1801 for the most part fall within these parameters and the profile of the town's birth and death rates do not differ materially from the national

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equivalent. In 1671, the crude death rate exceeded the crude birth rate both nationally and in Swansea; in subsequent years this is reversed and for the remainder of the eighteenth century the birth rate comfortably exceeds the death rate, although the gap between the two does not substantially widen, in the case of the national rates, until after 1800. After 1801, the figures for the Swansea crude death and birth rates, culled from the parish registers, cease to be credible and illustrate progressive under-registration. The 1671 crude death rate for Swansea is probably relatively high and, according to Dobson, dysentery or 'bloody flux' and smallpox were prevalent throughout England and Wales that year, although overall mortality levels were not appreciably above the norm. Table 2.2 above indicates that, from about 1690, the number of registered baptisms in Swansea exceeded the number of registered burials with the exception of the year 1730, which immediately followed the crisis mortality year of 1729. Swansea's population must, therefore, have been increasing steadily from the end of the seventeenth century. To what extent was this increase affected by fluctuations in the rate of mortality?

(ii) Mortality crises

'Mortality crisis' is the term given to sudden dramatic peaks in mortality recorded from time to time in the parish registers. Causes included war, epidemic disease and famine. Deaths from war on English or Welsh soil in the eighteenth century were negligible so that famine and disease (the two were linked) were likely to have been the major causes. There are problems in linking short-term mortality crises to longer-term trends of mortality: the two phenomena were not necessarily connected, and indeed the incidence of crisis mortality could and did vary from community to community. The simplest method of identifying local

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mortality crises is probably that suggested by Roger Schofield. Schofield stresses the arbitrary nature of any method of measuring 'crisis' mortality and defines a 'crisis' as an annual total number of burials twice or more the average for that year. Using this method, which Schofield justifies as being no more arbitrary than any other which may be devised, Swansea suffered only one crisis year during the period under study: 1685 when 108 burials were recorded (the average annual mortality rate was fifty-two). According to Dobson, there were no epidemics on a national scale this year so that Swansea's must have been of a local nature, with the bulk of the additional deaths falling in the months June to August. Turner refines Schofield's method by dividing 'crises' into 'major' (ie years with double the average number of burials) and 'minor' (years with one and a half the average number). When applied to Swansea the picture is as follows:

**TABLE 3.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>year</th>
<th>major crisis (average/actual no.)</th>
<th>minor crises (av./actual no.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>52/108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>61/111</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>51/81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>111/169</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>123/197</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>172*299</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*averaged over 13 years

Given that Swansea's normal crude death rate rarely exceeded 25 per 1000, meaning that about 2.5% of the town's population on average expired in a single year, a major crisis

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10 The information is taken from the standard aggregative analysis and the average annual mortality determined by aggregating the number of burials over a twenty year period and dividing by twenty.

11 Dobson, Contours of death and disease, table on pp.383-447. Dobson considers mainly the data relating to three counties in south-east England, but also notes the incidence and type of disease etc., and possible contributory factors, in other parts of Britain and Europe.
occurs, therefore, when 5% or more of the population dies; and a minor crisis when 3.75% or more expires. With one major and five minor crises in the period 1661 to 1835, it appears that Swansea was reasonably healthy in comparison with the English parishes studied by Schofield and Turner; although 1729 was almost of major crisis proportions and, when taken with the higher than average number of burials in 1730 and 1731 (and considered with the high mortality nationally for this year) perhaps should be classified as such.

2. Causes of death

(i) Crisis mortality years

As mentioned above, the causes of crisis mortality were likely to have been malnutrition or disease, the former arising in years of grain shortage and high prices sometimes leading to the latter. Table 3.3 below attempts to illustrate the connection, if any, between weather conditions, the harvest outcome, food riots and mortality. The information in the Table is incomplete but nevertheless sufficiently shows that the link between the years of crisis mortality and those of poor harvest and/or high grain prices is tenuous. Dealing first with Swansea's single year of major crisis mortality (according to the Schofield test), the majority of the additional deaths in 1685 took place in the summer months of June, July and August which suggests that those deaths were caused by fevers or gastro-intestinal diseases, or smallpox. Deaths from lack of resistance to diseases such as pneumonia caused by malnutrition resulting from a poor harvest and/or high prices would, it is suggested, be more likely to occur at the end of the same year, or during the first three or four months of the year following the poor harvest (and this view is supported by the timing of the popular disturbances in the later eighteenth century) and not during the succeeding summer.

Swansea's minor mortality crisis year of 1729 coincided with the national major crisis of 1728/9 (and of 1730/1).
TABLE 3.3
Mortality crises, weather conditions and food supply: correlation, 1685-1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>weather</th>
<th>mortality crisis?</th>
<th>harvest outcome</th>
<th>food riots?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1685</td>
<td>winter 84/5 long, dry and cold, then hot, dry summer</td>
<td>Swansea: major crisis, nationally, no</td>
<td>no information</td>
<td>no info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1709/10</td>
<td>cold winter</td>
<td>Swansea: records missing</td>
<td>scarcity nationally and in Swansea</td>
<td>riots nationally Sw. no info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1728/9</td>
<td>cold winter</td>
<td>Swansea: minor crisis, nationally: high mortality</td>
<td>high grain prices in some localities</td>
<td>in some places Sw. no record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>very cold 1739-41 and v. dry summer 1741</td>
<td>Swansea: no (slightly higher than average mortality). Nationally, v. high mortality and severe crisis. '1741 marks the last major demographic crisis of the early mod. period'.</td>
<td>nationally, great shortage of food and high prices</td>
<td>no record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>warm summer</td>
<td>Swansea: minor crisis</td>
<td>no record</td>
<td>no record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1756/7</td>
<td>1756 wet spring, followed by 'the wettest summer in memory of man'</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>1756 harvest poor; v. high grain prices '57</td>
<td>riots esp. N. Wales (also Carmarthen - not Swansea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766/7</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>great shortage of grain nationally</td>
<td>extensive riots, incl. Wales, threatened Sw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783/4</td>
<td>wet summer and autumn '83; winter 83/4 v.cold, much snow</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no record</td>
<td>riots Swansea Feb. '84 but no indication of cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>very dry summer</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>poor harvest 1792</td>
<td>riots Sw and other parts of Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>very hot, dry summer</td>
<td>Swansea: minor crisis</td>
<td>grain prices high</td>
<td>riots Sw in April</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Poor harvests and unprecedentedly high grain prices throughout most of 1790s were, in Wales, the cause of widespread and, in places, serious, food riots between 1793 and 1801.

According to Wrigley and Schofield, Britain experienced a succession of deficient harvests in the 1720s, and the very high mortality at the end of the decade (deaths from fevers, smallpox and influenza) almost certainly were not unconnected to high grain prices over successive years.¹²

There appears, however, to be no positive evidence of such connection for Swansea's minor crisis of 1729, and nor is there any such evidence for Swansea in 1741 when again, nationally, mortality and grain prices peaked together. Swansea's minor mortality crisis of 1753 did not follow on from any recorded shortage of corn: the slightly higher than average number of deaths for that year occurred mainly in the months of May and August and, although the increase in the death rate in the former month may have been connected with food scarcity arising out of a poor harvest in 1752, it seems unlikely that this was the explanation for August's death rate. Poor harvests nationally and locally in 1756/7, 1766 and 1792 were not followed by mortality crises; and the very poor harvests in Wales for most of the period 1793 to 1801, which caused riots in Swansea and elsewhere, coincided with only one minor crisis in Swansea in 1800. It should, however, be noted that the occasional surge in the monthly total of deaths in the St Mary's parish registers (for example, the forty-six deaths occurring in May 1796 - more than four times the normal rate for this month for the 1790s) may have been linked to the typhus epidemics which affected many localities from 1794 to the end of the century; and typhus was considered to be a famine-related fever.¹³

The Corporation was fully aware of the possible consequences - malnutrition, but especially 'riot' - of high prices and shortage. At these times attempts were often made by unscrupulous

¹² Wrigley and Schofield, Population history, p.667.
¹³ Dobson, Contours of death and disease, p.465.
individuals to profit from or corner the market. On the 9 December 1756, the Corporation made an order against forestalling, regrating and ingrossing 'for the prevention of distress to the poor', and on the following January 27 it was reported that there were 'great complaints' because of such distress and it was resolved to spend £35 on barley for resale to the poor. This was repeated in May of the same year when £400 had to be borrowed by the Corporation from the burgesses themselves (at no interest) for purchases and resale of corn; and the comment 'there never [was] growing in this neighbourhood a sufficient quantity to supply the inhabitants thereof' is revealing. In 1766, a national shortage arising from poor harvests resulted in a proclamation from George III prohibiting the export of corn and forestalling, regrating and ingrossing and this was backed locally by an order that such activities stop because the poor were being 'greatly inconvenienced'. In February 1793, the Corporation subscribed £200 to purchase wheat and barley 'from England' to be resold at a reasonable rate to 'labouring persons and their families who shall continue to demean themselves in a peaceable manner....'. This comment hints at the Corporation’s real concern. Popular disturbances, which hardly merited the description 'riot', certainly did often coincide with times of shortage and high prices, as is made explicit by the accounts and depositions in the Gaol Files, and in the Corporation and other contemporary accounts; those affected maintained that they were forced into violent action by desperation. It should be noted that most of these disturbances were reported as having occurred late in the year of the poor harvest, or early in the following year, and whilst malnutrition will, of course, weaken resistance to disease, it is likely that the Corporation took sufficient action to curtail the worst effects of dearth, so that a higher than average death rate the following year may not have been connected with a shortage of grain. It remains the case, however, that

14 Swansea Corporation, Book of Orders, 2 May 1757.
15 UCLS, HDMB, 15 October 1766.
16 UCLS, HDMB, 13 February 1793.
although the national mortality crises at the end of the 1720s and beginning of the 1740s demonstrate that there was an association between poverty, hunger, cold weather and disease (especially typhus) that interaction is complex, and any direct relationship between harvest prices and high mortality is weak.\footnote{Dobson, Contours of death and disease, pp.465-6.} The available evidence for Swansea supports that view; and it is also apparent that the incidence of 'riot' in Swansea was no more than in most other towns, and popular disturbances did not present a serious challenge to the town authorities in the eighteenth century.

(ii) \textit{Seasonality and the causes of death}

Wrigley and Schofield consider that the duration, severity and seasonal incidence of local mortality crises can provide clues to the general nature of mortality although not the nature of the disease which caused that mortality.\footnote{Wrigley and Schofield, Population history, pp.667-70.} Unfortunately, as mentioned above, the parish registers of England and Wales - and Swansea's are no exception - rarely provide consistent information on the cause of death. Even at known periods of crisis, the language used to describe diseases is often unclear and ambiguous. Smallpox does not, however, fall into this category, and references are frequent especially in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The disease was prevalent in both town and country (endemic in the former), and was a killer. Unlike influenza, smallpox tended to be localised in its effects and was the cause of, in particular, deaths among young children.\footnote{C. Creighton, A History of Epidemics in Britain, 2, ch.4 (Cambridge, 1965, 1st edn. 1891-4); P. Razzell, The Conquest of Smallpox (Firle, 1975), pp.128-32; Wrigley and Schofield, Population history, p.669.}

Burial normally follows quickly on death so that a burial distribution is virtually equivalent to a death distribution. It is, therefore, reasonable to seek from the parish register burial data
information on the major causes of death, if not of individuals, then collectively. If burials are considered on a seasonal basis, it is, in theory, possible that information on causes of death may emerge.\(^{20}\) For example, the incidence of respiratory diseases will be higher in the winter months, and will recur, although the exact timing will be dependent on climate: an exceptionally cold autumn may alter the usual pattern. Crisis mortality will often be caused by smallpox, but this disease is less predictable and will cause peaks (usually occurring in August and September) which interfere with the general pattern.\(^{21}\) Certain other diseases have a seasonal incidence, for example, scarlet fever and diphtheria are more prevalent in the cold months, as are deaths from old age. Deaths from pneumonia resulting from measles, whooping cough and influenza also tend to occur in winter. Summer would bring fevers and gastro-intestinal diseases (especially among infants) and late summer and early autumn was the common time for diarrhoeal infections such as dysentery. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the seasonal rise and fall of burials operated in a direction opposite to that of the thermometer: generally burials peaked in the winter and spring, and the gravedigger was least active in late summer. Obviously, this pattern could be and was disturbed by epidemics: the Rev. Thomas Short noted in 1750: 'as to mortality in its monthly reign ...... epidemics excepted, it generally begins its triumph in December, increases its conquest till it comes to the zenith of power in March; then declines till May.'\(^{22}\) Wrigley and Schofield also found this monthly pattern, and it is a pattern which still obtains.\(^{23}\) Figs. 3.1 and 3.2 below show the deaths seasonality pattern for Swansea for the years 1661-1670 and 1761-1770.

\(^{20}\) Although L. Bradley, in his essay 'An enquiry into seasonality in baptisms, marriages and burials, part 3: burial seasonality' in *Population Studies*, pp. 85-96, concluded that his attempts to use burial seasonality to identify possible causes of death were unsuccessful.

\(^{21}\) L. Bradley, ibid.


\(^{23}\) Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p.293.
The peaks for March/April and the troughs for July to September are clear (note the secondary peaks for June), and follow the national trend. The graphs do not, of course, provide more than an approximation of the mortality experience; more detailed analysis...
requires much more information usually not available from the parish registers, such as age at death and exact cause of death.

In Swansea, no causes of death are recorded in the registers prior to 1781 (and then usually only the accidental deaths are given), and age at death is not given consistently until June 1794. A mortality peak before 1667 in the summer months is suggestive (but not more) of plague or smallpox; in Swansea in 1685, 50% of the 108 deaths that year (the only major crisis mortality year) occurred in the months of June, July and August. According to Dobson there were no epidemics on a national scale this year, but Wrigley and Schofield comment that from 1678/9 to 1684/5 there was an exceptionally long period of high mortality although the proportion of parishes experiencing crisis was low. Swansea clearly did experience a crisis at the end of this period and, given the concentration of deaths in the summer months, smallpox is indicated. Swansea's minor crisis year of 1729 corresponded with a high mortality year nationally when smallpox raged almost everywhere, and influenza was also universal. In Swansea, mortality was consistently higher than the norm throughout the year although peaking for the months October to December when nearly 30% of all the year's deaths occurred. The Rev. Thomas Short noted that the diseases prevalent for this year included smallpox in June and a variety of less serious ailments. The high national mortality of 1741 was reputedly caused by epidemics of typhus, dysentery, typhoid fever, smallpox and influenza. The year 1740 was cold, and the resulting poor harvest followed by the hot, dry summer of 1741 gave rise to a combination of malnutrition, high prices and low resistance to disease, especially waterborne and fly-borne

diseases such as typhus and dysentery. Swansea experienced a total of sixty-nine deaths in 1741, higher than average for this period, but not appreciably so, and it appears that the town escaped 'the last major demographic crisis of the early modern period'.

During Swansea's 'minor' crisis of 1753, when 81 mortalities are recorded, there are no very pronounced peaks although the months of May and August demonstrate a high average burial rate (42% of the total for the year). There were no national crises throughout the 'healthy 1750s', a factor which contributed significantly to the modern rise of European population. Swansea's last minor mortality crisis of the eighteenth century was that of 1800 when burials were consistently higher than normal for most months with peaks from January to March (33.7%) and July and August (20.7%). But there were seasonal peaks in other years which do not qualify as 'crisis' mortality years. For example, the forty-six burials in May 1796 represents 28% of the total for that year and the proportion is far higher than the average for May for the twenty year period 1781 to 1800 of 11%. There does not appear to be an obvious explanation and the Corporation books hold no clue. Again, in 1791, twenty-three burials are recorded for September or 18% of the total (average 7.5%) for the year; in 1784 there are twenty-three burials for February or 21% of the total (average 10.3%); in 1731 the twenty-five burials in January represent 31% of the total for the year as against an average over a twenty year period of 6%. The explanation must obviously lie in local epidemics of smallpox or typhus or influenza. Smallpox tends to be endemic in large towns and epidemic in villages; expanding towns such as Swansea were attracting, from the 1740s, increasing numbers of immigrants, many from the country, who would have little or no resistance to disease. Those with least resistance to many diseases were young children: of the total number of deaths (197) in Swansea's minor crisis year of 1803, eighty-seven are

recorded as dying of smallpox (mostly in the months August to October), of whom 63 were
babies and children aged five or under. Swansea's last minor crisis year in the period under
study fell in 1832, when deaths from cholera occurred overwhelmingly in August with all
ages struck down.28

Most deaths recorded in St Mary's parish registers from 1781 are not from disease but from
accidents, and many accidents arise out of Swansea's developing function as a port and
place of industry. For example, in August 1791, three were drowned; in August 1792 five
suffered the same fate, and in December of the same year another three drowned. Of the
fifteen recorded deaths in 1807, seven were from drowning and the victims (aged from 13 to
50) probably all went down on the same boat. On February 9 1798 Robert Thomas, aged 14,
and William Griffiths, aged 17, were 'Burnt in the Works'. Rather bizarrely, and
inexplicably, on 1 June 1798 Sampson Phillips, aged 25, was 'shot from the Gun Boat';
another fatal shooting, of John Griffiths, occurred on the Burrows on the 5 June 1804. The
coroner's inquisitions found in the Great Sessions Gaol Files provide more details of the
fates of those who managed to avoid dying in their beds.29 On the 9 August 1791, David
Howells a labourer working in Little Rock Quarry, St Thomas, died when a 'great quantity
of stones and earth fell on him'. And on the 9 November of the same year, William Anthony
perished when he drank an infusion of herbs intended for external application to his injured
leg. On the 12 September 1801, William Thomas working near one of Swansea's dry docks,
and perhaps in a state of intoxication or, given the date, weakened from lack of
nourishment, lost control of the cask he was attempting to roll, fell over it and down the

28 H.J. Randall and W. Rees (eds.), 'Diary of Lewis Weston Dillwyn', South Wales and
29 NLW, Glam. 4/628.

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steps of the dry dock followed by the cask 'which struck him on the head and then rolled
over his body' with fatal results.

3. Nineteenth century mortality, and the development of public health

(i) The state of medical knowledge at the beginning of the nineteenth century

The parish register data can no longer be relied upon for this period, but information on the
incidence of disease and causes of mortality for the first four decades of the nineteenth
century can be found elsewhere. In 1815, Swansea medical practitioner Dr J.C. Collins
(1780-1824) produced his 'Medical Topography'. Collins came from a well-known Gower
family and his father, Charles Collins, had practised as a surgeon in the town and was twice
Portreeve. Collins junior reputedly studied at Guy's Hospital and later at Edinburgh and
possibly received instruction at some time from Jenner, the famous pioneer of vaccination.30

He was Sergeant-at-Mace for the Corporation at 20 and a burgess by 1801. Collins was,
therefore, part of the local Swansea 'establishment' and, as such, had a vested interest in
helping to promote Swansea to the world and to ensure that the '.....genteel independent
families, who are attracted to [Swansea] for society and amusements, and the cheapness of
its markets' were not deterred, particularly in the summer season.31 His method, conscious or
unconscious, of so doing (and other medical practitioners of the period followed suit) was to
emphasise Swansea's virtues over its obvious (to modern eyes) faults; although he did note
the prevalence in the town of smallpox, measles, scarlatina and scabies, amongst other
ailments. The practice and theory of medicine everywhere remained, however, in a
backward state; quack cures (much advertised in the Cambrian) proliferated, and folk
practitioners were much resorted to, whose remedies were perhaps no less efficacious than

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31 J.C. Collins, A Sketch of the Medical Topography of Swansea, South Wales (London,
1815), quoted in Davies, 'Lewis Weston Dillwyn', pp.78-9.
those offered by the establishment doctors. Collins in 1815 recommended bleeding as a treatment, and was a convinced champion of the virtues of flannel next to the skin as a means of warding off a variety of ailments. But Collins was by no means unprogressive for his time and indeed was one of the leading proponents in Wales of vaccination for smallpox, first introduced into the Swansea area by Dr William Turton in 1799-1800, and reintroduced by Collins in 1804. Swansea, as a port, was obviously vulnerable to infectious diseases, including smallpox, and there seems little doubt that Collins' course of vaccination after 1804 was effective in controlling the disease, and that his boast in 1815 that 'Swansea has been, for the last fourteen years, remarkably free from all description of fevers' was justified at that date, at least, so far as it applied to smallpox.32 Collins claimed that the parish registers for 1796 to 1805 recorded 805 deaths from smallpox; from 1806 to 1815 the number of victims was only fifteen.33 This improvement was aided by the founding, in October 1808, chiefly through the exertions of Richard Phillips and Thomas Sylvester, of a public Dispensary in Swansea which played an important part in the field of preventative medicine by offering free vaccination against smallpox to outpatients. The Cambrian, in the edition for the 14 October 1809, reported that of the 1,060 outpatients admitted for treatment at 'Swansea's Dispensary for the Poor', 576 had been discharged as well or relieved, 390 vaccinated against smallpox and eighty-five remained under treatment (the remainder presumably having died). Further progress was made with the opening, in 1817, in part of the former Bathing House, of Swansea's (and Wales') first public Infirmary following a serious outbreak in the same year of typhus.34 Improvement was, reportedly,

32 Davies, 'Lewis Weston Dillwyn', p.80; Collins, Medical Topography.
33 Collins, Medical Topography; The former figure for smallpox victims seems very high for St Mary's parish alone (58% of all deaths for the ten year period), and it is likely that victims from other parishes are included. There are, in fact, few specific references to cause of death in the parish registers at this period.
34 The accommodation was shared with the House of Industry
almost immediate: in September 1817 the new house surgeon, William Edwards, visited 109 patients with the condition. Henry Sockett remarked that smallpox had mainly affected the poor and that provision was made to create employment to avoid starvation.\(^{35}\) This was undoubtedly real progress although not sufficient to stem another serious outbreak of disease over the period from June 1824 to February 1825. This awakening determination to tackle disease and poverty was mirrored in many other towns. Action was often triggered by mortality crises. In the winter of 1799-1800, Leeds was affected by the typhus epidemic which swept most of the country. As a direct result of the epidemic a fever hospital or House of Recovery was opened in 1804. As in Swansea and elsewhere, the initiative was taken by a voluntary society founded by a prominent local physician, Dr Thorpe.\(^{36}\) Liverpool was well provided with medical facilities from quite an early date: the town's first general infirmary, which was free to the public albeit with restrictive entry criteria, was founded in 1749 followed by the Seaman's Hospital in 1752, the Lunatic Asylum in 1792 and a local dispensary to supply medicine to the poor in 1778. A House of Recovery convalescent hospital followed in 1806 and further facilities in the 1820s.\(^{37}\)

(ii) Environmental conditions and the health of the inhabitants

Overall, Collins' assessment of the state of health of the inhabitants of Swansea in 1815, and particularly those who worked in the copper industry, or who were the involuntary and passive victims of the sulphurous fumes given off by the works, or who had to live in the substandard and unhygienic housing in areas in the centre and to the north of the town,

\(^{35}\) H. Sockett, *The Substance of Three Reports to the Inhabitants of the Town and Franchise of Swansea....* (London, 1821). Sockett noted that, in 1817, there was much distress among the poor of Swansea and elsewhere because of a lack of food: ibid, p.23.


appears to have been over-optimistic. Collins' view (shared by others of his class at the time) was that the mild climate, plentiful and cheap food, the 'enervating effect of flannel' and the 'relatively good standard of housing' all combined with the beneficial effects of the fumes from the works (or the stale air from the mines) to keep disease at bay.\textsuperscript{38} Collins recognised and described the disastrous effects of the copper fumes on vegetation and animals in the locality, but seems unable, or perhaps unwilling, to make the connection. This was an official attitude which had long been set in stone: when approving the establishment of one of the town's first copperworks in 1720, the Corporation view had been that its effects would be 'not in the least prejudicial or Hurtful to our said Borrough or the Inhabitants thereof'; a view which was echoed 130 years later by the remark, by this time more cynical in intent, of a local solicitor: 'a great nuisance Sir, but good for the town, Sir, eh?'\textsuperscript{39} But, by the end of the eighteenth century, visitors to towns such as Bristol, Birmingham and Liverpool were criticising the atmospheric pollution. Dr Moss in his \textit{Medical Survey of Liverpool} (1784) commenting on the 'antiseptic qualities of the effluvia of coal and sulphurous smoke' was vainly pushing against the almost open door of public opprobrium. In Manchester in the late eighteenth century legal action had been taken against the filth in the air, and in 1812 Birmingham's first Smoke Abatement Act was passed. Swansea's smoke was the subject of litigation from the 1820s, but no real progress was made in the control of emissions for another forty years.\textsuperscript{40} Dr J.C. Collins was unable, in company with contemporaries such as Dr William Llewelyn and Dr J.W. Gutch, to make the link between the state of health of the people, the poor standards of hygiene, and the sometimes chronic environmental and housing conditions. In his \textit{Medical Topography} of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[38] Collins, \textit{Medical Topography}.
\item[40] Sweet, \textit{The English Town}, p.89; Francis, \textit{Smelting of Copper} (2nd ed.), pp.156-8.
\end{footnotes}
1815, Collins noted the general prevalence of typhus but neither he, nor Dr William Llewelyn, a surgeon of Baglan, who, in 1832 wrote a paper on the treatment of cholera, appear to have considered that there may have been a direct causal connection between this disease (and others) and the environmental conditions found in parts of Swansea. Collins and Williams and Gutch may have practised in a relatively unimportant backwater, but their ignorance was shared by the leading physicians and surgeons of the day. But the light began to dawn. In his *Medical Topography... of Swansea* published in 1839, Gutch hypothesised that the recent fatalities from typhus in Swansea ‘may......have in some measure originated from the imperfect state of the sewerage, the impure condition of the streets and the comparatively small supply of fresh water, all calling sadly for improvement’.41

An attempt to tackle the state of Swansea’s streets and drainage had been made with the setting up, in 1809, of a Paving Commission. The preamble to the enabling Act provides that the Commission was responsible for ‘the better paving repairing lighting and watching the several streets and other public passages and Places within the Town and Franchise of Swansea.....for removing and preventing nuisances, annoyances and obstructions therein’.42 The Corporation’s record in this area over the previous century had been undistinguished, and the Corporation books reveal that the policy had been one of reaction to complaints of inadequate drainage, or lack of cleansing, with *ad hoc* and deficient measures, rather than the formulation of a coherent policy for long-term improvement. The Commission was intended to remedy this deficiency. This body has, with some justification, been criticised for its failure to effect measurable improvements to Swansea’s deficient sanitary conditions, conditions which had deteriorated further after 1800 with the unplanned growth of the town.

42 49 Geo III c.79.
In mitigation, the Commission lacked sufficient funds from the outset (it was empowered to levy a shilling rate) to grapple effectively with a problem which was increasing year by year. Lack of funds meant a sense of impotence which in turn discouraged regular and active attendance at the meetings of the Commission. During the cholera epidemic of 1832, however, the Commission did establish a temporary 'Board of Health' for the town, and appointed investigators to visit and fumigate houses where deaths had occurred, and supervised burials and destroyed infected clothing. The Corporation's contribution to the same crisis was to 'recognise the present distressed state of the respective parishes [St Mary's and St John's] from the severe calamity with which they are now visited by the spread of a direful Disease of Cholera among us', and to vote £200 for a new burial ground. The 1832 epidemic killed about half of those who caught it: in England and Wales there were 18,000 deaths. By 4 August 1832, there had been about twenty deaths in Swansea a rate which, whilst perhaps not amounting to an epidemic, was sufficient to cause panic and to prompt Lewis Weston Dillwyn to remark on the 11 August, when a further five deaths had been reported, that he 'never saw the Streets so deserted on a Market Day'. The evidence of St Mary's burial register indicates that the total number of deaths for August was 103 as against an average for that month (over a thirteen year period) of about thirteen. It was not until 1837 that Swansea took the first step in securing a proper water supply by the construction of a reservoir on high ground about two miles from the town. A number of major English towns, such as York, Bristol, Norwich and Newcastle had taken similar steps as long ago as the late seventeenth century; most towns, English and Welsh, had to await the

43 J.R. Alban, 'Local Government, Administration and Politics, 1700 to the 1830s', in Swansea Illustrated, p.113.
44 UCLS, HDMB, 27 August 1832.
45 L.W. Dillwyn, Diary, p.71.
energy and engineering skills of the early Victorians before this obvious blow for public health could be struck.

(iii) The idea of public health

Vaccination against smallpox, the founding of the Dispensary in 1808 and the Infirmary in 1817, were a real incentives to the development of preventive medicine and public health in the face of ignorance and apathy. But much more needed to be done. In 1835 an anonymous commentator was moved to remark on Swansea and its inhabitants:

....the worst part of the business is they keep their town so dirty you will hardly believe what you could see in that way here. And the best joke is, the residents all cry out loudly about it, and say there never was such a dirty place, but yet take no steps to remedy the evil.46

It was left to Henry de la Beche and his hard hitting report for the Health of Towns Royal Commission (1845) to sweep away prejudice and ignorance and usher in a new awareness of the importance to town dwellers of public health, clean streets and good sanitation.47 De la Beche recognised that at the core of the problem lay a lack of proper provision and administrative machinery for street cleansing and drainage, and the seeming indifference of the inhabitants to the filth and ordure under their feet. Through the intelligent and judicious use of burial data, de la Beche was able to identify that the chasm existing at Swansea between the mortality rate caused by epidemics among artisans and working men (1 in 3.5), and the gentry (1 in 11.5), was the product of the exposure of the former to the conditions

46 The Cambrian, 30 May 1835. This may have been a 'plant' by the editor of the Cambrian.
under investigation. De la Beche's view that Swansea possessed 'nothing deserving the name of a system of drainage' was based, in part, on the damning report of a recent ex-mayor, Dr Richard Bird. Although, by the 1840s, the Paving Commissioners had constructed five covered sewers, these emptied untreated sewage directly into the river Tawe, and the Town Ditch served as a sixth, open drain. In the opinion of Dr Bird, 'the arrangements of the public sewers are extremely ill conducted and badly managed; system there is none at all; and in many parts of the town there is no drainage or sewerage whatsoever'. The Paving Commission's efforts over the previous forty years had been far from impressive in the face of growing population although, to be fair, the powers given by the 1809 Act fell short of adequate as did the powers to raise funds to pay for an effective system. Many houses had no privies, or, at most earth closets, and waste was thrown, with household rubbish, indiscriminately into the streets. This was the case even in the planned and relatively recently built Morriston where, in 1849, 'the sewage is left to find its own way along the open street-gutters, which....were in divers places clogged up with it. In hot weather the nuisance thus created is considerable, and the Medical Report, already cited, shows the ill effects not to be confined to the mere production of an inconvenience'. This was reflected

48 The duties of the original Paving Commission had, in 1836, been transferred to the reformed Corporation under the Municipal Corporations Act 1835, although legally the Commission remained a separate body.
49 De la Beche, Report, p.63.
50 The Commission on the 1 December 1819 had considered and adopted a detailed report on the condition of the streets and drainage which included the statement that 'the private drains and gutters of the Inhabitants have hitherto emptied themselves into the streets, and occasioned very considerable nuisances, should no longer be permitted.....' But the Commissioners were also 'anxious to avoid all expenses which are not most urgently required': Commission Minutes 1 December 1819. The Corporation, however, was far less effective: one of the few references to provision for drainage is in HDMB for the 9 January 1793 where the surveyor was ordered to stake out levels on the side of the river where 'common sewers may be made'.
in the state of the streets which were repositories for filth, dust and ashes, inadequately and irregularly removed by scavengers. Inevitably, the problem had worsened from 1801, with the increase in population from 6,099 to about 17,000, and the resulting infill development in the town:

Even the main streets of the town warranted censure by de la Beche as having an 'air of neglect' owing to the inefficient, or non existent, drainage and scavenging. Of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century literary visitors to Swansea, this was a view shared possibly only by John Byng, and although B.H. Malkin considered Swansea's streets to be not as clean as formerly, he still thought the place to be the cleanest large town in Wales.

It is, however, likely that few travellers ventured into the back alleys and courts. Also, de la Beche and G.T.Clark in 1849 did not single out Swansea for special treatment: most south

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52 Dr R. Bird in de la Beche, Report, p.60. Housing provision in Swansea was, however, considered by de la Beche to be better than in many towns with an average of hardly more than one family of five or six per house. Most houses were, however, of two rooms only. No cellar dwellings were noted: ibid, pp.65-6.

53 de la Beche, Report, p.60.

Welsh towns were subjected to equally harsh criticism for the condition of their sewerage system (where it existed). In T.W. Rammell's view (1850), Cardiff had been 'left completely to its fate, unassisted by the commonest aids of science or prudence'. No proper drains existed in the town only a 'succession of pits connected by a covered way' in which various deposits accumulated. Consequently, 'floods, swamps, filth, miasma, ague and other disorders' were found in 'fearful abundance'. Cardiff was even more the victim of the rapid increase in its population from 1840, and of the inadequacy of the remedies for righting the situation, than was Swansea. Many towns, in fact, were subject to criticism by the 1845 Royal Commission Report: Swansea's conditions were no worse than most and better than many. Its death rate at the time of 23 per 1000 was not much above the national rate of 22 per 1000, although far inferior to neighbouring Gower's 15 per 1000. In comparing Swansea in 1841 with thirteen other towns chosen as having a similar climate and being of a similar size, de la Beche noted the high incidence of death through tuberculosis and typhus in Swansea (for example, the death rate from tuberculosis was 1 in 4.8 in Swansea and 1 in 5.7 in Barnstaple; deaths from typhus 1 in 11 in Swansea and 1 in 24 in Barnstaple) and remarked that the supposed beneficial effects of copper smoke on these diseases was not apparent. He also remarked that the low annual death rate in Swansea (1.74 per hundred - the lowest of the fourteen towns compared) may have been influenced by the high rate of in-migration of persons over the age of five years. Conditions were equally as bad elsewhere in England. The St Ebbe's area of Oxford was extended in the 1820s and 1830s by the building of numerous small houses on low lying semi-waterlogged land liable to flooding. The site was developed piecemeal and individual builders provided a well and cesspit on

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each plot; consequently this was a fertile breeding ground for the cholera epidemic in the area of 1854. Clark's report resulted in the establishment in 1850 of a local Board of Health, which replaced the Paving Commission, the new Board deriving its powers from the pioneering Public Health Act, 1848. New powers included the control over sewage disposal and the water supply, the regulation of offensive trades, street maintenance and the making of byelaws (including for regulating building). Real progress in Swansea dates from 1854 when the first proper sewerage system was constructed.

The provision of an adequate and disease free water supply was also slow to be established. For centuries Swansea relied on the river Tawe, local springs and wells, and street water sellers for its supplies. The river, springs and wells were often contaminated with human and industrial waste. In Morriston and Trevivian, water from the canal was also used for domestic purposes. According to Clark in 1849 'the houses are almost all ill provided with privies, and the people draw water, often contaminated with sewage, from various springs and brooks within two to ten minutes' walk, or from the canal'. Some industrialists, notably Grenfell and Vivian, attempted to provide a decent water supply for their workers, with mixed success. In the face of inactivity by the Corporation and the Paving Commissioners, a group of citizens led by W.H. Smith ('Waterworks Bill') obtained a private Act of

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57 De la Beche, Report, pp.74-5; Clark, Report.
58 In May 1825, the Commissioners resolved to excavate six wells and erect public pumps over them in Market Place, with two more in Goat Street, two in High Street and in Orchard Street. The main streams included The Washing Lake, Ffynnon y Graig (the lower part of which became a notorious sewer) Burlais Brook (the source of a number of outbreaks of illness from industrial and human waste), St David's Ditch and Cwm Donkin Springs (the last filled Swansea's first reservoir): Paving Commission Minutes, 4th May 1825.
59 Clark, Report, quoted in Hughes, Copperopolis, p.188.
60 Hughes, ibid, pp.188-9.
Parliament and established a waterworks company.\footnote{De la Beche, \textit{Report}, pp.63-4; J.R. Alban, 'Local Government, Administration and Politics' in \textit{Swansea Illustrated}, pp.112-3.} The reservoirs constructed at Brynmill and Cwm Donkin lacked capacity and by 1845 only 470 houses out of a total of 3,369 in the town of Swansea enjoyed a piped supply of water while, as late as 1854, no houses north of the High Street railway station were connected to the mains.\footnote{7 & 8 Wm. IV c.52.} Swansea had to wait until the late 1870s for the completion of the Lower Lliw and Blaennant Ddu dams which, for the first time, provided an adequate supply for most of the town.\footnote{G.R. Howe: 'Swansea's Early Water Supply', \textit{Gower}, 29 (1978), pp.54-60.}

4. Conclusion

The crude birth and death rate data are not in themselves very enlightening except to prompt the observation that, throughout the eighteenth century, the data for Swansea appears not to have differed materially from the national data (Table 3.1). Also, from about 1750, when the town was starting to expand, there does not appear to be any deviation from the norm which perhaps might have been expected at a time of in-migration and pressure on resources. The data are, however, unrefined. Swansea experienced mortality crises, but one 'major' crisis (1685) and five 'minor' ones (1729, 1753, 1800, 1803, 1832) in the period 1661-1835 does not suggest that the town was an especially unhealthy place in which to live, or that, generally, there was a shortage of affordable food supplies affecting health.\footnote{There were, however, years of high mortality albeit not reaching 'crisis' category.} In relative terms, Swansea was, in fact, healthier than many other towns, and particularly the expanding English industrial centres, but Swansea's rate of expansion at this time was modest, when compared to, for example, Liverpool or Birmingham where cheap accommodation for immigrants was at a premium, and the notorious cellar-dwelling was commonly found. Whilst Swansea's crowded courts and alleyways, and back-to-back
houses, thrown up in response to population pressure, were a disgrace, and contributed to
the spread of disease, immigrants did not, however, have to suffer the damp, dark and
airless cellar dwellings found elsewhere. Swansea had the capacity to expand to the
salubrious south-west, and was able to accommodate new industrial villages on
undeveloped land to the north, thereby taking pressure off the centre. And houses
constructed by coppermasters for their workers in the industrial settlements were often of a
relatively reasonable standard. Causes of death are difficult to discover: the parish registers
do not record them before 1781. Inferences may, however be drawn from seasonality data
derived from the registers: the nature of the disease may be suggested by the season in
which it occurs. The pattern of Swansea's seasonal mortality 1661-1670 and 1761-1779
(Figs. 3.1 and 3.2), corresponded with the national pattern with peaks of mortality in
March/April and June, and troughs in August/September before climbing again in the winter
months. Smallpox, influenza, typhus and dysentery were all, no doubt common visitors to
Swansea (and elsewhere), and the high number of infant deaths in 1685 and 1803 suggests
smallpox. This disease is specifically recorded as occurring in 1806 and, of course,
Swansea's 1832 cholera epidemic is also documented in the registers and elsewhere. It is
not, however, easy to establish a firm link between peaks of mortality and external factors
such as weather conditions, grain prices and shortage and riots, although there is some
evidence that bad harvests meant high prices which precipitated malnutrition which
triggered diseases susceptible to famine (for example typhus) and higher mortality than
usual (see Table 3.3). Another external factor - copper smoke - must surely have contributed
to the incidence of respiratory disease. There is, however, substantial documentary evidence
of the link between high prices or shortage of grain and rioting: this occurred in Swansea

Dr J.C. Collins reported in 1815 over 800 deaths from smallpox in Swansea between 1796
and 1805.
and Cardiff in the 1790s, and later, and in many other towns; and difficulties in the supply of grain at an affordable price may also have contributed to the national typhus epidemic of 1799-1800.

Swansea’s experience of disease and mortality in the eighteenth century does not, therefore, appear to be much different from other growing, small towns, nor were the measures taken from the end of that century to alleviate dearth, tackle disease and improve public health out of the ordinary. Most towns had their own modestly progressive medical men, and Swansea was no exception. Dr J.C. Collins was undoubtedly a local pioneer in the administration of smallpox vaccines, although he may have been backward looking in some of his other treatments. There seems little doubt that the opening of Swansea’s public Dispensary by 1808, offering free vaccination against smallpox, and a public Infirmary (Wales’ first) in 1817, struck a blow against infectious disease. But more was required and, by the end of the 1830s, Drs. W. Llewelyn and J.W. Gutch were beginning to make important connections between diseases such as cholera and typhus and environmental conditions found in Swansea; and it is no coincidence that the Corporation started at this time to take first steps in the improvement of public health by the construction (1837) of a reservoir to provide a supply of clean disease-free water to the town. Swansea was not particularly backward in the area of public health when compared with other small towns, but real progress was not to be made here, or elsewhere, until after the reports of de la Beche and Clark had led to the passing of the Public Health Act, 1848.66

66 But the provisions of this first piece of public health legislation were permissive and adoptive: many urban authorities chose not to adopt them. Swansea’s Local Board of Health was, however, established under the Act in 1850.
In summary, therefore, the growth of Swansea's population between 1740 and 1840, whilst impressive for a Welsh town, did not compare in scale with the industrialising towns of England. Although the Corporation struggled to deal with overcrowding in the courts and alleys in the vicinity of Wind Street and High Street, the existence of which no doubt will have contributed to the spread of infectious disease, the scale of these problems was not sufficiently out of the ordinary to merit special comment by contemporaries. Whilst there was periodic unrest amongst the labouring poor of Swansea, especially in the 1790s, this arose out of corn shortages and high prices rather than as a reaction to any failure by the ruling elite to alleviate stress caused by overcrowding and poor housing and sanitary conditions. In general, and notwithstanding demands by industrial workers in Swansea and Merthyr for higher wages, food riots did not represent a conflict between capital and labour. The riots were not directed either against the existing political establishment, despite threats from rioters in Swansea in 1793 that France should be regarded as 'a warning'. Food riots were, apparently, organised, and even disciplined in their nature and, according to Thompson, concerned with the desire of the lower orders to protect their traditional rights and customs which constituted their 'moral economy'. Those taking part in food riots included not only the poor and unemployed, but also industrial workers, artisans and craftsmen, small shopkeepers and small farmers. There is evidence also of the involvement of the middling classes, if not as active participants then as supporters when it suited their purposes. As Sweet has convincingly shown, however, there existed in Swansea at the

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67 Jones, Before Rebecca, p.27.
68 E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', Past and Present, 50 (1971). See also A. Randall and A. Charlesworth (eds.), Markets, Market Culture and Popular Protest in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland, Liverpool (1996), pp. 17-23. For a critique of the 'moral economy', see Daunton, Progress and Poverty, 328-9. Daunton points out that regulation of markets may have been less to do with paternalistic protection of the 'moral economy' than the desire of the owner of the legal market to protect his monopoly rights.
69 Although perhaps to a lesser extent in south Wales: Jones, Before Rebecca, pp.31-4.

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turn of the eighteenth century (notwithstanding food riots) a social stability grounded on an
effective diffusion of power amongst the middling and governing classes. Whilst the
franchise was small, non-burgesses found outlets through membership of bodies such as the
Harbour Trust, the Paving Commission, the magistracy, the Vestry and the Poorhouse.

There existed also (as Chapter 5 will discuss) a unity of interest between the merchant and
professional classes and the industrial entrepreneurs with regard to Swansea's development
as a seaside resort. Furthermore, although the financial records of the Corporation were
open to criticism, there is little evidence of the degree of corruption which gave rise in other
towns to unrest and agitation for reform; and the Corporation was active from at least 1789
in promoting the development of trade and industry in the port and town. Whilst there was,
therefore, in Swansea in the five decades prior to the Municipal Corporations Act 1835,
undoubted hardship amongst the urban poor, there was, nevertheless, insufficient platform
for the demand for radical reform of the type which emerged (heralding the Chartist
movement) in Merthyr in violent fashion in 1831; and the political transition in Swansea in
1835 was notable for an absence of rancour, and an acceptance that change was inevitable
and desirable. But there remained much work to do.


In a sample of thirty-six towns in England and Wales detailing mortality, housing and
population in 1871, Swansea is sixth worst with mortality of 29.35 per 1000 population,
having a population of 56,057, a population density of 1.27 persons per acre and .20 houses
per acre. Liverpool heads the sample and the comparable figures are 38.71; 241,240; 97.67
and 31.18: R. Millward and F. Bell, 'Choices for town councillors in nineteenth century
Britain: investment in public health and its impact on mortality', in Sheard and Power, Body
and City, Table 9.1 on p.149.
CHAPTER 4: IMMIGRATION, ASSIMILATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction: motives and controls

An understanding of the process of migration of course involves more than an interpretation of the results of aggregative analysis. Migration is concerned also with individuals, the society they leave behind and the effects of their arrival on the receiving community and their assimilation into that community. It is concerned with the influence of kinship; with social and cultural factors which may have inhibited movement; with the local economy, including wage rates and employment opportunities; with the availability and cost of transport, and with political controls. In Wales, and (it will be argued) in Swansea in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, language, education and religion were additional potent factors. The combination of all these factors strongly affected Swansea's idea of itself, a self-perception or identity which shifted according to the exigencies of the economy; and, in addition, the wide ranging motivation of Swansea's immigrants contributed to a heterogeneity and diversity of population unmatched by any other Welsh town.

Migration has been called a 'demographic, social and cultural process linking communities, regions and nations'; an examination of it is essential to the proper understanding of the movement of peoples. Ravenstein observed that the majority of migrants moved usually short distances mostly for economic reasons and generally away from rural areas to centres of industry and commerce which owed their growth more to the reception and assimilation of incomers than to natural increase. Lee refined Ravenstein's 'laws' albeit re-affirming that

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economic reasons were the mainspring to migration. Potential migrants either desire to escape hopeless rural poverty (for example, from the Irish Famine of the nineteenth century), or are lured by a promise of economic betterment (the two are, of course, often complementary). In either case, the decision to throw over life on the land, often after many generations, must often have been difficult, notwithstanding the promise of a better life elsewhere. Pooley and Turnbull support Ravenstein's argument that migration in all time periods was short distance and contained within a well-defined regional migration-system, although they challenge the idea that direction was mainly from rural to urban. Indeed, Pooley and Turnbull argue that movement up the urban hierarchy played a relatively small role in the 'total migration system', and migration made a smaller net contribution to urbanization than previously accepted. They also challenge the assumption that migrants were mostly young, single persons; although the young, of both genders, were more likely to travel over greater distances, most migrants were family groups.

The available evidence for Swansea, which will be examined in this chapter, suggests that migration at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries to this incorporated borough and local market centre, and to the Tawe Valley was, of necessity (given the poor roads), short distance or 'local', and sometimes seasonal or 'circular'; in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as industry and the port developed, it was both 'subsistence' and 'chain' (the two categories are not, of course, mutually exclusive). There

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4 C.G. Pooley and Jean Turnbull, 'Migration and Mobility in Britain from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries' Local Population Studies, 57 (1996), pp.50-70.

5 'Subsistence' migrants were forced off the land in search of a livelihood; 'chain' migrants, also in search of betterment, took advantage en route to their ultimate destination of kinship.
was also 'career' migration with industrialists, merchants and shopkeepers, and the
professions drawn to the area by the prospect of exploitation of raw materials and the labour
attracted to the industrial works. Career migration was, of course, the pattern found in
industrialising towns and regions throughout England and Wales in the eighteenth and
nineteenth centuries although longer distance migration in Wales was hampered until after
the middle of the eighteenth century and the introduction of the turnpike trusts. 'Social'
migration, which was the prerogative of the wealthy and leisured classes of the eighteenth
and early nineteenth centuries, attended Swansea's efforts to sell itself as a seaside resort.

Documentary sources for the quantification of migration, especially for the later period, are
lacking. Prior to the start of the eighteenth century, apprenticeship regulations, church court
depositions and documentation relating to poor law and settlement legislation are useful for
information on origin and destination of certain groups of migrants but, after about 1700, the
incidence and utility of these records decline and, for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,
reliance must be placed on those sources from which it is possible to infer migration from its
effects on the receiving population such as marriage records (especially after 1753) and,
particularly after 1841, the census enumerators' books. The application of aggregative
techniques on the latter enables projection back into the eighteenth and even the seventeenth
centuries and the extraction of data of sorts, as was demonstrated in Chapter 2. It is almost
impossible to apply quantitative analysis to population movements in England and Wales to
extract an intelligible idea of spatial distribution and employment patterns of the incomers;
and, unlike the earlier period, consulting contemporary comment on immigrants is less
fruitful (even supposing such comment to be reliable). By the mid-eighteenth century, when
communications had improved through the work of the turnpike trusts (and were starting to

ties, or clubs and societies, as an aid to assimilation.

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improve in Wales), and the volume of immigration had grown, the receiving communities had become more used to immigration and better equipped economically to absorb the incomers, so that the process excited less attention by commentators. Mobility had become commonplace; and indeed the growing industrial towns, where deaths exceeded births (particularly in the earlier period), demanded a regular infusion of new workers, often with no questions asked. Whatever the exact proportion of natural increase to migration, the latter was an essential element in the balancing of population between country and town, especially at times of overall increase in population, and contributed to the burgeoning economy of towns in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.6 As we have seen, however, problems concerning lack of housing and proper sanitation, public order and food supply were almost inseparable from the migration process with the urban infrastructure lagging behind the reception of strangers.

From the end of the eighteenth century natural population growth gave a fresh impetus to migration, particularly to industrialising towns such as Swansea and Merthyr Tydfil and, in England, to Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds. In the fast growing industrial towns, in-migration was regulated according to economic need. It has already been noted that controls were at their most lax when demand for labour was greatest, and this is reflected in the paucity of documentary evidence for settlement. As the pace of industrialisation and urbanisation quickened, so did the rate of in-migration with some towns dependent on migrants to maintain population levels. Nevertheless, the accepted view is that the growth of industrial production in Britain was relatively constant from about 1750 to the 1830s, with no violent changes in the pattern of in-migration, although in England and Wales the proportion

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of population living in towns with a population of over 2500 rose from 24% in about 1750 to 30% in 1801. Three important questions arise: where did these new urban dwellers come from, why did they come, and how were they assimilated? In Swansea, it seems likely that most migrants from about 1700 were Welsh people fleeing the land and, because of the primitive state of internal communications in Wales at this period, most will have travelled from neighbouring counties, but with some from the English regions. In addition, there was a small, but economically important, number of Jewish immigrants from before the middle of the eighteenth century, of whom the Michael family was among the earliest and later the most successful representatives. Irish settlers to Swansea and other south Wales towns, escaping famine, did not really make their presence felt much before about 1840 (when many settled in the Greenhill area to the north of the town). These immigrants had to be quickly and effectively settled if public order problems were to be avoided. Apprenticeship had ceased to be an important means of absorption from about 1700 (boys had often been indentured to a relative) and, obviously, of achieving freeman status; but in Swansea and other industrialising towns in England and Wales, kinship ties continued to be crucial throughout this period - perhaps more so in the Swansea region than many English towns since Swansea was regarded as an 'English' town to the incoming, often monoglot, Welsh who naturally gravitated to the same locality as that of their countrymen who spoke the language. In Brinley Thomas' phrase, the Welsh learned to colonise their own country. This process was aided later in the period by the presence in the Welsh speaking receiving communities of resources which aided assimilation: clubs, societies, schools and, above all

8 See pp.165-6 below, and the evidence of personal names.
9 Although the *Cambrian* of the 12 January 1825 reported the refusal of shopkeepers to take the Irish or harp pence unless allowed thirteen or fourteen to the shilling, the measure being deemed necessary 'to check the present super-abundant supply from the Sister Kingdom'. See also P. O'Leary, *Immigration and Integration. The Irish in Wales, 1798-1822* (Cardiff, 2000), esp. pp.108-111.
chapels. A fourth question therefore arises in the case of Swansea's immigrants: what effect did they have on the receiving community and on Swansea's image of itself?

2. Swansea: economic expansion and in-migration

(i) Factors forcing people off the land: poverty and dispossession

These have traditionally been characterised by historians as 'push' factors. Swansea had no special claim as a target for the exiguous poor of the Welsh countryside although the early development of its industry gave it a longer history as a reception town for those seeking work than other industrialising towns. The Welsh have a history of leaving home, forced often by religious, social, economic and personal reasons. London, Liverpool, Bristol and America were favoured destinations. Religion was the main reason for emigration to America in the seventeenth century; poverty in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Life in the Welsh countryside, outside the relatively fertile regions of the Vale of Glamorgan and Gower, was hard and often degrading, and the problem was compounded by the raising of rents and the improvement of agricultural techniques. Whilst there is no doubt that agricultural methods and techniques had to change, the effects of change were often inimical to the well-being of the ordinary labourer on the land. Many were forced off and by dire economic need sought sustenance either in the industrialising towns, or in America:

The bearer of this, Daniel Davis, is about to emigrate to your country [America] with his wife and seven children. He is by trade a mason and understands the farming business pretty well...I am ashamed to trouble you and Dr Rogers so often with the concerns of these poor Emigrants,

10 A survey of 1695 noted 4,343 Welsh names in London comprising about 7.5% of the population. Welsh societies existed in London from the early eighteenth century and could be found also in Bristol and Birmingham: Whyte, Migration and Society, pp.99-100.
but what in God’s name can I do?...I cannot describe to you the condition
of our poor country; thousands of the poor move about the country begging
bread....Myriads would emigrate if they had money....

Agriculture was a major employer of labour throughout the period under study. In south
Wales, dairy production was important and drovers supplied English markets, and
particularly Bristol, with corn, meat, butter and cheese. In only a few places, such as Gower
and the Vale of Glamorgan, was cereal-growing more important than stock-rearing, and these
two areas were among the most fertile in Wales. Much of the remainder of Wales consisted
of upland moors and infertile *ffridd*, and it was in these regions that the worst poverty and the
effects of the pressures of over-population could be found. And it was from these regions also
that many thousands fled in the hope of finding a better life and industrialising towns such as
Swansea and Merthyr Tydfil were often their target. The importance of internal migration in
Wales, therefore, can scarcely be over-emphasised. Glamorgan, relatively, was a prosperous
region adjoining areas of agricultural impoverishment and, in the opinion of Friedlander and
Roshier, occupied a special place in the history of internal migration in Britain. As such, the
county was a magnet not only for the rural poor of Wales but also for the deprived and
desperate from the adjoining midland counties of England and from Somerset, Devon and
Cornwall. Although lowland Glamorgan was reasonably fertile, with workers relatively
well housed, even here agricultural improvements in the latter part of the eighteenth century,
later coupled with the post-1816 depression, meant that fewer workers were needed, or could

11 William Richards, Newcastle Emlyn, to Dr Samuel Jones, Philadelphia, April 1801,
*Pennepk Papers*, USA, quoted in T. Herbert & G.E. Jones (eds.), *The Remaking of Wales in
the Eighteenth Century* (Cardiff, 1988) p.139.
13 Pooley and Turnbull in ‘Migration and Mobility’ indicate that relatively few travelled from
the west Midlands region to south Wales between 1750 and 1879, which is unsurprising
given that both areas were the subject of intense industrialisation at the same period.
be afforded, even on the larger more prosperous farms of the Vale of Glamorgan or Gower; and the surplus labour was pushed to the industrialising locations of south Wales. The 'push' factor had less impact on the smaller holdings of the region (before 1750 most farms were thirty to thirty-five acres) where hired labour was less common. Later in the nineteenth century, the huge increase in Glamorgan's population created a demand for foodstuffs which boosted the agricultural economy and checked the flight from the land. Writing as late as 1939, B.L. Coombes summed up in graphic terms his feelings as a Herefordshire farm-boy who went to work in the south Wales coal-mines just before World War I. Referring to the rosy glare in the sky of the blast furnaces at Dowlais:

......in the cold and wetness of the winter evenings, when we had finished feeding the animals, and had cut enough chaff for the next day, we crowded near the fire of damp logs that Mother was coaxing into flames with the bellows. I would look at our feeble fire and think, with longing, of the heat and brightness that must be about those distant flames.

The tendency to leave the land was, however, pervasive: there was no significant expansion of the agricultural workforce in England and Wales between 1700 and 1800 and only a modest growth between 1800 and 1851. Given the general increase of population over the period, a substantial shift of employment from agriculture to industry and the service sector, and from countryside to town, is obviously indicated. Between 1760 and 1840 the percentage of the male workforce employed in agriculture in England and Wales fell from about 53% to 29% whilst male employment in industry rose from about 24% to 47%.

14 Boyns and Baber, 'The Supply of Labour', pp.311-362.
15 Quoted in Dai Smith, Wales: A Question for History (Bridgend, 1999), pp.55-56.
16 Whyte, Migration and Society, p.154.
(ii) Factors attracting people to the town: social and economic opportunities

Historians have traditionally referred to these as 'pull' factors. As we have seen, rural emigrants were often motivated by extra-urban factors and the town was a passive receiver of those seeking escape from poverty or, in the case of females, some degree of economic security through marriage. Of equal, if not greater, importance than the pressures pushing labour off the land, were the almost irresistible prospect of betterment through opportunities for trade and business, the higher wages on offer in industrial concerns, and the more superficial attractions of a fashionable seaside resort. There were increasing opportunities for women. The factors inducing this type of migration will be examined in turn as they were affected by and grew out of Swansea's historical urban development.

(a) Castle town, market centre and borough

Swansea's earliest immigrants were neither Welsh nor English but Scandinavian. The Vikings settled in the early eleventh century followed by the Normans about a century later. The latter built the first castle which was replaced in stone in the thirteenth century. As defence against the Welsh, and to service the garrison of the castle, plots of land (burgages) were offered to encourage further immigration. The origin of the first burgage-holders are not known but they were almost certainly English, and many probably came across the Bristol Channel from south-west England. The plantation formed the basis of the medieval and later town of Swansea and plantation was a process repeated in all the other castle towns of Wales.

17 Increased demand from the late seventeenth century for female domestic servants led to a substantial in-migration of women to towns, contributing to an imbalance in urban sex ratios. In the wealthy inner parishes of late-seventeenth-century Bristol, for example, 25-30% of the population were servants, and five out of eight of them women. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the proportion of female to male servants increased further so that by Victoria's reign domestic service had become an almost exclusively female occupation. Women were almost equally in demand, as cheap labour, in service and factory occupations, particularly the clothing trade and cloth manufacture. Whyte, Migration and Society, pp.80, 92; Sweet, The English Town, pp.205-7.
Whether a town survived or even flourished economically after the disappearance of the original military and administrative functions depended on the location of that town and the quality of its hinterland and communications. From the early twelfth century, Swansea was the focus of the agriculturally productive area of Gower and the location of its markets and fairs where produce and livestock could be bought and sold, and where the services and goods of tradesmen and craftsmen might be procured. Critical to this process was the legal grant of a franchise or right to hold markets and fairs. The feudal system, which tied its subjects to the land, and burdened them with onerous duties and obligations to their lord, was a great disincentive to trade. If trade was to be promoted, and the local economy advanced, a system of exemptions from the customary obligations had to be developed and the vehicle for these exemptions was the grant of charters of incorporation of the town followed usually some years later (once order and control over the new town had been established) by a grant of market rights. These charters gave substantial privileges to those who were prepared to settle in the new town including entitlement to the grant of a burgage tenement at the traditional annual rent of 12d, freedom from tolls and other valuable rights. Thus freed from feudal dues and obligations, the class of men known as burgesses were able to concentrate on commerce and it was this class, building on their original privileges, which came to dominate the local system of administration and justice, and which, in most incorporated towns, including Swansea, came to represent a decreasing, and increasingly unrepresentative, proportion of the population. Swansea was granted a succession of charters from 1158 to

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19 In Swansea in 1583 the number of burgesses has been estimated at 79, or 8% of an approximate population of 1000; in 1634, burgesses constituted 7% of the population but in 1833 only 0.7% of a total population of 15,621: W.S.K. Thomas, 'Municipal Government in Swansea 1485-1640', *Glam Hist*, 1 (1963), p.34. See ibid, pp.32-36 for details of the privileges of Swansea's burgesses, and see also Sidney and Beatrice Webb 'The Boroughs of Wales' in *English Local Government from the Revolution to the Municipal Corporations Act: The Manor and the Borough*, 3:1 (1908) pp.35-36; and (for details of the burgages) Morgan, *Town and Manor of Swansea*. Other (successful) Welsh boroughs shared this experience.
1685 but all were primarily concerned with incorporation or the confirmation of borough status and there is no specific grant of market rights although the grant of those rights may be inferred from the wording of some of the borough charters. Swansea was, therefore, at the very least, entitled to market rights by prescription the evidence for which may be found in the successive borough charters.

From an early stage in its history, therefore, Swansea's population was of mixed origin, with the original burgesses almost certainly being of Anglo-Norman stock, and the twelfth century castle erected as a defence against Welsh attack. But the sparse surviving documentary evidence suggests an early, and increasing, Welsh presence in the town and, by the early fourteenth century, Welsh burgesses are recorded. By 1400, at least 13% of the burgages were held by men who were indisputably Welsh (including David ap William, Ieuan ap Caradog and Thomas ap Rhys), whilst the names of another 14% strongly suggest a Welsh origin. The English were attracted originally to Swansea, and the Welsh presence thereafter grew, for one principal reason: the opportunity to profit from trade. The possession of market rights coupled with a relatively fertile hinterland, which included Gower, were the factors which encouraged the growth of the economy. According to Carter, the presence of a market was a 'basic qualification for urban status' although markets held in small villages would not, of course, bestow such status. John Leland in the mid-sixteenth century referred to Swansea as 'the market town and chief place of Gower'; at this period markets were being held there each Wednesday and Saturday with three (formerly two) annual fairs. Markets

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21 Walker, 'Anglo-Welsh Town' in Swansea Challenges, pp.5, 8, 15; Thomas, History of Swansea, pp.7-8.
23 Carter, Towns of Wales, pp.33-35.
were the outlets for local trade whereas goods offered at fairs came from a much wider area including overseas (facilitated, of course, by Swansea's coastal position). Thus, although the town remained small, the strength of the local economy was sufficient to impress Leland in the mid-sixteenth century, and the engine of the town's economic life at this period continued to be its market and fairs pulling in buyers and sellers from the countryside and from further afield. The market was not simply the centre of trade and economic life but also the focus of rural life around it. The market place, and the inns and taverns, were places to meet, exchange news and do business. Inevitably, traders and craftsmen settled and, over time, temporary booths and stalls became more substantial, and then, ultimately, were transformed into permanent shops and workshops.

A thriving market was, therefore, of critical importance to the economic well-being of a town, and Swansea's was no exception. Towns were ever vigilant to prevent disturbance to their legal market by unlawful 'rival' markets, and were prepared if necessary, to resort to litigation to protect their monopoly of trade within the common law distance.25 The survival

25 Urban historians have, perhaps, underestimated the importance of the legal right, and preparedness, of market owners to take action for disturbance of the peaceable enjoyment of their franchise by the levying of a rival market within the common law distance of six and two-thirds miles. For example, Alan Everitt (in 'The Market Towns' in P. Clark (ed.), The Early Modern Town, A Reader (London, 1976), pp.191, 193) speculates on the ideal and actual average distribution of and distance between market towns in England and Wales (7 to 10 miles) without once mentioning the existence of the common law distance and the captive trade maintained by the interdict on newer markets set up within a day's travelling distance of the legal market: see E.F. Cousins and R. Anthony, Pease & Chitty's Law of Markets and Fairs (London, 1998), pp.69 et seq. for a discussion of the supposed origin and development of the common law distance. An early case (1278) involved a dispute between the towns of Welshpool and Montgomery whereby the latter successfully petitioned (although this was not the end of the argument) to have the new, unlawful, market set up in the former removed to a site outside the common law distance: see R. Morgan, 'The Foundations of the Borough of Welshpool', Mont Colts, 65 (1977), pp.14-16. In a later case (1676) the burgesses of Tenby succeeded in closing down a rival market at Narberth. The law remains good today, most of the litigation being initiated by local authorities possessing charter market rights, or utilising powers under the Food Act, 1984.
of a small market town could depend on the health of its market and the trades, crafts and services which attended it. Swansea's markets appear, however, to have thrived, particularly from the mid-sixteenth century, and the municipal records attest to the very wide and varied range of goods and services on offer. Shoemakers, tailors, hatters, glovers and tanners represented the clothing interests; carpenters, tilers, masons, pavers and glaziers the building trades; butchers, bakers, vintners, millers and fishmongers the food sellers. Many of these craftsmen will have settled in Swansea contributing to its increasing population from the mid-sixteenth century. The growing volume of business transacted by the town from the early seventeenth century was reflected in the increase of the number of officers concerned with the town business, and the creation of new ones. It was reflected also by the desire to provide better market facilities. Hitherto, markets were held in Wind Street and the streets adjoining it; in 1651, the first of Swansea's five covered markets was constructed in Wind Street.

It is clear that, especially from the 1760s, business in the market, and the numbers attracted to the town to trade, were growing. In 1781, the dates of the four fairs were altered on the ground that the original dates were 'inconvenient' and, significantly, the Portreeve was authorised to advertise the change in the Hereford, Gloucester and Bristol papers, and in Rider's Almanack. It is plain that, at this period, Swansea's markets were attracting custom from a wide catchment area. The new covered butchers' market had been inconveniently (for the traders) located in 1774 on part of the Castle garden or postern, and was not a success;

26 Glanmor Williams, 'Before the Industrial Revolution' in Swansea Illustrated, p.15.
27 Thomas, History of Swansea, pp.156-157.
28 On the 17 November 1766, the Corporation proposed that the Tuesday market be revived, although this was not in fact finally implemented until the 4 June 1793 (UCLS, HDMB for those dates).
29 UCLS, HDMB, 19 February 1781.
and the space available on the streets around Castle Square for market stalls was becoming increasingly restricted, as John Nixon's painting of 1799 (Fig. 5.4, below) suggests. In November 1824 the Corporation resolved, specifically in response to complaints about the method of exposing meat for sale in the streets, that a committee be set up to consider resiting the market, 'the proposed measure [being] of great importance to the interest of this Corporation, as well as to some of the Inhabitants of this Town....'.30 The new market, erected at a cost of over £20,000 in 1830 on a two acre field donated by C.R. Jones, was deemed to be of 'essential importance to so populous a town'.31 Swansea's covered market (rebuilt twice) remains on this site.

It is difficult to demonstrate a direct relationship between Swansea's increasingly thriving markets and the numbers attracted to the town to settle permanently. Whilst it is highly likely that traders did settle in Swansea (and in other successful market towns), attracted by the abundance of trade, and subsequently set up permanent shops (this process is still discernible in Welsh market towns today), the success of Swansea's markets is evidence rather of the increasing number of migrants flocking in to find work and improve their prospects, and the corresponding demand for cheap produce.

(b) Port and harbour

If Swansea from the early eighteenth century was attractive to immigrants for the expectation of employment in the industrial concerns, it was hardly any less so for the presence of that essential adjunct to industry, a port and harbour, and the work which could also be had there. A large engraving of about 1830 entitled 'A View of Swansea from Heathfield Craig, Mount

30 UCLS, HDMB, 11 November 1824.
Pleasant' provides a panorama over the rooftops to Swansea harbour and beyond to the south-east. The town appears well-built, neat and prosperous and doubtless the intention of the artist is to suggest the harbour and the port as factors contributing to the prosperity of the town itself. Ten sailing vessels of various sizes are visible in the harbour; at least another ten can be seen moored at the quays and docks in the river and on the Strand. An early steamship has just left behind the encircling safety of the harbour piers and another seven vessels are ranged around the roadstead. Without doubt additional vessels would have been moored up-river out of view of the artist, but nevertheless the vessel count does not appear particularly impressive when Defoe's early eighteenth century report of 'sometimes a hundred sail of ships at a time loading coals here' is recalled. Table 4.1, below, taken from the Port Books of Swansea and Neath, 1709-1719, gives (incomplete) information on the exports of coal shortly before Defoe's visit. The data give some idea of the increasing trade over the eleven year period in coal and culm from Swansea to all destinations (the substantial increase in foreign trade after 1713 attributable to the Treaty of Utrecht). Other goods were carried: for example, on the 23 September 1709 a Swansea boat from Swansea carried, in addition to 27 chaldrons of coal, 12 gross glass bottles, 44 barrels of sugar, 2 grocery ware, 2 ironmongery ware, 26 bags of nails, 2 chests of soap, 3 boxes of glasses, 1 basket of

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32 By E.H. Brindley (engraver) and J. Richardson
33 Other contemporary views of the river and harbour include that of the Buck brothers (1748) (see Chapter 5), which is a clear and detailed prospect of the town from the east bank of the Tawe showing twenty two vessels moored in the river or in docks below High Street, the Strand and near the Pill, with another seven in dry docks undergoing repair or construction. In Paul Padley's vista of the town from the north-west of about 1790, encompassing the sweep from the Cambrian Pottery to the harbour, about fourteen vessels are visible in the river or docks and another four in the harbour. The striking feature of both views is that much of the river bank appears still to be undeveloped. Padley, however, captured Swansea at the cusp of its economic development: with the death of the Duke of Beaufort's steward Gabriel Powell about a year earlier the last barrier to progress had been removed: see Chapter 5 below.
earthenware, 2 bundles of frying pans. Other exports included butter, wool, wheat, malt and leather.

**TABLE 4.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Port</th>
<th>Coastwise</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Channel Isles/Continental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1709</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>9,861</td>
<td>2,532</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>12,231</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>8,694</td>
<td>3,195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>10,431</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>8,984</td>
<td>3,340</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>11,555</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>4,281</td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>5,859</td>
<td>998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1714</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>6,558</td>
<td>3,443</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1719</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>7,528</td>
<td>1,741</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neath</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: PRO, E/190/1292-7; D.T. Williams, 'The Port Books of Swansea and Neath', *Arch Camb*, 95 (1940), pp.192-209.

The import trade at this time was small and goods carried to Swansea and Neath included, from Ireland, linen, soap, tallow, linseed oil and hides; from the Channel Islands, cider and Norway deal; from France, salt, wine and brandy - and also cordage, cable yarn, rough hemp, canvas and cloth, no doubt required for shipbuilding and repairs. Reference is also made in 1716 to the import of Swedish iron, which was to be the basis for the establishment of the steel and tinplate industries in Swansea in the nineteenth century. And from about 1717, of course, the import of copper ore from the West Country, and later from Anglesey and South America, became increasingly important. It is perhaps significant that most vessels carrying cargo to and from Swansea at this period appear to have been captained by Welshmen (Harry, Bevan, Davies, Maddocks, Williams and Vaughan) although the master of the
'Dispatch' of Swansea, leaving Swansea on the 4 December 1719, was one John Leperell, a Channel Islander. The number and proportion of Welsh masters had substantially increased over the previous century: of the seventy-four shipments of coal from Swansea recorded for the years 1606/7, forty were carried in ships with masters with English names, thirty-one masters had French or Breton names and only three ships appear to have had Welsh masters (Phillips, Owen and David). It is difficult to give an accurate picture of the number of ships which might have been loading coal at any one time when Defoe visited. It is, however, fair to suggest that the ports of Swansea, and Neath were, in relative terms, busy at this period, and that the subsequent improvements to the dock and harbour facilities undertaken both by individuals and by the Corporation and recorded with increasing regularity in the Corporation records, reflected the development of coastal and overseas trade from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries and stimulated the economic development of the town during this period. And, without doubt, the opportunities for employment aboard ship and on shore would have increased.

As a busy harbour, therefore, a significant proportion of Swansea's population was likely to have been employed in connection with shipping. An increasing number of the burgesses were mariners: an Order of the Corporation of the 11 May 1675 tried to counter the difficulty arising from this by requiring the burgess/mariner to appoint a deputy to act in his absence.

36 For example, UCLS, Book of Orders, 2 January 1733 (John Morris granted lease for twenty years subject to covenant to build dock for loading ships etc); Book of Orders, 31 December 1751 (Corporation to repair 'key' as far as the Goat and Mr Squire's new wall); UCLS, HDMB, 9 March 1769 (Henry Squire to have an extended term for 61 years on the bank in consideration of making a dry dock for the graving and cleaning of ships); UCLS, HDMB, 27 October 1771 (Committee appointed for the cleaning of the bar and harbour to 'promote and encourage trade'); Jones, History of the Port of Swansea, pp.38-64.
Shipbuilding took place from at least 1667 (when Henry Mansell built a frigate) and was of growing significance from the 1730s under the Squire family who increasingly began to lease banks or yards from the Corporation. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Llewhelyn family and the firm of William Meager and Richards were prominent in the business. Incomers were attracted, therefore, not only by the prospect of maritime employment, but also by the chance of work in shipbuilding and in the associated trades of blockmaker, anchorsmith and sailmaker, and in one of the two roperies. Work might also be had on the dockside, loading and unloading cargoes, and general porterage. There was a considerable sideline in smuggling.

The demands of the copper smelting industry for larger capacity vessels was the catalyst for the river and harbour developments from the 1790s, but the drive for improvement had started some decades before. The earliest known plan of the river Tawe is that of B. Jones of 1771 (see Fig. 2.4 above), which was probably prepared for the committee appointed by the Corporation on the 27 October 1771 to report on ways of preserving and improving the navigation of and promote and encourage trade of the river and harbour. The plan is particularly useful for the 'explanation' endorsed on it which includes details of obstructions in the river (caused mainly by the indiscriminate dumping of ballast, clearly visible on the east bank of the river in the Thomas Rothwell engraving of 1791/2 - see Fig. 5.2 below) and descriptions of the existing quays and banks and the owners and occupiers of them. The plan confirms the impression given by the prospects of the Buck brothers (1748, Fig. 5.1 below) and Paul Padley (c.1795, Fig. 5.3 below) that the port facilities were undeveloped, and even primitive, and they certainly must have been inadequate for the copper, lead and spelter

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37 The dumping of ballast is first mentioned in the Corporation records in 1555 and, despite the regular issuing of ordinances, remained a constant problem to the Corporation and to those using the river.
manufactories lining the banks of the river. Robert Morris I, as early as 1723, had described the difficulties and complained that in the spring the river Tawe was navigable only eight or nine times to the intended sites of the copper mills at Landore and Fforest, and that vessels of forty or fifty tons could not come alongside the site of the present copper works owing to the bar at the Ferry Pool and the 'paddocks' in the river which greatly impeded navigation. By the 1760s, the industrialists, manufacturers and traders of Swansea were becoming thoroughly discontented over the impediments to navigation and the deficiencies of the port and harbour, and by the failure of the Corporation to tackle the problem in the face of increasing trade and traffic. The 'gentlemen engaged in coalaries, copper works and manufactories' decided to take matters into their own hands and their meeting on the 17 January 1772 at the Falcon Inn on the quayside was the beginning of the process of improvement which led to the passing of the first Harbour Act in 1791, the construction of breakwaters in the harbour (from 1792), and the canal (1798), and the general improvement of the harbour and the construction of new docks initially under the direction of Captain Huddart from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The effect of the improvements were reflected in the seven-fold increase in tonnage handled by the port over a period of sixty-seven years, as shown in Table 4.2, below.

38 Robert Morris 2, History of the Copper Concern (1774) (notes on the letter books of Robert Morris 1 concerning the latter's copper smelting activities in Swansea 1717-1730), UCLS, UCW Swansea, Morris papers.
39 Jones, History of the Port of Swansea, pp.54 et seq.
TABLE 4.2

Number and register of vessels entering Swansea Harbour, 1768-1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Tons Reg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>30,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>74,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>2,590</td>
<td>154,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>153,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>2,495</td>
<td>156,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1825</td>
<td>3,298</td>
<td>206,989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>3,699</td>
<td>237,418</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Swansea, in fact, had been an important port by Welsh standards from the Middle Ages and it was this factor which had ensured that the town did not have to rely entirely on its role as a market centre once its military function had gone. In 1598, George Owen of Henllys had observed that:

such of those towns as stood convenient either to serve as a thoroughfare or a convenient place for a market town or else had some good port or harbour fit for trading by sea, those towns fell to some good trade and so flourished and doth yet uphold themselves in some reasonable wealth, the rest being placed in wild and obscure places inapt for any trade fell into ruin and utter decay.  

The locations of Llantrisant, Cowbridge and Kenfig proved to be 'inapt', and these towns declined; Cardiff, Carmarthen and particularly Swansea were able to build upon their natural assets and flourish, and draw in the surplus population of the declining towns.

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40 Quoted in Jones, *History of the Port of Swansea*, pp.120-1.
(c) Industry, manufacturing and trade

The history and topography of Swansea's industry, and the fortunes of those who were employed in it, has been well documented, most recently, and comprehensively, by Hughes. It has already been observed that Swansea's English culture and language in the eighteenth century was a consequence of the town's attraction for immigrants from an early date. In the Tudor period the substantial expansion of the coal extraction industry and the activities of the port (including shipbuilding and the import of tobacco from the Americas) had, of necessity, attracted labour (much of it skilled) from elsewhere, and it is likely that the town grew by at least 80% during the period 1500 to 1660. Thus, by the 1720s, Defoe was able to comment that Swansea's inhabitants were able to attract 'a very great trade for coals and culm which they export to all parts of Somerset, Devon and Cornwall and also to Ireland itself'. Coal was also being exported to Spain, Portugal and the Low Countries. The older established coal and copper areas, such as Swansea and Neath, attracted, or sometimes (in the case of those already skilled in industrial processes) poached, workers from farther afield. The copper

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41 For example, Francis, *Smelting of Copper*; Williams, *Economic Development of Swansea*; R.O. Roberts, 'The Development and Decline of the Copper and Other Non-Ferrous Metal Industries in South Wales', in *Trans Hon Soc Cymm* (1957) pp.78-115; ibid, 'The White Rock Copper and Brass Works, near Swansea 1736-1806' in *Glam Hist*, 12 (nd), pp.136- 151; ibid, 'The Smelting of Non-Ferrous Metals since 1750' in A.H. John and Glanmor Williams (eds.) *Glamorgan County History: Industrial Glamorgan*, 5 (Cardiff, 1981), pp.47-96. An interesting account of the practical problems faced by early participants in the copper smelting industry is found in the depositions of witnesses to an action brought in the Court of Exchequer in 1723 by John Phillips, a chemist and metallurgist, against John Lane, copper entrepreneur, for monies owed (printed in 'The Copper Industry of Neath and Swansea: Record of a Suit in the Court of Exchequer, 1723', in *South Wales and Mon. Record Society Publications*, 4 (1957)); Hughes, *Copperopolis*. Hughes is particularly strong on the landscapes of industry, including (in addition to the works) the housing, chapels and other institutions of the copper settlements.


and tinplate works in these areas were manned, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, by successive generations taking pride in, and keeping secret, industrial skills passed from father to son. The work was often dangerous so that teamwork was essential; this reinforced the feeling of mutual dependence and respect, and helped ensure observance of work discipline. The surviving probate evidence suggests that, at a time when communications in Wales were primitive, labour for the earlier industrial enterprises (mostly coal) was initially drawn locally and from an agricultural population who often simply hired out their services on a seasonal basis. To this extent, industrial wages supplemented, but did not replace, agricultural earnings. There is no record at this period of the number and origin of workers from further afield, but, as already suggested, most probably came from neighbouring agricultural areas. The new workers from agriculture arriving during the eighteenth century, attracted by the prospect of higher wages in industry, formed the nucleus of an industrial proletariat, a distinctly new class in the social and economic life of Glamorgan, a class which was to be at the centre of the social upheavals and demands for justice at the end of that century, and during the first four decades of the nineteenth century.

Evidence that industrial wages in south Wales at the turn of the eighteenth century were higher than those in agriculture is scarce. Even allowing for inflation, Table 4.3, below, suggests that wages in the countryside were being forced up in the battle to keep farm servants; and this was a pattern repeated wherever town and country competed for labour.

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45 Industrialization in rural areas at this time was a gradual rather than sudden process: Whyte, Migration and Society, pp.148-9.
47 J. Fox, General View of Agriculture in the County of Glamorgan (London, 1796); W. Davies, General View of the Agriculture and Domestic Economy of South Wales (London, 1814).
Data on industrial wages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are again hard to come by but in Swansea in 1758 an unskilled industrial worker was receiving about 6/- per week; by the end of the eighteenth century this had increased to 10/- per week. The differential does not appear to be great but, by 1831, colliers could expect about 21/- per week, although at this time the rate appears to have fluctuated greatly.\textsuperscript{48} It may not have mattered, however, whether wages were in fact higher if potential migrants to the town believed them to be, for decisions to leave the place of origin were often likely to have been based on incomplete or inaccurate information.\textsuperscript{49}

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\caption{Comparison of agricultural wages in Glamorgan, 1796 and 1811}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Wages 1796 (Fox)} & \textbf{Wages 1811 (Davies)} \\
\hline
Farm servants (skilled, living in) & £5 to £10 pa & £14 to £20 pa \\
\hline
Waggoners / other skilled outdoor labourers & 1/- to 1/7 per day & 8/- to 10/- pw winter \\
& & 9/- to 12/- pw summer \\
Piece workers mowing/reaping & 2/6 per day & 2/6 - 4/- per day \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

It has already been noted that the Corporation Books reveal the existence of a wide range of trades in the town at a comparatively early date. Data on trade from the end of the eighteenth century may be extracted from trade directories although this data is unsatisfactory for the purpose of comparison at different dates because directory entries were often incomplete and unreliable. The available evidence for Swansea is considered in more detail in Chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{48} Boyns and Baber, 'Supply of Labour', pp.319 et seq.
\textsuperscript{49} Whyte, Migration and Society, pp.12-13.
below, based mainly on the information extracted from *Mathews' Directory for 1830*, which reveals an impressive range of services and trades on offer for a town with a population still under 14,000.\(^{50}\) The data illustrates well Swansea's diverse and versatile character at this date. Many of these tradespeople would not have been native to Swansea, and would have been attracted by the opportunities created by the arrival of the newcomers.

As will be apparent from the next section, and Chapter 5, Swansea at the end of the eighteenth century was certainly 'a town of contrasts', and may have been positively confused as to its identity. The topographer Donovan graphically summed up the dilemma in about 1800:

Towards the south the sea bursts upon the view with an air of conscious dignity, rolling its translucent blue waters into the expansive semicircle formed by the boundaries of Swansea Bay....The adjacent shore, a fine assemblage of gently swelling hills of the deepest verdure....the prospect to the eastward is very different. It is in a word the suburb of a great commercial seaport....the River Tawe, and its contiguous canal, crowded with ships, coasting vessels, and the numerous craft employed in the coal trade, engross the chief attention. The shores are lined with docks for repairing vessels, warehouses for stores, merchandize, manufactories of many kinds, and an unceasing bustle of mariners ....a little beyond, to the south of the river, extend the founderies, the brass and copper works....still further north, are the coal works, and in the farthest distance between the hills another range of works appear half enveloped in the smoke arising from their own furnaces.\(^{51}\)

\(^{50}\) See pp.235-8 below.

\(^{51}\) E. Donovan, *Excursions Through South Wales and Monmouthshire*, (London, 1805), pp. 90-1; and see Chapter 5 below.
(iv) The resort town

The Corporation had made increasing efforts from about 1780, aided by the death in 1789 of the Duke of Beaufort's obstructive steward, Gabriel Powell, to promote Swansea as 'the Brighton of Wales'. From 1804, the Corporation was greatly assisted in its endeavours by the *Cambrian*, which was founded in that year. The marketing strategy was simple: praise the assets and ignore the defects. But for more than four decades this approach worked and was rewarded by the arrival in the season (May to October) of visitors attracted by the facilities on offer which included sea bathing, hot and cold baths, walks and excursions (including the Burrows, and along the canal to the copperworks), the assembly rooms, the theatre, horse racing and sailing matches.\(^1\) Swansea boasted virtually every attraction on offer at admittedly more prestigious resorts such as Bath, Brighton and Margate, but was disadvantaged by its distance from London and the lack of Royal patronage. But, as faithfully reported by the *Cambrian*, visitors came, mostly from south Wales, adjoining English counties and from across the Bristol Channel, and included some of the 'quality'. With regular coach and boat services, Swansea was accessible and, some contemporaries thought, a genuine alternative to, and rival of, resorts such as Weymouth. On their arrival, visitors could find reasonable lodgings, with stables, at the Mackworth Arms in Wind Street, the Bush Inn in High Street and the Cambrian Hotel on the Burrows. Accommodation could also be found in the lodging houses advertised in the *Cambrian* and listed in the guide books (in 1802, at least 35; 1813, 34; 1823, 38).\(^2\) The Burrows, which had been developed with the encouragement of the Corporation from about 1770, was a favourite place to stay, and also for walking in the public pleasure grounds adjoining. Lodging houses advertised in the

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\(^1\) See for example, the report on the races in the *Cambrian* of 17 July 1810 extolling the 'elegant equipages on the Course, [which] filled with beauty and fashion, exceeded all precedence'

\(^2\) Although, if these figures are accurate, the resort was hardly flourishing and may reflect the difficulties attendant upon Swansea's industrial function.
Cambrian often included a detailed description of the accommodation and facilities; any sea view, however partially obscured, oblique or distant was sure to be mentioned. And, according to the Cambrian of the 22 September 1810, Swansea had that season, in company with Tenby and Aberystwyth, 'overflowed with genteel Company' and 'these favoured spots ....in consequence of their natural attractions' acquired annually an increase of permanent residents. Travellers' accounts of the resort facilities at Swansea are, for the most part, favourable although the Rev. John Evans was amusingly scathing in his description of the qualities of the place and its food and other diversions, in comparison with Weymouth. But even Evans had good things to say about Swansea Bay; and travellers and other commentators are unanimous that this was the town's crowning glory and prime asset. Swansea's predicament was summed up by Evans when he wrote that 'it is the wish of the inhabitants that Swansea should be viewed in the light of a fashionable resort, rather than as a trading town; and a bathing place, rather than a seaport'.

The economy of Swansea in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries will be considered in Chapter 5, but it should be mentioned here that a town's resort function obviously generated opportunities in trade and service (albeit at the expense of some of the traditional industries) in response to the demand for leisure and cultural facilities and the consumption of 'luxury' goods, which, in turn, encouraged an improvement in the fabric of the main shopping streets and their ultimate transformation (and Swansea and other Welsh resort towns shared this experience) of those streets into 'social spaces'. Shopping became, in many resort towns, and particularly towns such as Bath, Chester and York, a recognised

54 J. Evans, Letters written during a Tour through South Wales in the Year 1803, and at other times (London, 1804), pp.168-9.
leisure pursuit in its own right, and staff needed to be found to meet the new demand. And, of course, new opportunities in domestic service, particularly for female immigrants, were generated by the influx of temporary and permanent residents in possession of leisure-time and money.

Much effort, therefore, was put into promoting Swansea as a resort. Like Liverpool, which enjoyed increasing popularity as a sea-bathing resort from about 1708, until Southport became dominant in the 1820s, Swansea's pretensions to resort status were ultimately subsumed in its role as an industrial town and port, the swansong of the resort being marked by the building of new docks on part of the Burrows in the 1840s. Unlike Liverpool, Swansea retained its beaches and vistas of Swansea Bay. But the *Cambrian*, as early as 1822, was in no doubt that, as with Neath and Llanelli, the spiralling population of Swansea, and the town's concomitant increase in wealth and influence, arose chiefly out of the presence of the industrial works; and that to remove the works to alleviate the nuisance from copper-smoke would be too high a price to pay when the visitor season was so short and the attractions might only be a passing phase.

3. Immigration and urban identity

(i) Approximate numbers and nationality

Whilst the earlier immigrants to Swansea were of Anglo-Norman stock, as evidenced by the pattern of personal names, many of those attracted by opportunities in trade and industry

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57 Although, when the writer was an undergraduate at Liverpool University in the late 1960s, and living in the northern suburb of Waterloo, it was still possible to enjoy the sandy beach and dunes there (now long gone under dock extensions), and visualise without too much difficulty Liverpool's former attractions as a seaside resort.
58 Boorman, *The Brighton of Wales*, p.95, and see Chapter 5 below.
must have come from adjoining Welsh counties - but not exclusively so. There are many examples of English names in seventeenth century Swansea: for example, Isaac After who was Portreeve in 1673, John Symonds shoemaker, John Collman, gent., Nicholas Long, dyer, Cradock Rogers, tanner, John Southerwood, mariner and so on. Prominent families such as the Herberts, the Seys, the Francklens and the Ayres were English (or Anglo-Norman) in origin. A rough and ready indication of the proportion of Swansea's inhabitants with Welsh and English surnames may be gleaned from tax records and the record of wills and probates in the National Library of Wales (Table 4.4 below).

TABLE 4.4

Welsh/English names from the Swansea wills index, 1660-1835

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Welsh names no.</th>
<th>English names no.</th>
<th>English names (long settled) no.</th>
<th>Total no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1660-00</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701-50</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1751-00</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-35</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 NLW, register of wills and probate inventories for St. David's 1669-1700.
60 Walker, 'Anglo-Welsh Town', pp.5-8.
61 Any attempt at classifying surnames into 'English' and 'Welsh' will obviously be impressionistic. Some comfort may, however, be drawn from the fact that the Welsh did not begin to adopt the English system of fixed surnames until about the sixteenth century and then favoured patronyms with or without the (English) genitive 's'. Another common form (the Welsh equivalent of the genitive 's') resulted from the compounding of ab or ap ('son of') with the father's first name particularly if that name began with a vowel. Examples of each name form from the Swansea wills index include David/Davies, Evan(s), Griffith(s), John/Jones, Lloyd, Owen, Bevan(s), Bowen, Powell, Price, Pritchard. Occupational, descriptive and place-name forms were not much found in Wales except, of course, colloquially, although the place-name of origin sometimes became the surname of a migrant; also, place-names were adopted by the upper classes (eg Thomas Pennant, b.1726). This meant that the Welsh had a smaller range of surnames than the English but uncertainty arises because some of these surnames were not exclusive to Wales (for example, Jones, Roberts, Ellis, Thomas, Williams): T.J. and Prys Morgan, Welsh Surnames (Cardiff, 1985), esp. pp.10-24; D. Hey, Family Names and Family History (London, 2000), pp.91-94, 117-122.
The proportion of individuals falling into each category appears to be remarkably consistent until 1800 when English names increase; but perhaps the only firm conclusions to be drawn from the data are that most Welsh immigrants after 1750 settled outside the town of Swansea, and most of the labouring classes did not make wills. Nevertheless, the figures clearly demonstrate the relatively large proportion of individuals of non-Welsh origin present in the town from an early date. Employing the Hearth tax 1670 and the Land and Window tax 1788 for the same purpose produces the following results:

1670: Welsh names 66%  English 27%  English long settled 7%
1788: Welsh names 57%  English 35%  English long settled 8%

In relative terms, Swansea's population growth over a period of one hundred years from 1670 was not impressive. According to the Hearth tax data, Swansea's estimated population in 1670 was 1,760; by 1721 this had hardly increased to 1,813; by 1751 the estimated population was 2,384: this is still a small town by any standards. By way of comparison, Liverpool's increasing prosperity between 1660 and 1750 as a port for sugar and tobacco attracted immigrants in large numbers. From a Hearth tax estimate of about 1,400 in the 1660s, the population had increased to about 6,000 by 1700, had doubled that number by 1720, and had further swollen to about 22,000 by the 1750s, pushing Liverpool up from nowhere to sixth in the hierarchy of English towns in less than a century. Aggregative analysis of Liverpool's baptism and burial records suggests that, of this increase, no less than 80% can be attributed to immigration.

62 See Fig.2.10, above.
Between 1801 and 1851, Glamorgan's population grew three-fold from 70,879 to 231,849 (327%); during the same period the five agricultural counties of south Wales increased from 218,013 to 361,758 (65.9%). All other Welsh counties suffered a net loss of population owing to out-migration. This clearly demonstrates an acceleration, from the beginning of the nineteenth century, of the movement into the industrial centres from the surrounding agricultural areas of mostly, but certainly not exclusively, unskilled workers. In 1801, 35% were employed in agriculture; by 1851 this had dropped to 16%. For industrialisation to occur, therefore, an alteration in the size and nature of the population is required exceeding that which can be provided by natural increase alone. In Swansea, the steady increase in population can be explained in terms both of an increase in the birth-rate and decline in the death-rate (see Chapter 2), the latter assisted by advances in medical knowledge, some improvement in environmental standards, and a reasonably good supply of cheap food from the agriculturally productive hinterland. But natural increase on its own is insufficient, and Swansea, as elsewhere in Glamorgan and other industrialising regions, experienced from about 1740 an accelerating in-migration of workers drawn by the prospect of economic betterment. Immigration can be expressed by the well known formula:

\[
\text{Net immigration} = Pt_2 - [Pt_1 + (B - D)]
\]

where \(Pt_1\) is the population at the first date, \(Pt_2\) is the population at the second (later) date, \(B\) the number of baptisms (births) and \(D\) the number of burials (deaths) over the period. The formula thus reflects the fact that changes in size of population result both from the relationship of births to deaths and by migration inwards and outwards.
The population data for the last quarter of the seventeenth century extracted from the parish registers of St Mary's, Swansea are not particularly helpful for calculating immigration because of distortion caused by the high death rate at this time. The first decade or so of the eighteenth century suffer from a complete or partial absence both of parish register and Bishop's Transcripts data so that it is not possible to estimate immigration for this period. But Swansea's population growth before about 1720 appears from the available data to have been slow and it is unlikely that many immigrants would have been attracted before the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century simply because there was no strong draw, and because of the deterrent effect of the poor quality roads. The figures in Table 4.5 below are subject to the usual caveat concerning imprecision made no better by the fact that births and subsequent deaths of the offspring of the immigrants themselves are not disaggregated. Nevertheless, the trend noted earlier is confirmed: Swansea from the 1720s was attracting growing numbers from elsewhere and those immigrants constituted an increasing proportion of the swelling population, which continued throughout the nineteenth century.

**TABLE 4.5**

St Mary's, Swansea: contribution of migration/natural increase to population growth, 1671-1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Net migration</th>
<th>% migration</th>
<th>% natural increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t1</td>
<td>t2</td>
<td>(-33)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671-90</td>
<td>1,795</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>+24</td>
<td>21.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721-40</td>
<td>1,813</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>+176</td>
<td>34.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741-60</td>
<td>1,924</td>
<td>2,434</td>
<td>+933</td>
<td>54.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761-80</td>
<td>2,434</td>
<td>4,139</td>
<td>+1,245</td>
<td>63.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781-00</td>
<td>4,139</td>
<td>6,099</td>
<td>+3928</td>
<td>76.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801-20</td>
<td>6,099</td>
<td>11,236</td>
<td>+3573</td>
<td>96.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821-30</td>
<td>11,236</td>
<td>14,931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The proportion of immigration to natural increase from 1821 to 1830 appears striking, but the parish registers for these years were deficient. Unfortunately, for the period under study, the census data are also not helpful: it is not until 1851 that the place of birth is recorded, nor do the census enumerators' books survive before this date.

The 1841 census does, however, record whether a person was born in the same county as the place of current residence. Glamorgan's proportion of individuals born in other counties (23.2%) is outstripped by that of Breconshire (27.8%). With the arrival of the canal in 1800, the improvement of roads (and the construction, in 1816, of the Brecon - Hay tramroad), and the development of new markets provided by the iron industry centred on the Merthyr region not many miles to the south, the economy of the town of Brecon had prospered and it had become an important distribution centre for a substantial hinterland; and it also retained its role as principal market town in a rich agricultural region. But Breconshire was not to enjoy again the primary position for immigration from elsewhere. Of Glamorgan's 23.2% outsiders in 1841, 56% were male: it is, at first sight, rather surprising that the proportion was not higher given the nature of the work on offer, but this supports the argument that immigrants tended to move as families either at the same time or in stages with the main bread winner on the road first, and many females were attracted by the prospects of employment in domestic service. The 1851 census records that 81% of the population of Swansea was born in the town, or in Wales, but, of those aged over 20, about 43% were born in Swansea and 31% in Wales; immigrants from Devon and Cornwall accounted for 9%; Gloucestershire 3% and 4% came from Ireland.

The graph at Fig. 2.2 above supports the data in Table 4.5 and, as has already been noted, Swansea’s demographic history falls into three stages. The period 1665 to about 1720 shows a modest increase in the number of baptisms over deaths, suggesting a very small increase in population. Between 1721 and 1760 there was a steady, if unspectacular, advance in the number of baptisms over deaths; after 1760 there was a strong upward movement of baptisms, marriages and deaths clearly indicating in-migration and consequent economic and industrial growth.

(ii) Some consequences of immigration and population increase

As we have seen, obvious problems arise if the rate of population growth outstrips the development of the urban infrastructure. By 1749, the burgesses of Swansea were petitioning the Duke of Beaufort to lease the Castle to convert it into a workhouse for the accommodation of the poor of the town and franchise who had ‘of late years become very numerous and Burdensome’ suggesting that the poor arriving in Swansea in the hope of employment were having difficulty in finding (or paying for) accommodation. At the end of the eighteenth century, three events are recorded connected with St Mary’s Church, insignificant in themselves, but which strongly suggest the effects of population pressure. First, in 1775, in a document headed ‘Parochial Grievances’, complaint is made that many parishioners were being kept from St Mary’s Church seats for the want of sufficient accommodation. Secondly, in 1794, an evening service was introduced in St Mary’s because the limited seating capacity was unable to cope with the demands of the town. Third, because of the greater number of burials, the length of time the bell was tolled after a funeral was reduced. Again, on the 14 March 1825, the Corporation agreed to sell a field adjoining St

65 NLW, Bad 1503.
67 Walker, 'Anglo-Welsh Town', p.11.
John's Church to extend the burial ground 'which had become very confined'; and on the 13 May 1825, the Corporation supported a proposal by Swansea Commercial Society for a new market place, commenting on the 'opprobrium attached to the Town for want of such necessary accommodation for so populous and increasing a place'.

Immigrants need to be housed. Brinley Jones appears to suggest a link between Swansea's population increase after the middle of the eighteenth century, and the enclosure in 1762 of seven hundred acres of Townhill and fifty acres of the Burrows by Act of Parliament. It seems doubtful that a direct link existed but rather that the increasing pressure of population was a catalyst for enclosure (because of the acute shortage of pasture for animals within easy reach of the town), but which admittedly led later to development of some of the enclosed land. Development on the Burrows began in the 1770s, with relatively high-class housing associated with Swansea's development as a seaside resort, whilst Townhill was not developed in earnest until well into the nineteenth century. But there were other motives for the enclosure of, in particular, Townhill, which were not in any way connected with a perceived demand for land for housing but which were rather an opportunity for Swansea's burgesses (and the Duke of Beaufort as lord of the manor), to increase their landholdings and consequently their grazing incomes. It has already been suggested that Swansea town's increasing population was absorbed mostly into the central core through the squeezing in of alleyways, courts and yards behind the buildings lining the main streets, and accommodated also in sub-standard housing to the west and north of that central core. There are frequent

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68 UCLS, HDMB, 14 March and 13 May 1825.
70 UCLS, HDMB, 9 October 1760; Bad 1420, 1761.
71 UCLS, HDMB, Rent Roll, Michaelmas 1777.
72 This can be detected by comparing the 1803 town plan and John Evans' plan of 1823 (the latter is at Fig.2.7 below.) Development is also apparent over this twenty year period to the north and east of St John's Church; to the south west (Nelson Place and Nelson Terrace), and
references in the Corporation's Hall Day Minute Books to the desirability of providing houses to meet the needs of this increasing population and to the grant of leases of land on which to build those houses. Many others, attracted by work in the new industrial enterprises, were housed in the new villages such as the planned Morriston outside St Mary's parish to the north. The Cambrian Works, constructed 1720, was the only copperworks within the boundaries of the ancient borough of Swansea so that the presence of the copper industry may not have contributed greatly to the problems of overcrowding in the town itself.

(iii) The significance of the Welsh language

In the town of Swansea at the end of the eighteenth century the dominant culture was, and had been for many years before, English. From the fourteenth century the street names were English in form and the borough and parish records from the sixteenth century were predominantly in English with a smattering of Latin and even less Welsh. But the Welsh language at this time was in everyday use. The St Mary's Churchwardens' Accounts from 1558 to 1694 include frequent references to the purchase of books in Welsh. By the end of the sixteenth century the language of worship was under threat because on the 18 January 1592/3, two parishioners presented articles in the Consistory Court at Carmarthen against an on the Burrows.

For example, UCLS, HDMB 10 February 1773, 6 December 1786, 20 November 1789, 4 April 1791, 18 September 1805.

Hughes, Copperopolis, p.162. Hughes estimates that there were probably only about 335 employed in the copperworks of the lower Swansea valley at the end of the eighteenth century, but with about 1,100 directly dependent on the industry. Those workers and their dependents occupied about 225 houses or cottages the great majority of which were in the industrial villages to the north of the town and to the east of the river. A substantial proportion of this housing had been constructed by coppermasters in locations adjoining their works, where little or no housing had existed previously, as an added incentive to potential workers: ibid., pp.162-3, 193-4. In Morriston, John Morris laid out plots on which his workmen built; this was also the practice at Foxhole, east of the river, ibid. But see the comments of Henry Sockett in 1817 regarding copperworkers and colliers residing in the town 'but without having gained settlement therein', below, p.185. In 1841, only four colliers and four copper-workers are recorded by the census as living in central Swansea.

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English vicar of St Mary's, John After, for refusing to celebrate in Welsh. A compromise was reached but After was soon again in trouble with the Court accused, on the 28 June 1593, of not conducting a burial service in Welsh. It is clear that, at this time, there was an influential Welsh-speaking body in the town, some of whom held important office.75 There are records throughout the eighteenth century of the purchase of Welsh prayer-books but, by the time of the appointment of the Rev. Miles Bassett - almost certainly a monoglot Englishman - as vicar of St Mary's, the effort to maintain Welsh services was probably abandoned and, in 1785, the Vestry formally resolved that services be conducted entirely in English.76 The phrase 'the Welsh duty', then current to describe services conducted in Welsh, is significant.

But the language and culture received an infusion: most of the migrants to industry in Wales from the late eighteenth century were from Welsh speaking areas. As Malkin succinctly puts it: 'The workmen of all descriptions [at Cyfarthfa, Merthyr Tydfil] are Welshmen. Their language is entirely Welsh. The number of English amongst them is very inconsiderable'.77 These immigrants raised large families the majority of whom grew up to speak Welsh.78 Brinley Thomas considers immigration as significant in preserving the Welsh language because those migrating to the new industries tended to seek out, for mutual support, comfort and solidarity, others from the same rural community left behind.79 Language, for the Welsh, was (and remains) inextricably bound up with culture and found expression through religious observance. This meant, in practice, the binding together of close-knit communities through the interaction of these elements. The emergence of a 'Welsh way of life' in Glamorgan is

77 Malkin, The Scenery, Antiquities and Biography of South Wales (London, 1804).
78 According to the 1911 census, 65% of the persons speaking Welsh in Wales were living in the four industrialized counties of Glamorgan, Carmarthen, Monmouth and Denbigh.
likely to have arisen out of the attraction and concentration of many thousands of Welsh speakers forced or lured from the land into the industrial way of life. Swansea town itself remained relatively unaffected; the influence of the social elite (many of whom were immigrants) ensured that the dominant language remained English and the *Cambrian* was an English-language newspaper, although it is significant that some of those advertising in it, such as S.G. Willoughby, shopkeeper, on the 6 April 1805, and L. and J. Michael, tea warehouse, on the 17 June 1815, were on the look-out for Welsh-speaking staff. But the presence of Welsh chapels in the town, and English ones in the industrial settlements, testifies to no clear-cut linguistic division.

(iv) The assimilation of immigrants: the contributions of culture, education and religion

Many Welsh immigrants were nonconformist (mostly Independent or Congregationalist) and their faith was strongly instrumental in determining the religious character of Swansea, its industrial villages, and other Welsh industrial towns, so making them different from most English towns. Lacking any experience of town life, and needing to assimilate into their new surroundings, Welsh immigrants created institutions, closely resembling those left behind, which were based on family ties and links, and given embodiment and expression through the chapel. Most surviving chapels in the town and surrounding villages were built, or rebuilt, to house increasing congregations, after 1860. As a centre of Dissent from the mid-seventeenth century, however, Swansea's Independents had quickly taken advantage of the Toleration Act 1689 to establish, in an old cottage, their own chapel at Mynydd Bach Common near the later site of Morriston. This congregation produced twelve daughter congregations all of which founded their own chapels throughout the area.\(^{80}\) The eighteenth century witnessed a resurgence in the influence of the Anglican Church through the instrumentality of the

\(^{80}\) Hughes, *Copperopolis*, pp.140-1.
Methodists who, from about 1742, made numerous converts among the colliers and copperworkers through an emphasis on emotion and enthusiasm in place of the dry rationalism of the mother church. The example was not lost on the nonconformists, particularly Independents and Baptists, who quickly adopted the Methodist approach with great success. In the first half of the nineteenth century, aided by the influx of workers from rural Welsh speaking areas, the appeal of nonconformity far outstripped that of the Anglican Church, and by the 1851 Religious Census the Independents had opened twenty-two new chapels in the Swansea area, the Baptists seventeen, the Calvinistic Methodists twelve, the Wesleyans eleven and the Primitive Methodists four compared with only five new churches by the Anglicans. Chapel building was aided by the preparedness of landowners and industrialists to grant leases for the purpose for long terms at low rents, and by the ethos of self-help. 'Y Coleg' Chapel, Landore (Welsh Independent) was constructed in the 1820s partly through the efforts of the female members of the congregation, who carried stones from Cwm Nant Rhyd-y-Filais for their men to dress and use in the construction of their chapel. By the 1851 Census the town was able to accommodate 66% of its inhabitants in its thirty-one churches and chapels, and the borough as a whole more than 66% in its sixty-eight places of worship. Morriston had seats for not less than 84% of its worshippers. Religious observance, industrial work and the Welsh language had become inextricably intertwined. Although the Welsh language was of critical importance, most new workers quickly became

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81 In Swansea town represented by the building of Wesley Methodist Chapel, Goat Street in 1789, The Countess of Huntingdon's (Calvinstic Methodist) Chapel, near the Burrows opened 1791 and York Place (English) Baptist Chapel, 1830.  
82 G. Williams, 'Religion and Belief' in Swansea Challenges, pp.22-3.  
83 Williams, 'Religion and Belief', p.28.  
84 Although the (usually) Anglican coppermaster did not actively promote nonconformity, it was not to his advantage to impede it: Hughes, Copperopolis, pp.291-2.  
85 The building doubled as a school: Hughes, ibid, p.268.  
175
bilingual on the basis, significantly, that English was the language of business, and Welsh of production, labour, religion, culture and family. It was not, however, a universal rule that organised religion survived and flourished in the industrialising towns of England and Wales. In the larger towns with the fastest rate of growth, religious provision was the least successful because the existing cultural and religious resources tended to become overwhelmed by the flood of immigrants. This was the case in Liverpool, Manchester and probably Merthyr Tydfil, but not in Swansea, Newport and Neath, which had been and were developed as a collection of small villages each with its core and religious and cultural life: 'Almost anywhere on the coalfield, town and country seemed to be in balance and the quality of interpenetration to be such as to create a new culture rather than to produce conflict between the new and the old'. The emphasis in these villages was on creating new communities, rather than attempting to adapt the old.

Religious observance became closely bound with education and the work ethic. There had been grammar schools, mostly for the sons of the better-off, in most Welsh market towns from the sixteenth century, and the school founded in Swansea by Bishop Hugh Gore in 1682 was a later version of this type. The first organised attempt at educating the children of the poor had been made in the seventeenth century through the instrumentality of charity schools set up 1674-81 by the Welsh Trust of Thomas Gouge, and then by those of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (1699). Whilst the efforts made by the schools of the Trust and SPCK were valuable, the education offered was limited in scope and, critically, was mostly in the medium of the English language. This was redressed by the foundation, in

1737-77, of the Welsh Circulating Schools system by Griffith Jones, vicar of Llanddowror, which concentrated with success on teaching children, and their parents, to read. The lessons were strongly based on the Bible and biblical subjects and helped pave the way for the Methodist Revival. The schools spread rapidly and, by Griffith Jones' death in 1761, there were no fewer than 3,495 in Wales although the system foundered after 1779. These schools provided, however, a foundation for the those later introduced by industrialists for the children of their workers.

The first works schools in Wales had, in fact, been established as early as 1700 by Sir Humphrey Mackworth at the Esgair Hir Mines in north Cardiganshire for the children of the miners of the Company of the Mine Adventurers, followed by another at Neath in 1705. The stimulus for these original schools may have been the demands of skilled immigrant smelters from Sweden, Germany and Holland, where the works school was a familiar institution with a long history, although Mackworth's own interest in the welfare of his workers and their families should not be underestimated. The schools were initially free, the costs being borne by the Company, but by 1709 the miners were required to contribute 2/6 per quarter towards the education of their children. Swansea's later coppermasters recognised the need to provide the children of their workers with a basic education for a complex variety of reasons: religious, social, political and economic; but also as an investment for the future. From the early nineteenth century the Morris, Grenfell and Vivian families all established schools in easy proximity to their works and where no educational facilities had existed before.

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90 For example, the Kilvey Copperworks School, Foxhole, 1806 (Pascoe Grenfell); the Birmingham Copperworks School, Morristown, 1815 (John Morris II). 'Y Coleg', Nant Rhyd-y-filais (1824) doubled as a nonconformist chapel and was built by the congregation themselves: Hughes, Copperopolis, pp.243-6. Most of the works schools were built after 1835.
schools were being opened also by paternalistic proprietors of industrial concerns in England from the latter part of the eighteenth century and, as in Wales, these schools were independent of the State and, unlike factory schools, were not provided in response to legislation.91 It seems highly likely that investment in the children of immigrants helped bind the community to the works and encouraged the view that work, education and religion had a close affinity. And Swansea may have led the way in south Wales in the provision of schooling for all classes of society: at a meeting of subscribers and friends of a British school in Newport in February 1815, the chairman took the opportunity:

> to pay the inhabitants of Swansea a well merited compliment for their early and successful exertions in the noble cause of universal education without distinction of seat or party, including by calling on the inhabitants of Newport to emulate their praiseworthy example.92

The foundation of mutual aid or friendly societies and clubs also helped the incomers to settle to their new existence; and for those (almost always men) to whom the chapel was not a deterrent to the supposed evils of drink, the public house was often a refuge from poor conditions and overcrowding at home.93 This was the other side of the coin: industrialization encouraged the incidence of drunkenness by forcing incomers into a strange environment so weakening traditional sanctions which had enforced standards of conduct in the countryside.

Many immigrants, especially those to 'frontier' towns such as Merthyr Tydfil, were young,

91 Hughes, *Copperopolis*, p.ii.
92 The *Cambrian*, 18 February, 1815.
93 In 1802-3, there were twenty-one Friendly Societies in Swansea town, and one in Swansea Higher. At the same date, there were fifteen in Merthyr Tydfil, fourteen in Neath town but only two in Cardiff town: Dot Jones, 'Did Friendly Societies Matter? A Study of Friendly Society Membership in Glamorgan 1794-1910', *WHR*,12:3 (1985), pp.347-9. Most of Swansea's Societies met in public houses such as the *Wheat sheaf*, the *Globe* and the *Blue Boar.*
unmarried and sometimes without ties to the receiving community, and constituted a disruptive influence made worse by the effects of strong drink. The heavy, hot and tedious nature of industrial work encouraged the trend: the effects of drink were a relief from long hours of strenuous labour:

We are caged up like so many birds until night comes, and when we are liberated from our tedious engagements, we are let out into the streets like 'birds of prey', for by the time we finish it is time to go bed, we must either perambulate the streets or go to the Public House, to forget the annoyance of the day.94

All ports and industrial towns were places of heavy drinking and Swansea was no exception: Swansea historian W.C. Rogers claims that, by the mid-nineteenth century, there were over three hundred public houses in the town, many of which were located in the Strand, and built to serve the newcomers, particularly seafarers, from about 1780.95 Another dislocating element in the early nineteenth-century immigrant community was the the traditional lack of division between recreation and labour, employers were forced to introduce a strict regime to separate work from play, to inculcate the idea of time-keeping, and to impose strong discipline on their employees through regular hours and a minimum standard of good behaviour. After initial resistance to the new discipline, the standards required became accepted and then associated in the minds of most immigrants with the idea of 'respectability' and self improvement through hard work. A new ethical code developed out of the original perception of the employer that the old, 'bad' ways of the countryside had to be eradicated

95 P. Stead, 'The Entertainment of the People' in Swansea Illustrated, p.252, quoting Rogers. This number is likely to have been an overestimate, however: see p.235-6, below.
and this became the basis of rules of conduct amongst the immigrant community for living
and working in an urban environment. The new rules were enforced through attendance at
the chapels, Sunday schools and schools of the community. External discipline was
imposed by the employer through loans to privileged employees to buy houses, by the
provision of schooling, and by the truck system. Not everyone conformed, and to deal with
those who did not, Swansea Corporation in 1823 voted money for the strengthening of the
police system:

> it being the opinion of this meeting that in consequence of the increased
> population of this Town, and the increase in vagrancy, it is become the
duty of this Corporation to afford every support to the due maintenance
of good order within this Town....

It was on the edifices of chapel, Sunday school and school that the new 'peasant' urban
culture of the Swansea Valley was rooted, and it grew into and flourished in the form of the
great religious, literary and musical movements of working-class south Wales of the second
half of the nineteenth century, of which Morriston's Capel Tabernacl was the supreme
symbol. From these developments the industrial villages and towns throughout south Wales
would take their identity, but the catalyst was the economic development of the receiving
community triggered by the exploitation of natural resources fuelled by the labour of
immigrants.

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97 UCLS, HDMB, 20 January 1823. There is a striking contrast between the statement of
Gerald of Wales in the early thirteenth century that 'no one of this nation ever begs', and the
observation of a visitor to Carmarthen in 1803 that 'The streets of the town are infested with
beggars; indeed mendicity seems systematically pursued, both here and in all parts of South
Wales'. Davies, Economic History of South Wales, p.152.
4. Conclusion

A town would probably cease to exist without its supply of new people. It attracts them. But they often come of their own accord towards its lights, its real or apparent freedom, and its higher wages. They come too because first the countryside and also other towns no longer want them and reject them. The standard stable partnership is between a poor region with regular emigration and an active town......99

At the beginning of the modern phase of industrial development in Glamorgan, from the late seventeenth century, the most influential immigrants were those entrepreneurial individuals - often Quakers - who founded enterprises which were to have a profound influence on the development of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. These 'career' immigrants were attracted by the combination of local, easily worked coal and iron, copper ore within reasonable distance and port facilities and good communications by sea. Sir Humphrey Mackworth, who set up copper and coal works in the Neath area in the 1690s, came from Shropshire, and imported workers from the same county to dig for coal and smelt copper ore. Successive generations of the Mackworth family became closely involved in local politics and the administration of justice not for any altruistic reasons but as a means of protecting their extensive investments.100 Robert Morris, also from Shropshire (with strong Welsh family ties), settled in Swansea in 1726, taking over the Llangyfelach copperworks from Dr John Lane of Bristol, who had founded them in 1717. The works flourished and the Morris family's exertions, aided by imported English smelters (the craftsmen who supported them -

masons, smiths, carpenters - were recruited from neighbouring Welsh counties) contributed to making Swansea the copper capital of the world. Robert Morris' grandson, Sir John Morris, built Morriston at the end of the eighteenth century to house mainly Welsh immigrant labour. The Grenfells of Kilvey had extensive mineral interests in Cornwall and extended them to Swansea in the early nineteenth century with the acquisition of Middle and Upper Bank copper works which employed over a 100 men at their peak. The Grenfells also smelted copper in North Wales and kept their own line of ships sailing between Swansea, Deeside and Liverpool. Perhaps the best known and most influential family of the later industrial history of Swansea, the Vivians, owed their establishment in the area to the foundation of the Hafod copperworks in 1809 by John Vivian - another Cornishman. These entrepreneurs were attracted by the natural resources of south Wales and particularly by the accessible coal reserves, and advantages of water transport. Their workers soon followed - often in stages. Since agricultural wages were higher closer to the industrialising towns, those leaving the land for the first time were tempted by jobs in an industry they knew before taking the bigger step into the works. The demands of the works and associated mines founded by these incoming entrepreneurs for labour led directly to the development, from the late eighteenth century, of the working class townships to the north and east of Swansea. These townships, the best known of which are Morriston (the population of which grew from 629 to 2,047 between 1796 and 1851), Trevivian and Glandwr (Landore) to the north and Foxhole, St Thomas and Pentrechwyth across the river to the east, were overwhelmingly Welsh in language and character, and remained so into the twentieth century (see Fig. 4.1).

Fig. 4.1

Swansea's industrial communities and copperworks, 1830-1840

Source: S. Hughes, *Copperopolis*, p.15
Swansea's industrial communities and copperworks, 1830-1840

Source: S. Hughes, Copperopolis, p.15
Table 4.6 shows the growth of population in the first half of the nineteenth century in those settlements close to the industrial enterprises.

**TABLE 4.6**

Swansea's industrial villages: growth in population, 1801-1851

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement</th>
<th>1801</th>
<th>1851</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St John</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>1,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea Higher</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>1,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clase [includes Morriston]</td>
<td>2,549</td>
<td>7,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Thomas</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>1,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llansamlet Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Llansamlet Higher</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>2,567</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: D. Trevor Williams, *Economic Development of Swansea*, p.163

In 1801, the population of Swansea borough was just over 6,000 but, if the industrial settlements are included, Swansea was at this date the largest centre of population in Wales with about 11,000. The basic pattern of population in 1801 was hardly any different from 1851, with the vast majority of miners and copperworkers living to the north and across the river to the east of the town. And the rate of growth of the northern suburbs continued to outpace that of the town: in 1849 the population of the town was estimated at 17,500 with 19,000 in the industrial settlements; in fifty years the town's population had increased by three-fold, and that of the settlements by five-fold.  

Migrants to a town were not always welcomed as a potential boon to the local economy.

Those with skills, or money to spend on founding industrial concerns or businesses, or on

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104 Hughes, *Copperopolis*, p.165. According to Hughes, the populations of the following workers' settlements in 1841 were:

- Morriston: 2,187
- Graig Trewyddfa: 1,023
- Foxhole/Whiterock: 902
- Trevivian (Hafod): 256
pleasure, or those who were able and willing to look for work, were welcomed; those with slender or no means of support, and without skills, or who were physically disabled, were categorised as rogues and vagabonds and regarded as a burden on the inhabitants of the town. Attempts were made to control and determine responsibility for these unfortunate individuals through the instrumentality of successive Settlement Acts, the aim of which was to return the stranger to his place of origin or settlement. Swansea's increasing difficulty with incomers from the beginning of the nineteenth century - even those with employment in the copperworks - is illustrated by the comments of Henry Sockett in 1821 who, referring to the proposal to abolish the law of settlement, and the power of removal, was of the opinion that:

The town and franchise of Swansea.....would by the enactment of such a measure be utterly ruined, as it is situated in the immediate neighbourhood of most extensive copperworks and collieries, whose workmen reside in the town, but without having gained settlements therein.....I do not exaggerate in stating that the number of families of this description is at least a thousand, and that the nearly whole of them are so circumstanced, that if they were parishioners they would become burthensome as paupers... .

In Sockett's view, the proposal was unfair because in an expanding manufacturing town such as Swansea, the industrial parishes would have the benefit of an immigrant's labour whereas the town would have the burden of supporting him as a pauper.

106 Sockett, ibid, p.8.
Depositions of persons arrested as having no visible means of support can sometimes be found in the Quarter Sessions records and provide vivid evidence of hardships suffered.

Swansea, and other port towns, were frequent places of potential refuge of seamen, such as Alexander Culbert, who was examined by Gabriel Powell on the 8 October 1772. Culbert was born near Cork and, after service aboard a number of ships, was blinded in the right eye by a piece of rigging on *The Thunder*. He was, in consequence, sent back to Portsmouth, paid off and 'turn'd adrift'. His wife joined him and they embarked together on a life of begging and selling 'trifling things' without a licence. Attracted to Swansea, Culbert found himself before Powell for begging in the Swansea streets. Powell would, no doubt, have returned Culbert to Cork. The Irish were frequent visitors to port towns. A justices' order by John Morris on 29 August 1759 for reimbursement of the expenses of Benjamin Rees, Constable of Swansea, for the removal of Margaret Carty, also of Cork, 'a rogue and vagabond', can be found in the Quarter Sessions Records. Carty had been ordered to be delivered to *The Prince of Orange* lying at Mumbles bound for Cork but, for reasons unrecorded, the master of the ship, Phillip Jeffreys, refused to receive her and she was returned to Swansea. She was delivered to Mumbles for a second time and carried back to her home town on *The Francis*. The Corporation could, however, appear to be generous to the itinerant poor by giving them money - but on condition they moved on. But often they did not. Henry Sockett observed that, in 1817, 'the same degree of distress among the poor, which had spread itself over the other parts of the kingdom, prevailed at Swansea' and that decisive measures were urgently needed to find employment for labourers whose families were starving. The only place for reception of paupers without homes at this relatively late date

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107 GRO, Q/SR 1773A 24.
109 For example, UCLS, HDMB 3rd April 1783, when the Corporation voted £5 relief for several distressed soldiers on their way back to Ireland.
was the room in the Castle, converted in 1749/50, which was crowded to such a degree, that they lay seven in a bed, in a state of filth and wretchedness impossible to be described.\textsuperscript{110}

Despite the problems of the poor, Swansea enjoyed modest success as a seaside resort for about four decades from 1780, with the spending power of the leisured classes contributing to the economy of the town, and their presence and the publications of travellers raising the town's profile in England and farther afield. But it was the energy of that other class of immigrant, the English industrialist and entrepreneur, which was to count in the longer run, and which provided the focus, the centripetal source, of massive internal in-migration by the most numerous of the migrant order, the labouring classes. In their wake came merchants, professionals, shopkeepers and craftspeople: men like William Padley from Yorkshire, Quaker merchant and town burgess; Robert Nelson from Scotland, wealthy mercer and property developer and John Francis from Somerset, coach and harness manufacturer and retailer. These individuals, and many like them, were anxious to exploit the advantages to trade of the new concentrations of population. From the early nineteenth century, the demand for labour in the industrialising regions was so great that in the Vale of Glamorgan:

\ldots every man knows that in the case of disagreement with his employer, he has a probable recourse at the various 'works' where higher wages and constant employment hold out a strong temptation to exorbitance and negotiating terms with individuals who are compelled, with slender purses, to bid against the wealth of Merthyr Tydfil and Swansea.\textsuperscript{111}

\textsuperscript{110} Sockett, \textit{The Substance of Three Reports}, p.17.
\textsuperscript{111} Quoted in Williams, 'Population changes in Glamorgan', p.120.
'Going to Merthyr' had become a potent threat to a tight-fisted or impecunious agricultural employer, and attempts by Agricultural Societies to impede the flow of agricultural workers off the better land to industry by offering premiums or prizes to farm workers (for example, for length of service on the same farm) to induce them to stay, had only a limited effect.\textsuperscript{112}

Population change is the most sensitive barometer of industrialization and urbanization, and successive censuses illustrate how, in England and Wales, the advent of industrialization concentrated people in a few places, altering forever the balance of communities which had survived unchanged over many generations. Whilst it is possible to demonstrate Swansea's early and gradual economic development through its status as borough, market town, port and seaside resort, real growth - mainly through in-migration - did not begin until about 1740 although even by 1800 Swansea remained, in English terms, a small town. In 1801, the chief towns of South Wales - Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Cardiff and Newport could boast a population of only 18,000 between them (if the population of Swansea's industrial communities are disregarded), as Table 1.9 above demonstrates, whilst the population of Liverpool alone was more than four times as much, as were the populations of Birmingham and Manchester. Even in 1831, Swansea's population fell short of a modest 15,000. The really dramatic growth in population, fuelled almost entirely by immigration, of Swansea, Cardiff and Newport falls outside our period and began about 1840 with the modern development of these ports for the export of coal and other minerals. It is not, however, so much the quantity of Swansea's immigration during the hundred years to 1841 which impresses, but the variety of reasons for it, and the diversity of immigrants attracted. In this lies the difference between the experience of Swansea and other Welsh towns (and most English towns also). Unlike Merthyr Tydfil, which started to suffer economically when its

\textsuperscript{112} NLW, Kemeys-Tynte, f.18.
iron industry began to decline from about 1850, Swansea did not have all its eggs in one basket and its development as a multifunctional centre made it attractive to different types and classes of immigrant at different times. These immigrants, in their different ways, changed the demographic, economic and cultural character of Swansea; and Swansea's satellite villages developed a thriving, dynamic identity and culture based more exclusively on the Welsh language and religion, remnants of which can easily be detected today. And the development of these separate communities *de novo* by industrialists for their workers, took some of the pressure off Swansea town to provide homes for immigrants, lessening the problems of gross and unhealthy overcrowding found in the industrializing English towns mentioned above. Certainly, there was no equivalent in these English towns in the eighteenth century of the model workers' accommodation of Morris' Castle, nor indeed is there an equivalent for this period of the planned industrial village of Morriston.113 Another advantage accrued from the concentration of immigrant workers' housing to the north: the rate and type of development in Swansea town itself could, to some degree, be better controlled by the Corporation particularly with an eye to preserving its attractions as a seaside resort. But unregulated immigration to Swansea itself undoubtedly brought problems to the town and, as Henry Sockett's comments in 1821 demonstrate, Swansea was very far from possessing an adequate infrastructure, and many poor immigrants suffered in consequence. The difficulty in having to plan for the reception both of those attracted by the opportunities offered by industry and the consequent trade, and those seeking the more purely ephemeral pleasures of a seaside resort, ultimately forced Swansea into making a choice. That choice proved not to be difficult.

113 According to J.M. Davies, Morris built the Castle to house Pembrokeshire colliers brought in to break a strike of local miners: Davies, 'The growth of settlement in the Swansea valley', Univ. of Wales M.A. (1942), p.35.
1. Introduction

A picture is reputedly worth a thousand words. An image can however, be misleading and must be interpreted in the context of the world it depicts. It may often be a social document as well as an aesthetic experience and, from that image, it may be possible to identify contemporary fashions and ideas, social attitudes and civic ambitions, and perhaps (through the comparison of images through time) the tensions in society induced by circumstances and change not always fully anticipated or easily accommodated.

In eighteenth-century Wales, social tensions arose out of conflicts of interest between rural and urban, the Welsh and English languages and the agricultural economy and industry. Overlaying these elements, and the social readjustments which grew out of them, was the (late) awakening of a political consciousness in urban Wales: it was not until the 1770s that the first stirrings of opposition to the undemocratic and unrepresentative rule of the local urban oligarchs were detectable, later stimulated by the momentous upheavals of revolution in France. And there were other potent factors, including Dissent and Methodism, and the Romantic Movement, which provoked a new Welsh national awareness, reacting to the threatened or actual loss of old customs, rituals, culture and way of life.

As Peter Lord has shown, Wales possessed, particularly from the mid-eighteenth century, a striking visual culture linking landscape, the effects of industry on it, and a developing national consciousness. This was, however, a

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vision complicated by the perceptions of visiting artists, mostly English, influenced by
William Gilpin's theories of the picturesque.3

Wales had, in the mid-eighteenth century, produced its own landscape artists of vision and
talent, including Richard Wilson and Thomas Jones of Pencerrig; after 1782, and the
publication of Gilpin's ideas on the theory of landscape, many English artists (including
J.M.W. Turner, J.C. Ibbetson and Paul Sandby) flocked to Wales to explore through their
work the new theories of the sublime and picturesque. Their attention was, however, by no
means restricted to the pastoral, particularly where the developing industrial and urban
landscapes presented a dramatic contrast to the endangered, and increasingly encroached
upon, countryside. Many of these artists portrayed industrial subjects and, in the process of
recording the new and visually spectacular, so registered for posterity the social trauma
attendant on the process of industrialisation in Wales, not least the wretchedness of those
enslaved to the works.4 These images inevitably raised the profile of Wales and, at a period
when much of continental Europe was inaccessible, attracted many tourists from England
and overseas. And these visitors to Wales, and to Welsh towns, were present virtually at the
start of the social convulsion precipitated by industrialisation.

Swansea shared in this process, and the town was reasonably fortunate in its ability to attract
visiting artists and engravers of quality, including Turner, Smith, Gastineau and Cotman.
These artists were, however, drawn particularly to the infernal imagery of the copperworks

3 Lord, Industrial Society; Lord, The Visual Culture of Wales: Imaging the Nation, (Cardiff,
2000); Lord, Words with Pictures: Welsh Images and Images of Wales in the Popular Press,
1640-1860, (Llandysul, 1995). For Gilpin, see fn.10, below.
4 Artists included Sandby, Ibbetson, Turner, Phillippe de Loutherbourg, J. Ingleby, J.
'Warwick' Smith, Thomas Hornor, J.S. Cotman and H. Gastineau: see Lord, Industrial
Society, pp.18-40, 128-136.
rather than to the town itself. The representations of those artists interested in the town and its social life, examples of which are considered in this Chapter, for the most part confirm the map evidence considered in Chapter 2 above in terms of the development of the form and layout of Swansea.5 But they also provide valuable information, which cannot be extracted from maps, on the town's appearance in the eighteenth and first part of the nineteenth centuries, its architecture and building design, and the quality and condition of its buildings, most of which have long since vanished. The images of Samuel and Nathaniel Buck (1748), and Thomas Rothwell (1792) are potentially valuable in this respect, providing as they do a means of detailed comparison at a time when Swansea was undergoing economic and functional transformation. The pictorial evidence may, therefore, be employed (with care) in two ways: as a source of information or data for Swansea's physical and economic development, and as an indication of the image the town wished to present to the world, and of its increasing awareness of the need forcefully to promote and project this image to attract visitors, particularly those from England. Some images suggest also the physical alterations Swansea was undergoing from the mid-eighteenth century, and the stresses which must have attended these changes, including those associated with the attempt to present itself as a polite 'English' resort. If the 'quality' were to be attracted to Swansea, it was important to dissociate the emerging resort from the often unflattering accounts of Welsh towns by English writers which had appeared with increasing regularity from the 1770s, and which were written with the assumption of superiority of most things English (and particularly English towns and society) over most things Welsh. This was an attitude a number of

5 A number of artists and drawing masters (for example, T. Hornor, G. Delamotte, J. Harris Senior, W. Butler), attracted by the prospects of work arising out of the increasing prosperity of the town, became resident in the area after 1800: Prys Morgan, 'Art and Architecture' in Swansea Illustrated, pp.180-1.
prominent and imaginative eighteenth century Welsh scholars and patriots were determined to correct.

From the beginning of the eighteenth century it is possible to trace in works by Welsh authors a reaction against the assumption by English writers and commentators of English hegemony and Welsh cultural and social decline and mediocrity. The foundation in London in 1751 of the *Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* gave this fresh consciousness a focus and a means of dissemination of publications on matters Welsh. The recovery (or invention) and publication of the history and details of ancient custom and tradition, particularly relating to Celts, druids and bards, were deemed to be of particular importance. The groundwork was laid by Edward Lhuyd in 1707 with the publication of *Archaeologica Britannica*, and Lhuyd provided the Welsh 'with a new and quite independent vision of their past' when he proved the common Celtic ancestry of the languages of Welsh, Cornish, Breton, Irish and Gaelic. The ancient Celts were popularised by the Reverend Henry Rowlands of Llanidian in his study of the priestly druidic order in Anglesey which was instrumental in encouraging 'druidomania' among visitors to Wales in the late eighteenth century. The waters were, however, considerably muddied by the brilliantly imaginative confections of 'the rogue elephant' of Welsh literary tradition, Edward Williams of Glamorgan (1747-1826), who took the bardic name Iolo Morganwg, and who deliberately created a history, literature and tradition of Wales which he thought the Welsh people deserved, and not one which appealed to scholars alone. The *Gorsedd*, or 'guild', of Bards was a creation of Iolo's and, owing to his determined and enthusiastic promotion, it became from 1819 an important part of the ritual

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of eisteddfodau, and has long since acquired, after an unbroken existence of almost two hundred years, historical respectability. In the same spirit, Owain Glyndwr's exploits were rescued in the 1770s from early fifteenth-century fog by scholars such as Evan Evans and Thomas Pennant and Owain elevated to the status of great national patriot and warrior - with such success that, by the end of the eighteenth century, tourists were, in peculiarly modern idiom, referring to the Dee Valley as 'Glendower Country'. Myths, symbols, regalia and dress, designed to embellish native historical culture, but which also (and not always incidentally) captured the interest of the English tourist, were shamelessly invented; many have survived and are now part of Welsh 'tradition'. These attempts to create or recreate a sense of identity and nationality for the Welsh, and reinvigorate the Welsh language, provided fertile ground for the reception, from about the 1770s, of English tourists to Wales in search of the 'Ancient Briton', the idea of which had been propagated by the writings of the members of societies such as the Cymmrodorion, and which was complemented perfectly by Welsh scenery which fitted Gilpin's ideal of the sublime and picturesque (the more romantically rugged aspects of which had been extolled by Iolo). This new 'branding' of

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8 Iolo Morganwg was (in Prys Morgan's phrase) 'many-sided', and much more than a forger and fantasist. As an exceptionally well-read artisan (he worked for the whole of his life as a stonemason), he was also a radical (whose coded anti-establishment message could be found in the ceremony of the Gorsedd); businessman, farmer, designer and architect, romantic poet and historian, agriculturalist, topographical writer - as well as the romantic mythologist for which talent he is probably best remembered. His specific purpose, in addition to giving the Welsh a new sense of historical and literary worth, was to raise the idea and reputation of Wales in the eyes of its English neighbours, a purpose to which the English were not unreceptive given the perceived need to strengthen the unity of the British Isles against the threat of France and Spain.

9 Evans, Mythology', p. 115.

10 Rev. William Gilpin, Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales & Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; made in the Summer of the Year 1770 (London, 1782). It is enlightening to compare Defoe's observations on the Welsh landscape in 1726, unaffected by the influence of the Romantic Movement, when he began to repent of his decision to enter Wales 'as not having met with anything worth the trouble; and a country looking so full of horror, that we thought to have given over the enterprise, and have left Wales out of our circuit': P. Rogers (ed), Daniel Defoe: A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain, 1724-26 (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 376-7. For the 'rediscovery' of Welsh
Wales helped also the Welsh visualize their own country, for the new symbols and ceremonials had 'an exceptional importance in a national community that was not a political state. They were a substitute for the lost customs and rites of the old society of patronal festivals, merry nights and calendar feasts.'

Except for a small elite, there was, however, to be no concept among the people of Wales of a nation-state until the nineteenth century.

This is the context in which much of the topographic literature and images of Wales in the eighteenth century was produced. It is, perhaps, unsurprising that some late eighteenth-century English visitors to Wales, and to Welsh towns, including Swansea, felt that the experience did not quite live up to the promise (although the few Welsh commentators were usually enthusiastic). Nevertheless, certain towns, particularly Swansea from about 1790, were making determined efforts to meet expectations by developing facilities no inferior (they hoped) than those found at a Brighton or a Weymouth. If the published impressions of English visitors to Welsh towns were sometimes less than generous, town guides and trade directories, appearing from the 1790s, attempted to redress the balance. These sources, although often entirely uncritical, contain data on businesses which, whilst not wholly reliable, are valuable in assessing the development of the manufacturing, service and retail sectors from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and so the growth of, and any changes of direction in, the urban economy through time. Through an examination of contemporary literature and images, therefore, it should be possible to trace the development of Swansea, particularly from about 1750 when the effects of the in-migration considered in Chapter 4 above were beginning to be felt; to note the consequences of the inexorable build-up of tradition and culture, see particularly Morgan, 'The Hunt for the Welsh Past' pp.43-100; Morgan, 'Engine of Empire c.1750-1898', in P. Morgan (ed.) The Tempus History of Wales 25,000 B.C. - A.D. 2000 (Stroud, 2001), pp.175-184

pressure of population forcing changes in the appearance and fabric of the town; to identify the growing realisation that existing administrative machinery and infrastructure were inadequate to cope with incomers, and to consider the measures put in place in an attempt to deal with the resulting social problems and pressures. Further pressures arose out of conflicts among the urban elite in face of threats to vested interests, and Swansea's aspirations to become a 'polite' town and 'English' resort in the face of ambitions of entrepreneurs and industrialists, and the consequences of their activities on the infrastructure and environment. As always, the conclusions to be drawn are constrained by the nature of the sources, and the motives of those responsible for their generation.

2. Images and text: contemporary views of Swansea and Welsh urban development

We have already seen that John Speed chose Cardiff and Llandaff rather than Swansea to embellish his 1610 map of Glamorganshire so that Francis Place's naturalistic sketch of 1678 is the earliest extant representation of Swansea. Place was a friend of Wenceslaus Hollar and was influenced by his work. He travelled extensively from his home in York and, in addition to Swansea, drew Cardiff, Tenby, Pembroke and Oystermouth castle; his drawings have been described as 'simple and direct statements of biographical fact'.\(^\text{12}\) The sketch of Swansea was, however, made from rather a low angle across the beach from Fabian's Bay so that only the castle and the tower of St Mary's Church are clearly visible. Townhill is shown as open and unenclosed with a cover of scrub. Shipbuilding activities are apparent just below the castle; seventy years later the Buck brothers were to show shipbuilding in the same location (see below). Just downstream of the shipbuilding operations, vessels are visible moored at the town quay (constructed 1616) and there are at least three further ships moored in the river. As

in the Buck panorama, the castle dominates the view. A clearer, but rather naive panorama
was produced by London cartographer Emmanuel Bowen in 1729. Bowen's miniature view of
the town was drawn from an elevated point to the south-east and provides the earliest street
plan of Swansea.\(^\text{13}\) Again, the castle, St Mary's church and the quay are clearly visible, and
also Wind Street and High Street although the buildings are little more than a token
representation from which nothing of any great morphological, topographical or architectural
value may be deduced. The (limited) impression given by Place and Bowen is of a town of at
least local importance, particularly for its port and maritime activities, but perhaps of no
great urban status particularly outside Wales.

Defoe's comments, already quoted, made on his visit to Swansea just a few years before
Bowen drew it, seem to suggest, however, that Swansea may have had a rather higher profile.
Defoe's descriptions of Wales are amongst the earliest extant, and helped to raise awareness
of the Principality amongst those living outside it.\(^\text{14}\) Unlike many later travellers, Defoe was
interested less in the romantic and the sublime and more in recording objectively his
impressions of Wales and its economy and trade. According to Lord, Defoe was a 'pragmatist
interested in the creation of wealth through the exploitation of natural resources', and, in
effect, he took an inventory of what he saw.\(^\text{15}\) Although rural scenery and antiquities were not
yet in fashion, Defoe was not insensitive to the effect of landscape on the imagination, and
purported to compare the mountains and valleys of Wales and those of the Alps and the
Andes (which he had not seen): Welsh mountains were as 'horrid and frightful' as those found

\(^{13}\text{E. Bowen, A New and Accurate Map of South Wales (1729).}\)
\(^{14}\text{Fifty years earlier, Richard Blome wrote that 'Swanseay, commodiously seated on the}
sea-shoar where the River Tawe dischargeth itself...is a large, clean and well-built Town}
which for riches and trade is esteemed the chief of the County and that by reason of their}
Coal-pits, and the great industry of its Inhabitants: Britannia (London, 1673), p.273.}\)
\(^{15}\text{Lord, Industrial Society, pp.20-8.}\)
almost anywhere else. But towns and their economy interested Defoe more and, of the Welsh
towns he visited, Pembroke appears to have impressed him most with Swansea a close
second. He noted that Swansea was important for its good harbour and substantial trade in
coal and culm, and was considered the chief port of south Wales. The impression gained of
the town in the 1720s is of a modern, thriving, commercial port. In contrast, Defoe's view of
Carmarthen was of an 'antient but not decay'd town....well built and populous' and, despite a
long history and rich agricultural hinterland, the impression is of a town which had seen
better days economically, and which was slipping in the Welsh urban rank-order.16 Brecon,
another 'antient' town, also perhaps gave the impression of having seen better days. Tenby
and Pembroke impressed Defoe as ports, particularly the latter, 'the largest and richest, and at
this time, the most flourishing town in all south Wales'. Significantly, Defoe, in explanation
of Pembroke's success, referred to the presence of a great many English merchants, 'some of
them men of good business'; he was told that almost 200 ships belonged to the town. The
hinterland was fertile and well cultivated, justifying (in English eyes) its description 'Little
England beyond Wales'. Cardiff merits only a brief reference as having a good port 'four
miles below the town'. Defoe's remarks on Aberystwyth are curious, and have prompted
suggestions that, as with the Alps and the Andes, he did not visit all the places he purported
to describe. The town, he claimed, 'is enrich'd by the coals and lead which is found in its
neighbourhood, and is a very populous, but very dirty, black smoaky place' and the people (he
fancied) looked as if they lived in coal or lead mines.17 Whilst Aberystwyth served as a port
for the exportation of lead ore mined inland, coal was never mined in that area. This
demonstrably inaccurate observation calls into question descriptions of other towns,
including the reference to Swansea's hundred sail of ships at a time loading coal, which later

16 Rogers (ed.), Defoe: Tour, p.379. Defoe's 'antient' was not a term of approbation.
17 Ibid, pp.380, 382.
pictorial evidence suggests would have been unlikely. Aberystwyth at this time was relatively
insignificant in Welsh urban terms and would remain so until its development as a resort
from about 1780.\textsuperscript{18} There is, however, little doubt that Defoe's work was influential, and it
appeared at a time when the aesthetic and philosophical movement that was to paint Wales as
a bucolic paradise amongst 'horrid' mountains, and its people as primitive and innocent
'Ancient Britons', was beginning to emerge.\textsuperscript{19}

Contemporary with Defoe, Samuel Buck produced his first town engravings (of Leeds and
York) in 1721. These and the later engravings were published by subscription and aimed at
the aristocracy, gentry, professionals and merchants of (and also those exiled from) the
'Eminent Towns' depicted. It follows, therefore, that the presence of a ready market for the
work was of paramount importance in the decision to depict a town. Like Defoe, the Buck
brothers were interested in the economy of each town, and the contribution each made to the
commercial and manufacturing prosperity of the country. In 1727, Samuel Buck was joined
by his brother Nathaniel, and the brothers' copper engraving \textit{East View of Swansea} of 1748
represented a substantial step forward in representations or descriptions of Swansea, and is of
the greatest value in visualizing the town at a time when the effects of in-migration were
starting to be felt, and the coal and copper industries beginning to consolidate their
importance to the local economy.\textsuperscript{20} The Bucks' Swansea appears as a reasonably prosperous,

\textsuperscript{18} Lewis, \textit{Born on a Perilous Rock}, pp.194-9; Borsay, 'Health and Leisure Resorts' in
\textit{Cambridge Urban History}, p.780.
\textsuperscript{19} Defoe is generous about Wales and the Welsh; unlike some of those who later trod in his
steps, he generally found the provisions and the inns 'very good', and the Welsh very civil,
hospitable and kind, especially to strangers.
\textsuperscript{20} The Buck brothers' work in England and Wales has recently been collected in Ralph Hyde
(ed.), \textit{A Prospect of Britain; The Town Panoramas of Samuel and Nathaniel Buck} (London,
1994), plate 11 (Cardiff), plate 75 (Swansea). See also D. Moore and P. Moore, 'Bucks'
solidly-constructed town, economically dependent on its port activities including
ship-building and repairs.\textsuperscript{21} In their commentary, the Bucks mention Swansea's

Considerable Trade, particularly in Coals; and in this Neighbourhood are
several considerable Works in Coper [sic], Iron and Tin, By the Conveniency
of its Situation [Swansea] is induced to hold a large and profitable correspondence
with the City of Bristol.

Although the Buck brothers do not depict any manufactories or industrial works, and in this
they differ from their near-contemporary, Thomas Rothwell (see below), the prospect is
interesting because the town's axis is clearly north-south (the town at this date was less than
three-quarters of a mile in length, with a maximum east-west width of one-quarter of a mile)
following the original course of the river whereas the axis of the modern town, developing
from about the 1820s, is east-west. The panorama is one of contrasts: in the foreground (in
accordance with the Bucks' usual practice), figures in fine dress stroll indolently on the river
bank and in the immediate foreground a hunting party disports itself; beyond, on the Tawe
and its west bank, ships are moored, or are under way, under repair and under construction.\textsuperscript{22}
The town stretches between the Bay (Mumbles provides a pleasant backdrop) and the
peaceful wooded pastures and slopes of the undeveloped and as yet unenclosed Townhill.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21} Although, as Hyde points out, the prospect appears to underestimate the town's prosperity
in light of Defoe's 'hundred sail of ships' comment in that relatively few ships are shown on
the river or under repair or construction: Hyde, \textit{Prospect}, p.54.
\textsuperscript{22} The Bucks employed artists to draw foreground and figures: Jean-Baptiste Claude
Chatelain was probably responsible for these elements in the Swansea engraving: Hyde,
\textit{Prospect}, p.28.
\textsuperscript{23} The Enclosure Act for Townhill and the Burrows was passed in 1762.
Figure 5.1
S. & N. Buck. The East View of Swansea (extract) (1748)

Here also there are contrasts. In the centre of the engraving, the castle dominates in a manner unthinkable in the portrayals of the industrial and commercial centre of about 1800; from the Burrows in the south (also as yet unenclosed and undeveloped) to the castle, many of the houses of the Strand and Wind Street are small, jumbled, and probably predominantly of sixteenth and seventeenth century design and construction. From the castle north to Worcester Place and lower High Street, gentry houses of generous proportions with large, formal gardens, prevail. It was here that the first and second Gabriel Powell had their residence in the large double-saddle house in lower High Street adjoining an even larger Tudor-style mansion. Even in this locality, there is contrast: the single-storey buildings at the foot of the elaborate gardens sloping down to the Strand are likely to have had a commercial function and used as storage sheds or private warehouses for goods unloaded from ships moored at the quay. The insalubrious Morris Lane marked the northern line of the defensive walls of medieval Swansea; by 1748 there had been development beyond of a mixed nature although most of the dwellings appear small and of both single- and two-storey construction.

The Buck brothers made engravings of five other Welsh towns in the Principal Series; most of the remaining seventy-seven plates are of English towns. A comparison of the Welsh and the English towns confirms graphically the evidence of the contemporary literature: apart from being far fewer in number, Welsh towns were markedly undeveloped when compared with most of their English counterparts in terms of the area built upon, the sheer press of buildings and the numbers of church towers and steeples piercing the prospect. An attempt is made to remedy the Welsh towns' lack of presence by depicting them on a larger scale than

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24 See Moore and Moore, 'Buck's Engravings' pp.140-2; B. Morris, 'Buildings and Topography' in Swansea Challenges, pp.149-152.
most English towns. Swansea, Carmarthen, Haverfordwest and Wrexham appear from the 
pictorial evidence to be of similar size to each other, with Cardiff lagging behind, still largely 
confined within its medieval walls. By 1748, therefore, Swansea was clearly an important 
urban centre in Welsh terms, as its inclusion on the Bucks' itinerary would suggest (the 
presence of wealthy subscribers being a pre-condition to depiction). In terms of population, 
Swansea, in company with all other Welsh urban centres, remained a modest place with 
about 2400 inhabitants in 1751 (Table 2.11 above); the graph at Fig. 2.2 above indicates, 
however, that at the time of the Bucks' visit, the town had just embarked on the surge of 
population growth which was to make it the most populous town in Wales, excepting 
Merthyr, by 1801 (Table 2.10 above).27

From the 1770s travellers, most of whom were Englishmen, were beginning to record their 
impressions of Wales and, for some, the template had been fashioned by William Gilpin. 
Gilpin had attempted, in 1782 to organise and set travellers' accounts into a theoretical 
framework by producing a handbook which purported to define beauty in the landscape, and 
which set down rules for analysing the qualities and deficiencies of a rural prospect.28 
Whatever the merits of Gilpin's theories, his book was popular and, when coupled with the 
literary creations of Thomas Pennant and later Iolo Morganwg, appears to have raised the 
profile of Wales as a place to visit, and to have encouraged a substantial influx at the end of 
the eighteenth century of tourists, including writers and artists, eager to experience the new 
aesthetic of the picturesque. Some of these new visitors to Wales were able to reconcile the 

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26 Hyde, Prospect, Cardiff (plate 11) (this was published the same year as Swansea); 
Carmarthen (plate 13); Haverfordwest (plate 30); Pembroke (plate 55); Wrexham (plate 81). 
Hyde considers the Bucks' town prospects to be substantially accurate: Prospect, p.29. 
27 Table 2.10 above shows that Swansea had the fastest growing population in percentage 
terms between 1670 and 1801 (252%), apart from Merthyr (which was a special case). 
28 Gilpin, Observations on the River Wye (London, 1782). Gilpin was to be satirised as Dr 
Syntax by William Combe and Thomas Rowlandson in 1823.
existence of industrial buildings and plant, and their effect on the landscape, precisely
because water (and steam) mills, furnaces and forges were often located in areas of
picturesque beauty, and the juxtaposition provided opportunities for depiction, description
and hyperbole never before available. Gilpin was not insensible to this effect:

One circumstance, attending this alternacy, is pleasing. Many of the furnaces,
on the banks of the river, consume charcoal, which is manufactured on the spot;
and the smoke, which is frequently seen issuing from the sides of the hills; and
spreading its thin veil over a part of them, beautifully breaks their lines, and unites
them with the sky.

Others deplored the appearance and effects of industry, and, except to criticise, passed over
the phenomena in silence.

Descriptions or representations of eighteenth century Wales and its towns were not, however,
the sole prerogative of English travellers or artists. Arguably the most influential of the native
commentators, born in 1726 at the time of Defoe's tour in Wales and the commencement of
the Bucks' careers in town prospects, Thomas Pennant came from a gentry family of
Downing, Flintshire. He became an industrialist, natural historian and antiquarian, travelled
widely throughout his life, recorded his impressions in writing and often commissioned
competent (including some Welsh) artists to depict for posterity the places he visited. His
Tour in Wales (1778), and Journey to Snowdon (1781) (with engravings by Moses Griffith),

29 There are many examples in, for example, the artistic works of Moses Griffith, John
'Warwick' Smith, Thomas Hornor, Paul Sandby, John Hassell et al. See Lord, Industrial
Society, pp.20-41.
30 Gilpin, Observations on the River Wye, p.12; and see Lord, Industrial Society, pp.20-2.
quickly became standard texts for other tourists to north Wales; the commercial success of the *Tour* did much to popularize and encourage the study of Wales, its history and countryside.\(^{31}\) It is unfortunate for the study of Swansea that he was 'not interested in the least in South Wales'.\(^{32}\) His approach to the subject was not dissimilar to that of Defoe or the Buck brothers in that he recorded what he saw dispassionately and without recourse to romantic or flowery language or unnecessary embellishment. As an antiquarian and topographer, he was particularly conscious of the effect of historical events on the landscape; as a scientist and industrialist, he was interested in, and recorded objectively, the consequences of the advance of industry across the Welsh countryside, including the effects of copper smoke on foliage. Pennant's approach was rational not judgmental, and he regarded the description and depiction of industrial subjects to be entirely appropriate. To this end, he commissioned John Ingleby to produce drawings (afterwards engraved) in 1792 of industrial sites in Denbighshire and Flintshire and whilst Paul Sandby and J.C. Ibbetson, amongst others, produced earlier views of industry in Wales, those commissioned by Pennant probably had most impact.\(^{33}\)

Pennant's influence may be seen in the depiction of Swansea's industry. In 1791, as part of a series intended to appeal to visitors to the area, Thomas Rothwell (1740-1807) depicted the Cambrian Pottery and Forest Copper Works, Morriston. Each scene is detailed and enlivened by figures engaged in various activities (in contrast to William Butler's view of Wind Street fifty years later, the figures are oversized).\(^{34}\) Ibbetson's more naturalistic drawing, 'A Coal

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\(^{32}\) NLW, ms.5500C, f.39, letter to R. Bull, 21 March 1784.


\(^{34}\) See below, p.230 and Fig.5.5; and M. Gibbs and B. Morris, *Thomas Rothwell, Views of Swansea in the 1790s* (Swansea, 1991).
Staithe on the River Tawe' (1792), is a view also completely industrial in nature, and evidence that Swansea's increasing pace of development at this period was regarded as sufficiently important, and interesting, to record.\(^\text{35}\) It is a reminder also that owners of coal mines looked for the quickest route to a suitable shipment place, which might be little more than a short pier and drop, and did not require elaborate port facilities.\(^\text{36}\) Ibbetson's drawing depicts also Morris Castle on the hill behind the staithe, built in 1750 by Robert Morris to house his workers at the Fforest Copper Works, thereby linking the scene with Rothwell's view of the Works. In artists' depictions, industrial subjects were beginning regularly to complement or even displace traditional views of castles, parks and houses; and there was a corresponding trend in the accounts of travellers.

Rothwell's work may be profitably compared with that of the Buck brothers. An enamel painter, engraver and artist, Rothwell appears to have arrived in Swansea in the late 1780s, after having been employed in the pottery industry and book trade in Hanley and Birmingham, to work for George Haynes of the Cambrian Pottery on the banks of the Tawe.\(^\text{37}\) It was exactly at this period that Swansea was being promoted as a fashionable seaside resort 'in point of spirit, fashion and politeness......the Brighton of Wales'.\(^\text{38}\) And travellers to Swansea at this period agreed with the Rev. J. Oldisworth in the *Swansea Guide* (1802) that 'the Cambrian Pottery......cannot fail to be an agreeable morning's amusement to those unacquainted with this kind of manufacture'. The ten views of Swansea and locality produced by Rothwell in 1790 and 1791 were, therefore, almost certainly, an attempt to cash in on Swansea's growing popularity as a fashionable seaside resort since no known example of

\(^{35}\) Lord, *Industrial Society*, p.28.

\(^{36}\) Jackson, 'Ports' in *Cambridge Urban History*, p.711.


\(^{38}\) The *Gloucester Journal*, 14 August 1786.
Swansea ware carries any of these engravings. And it seems highly likely that Rothwell would have been influenced by the Bucks' work, for the viewpoints from the east bank of the Tawe are very similar, although Rothwell's is the more elevated. The two most useful engravings for determining the development of the town are North-East View of the Town of Swansea (Fig. 5.2) and Port and Bay of Swansea, Glamorganshire since each provides a means of measuring the changes to the fabric of Swansea since 1748. These changes do not, however, appear to be startling, and reflected the fact that Swansea's population in the 1790s still fell short of 6,000. The most obvious change is that development of the Burrows had begun, with the construction, in 1776/7, of the fashionable Union Row, later Somerset Place (where Rothwell was living). There can be little doubt that the Corporation was aware of the potential for building on the Burrows, a relatively flat stretch of sandy ground immediately adjoining the south of Wind Street, for construction of Union Row had commenced within little more than a dozen years of enclosure. Development of the Burrows presented the Corporation with an opportunity, as a single landowner, to regulate and control from the outset - through the imposition of covenants in leases - the laying out of streets and design and appearance of houses in accordance with the neo-classical ideal then in vogue.

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39 The ten Rothwell engravings are of the Cambrian Pottery; the Forest Copper Works, Morriston; Mount Pleasant; the Bathing House; Penrice Castle; Briton Ferry and Vernon House; Swansea Port and Bay; Swansea from the North-East; Sketty Hall; Clasemont.


41 The Townhill and Burrows Enclosure Act, 1762 (2 Geo.III c.7). The Burrows lay to the east of the Mount and stretching westwards to the south of the town as far as Brynmill: see the plan drawn by William Jones, 1762, to accompany the Commissioner's Award, NLW, Bad 908.
SPECIAL NOTE

This item is tightly bound and while every effort has been made to reproduce the centres force would result in damage.
Figure 5.2

Thomas Rothwell: *North-east View of the Town of Swansea* (1790/1)

The objective was to create order, symmetry and elegance to reflect refinement of taste, *de rigueur* for any Welsh town hoping to attract polite English society. Union Row was a three storey terrace of fifteen houses, unified by a central pediment in one overall grand classical style made fashionable by the Woods of Bath and notable also in Edinburgh's New Town.

The materials used in construction were brick, stone and tiles which served the dual purpose of assisting in the creation of a uniformity of external design, in place of the jumble of the vernacular tradition, and as protection against the conflagrations so prevalent in the case of timber and thatch. 42 The interiors of these houses were equally uniform in design, and their spaciousness provided a contrast to the one up one down design of the workers' housing not far to the north. Union Row was probably architect William Jemegan's first commission in Swansea and, as was often the case in Bath and other developing towns of the eighteenth century, was likely to have been a speculative venture undertaken in response to the demand for accommodation by seasonal visitors and the increasing permanent population. Union Row provided a model for the design of some of the later terraces on the Burrows. 43 Location was obviously of equal importance: the extensive views over the Bay made 'the situation...in every respect most desirable for Private Lodging Houses'. 44

In Rothwell's engraving, no harbour piers are shown at the entrance to the Tawe: the western pier was not completed until 1795 and the eastern pier not until 1809. Further north, houses are beginning to appear on the lower slopes of the now-enclosed Townhill including Heathfield Lodge, built for the third Gabriel Powell. The river Tawe is hidden behind

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42 Sweet, *English Town*, pp. 84-6.
43 Somerset Place is now demolished. Jemegan (1750/1-1836) was responsible for other terraces on the Burrows, namely Gloucester Place (1824), Cambrian Place (part removed), Adelaide Place (demolished), and probably Prospect Place. For a summary of Jemegan's Swansea career, see T. Lloyd, 'The Architects of Regency Swansea', *Gower*, 41, pp. 58-62.
44 Corporation advertisement in the *Cambrian*, 1 September 1804.
mounds of ballast (not apparent in, or omitted from, the Buck engraving) dumped randomly on the east bank. Some ships are depicted, rather dramatically and alarmingly, running up-river in full sail before a strong breeze; this was, no doubt, artistic licence. The Rothwell views were produced at about the same time as the maps by John Cary (1792, Fig. 2.5) and George Yates (1799, Fig. 2.6). Whilst the difficulties inherent in attempting a comparison of a plan with an elevation prepared by different hands are self-evident, particularly when the plan is of a relatively small scale, there appear to be no obvious discrepancies or inconsistencies between Cary's and Yates' maps and Rothwell's panoramas. On Cary's plan and in Rothwell's view development on the Burrows is shown; the Mount and the Parade (with trees) are clearly marked; gentry houses are starting to appear on Mount Pleasant.

There may have been few changes apparent in a forty-three year period but Rothwell, and the sixteen-year old Paul Padley, depicted Swansea at a critical stage in its history. The town was drawn by Padley in about 1795 from a point above its northernmost limit of development, looking south (Fig. 5.3). The industrial works are up-river behind the observer and the built-up area of housing ends at old St. John's Church. There is no canal and the Mount and the Parade have still not been removed to make way for the Oystermouth Tramroad (1805). The houses on High Street and Worcester Place continue to be occupied by local gentry but the new housing constructed on the Burrows is visible, much of it accommodation for visitors to the resort. The town was poised between that which Gabriel Powell strove to preserve and control on behalf of his employer, the duke of Beaufort, and the busy centre of commerce, trade and industry it was to become in the following century.

\[45 \text{ The Cary map, based on Swansea Bay (1795), based on Yates' survey, first appeared in the Swansea Tide Table of that date.}\]
The population remained under 6000, but provision urgently had to be made for the growing demand for accommodation for workers as well as visitors.46

The genesis and realization of the new development in the town can be traced in the Corporation records where there are many references, particularly after 1800, to the release of land for building purposes. Likewise, from the first appearance of the Cambrian in 1804, advertisements for land and property in private ownership for sale or let are frequent. On the

5 May 1804, a ninety-nine year lease of a piece of ground adjoining the rear of the Golden Lion Inn in High Street and lying between this street and Back Lane, and having a frontage of 500 feet to Back Lane was advertised for industrial, storage or for 'Workmen's Shops and Houses'. The advertiser pointed to the convenience of the site being in the vicinity of collieries, copper-works and potteries (for workmen), and quarries (for building stone and lime - about one hundred yards to the west). On David Davies' 1803 plan, this area (the second and third blocks north-east of College Street) appears to be relatively undeveloped; on Evans' 1823 plan (Fig. 2.7), the second block above College Street is developed. On the 1852 Board of Health plan (Fig.2.10), most of the area to the rear of the Golden Lion is covered with small dwellings constituting (from the south) Regent Court, Davies Court, Daniel Court and Howell Court. The houses in these courts were one up, one down and appear only to have had sufficient land for (shared) privies, or, in the case of Regent Court, small back gardens or yards, and are in marked contrast to the houses in the next street to the north, Mariner Street, the gardens or yards of which appear to be of a reasonable size with certainly sufficient room to construct a rear scullery extension to the basic two up and two down layout.  

The publication of the images discussed above reflects the fact that, by 1780, Swansea was becoming known as a place worth visiting. A printing press was established in this year and advertisements for the theatre, bathing machines, and assemblies at the Mackworth Arms began to appear in the Bristol and Gloucester newspapers. Other improvements appropriate to a 'polite' resort included proposals in 1786 by John Calvert ('on the behalf of several  

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47 See B. Morris, 'Swansea Working Class Houses, 1800-1850', Gower, 26 (1975), pp.53-61. Most of the houses from this period have long since been swept away.
48 Sweet, 'Stability and Continuity' p.18. The first explicit reference in the Corporation minutes to Swansea's resort pretensions was in 1771 when leave was given to John Calvert to build a house for his bathing machine near the boat house: UCLS, HDMB, 2 August 1771.
Gentlemen of this Town') to level part of the Burrows for the playing of cricket, and by Calvert again later in the same year for the erection of public baths (and 'houses or buildings of three storeys') on the Burrows.\textsuperscript{49} Calvert was an architect and also, from 1778 to 1784 the manager of the theatre at Swansea referred to below (which he probably also designed), and so had a vested interest in encouraging development.\textsuperscript{50} But if Swansea was to have any chance of competing with, and drawing polite society away from, the leading English resorts, the appearance of the town, and the facilities on offer, required urgent attention. This forced the Corporation and the urban elite in the late 1780s into consideration of the thorny question of town and harbour improvement: and thereby into conflict.

The problem of improvement to streets, harbour and river navigation had been considered at meetings of interested parties called in the 1770s, but proposals for improvement through an Act of Parliament had been blocked by the duke of Beaufort's faction of burgesses led by Gabriel Powell.\textsuperscript{51} The issue of improvement came to a head following a public meeting at the Mackworth Arms on the 10 October 1787, which had resolved to apply for a Bill to improve the navigation of the river, when the Corporation resolved (again under pressure from Powell) on the 2 November to oppose any such move, and any Bill to improve paving and cleansing, on the grounds that it would 'tend to be to the manifest destruction of many of our most valuable Rights and Priviledges'.\textsuperscript{52} Moses Harris' cartoons of 1787 provide amusing and satirical comment on this episode, and on the unpopularity of Gabriel Powell.\textsuperscript{53} The cartoons are a somewhat partisan commentary also on the difficult times being experienced by the

\textsuperscript{49} UCLS, HDMB, 13 December 1786.
\textsuperscript{50} Prys Morgan, 'Art and Architecture' in Swansea Illustrated, p.193.
\textsuperscript{51} UCLS, HDMB, 27 October 1771, 6 January 1772, 19 June 1772; UCLS, Grant Francis Broadsides, B6, f.8
\textsuperscript{52} UCLS, HDMB, 2 November 1787 (the Corporation had earlier opposed a proposal for a Bill for paving the town, ibid., 5 February 1787); UCLS, Collins mss. Box 10.
\textsuperscript{53} Harris was a friend of Robert Morris a radical member of the Swansea industrial family.
town at a period of transition with opposing factions struggling for ascendancy. *A Welsh Corporation* depicts the undignified scuffle amongst burgesses which accompanied Powell's (successful) bid to force through the Corporation a resolution to vote money to oppose a Bill for town and harbour improvements; in *The Steward* (see frontispiece), Powell's attempt (at the subsequent parliamentary committee dealing with the Bill) to characterise Swansea as 'a poor town mostly inhabited by Copper men and Colliers; but as well paved as most Country Towns...' is illustrated by his standing outside Swansea Theatre ('I know of no theatre there; I may have heard of one; I was never at it') on an ill-paved and dirty street with pigs rooting about his feet.\(^5\)

Clearly, at this date, Swansea was not a poor town, and, as we have seen, it was certainly not mostly inhabited by coppermen or colliers; but nor was it as well paved as many English country towns. It fitted the purpose, however, of those with vested interests in opposing improvements to claim otherwise. Powell knew that once it was conceded that Swansea was inhabited not so much by coppermen and colliers but rather by gentry, industrialists, wealthy manufacturers and merchants, who might seek to organise themselves into statutory bodies, then his control of town affairs would be gone. Robert Morris' broadside, dated 26 June, 1788, ostensibly on behalf of radicals and industrialists, castigated the 'self-chosen rulers of the Town' for misapplying funds for street improvements 'leaving the streets in an irregular, mauled and imperfect state, nuisances as thick as ever, many houses drowned on every shower by their injudicious management and an Act of Parliament more necessary than before' is indicative of the passions over the question of town improvement engendered at this period - even allowing for the radical Morris' opportunistic espousal of this issue to

attack the oligarchic and aristocratic interests. The realisation among many inhabitants of the town that visitors would be deterred and trade impaired if urgent improvements were delayed much longer forced the duke's party into retreat and, on the death of Powell in 1789, the main obstruction to progress was removed. Powell's strenuous and insensitive promotion of the duke's cause helped stir up animus against the aristocratic family, resentment which had existed earlier but which had been neutralised by the 'subservient' relationship, based on mutual self-interest, of the Corporation with the duke. With Powell out of the way, improvements could be pursued through the instrumentality of the statutory bodies Powell had feared he would not be able to control, and the powers of which he felt would have damaged his, and the duke's, personal interests. The 1789 Paving and Improvement Bill had, however, failed and, with the departure of Robert Morris from the local scene in the 1790s, the radical focus disappeared and Swansea did not finally gain its Paving Act until 1809. With the passing of that Act, Swansea's Paving Commission came into being - much later than in most towns: Cardiff in 1774 had became the first Welsh town to obtain a local Improvement Act, followed two years later by Brecon, by Carmarthen in 1792 and Abergavenny in 1794. Merthyr Tydfil, the largest town in Wales at the beginning of the nineteenth century, had none at all. Chester had obtained its Improvement Act in 1762 and Salisbury twenty five years earlier. The record of Swansea's Paving Commission over a period of forty-one years was not particularly distinguished (an experience shared by many other towns), although some progress was made.

56 Sweet, 'Stability and Continuity', pp.22-7. The Corporation, however, made common cause with the duke against the industrialists early in 1794 over whether the Canal Bill should authorise extension of the canal to Swansea: UCLS, HDMB 31 March 1794. Other towns, for example Southampton, had similar problems over the question of the appropriate machinery for improvement: Sweet, 'Stability and Continuity', p.26, n.45.
During the last few decades of the eighteenth century, an examination of contemporary images and published accounts show that Swansea's ambitions to achieve resort status, and to become a magnet of polite society, grew more credible; but the town was also forced to confront the obvious contradictions inherent in its existing, and growing, port and industrial functions. It was obviously in the town's interests to promote itself with confidence as an appealing place of resort and entertainment, notwithstanding the presence of industry, and to demonstrate that the output of the copperworks was not necessarily antithetical to the ideals of the urbane, or, indeed, of the sublime and picturesque. But the comments of some of the earlier travellers suggest that this was always going to be a struggle. Henry Penrudock Wyndham in the mid-1770s observed that the town 'carries on a considerable trade in coals, pottery and copper. A large copper work is perpetually smoaking within view of the town, and another, still larger, employs many hands a few miles higher up the river'. Although Wyndham remarked that Swansea was populous, well located, its streets wide and its houses regularly whitewashed, he made no reference to the beauty of its surroundings, nor its sands. The descriptions of Cardiff, Haverfordwest and Brecon are similarly common-place although Wyndham approved of the last (large, populous and handsome: it stands upon a beautiful eminence'). Pembroke's site on a narrow, rocky ridge was compared to that of Edinburgh; Aberystwyth's economy merited more comment: the herring fishery was not what

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57 Swansea was struggling towards, in Borsay's much-quoted phrase, 'urban renaissance': The English Urban Renaissance (Oxford, 1989); Sweet, 'Stability and Continuity', p.17. The traditional Swansea trading, professional and merchant families do not seem to have been in conflict with the industrialists over the provision of social and cultural amenities for the town, despite the difficulties inherent in the juxtaposition of resort and industry. The names of the major industrial families appear on the subscription lists of all the projects for the enhancement of Swansea as a resort: Sweet, 'Stability and Continuity', pp.35-6.

58 H.P. Wyndham, A Gentleman's Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales...in the Months of June and July 1774 (London, 1775); A Journey into Wales in 1777 (London, 1781). The copy in NLW is a second edition, 1791, interestingly annotated by 'H' in manuscript in 1802 (NLW, ms.20 078D).

59 Wyndham, A Gentleman's Tour, pp.36-7.
it was, but there existed a bathing season. There is doubt, however, as to whether Wyndham (like Defoe) visited Aberystwyth: he refers to the town's beach as 'sandy'; 'H' the annotator in 1802 of the NLW copy of Wyndham, pointed out irritably that it was no such thing and the 'gravelly' nature of the shore meant that 'the bathing is very inferior to Tenby and many other places'.

Wyndham's reservations over smoke were echoed by another early traveller, Luttrell Wynne who, in 1773, referred to it as being disagreeable even to those who stayed for only a short time in the town.\(^{60}\) The entertaining reactionary, John Byng, shared Wynne's low opinion of Swansea, describing the town in 1787 as 'nasty', the pavements as 'bad', the Mackworth Arms 'as very dirty and dear' (many travellers were unimpressed by this hostelry), and the bathing company as 'idle'. He found little to say in favour of Wales either. But Byng had an equally low opinion of certain English towns: of the developing Manchester and Birmingham he wrote that there 'are no two towns in England I wish so much to avoid...'. His objections to these towns, and others similar, appear to have been based on the visible development there of trade and the economy, and an acute sentimentality for the old way of life thereby threatened: 'the hearty husbandman suck'd into the gulf of sickly traffic'. Byng did not like towns of this sort, and other visitors to Welsh towns in a similar state of transition may have shared this attitude.\(^{61}\) Byng was unpublished in his lifetime, and wrote for himself and his friends, but in his narrative may have exaggerated his prejudices and antipathy against Wales and the Welsh people in the interests of producing a racy and readable account of his journeys.\(^{62}\) Wales, and particularly Swansea, did not live up to Byng's expectations, and he


\(^{62}\) Byng's journals were first published edition by C. Bruyn Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington
was disappointed to find even this relatively remote corner of Britain becoming increasingly affected by commerce and industry and other characteristics of the modern world he so deplored.

The introduction to this Chapter outlines the part played by Welsh artists and writers in the 'Welsh Renaissance' of the eighteenth century, and the new awareness, developing throughout that century, of native history, tradition and culture, both real and invented. Scholars such as Edward Lhuyd, the Morris brothers (Lewis, Richard and William) of Anglesey, William Owen Pughe and Thomas Pennant, raised the profile of Wales at home and elsewhere, but it was the polymath and expert forger Edward Williams ('Iolo Morganwg') who left the most lasting legacy; so much so that many of his fabrications became embedded in Welsh literature and 'tradition'. In 1796, Iolo provided a perspective on Swansea from a Welsh viewpoint, untainted by an attitude of superiority, although no doubt he was conscious of the need to provide a corrective to the English view of Wales and Welsh towns as backward and inferior.63 In an account reflecting mainly Iolo's interest in soils, the land and agriculture, he also made illuminating observations on some south Wales towns. Swansea had:

improved amazingly within the last 25 years that it is now the largest in Wales, it has a great deal of coal trade, a large copper works, a Pottery equal, as some say to Mr Wedgewood's, a fine Bay for sea-bathing, and on that account has been much frequented.....considerable progress has been made on a large Canal.64

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63 E. Williams, *Agricultural Observations Made in a Journey thro' some parts of Glamorgan and Caernarthsire in June 1796*, NLW, ms.13115B.
64 Williams, *Agricultural Observations* pp.27-8. The canal had been conceived by William Padley, merchant, in about the year 1780. Construction started following the passing of the
The tone, in contrast to the acerbic comments of Byng, appears to be one of Welsh pride and excitement at the rapid development of Swansea - both as an industrial town and as a resort.

Iolo noted also that the country around Swansea was very populous 'owing to the Collieries and Copper works', and that the town was 'considerably larger than any town in Wales [with] a great many very good and elegant houses built of late years.....it is much resorted to for sea bathing' and also important for commerce. Iolo recognised the essential duality of function of Swansea; but nothing he wrote suggests that he thought that there were tensions or contradictions in that duality; and he saw nothing incongruous in it. He was impressed also by the growth of Morriston from nothing twenty years before to a settlement of about 200 houses: the houses were detached; the gardens good, the streets wide, and the town 'increases daily and goes towards Swansea that walks out rapidly to meet it, and a few years of peace [from the Napoleonic wars] will enable the two towns to embrace each other'.

Iolo's observations should not, however, be regarded as entirely objective: he spoke highly also of Neath and Carmarthen although, revealingly, he referred to the latter - hitherto regarded as the chief town of south Wales - as being a good town 'for Wales'. The views of this native writer on developing Welsh towns were (as might be expected) almost wholly positive.

Iolo Morganwg recorded his impressions of Swansea in 1796; three years later John Nixon, in the manner of Hogarth, produced in paint his version of Swansea market (Fig. 5.4). Nixon's painting perhaps also suggests a duality of function.

Canal Act, 1794, and it was completed in 1798. It evidently had a substantial effect on Swansea's economy for the Cambrian was able to report on the 22 December 1810 that 'such was the progressively rapid improvement in the trade in Swansea, that offers of two hundred pounds per share....have been declined for shares in the Swansea Canal'. According to the Cambrian of the 28 July 1810, the price had been £60 per share in the early period of the undertaking. See Jones, History of the Port of Swansea, pp.107-116. 65 Williams, Agricultural Observations, pp.99-100, 371-2.

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He depicts a scene redolent of Hogarth's 'Southwark Fair' (1732), where the buildings form a framework for the seething mass of humanity below, and the formality of the architecture of the market hall provides a contrast with the disorderly and unregulated nature of town life where animals mingle promiscuously with the crowd. The depiction of the shambles, the rather poor state of the cobbled square (with the open drain in the foreground) and the dilapidated state of the early eighteenth century house nearly closing off Castle Square in the
background, encapsulates the problems which were just beginning to be tackled at this date and, given the desire of the Corporation and industrialists alike to improve the town, generated conflict over the slow pace of progress. It seems certain that this was not a depiction of Swansea which the Corporation would have wished to have promulgated to potential visitors to the resort. The view is, however, full of intended humour (and incidental information on the fabric and economy of Swansea) and Nixon peoples the open market hall at the top of Wind Street, and the surrounding area, with buyers and sellers drawn there both for business and pleasure. On the left of the painting at the entrance to St Mary Street (otherwise Butter Street), a butcher in his shambles tries to tempt a reluctant couple to purchase a cut from the sides of meat hanging rather unhygienically a few feet above the dusty cobbles of the market place; opposite, under one of the pillars holding up the roof of the classical open-sided market hall, a pig on a lead (pigs were a common inconvenience on urban streets at this period) is frightened by a dog and upsets an old lady's stall scattering her paltry wares over the cobbles to the amusement of some of the onlookers; in the background, strolling players perform interludes on a stage before an appreciative audience. The Golden Lion Inn is visible through the pillars of the market hall and, through an open window of the Inn, two drinkers can be glimpsed enjoying the animated scene outside. Adjoining the Inn, the presence of the Swansea Bank is evidence of the town's developing economy; on the building next door the sign 'Voss from Bristol' suggests this city's importance to this economy.66

Between 1780 and 1820, the Corporation tried hard to augment the facilities for visitors, and to promote the natural assets on its doorstep, but the stranglehold imposed by the duke of

66 J.M. Voss, linen and woollen draper, continued to trade from these premises until 1825: the Cambrian, 4 June 1825. The changes apparent to this part of Swansea in F.W.L. Stockdale's identical view of 1824 (reproduced in Swansea Challenges, p.154) are not startling
Beaufort's party on the Corporation until 1789 meant that their efforts always tended to come a little too late. In 1789, the Corporation purchased the Bathing House and appointed a committee to inspect the state of it 'in order to render the Bathing at this place as commodious as possible for the publick convenience...'. At the same meeting, John Morris was requested to procure from Weymouth 'a place of great resort for sea bathing' an exact model of one of their best types of bathing machine. Despite expenditure by the Corporation in fitting up the premises, the Bathing House, because of its location about half a mile west of the town, appears never to have been very popular (John Evans, in 1804, was particularly critical of the 'total inattention to the comforts and conveniences of the company...'), and by 1817 it had become the House of Industry and Infirmary. In May 1811, the burgesses resolved to grant a ninety-nine year lease of a site in Cambrian Place on the Burrows for the purpose of building the Assembly Rooms. The building of Swansea's Assembly Rooms, designed by Jernegan in 1805 in neo-classical style, encountered many vicissitudes, and was not opened finally until 1821 (and not finished until the following year). Assembly rooms had been an essential focus for public recreation in many towns in Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and many survive in splendid condition (for example, at York and Bath). Swansea's Assembly Rooms were fairly modest (although much exalted by the Cambrian), but unfortunately opened at a time when assembly had declined in many more fashionable centres, and too late to add much gloss to the town's reputation as a resort. The Cambrian, and successive Town Guides, Directories and Tide Tables, were
assiduous in promoting these and other attractions on offer, including St Mary's Church, the
castle, warm and cold sea water baths, libraries, the theatre, the racecourse on Crumlyn
Burrows, sailing matches on the Bay and public walks and pleasure grounds on the
Burrows.\(^{71}\) All this activity was intended to enhance the status of Swansea as a resort in the
eyes of others.

The Corporation and, from 1809, the Paving Commissioners were reasonably active in other
directions. Roads were improved, and new ones constructed, and the fabric of the town
refurbished. Gas lighting was introduced in 1821, surprisingly early given the relatively late
date of the adoption of the Paving Act. Significantly, and for the edification of the more
adventurous tourist, the Corporation did not attempt to conceal the presence of the
copperworks, the pottery and the canal; those in the business of promoting the town
appreciated that if it was not possible to hide features which might be thought to detract from
the product, then those features may as well be promoted. Some tourists were fascinated by
the processes of Britain's Industrial Revolution, and the resulting transformation of the
landscape: in 1803-4 a Swedish visitor, Eric Svedenstierna remarked:

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\text{To return to Swansea, one finds near by the town....such a profusion of} \\
\text{copper works, coalmines, steam engines, ponds, canals, aqueducts, and} \\
\text{railways, that the traveller, on arrival, becomes quite undecided as to where} \\
\text{he should first direct his attention....}^{72}
\]

interest of the resort, the \textit{Cambrian}, 1 January 1825.

\(^{71}\) A good example of the genre is contained in \textit{The Tide Table....for the Year 1834}, pp.17-18.
Svedenstierna also made favourable remarks on the contribution the industry made to the local and national economy. Other tourists considered the nuisance from the copper smoke to be exaggerated. Elizabeth Spence described her visit in the early 1800s to the copperworks as a 'spectacle...truly sublime', and was of the opinion that, although Swansea had been described by tourists in general as:

- dirty, smoky and disagreeable, and its grand views passed over in silence...the actual situation of the town is beautiful.....the idea of its being impregnated with smoke from the copperworks is an unfounded prejudice: they are a mile and a half distant from the town, and I never beheld a clearer atmosphere.\(^7\)\(^3\)

This was probably generous. Notwithstanding, however, the (usually upwind) bustle and grime of industry, Swansea's coastal location was, in the period before about 1825, usually admired by visitors, both as a favoured place of resort for the leisured, and as a harbour and seaport; and the coastal location clearly satisfied the criteria adumbrated by Gilpin. The descriptions of Swansea Bay employed the language of the sublime; additionally, the town was praised as the 'Brighton of Wales' and its Bay compared favourably to that of Naples. Richard Warner in 1798 referred to the 'deep and secure bay, rendering it the most considerable seaport in the Principality'; the town he thought 'large and well built.....the houses are chiefly modern, handsome and commodious'. He considered the trade of Swansea to be nearly on a par with that of Bristol.\(^7\)\(^4\) Henry Skrine, in the same year, was also favourably impressed with the fabric of the town: 'Swansea, both in extent, the width of its

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\(^7\)\(^3\) Elizabeth Isabella Spence, *Summer Excursions through parts of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire Derbyshire and South Wales* (2nd ed., London, 1809), 2, p.84. Few descriptions of Swansea, published or unpublished, in fact fail to praise the natural beauty of Swansea's location.

streets and the aspects of its buildings, far exceeds all the towns in South Wales; it has of late been greatly improved.\textsuperscript{75} John Evans, in 1803, whilst praising Swansea's surroundings highly, was less than impressed with the facilities on offer, and thought them much inferior to those to be found at Weymouth, although he conceded that the town was 'well built...and from the spaciousness of its streets, the appearance of its buildings, and the beauty of its situation, may be considered as the first town in Wales'.\textsuperscript{76} B.H. Malkin was of the view that the 'greatly increased bustle of commercial thoroughfare, and the great influx of occasional visitors' had affected for the worse the cleanliness of the place although he remained of the opinion that Swansea was the cleanest place of any large town in Wales, in contrast to Carmarthen, which was 'filthy to an unpardonable excess'.\textsuperscript{77}

Travellers of this period were, therefore, reasonably impressed with the fabric and appearance of Swansea and its buildings, but the approbation was neither universal nor unqualified. In comparison, however, with most other Welsh towns, the overall impression gained of Swansea from the accounts of contemporary travellers is positive. And there seems to have been a marked improvement since the visits of Wyndham, Wynne or even Byng. Notwithstanding the views of Elizabeth Spence, it is apparent from the comments of Wyndham and Wynne in the 1770s that copper-smoke, well before 1800, constituted a cloud on the horizon of Swansea's resort aspirations. The Corporation had probably foreseen the potential problems of industry to the town at an early date. In a certificate issued by the burgesses on the 26 September 1720, approving the erection of a copper works on Mr Ley's

\textsuperscript{75} H. Skrine, \textit{Two Successive Tours throughout the Whole of Wales} (London, 1798), p.67.
\textsuperscript{76} Rev. John Evans, \textit{Letters written during a Tour through South Wales, in the year 1803, and at other Times} (London, 1804), pp.161, 169, 171-2. It was Evans who made the comparison (endorsed - or probably copied - by George Nicolson in 1813) with the Bay of Naples.
\textsuperscript{77} B.H. Malkin, \textit{The Scenery, Antiquities and Biography of South Wales}, 2, pp.484-5. But 'An Observer', writing in the \textit{Cambrian} of the 25 August 1804, complained about the 'holes in and filth upon the principal streets [of Swansea] and the presence of heaps of coal ashes on them'.

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Bank, the Corporation had declared with apparent conviction that the carrying on of the works 'will prove very much to the advantage and not in the least prejudicial or hurtful to our said Burrough or the Inhabitants thereof'. That this confidence subsequently proved to be misplaced was probably not a surprise, and when the lease was surrendered by Robert Morris in 1764, the Corporation re-granted 'the old building commonly called the old Copper works' to William Coles for a pottery with a covenant against copper smelting. In a sense, therefore, the Corporation had long since accepted the idea of industry in the locality, albeit not again within the town boundaries.

But the nuisance remained. In 1803, John Evans' view was that copper-smoke made Swansea 'a very disagreeable place of residence', an opinion shared by Malkin visiting the same year who, whilst admiring the 'highly beautiful' Swansea Bay, considered Swansea's pretensions as a bathing place to be impaired by smoke. Evans also observed that 'it is the wish of the inhabitants that Swansea should be viewed in the light of a fashionable resort rather than as a trading town; and a bathing place, rather than a sea-port'. Donovan's description (1805) of the view from the tower of Swansea castle, and the contrast between the Bay, the docks and the copperworks, has already been quoted: the comment echoed that of Evans and neatly summed up the difficulties inherent in trying to be both a polite resort on the English model and a centre of trade and industry. Despite the efforts of the Cambrian which, for the best of motives, praised Swansea's virtues as a resort for year after year, these incompatible objectives could not, in reality, be long be sustained with the further growth of industry, and

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78 NLW, Bad 2, 2087; Francis, Smelting of Copper, p.97; Jones, History of the Port of Swansea, pp.301-2.
79 UCLS, HDMB, 25 and 31 July 1764, Jones, History of the Port of Swansea, p.305.
80 Evans, Letters, p.90.
once the initial fascination for some tourists for the works had worn off. George Nicolson in 1813, after noting that Swansea had long been a winter residence of the neighbouring gentry, and a favourite resort in the summer for bathing, contrasted the 'dismal gloom of the manufactories hanging over the River Tawe' with the whitened walls of the workers' villages, and remarked that Swansea's increased opulence arises principally from the prosperity of its manufactures and commerce. Samuel Lewis described Swansea at a time (1833, 1840, 1848) when it had probably become obvious to all that the town's future lay not in leisure but industry. Despite the town's favoured location, Lewis recognised that it had arisen:

with a rapidity unparalleled in the history of the principality, from a comparatively insignificant place to a degree of commercial and manufacturing importance, which may well entitle it to be considered, not only as the chief town in the County of Glamorgan but as the metropolis of South Wales.

Lewis noted that the streets were well paved and lit by gas; the houses neatly and substantially built, especially those in High Street and Wind Street. Reference was made to the considerable recent additions to the town, several new streets having been formed and and many residences erected including fashionable detached houses at Belle Vue and the Burrows, and several ranges of 'respectable houses...inhabited by genteel families'.

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82 A good example of the Cambrian's marketing effort on behalf of the town is contained in the edition of the 16 June 1804: [Swansea over the previous 25 years had] 'wonderfully increased in trade, importance and respectability; and is daily improving. Upwards of 3000 vessels laden with coal or culm alone cleared out for different parts of England and Ireland during the last year...As a place of fashionable resort for seabathing, Swansea ranks the first in Wales...great influx of genteel Company...many families are compelled for want of accommodations on their arrival either to return, or proceed further into the country'.


substantial portion of building land had been laid out and developed. A water supply had been installed (1837), the port and harbour improved and extended, and a new market place erected (1830). By the end of the 1840s the floating dock had been completed, and the construction of the South and North Docks (the former on the Burrows) was not to be long delayed.\footnote{In Black's *Picturesque Guide through North and South Wales and Monmouthshire* (Edinburgh, 1853) (much of it is plagiarised from Lewis) it is remarked (p.318) that Swansea 'is much resorted to for seabathing....yet it cannot be denied that to persons seeking health it is rendered in a less degree attractive, by the smoke and noxious effluvia which, in some states of wind, are brought in from the copper and chemical works of the neighbourhood'. Yet Black repeated the hackneyed claim that the fumes did not affect health and were conducive to a long life (ibid., p.319).}

By 1859, there was no longer any doubt as to Swansea's main function:

\begin{quote}
Swansea was once a rather fashionable watering place, but its glory has long since disappeared, docks having swallowed up the Burrows and Promenade, and the bathing passages have been driven further and further away...The population is large and rather dirty towards the upper part of the town...but improves greatly towards the west where villa building is increasing year by year and where aristocratic Swansea principally resides.\footnote{G.P. Bevan, *Tour of Gower* (1859), quoted by J.M. Davies, unpublished M.A. dissertation, Aberystwyth Univ., 1942.}
\end{quote}

The Corporation had not, however, been insensible to complaints by visitors and others of the effects of smoke on the town and environment, nor indifferent to the actions for nuisance brought by local farmers against the copper firms between 1822 and 1841 (all unsuccessful), and supported (through the contribution of a sum of £200) unsuccessful efforts by J.H. Vivian in the early 1820s to find a process to reduce the noxious qualities of it.\footnote{UCLS, HDMB, 23 October 1821. On the 7 March 1823, the Corporation declared that, in its opinion, '....the prosperity and welfare of the Town of Swansea and its neighbourhood is mainly supported by the extent to which the Copperworks situated near this Town are carried on and this Corporation think it right to take the present opportunity to express the high satisfaction they feel at the success that has attended the spirited and scientific exertions of}
was never a serious suggestion that the source of the problem be removed entirely for the 
Corporation and, certainly by 1822, the *Cambrian* recognized that Swansea's long term 
prosperity was bound up with the development of its industrial and commercial functions.88 
By this date also, the scale of the works, and the sulphurous smoke billowing from them, had 
caused irreparable damage to vegetation on hundreds of acres of land to the east and 
north-east of Landore and Morriston. This was an area where some of the second generation 
of entrepreneurs, such as John Morris I, had built their mansions, and attempted to integrate 
them with their works, and the houses of their workers, into the landscape. Rothwell had 
depicted Morris' Clasemont in 1792, with countryside rolling down to William Edwards' 
elegant Wychtree Bridge in the foreground. Industrialists in other towns, such as at Neath, 
Dowlais and Bristol had followed the same practice. Morris moved from Clasemont in 1806, 
and the third generation of industrialists in the town, and those newly arrived at the beginning 
of the nineteenth century, such as the Vivians, built their mansions overlooking the 
still-pristine Swansea Bay.89 

Messrs Vivian and Sons in counteracting any inconvenience .....from the great issue of smoke 
from the Furnaces....' (UCLS, HDMB, 7 March 1823). In fact, a partial solution to the 
nuisance was not successfully applied until the 1860s.

88 An editorial in the *Cambrian* of the 15 June 1822, expressed the opinion that the rapid 
increase in prosperity in and importance of Swansea (and also Neath and Llanelli) had been 
occasioned by the copperworks, and future prosperity would depend on the continuance of 
the works '.....we hesitate not to say, that if the nuisance of the copper smoke could only be 
removed by the actual removal of the works themselves, we should decidedly deprecate a 
measure so fraught with destruction to the prosperity of these ports, and would endeavour 
contentedly to bear the annoyance of the smoke'. See also the report in the *Cambrian* for the 
19 January 1822, 'Success [in removing the noxious element of the smoke] would remove 
from us the only material alloy to the sterling value of those advantages which nature, in a 
lovely country, and a mild salubrious climate, has so bountifully bestowed'. Swansea's 
quandary was recognised outside Wales; in 1822, the *West Briton* (Truro) reported with a 
degree of sarcasm that 'if the town of Swansea should lose the greater portion of its trade by 
the destruction of the copper works in its vicinity, it would be compensated by becoming a 
delightful bathing place', Jones, *History of the Port of Swansea*, p.314 
89 Hughes, *Copperopolis*, pp 322-3. 

229
SPECIAL NOTE

This item is tightly bound and while every effort has been made to reproduce the centres force would result in damage.
Only ten years before Bevan's description of Swansea as a defunct watering place, and
exactly fifty years after Nixon's painting of Swansea market, William Butler's depiction of
Wind Street in 1849 (Fig. 5.5), appears to present an aspect of the town of which the
Corporation would have approved.90

Figure 5.5
Wind Street, Swansea, William Butler (1849)

90 For a short account of Butler's life and career, see B. Morris, 'William Butler, Artist:
Wind Street is wide and handsome and seemingly well paved and clean. Everything appears well ordered and regulated in contrast to the chaos of Nixon's view. No pigs are visible. The street is lit by gas; the shop windows are large and alluring; the fashionably dressed mix decorously on the street with the more rustic. The Cambrian newspaper office is given a prominent place in the foreground of the composition suggesting an arrangement of some kind with the artist. A coach ('London' is painted on the back) has just arrived at, or is about to depart from, the Mackworth Arms. The impression given is of a clean, reasonably prosperous, solidly constructed provincial town, probably comparable with any town of similar size in England, and certainly in Wales (in 1851, the population of Swansea town was 21,533). The buildings are, for the most part, of three and four storeys, and of late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century design, although interspersed with older, lower structures. No building appears to be out of repair, and there are no projections into the street, apart from the portes cocheres in front of the Mackworth Arms and the George Commercial Inn. The scene is painted in such a way as to exaggerate the width of the street and the height of the buildings in comparison with the human figures: a common conceit of the time designed to accentuate the virtues of the place depicted for the purpose of attracting visitors. The date is significant: for many years Wind Street had been the most fashionable street in Swansea and the chief location of professional and retail services (including for luxury goods) (Table 5.2 below); the Burrows had long since eclipsed Wind Street as a place of fashionable resort and residence and, since the 1830s, the latter had begun to lose its

91 By this date, the old market hall had been cleared away from the north end of Wind Street and Island House (from the south end of which Butler's painting appears to have been executed) followed later in the century.

92 Other contemporary views of the town include those by H. Gastineau (eg, Swansea Castle, 1830; Entrance to Swansea Harbour 1831); also, a View of Cameron's Wharf, Swansea, attributed to W. Butler, 1847. An engraving from a daguerrotype, 1846, shows the town and harbour from an elevated position looking south, and illustrates well the huddled nature of the newer housing in contrast to the older, wider streets.
ascendancy (never to be regained) to the newly developing Oxford Street area closer to Swansea Bay to the south west. Butler may, therefore, have depicted Wind Street in this fashion for propaganda reasons or as an advertisement for its fading charms.

An inhabitant of Swansea at the date of the Bucks' engraving (1748) would, if transported forward in time to 1849 (the date of Butler's view of Wind Street) be surprised at the transformation of the town and locality. Not only had the population of the town itself increased tenfold (from about 2,000 to 21,500), but the mining communities to the north such as Hafod, Manselton, Landore and Morriston had appeared, and had developed their own distinctively Welsh culture independent of the town, as had their counterparts across the river Tawe (Pentre Guinea and St. Thomas) at the foot of Kilvey Hill to the south-west. The built-up area of the town had extended also to the south to cover much of the enclosed Burrows, which remained a select residential area despite the later development of the South Dock; the 'New Cut', completed in 1845, gave Swansea its first 'floating dock', formed out of a meander of the Tawe adjoining the Strand. To the north and north-west, the flanks of Townhill had been built upon, as had the crescent of Swansea Bay, where the crachach maintained an opulent lifestyle in their splendid mansions.

The Swansea crachach had been active in other directions: the completion, in 1841, of new premises for the Royal Institution of South Wales, built on land on the Burrows leased by the Corporation, helped to consolidate the town's modified image of itself as primarily a cultural and industrial centre, whilst at the same time enhancing the status and power of the middle-class elite. Gentlemen's clubs had appeared in provincial towns (for example, Spalding) from the early eighteenth century; later urban growth, particularly arising out of industrialisation, encouraged the coming together of groups of scientists, manufacturers,
medical men, lawyers and Dissenters to read papers and exchange ideas. The possession of scientific instruments and natural history display cabinets, and some scientific and medical knowledge, became expected of a gentleman; and the foundation of learned societies (the Lunar Society of Birmingham was a famous example) in many towns from the end of the eighteenth century provided a means of dissemination of the most recent research and learning on subjects such as antiquarianism, geology and natural history. Whilst the foundation of mechanics' institutes was a parallel development, learned societies were concerned not with questions of practical mechanical science but rather to provide middle class society and professionals with an urban power base for the exercise of social and economic authority through research into and publication on subjects of contemporary interest. Physicians played an important role, and their contribution to the vexed questions of urban overcrowding and disease led to the foundation of dispensaries and infirmaries, and ultimately to the appointment of medical officers of health for towns. The aristocracy appears rarely to have played an active part in the establishment and conduct of learned societies, although were often patrons to organisations, and sometimes patrons in the active and personal sense to scientists and artists seeking financial support for their work. 

Swansea's learned society had been founded (fairly late) in 1821 as the Cambrian Institution and, from this short-lived body sprang, in 1835, the Swansea Philosophical and Literary Society, renamed in 1838 the Royal Institution of South Wales, the objects of which were:

'...the Cultivation and Advancement of the various Branches of Natural

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The prime mover in the foundation was a youthful George Grant Francis, aided by a remarkable group of prominent Swansea men including Lewis Weston Dillwyn, J.H. Vivian and C.R.M. Talbot, and soon joined as members by, among others, John Dillwyn Llewelyn, Starling Benson, W.E. Logan, M. Moggridge and lawyers J.G. Jeffreys and R.W. Beer. Medical men were well represented: Drs. G.W. Gutch, E. Howell, G.G. Bird, T. Williams and W.H. Michael were prominent and active early members who read and published papers. Most early members had the wealth and leisure to further their interests and influence through the instrumentality of the R.I.S.W.94 Between 1838 and 1841, purpose-built premises, worthy of the potential importance of the work of this body of men, were erected on the land on the Burrows leased from the Corporation. Designed in the form of a Greek temple, with Egyptian overtones, by Liverpool architect Frederick Long, the R.I.S.W.'s new headquarters housed a laboratory, a museum and an art gallery, and became a focal point for a wide range of cultural activities and lectures.95 On occasions, and increasingly as the years passed, some of these activities were made accessible to all social classes and the R.I.S.W. was to make an important contribution to Swansea's educational resources. The R.I.S.W. remains housed in the same premises, and the building continues to provide a striking contribution to Swansea's cityscape, and to the city's social and intellectual life.

More prosaically, but no less importantly, Swansea's roads and streets by the 1840s had been improved, obstructions removed and new thoroughfares formed, many lit by gas; the town (or at least the main streets) was cleaner; shops had proliferated, and the choice and quality of items on display greatly increased; there were many more social diversions on offer. Problems of inadequate water supplies and drainage were, at long last, being tackled. The railway was about to reach Swansea (1850). In 1849, if not in terms of population then certainly in reputation, Swansea was the first town in Wales, and had been probably since 1800; our time traveller would be in no doubt of the primary function of the place. Although the fashionable resort on Swansea Bay had flourished briefly between 1780 and 1820, and declined, the commercial port and industrial town had boomed in its place, and would continue to do so for most of the remainder of the century. A surprising amount of this information may be obtained by an examination and comparison of the contemporary images and publications so far considered in this Chapter, supplemented by the map evidence briefly surveyed in Chapter 2 above. More may be learned about the economy of the town from the sources examined in the next section.

3. The early nineteenth century town economy: guides and trade directories

Is it possible to make a convincing connection between the views of travellers and artists in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries and other source material for the developing economy of Swansea? If the accounts of English travellers pretend to an objective viewpoint of the town described, the authors of town guides or introductions to trade directories or tide tables, in company with the editor of the *Cambrian*, probably would not have sought to claim such disinterest. These publications first appeared for most towns from the middle or end of the eighteenth century and were published in two parts: first, a potted history and description of the fabric of the town and its attractions, and secondly a list of
names and addresses of the principal inhabitants or, in the case of trade directories, a list of trades and businesses. As the nineteenth century progressed, the introductory matter was often published separately as a guidebook to the town. Trade or commercial directories, despite their shortcomings, can be a useful source of information.96 The Rev. J. Oldisworth's *The Swansea Guide* (1802) is typical of the genre, and its account of early nineteenth century Swansea is wholly uncritical and intended as an advertisement for the town's charms. Wind Street is 'handsome and well-paved'; the Mackworth Arms 'admirably adapted for the accommodation of the stilysh traveller' (Byng and others would not have agreed); the market hall 'commodious in every respect'; the houses in Worcester Place, High Street and Mount Pleasant 'excellent and neat'. *Mathews's Swansea Directory for the Year 1816* contains similar descriptive language, including the observation that 'The streets throughout the town are undergoing considerable repair by removing obstructions and newly paving, which will in a short time be finished when it will be the cleanest and most pleasant town in Wales'. *Pigot's London Provincial Directory*, 1822-3, is similarly complimentary on every aspect of Swansea's appearance and economy, as is *Mathews's Swansea Directory for the Year 1830* which, perhaps mindful of the increasing threat posed by copper-smoke, exclaims:

Great improvements have taken place in the town of Swansea in the last few years, and every possible inducement held out to visitors by providing for their accommodation, comfort and amusement in the establishment of Public Assembly Rooms fitted up in a superior style, where Balls and Promenades are well conducted, regularly and respectably attended.

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The descriptions in these sources cannot be taken at face value; but the real worth of trade directories is that they offer a snapshot, albeit a somewhat indistinct one, of the economy of a town at the date of publication. In the case of Swansea they also provide evidence that the town was developing in ways other than those examined above: as a fashionable service and consumer centre.\textsuperscript{97} No other town in Wales was able to boast such a wide range of functions at this date - a source not only of pride but also of conflict to the town when reality regularly fell short of aspiration as Swansea struggled to meet expectations of residents and visitors alike. The information in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 has been extracted from Mathews's Directory, 1830. The problem with the data is that it is incomplete, favouring businesses in the more prominent or fashionable streets. For that reason, any attempt at a comparative exercise utilising data from earlier directories will be misleading, except in a general sense, if the object of that exercise is to demonstrate economic development. For example, 	extit{Pigot's Directory} 1822-3 lists under the main (central) streets (letters A to D in the key below) only thirty-four manufacturing/craft businesses whereas the obviously more comprehensive 	extit{Mathews's Directory} of 1830, records eighty-eight of the same sector. The records of those businesses catering mainly for the elite do not, however, show the same discrepancy: in 	extit{Pigot} the numbers in sector I (professional and financial) in streets A to D are twenty-three, and in 	extit{Mathews} twenty-nine. In the retail sector III, on the other hand, the equivalent numbers are thirty-two (\textit{Pigot}) and ninety-seven (Mathews), most of the additional traders in the latter being located in the less fashionable Upper High Street, and in the definitely down-market Strand. Again, the recorded figures for inns and public houses show a slight decrease for streets A to D from forty in 1822/3 to thirty-seven in 1830, but this includes five fewer in the Strand, which, at both dates contained (unsurprisingly) more public houses (twenty-two and

\textsuperscript{97} Although evidence of this may be derived from Butler's 1849 view of Wind St, fig. 5.5; see below.
seventeen respectively) than in any other street in Swansea, obviously reflecting the town's port function. The street with next highest number of public houses in 1830 (except for the much longer High Street) was St Mary's Street (G). This street was, and is, a short, narrow thoroughfare linking Market Square at the top of Wind Street (the location of John Nixon's painting, Fig. 5.4 above), and Fisher Street, but it nevertheless managed to accommodate eight public houses in addition to six shops and three craft businesses. This street had also been known as Butter Street and was the location of that part of the market selling dairy produce, and the demand for refreshment on market days was no doubt part of the explanation for the generous supply of watering holes. Earlier Swansea directories (Universal British Directory, 1799 and Mathews's Swansea Directory, 1816) appear equally unreliable for the purposes of comparison.

98 The 1852 Local Board of Health Plan records twenty-three public houses on the Strand.
99 Meat was also sold there: in the Cambrian for the 8 January 1820 there appears an advertisement for a house to let in the street which included a 'moveable shambles in front which are let to butchers on market days to considerable advantage'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Wind Street</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>Orchard Street</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>High Street</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Waterloo Street</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Castle Street</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Rutland Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Strand</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Worcester Place</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Market Place</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Calvert Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Goat Street</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Nelson Place/Terrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>St Mary Street</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Chapel Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Caer Street</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Pleasant Row</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Fisher Street</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>The Burrows</td>
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<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>College Street</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Park Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Quay</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Frog Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.1
Service functions of Swansea, 1830

#### Category of Service Function

| Service Function | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | Totals |

##### I Professional & Financial

- **Accountants**: 1
- **Academies**: 3
- **Architects**: 1
- **Attorneys**: 1
- **Auctioneers**: 2
- **Banks**: 1
- **Druggists**: 2
- **Fire/Office Agents**: 3
- **Ship brokers**: 1
- **Surgeons**: 2
- **Surveyor**: 1
- **Optician**: 1

#### Totals: 11 9 8 1 3 5 1 6 0 0 1 1 4 2 2 1 3 4 2 0 66

##### II Manufacturing/craft

- **Building trades**
  - **Builders/masons**: 1
  - **Carpenters/joiners**: 1
  - **Painters/glaziers**: 1
  - **Plasterers**: 1
  - **Carpenters/gilders**: 2

#### Totals: 2 0 0 0 0 0 1 2 0 2 3 2 0 3 1 1 0 2 4

- **Craft Services**
  - **Anchormiths**: 1
  - **Boatbuilders**: 1
  - **Bookbinders**: 1
  - **Bootmakers**: 2
  - **Braziers/implaters**: 1
  - **Brewers**: 1
  - **Cabinet makers**: 1
  - **China/earthenware manufacture**: 1
  - **Coachmaker**: 1
  - **Corkcutter**: 1
  - **Curriers/tanners/leather cutters**: 3
  - **Dressmakers**: 3
  - **Enamellers/gilders**: 1
  - **Hairdressers**: 1
  - **Hatters/straw hat manufacturers**: 3
  - **Leather dressers/glovers**: 1
  - **Maltsters**: 1
  - **Mop/serve/basket & brushmaker**: 1
  - **Paper maker**: 1
  - **Printer/letterpress**: 1
  - **Pump & blockmaker**: 1
  - **Ropemakers**: 1
  - **Saddler & harness makers**: 1
  - **Sailmakers**: 1
  - **Silk & cotton dyers**: 1
  - **Smiths/farmers**: 1
  - **Tailors**: 2
  - **Umbrella maker**: 1
  - **Upholsterers**: 1
  - **Watch/clockmakers**: 3
  - **Weavers**: 2
  - **Wheelwrights**: 1

#### Totals: 20 29 12 27 1 11 3 3 4 4 3 3 2 2 0 10 0 1 3 0 2 1 141

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### III Distribution

**III Distribution**

(a) Merchants

| Service Function       | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | Totals |
| Coal & culm           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 4 |
| Com/Flour             | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 4 |
| General               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Hop & seed            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 2 |
| Salt                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Tea                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Timber                |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 3 |
| Wines & spirits       | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 8 |
| Totals                | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 |

(b) Retail

| Service Function       | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | Totals |
| Bakers                |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 12 |
| Booksellers, stationers etc | 4 | 2 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 7 |
| Brown ware dealers    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 3 |
| Butchers              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 8 |
| Confectioners/pastry cooks |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 2 |
| Drapers               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 12 |
| Fishmonger            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Flour dealer          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Grocers/tea dealers   | 7 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 38 |
| Ironmongers, ships chandlers | 1 |   | 4 | 3 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 9 |
| Jeweller              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Spirit and liquor dealers |   |   | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 7 |
| Milliners/H'dashers etc | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 4 |
| Pawnbrokers           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 4 |
| Perfumer              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Shopkeepers           | 12 | 1 | 2 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 17 |
| Silversmith, tea dealer etc |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Slopsellers           |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 5 |
| Tallow chandler       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 1 |
| Totals                | 23 | 30 | 24 | 20 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 34 |

**Inns, public houses**

| Service Function       | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | Totals |
| Inns & Hotels          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 4 |
| Public houses/taverns  | 5 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Totals                | 6 | 13 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 7 |

Directory data is, however, a useful indicator of the distribution and incidence of trades and business and both Pigot and Mathews confirm the impression of Swansea given by the other sources discussed. In both 1822 and 1830, Wind Street accommodated the highest number (eleven) of sector I (professional and financial) businesses (ten recorded in 1822/3), the third highest number of retail businesses (twenty-three), and given the presence of dealers in luxury goods such as silverware, tea and perfumes, and also books, is likely to have hung on until at least the 1840s to its status as Swansea's principal and most fashionable shopping street, as suggested in Butler's 1849 painting (Fig. 5.5 above).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Prof/Fin.</th>
<th>Crafts</th>
<th>Merchants</th>
<th>Retail</th>
<th>Pubs etc</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wind St. (A)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High St. (B)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle St. (C)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strand (D)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Sq. (E)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat St. (F)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mary's St. (G)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caer St. (H)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher St. (I)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College St. (J)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quay (K)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard St. (L)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo St. (M)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland Pl. (N)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Pl. (O)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvert St. (P)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson Pl/Tce. (Q)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapel St. (R)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Row (S)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrows (T)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park St. (U)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frog St. (V)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wind Street was also home to twenty-four sector II (manufacturing/crafts) businesses, albeit including 'luxury' trades such as a cabinet maker, watch and clock makers and hatters. The workshops would have been located behind the retail premises fronting the street. High Street (including Upper High Street) had a higher total number of businesses than Wind Street (eighty-six to sixty-eight) (Table 5.2) with more craft services, retail outlets and public houses (many at the 'wrong end' of Upper High Street), and the luxury trades listed are cabinet makers, tea dealers and hatters; there were also three academies (more than in any other street) indicating that the lower end of High Street at least had pretensions to fashionable status. It is, perhaps, odd that travellers make no comment on the heterogeneous nature of Swansea's main streets; the professional, retail and craft services in Brecon's streets were similarly thought not worthy of mention although they must have constituted a distinctive element in the townscape. This aspect of street topography may, however, have been commonplace in small towns at a time when specialisation was developing. Castle Street (otherwise Castle Bailey Street) linking the top of Wind Street and High Street, housed the second highest number (nine) of professions, including the greatest number (with Fisher Street) of lawyers (three). It is notable that the professions were spread fairly evenly throughout the town, including in the more fashionable of the recently built areas to the south and south-west, such as the Burrows, Calvert Street and Pleasant Row. These businesses were, however, located either in or within walking distance of the traditional town centre. The growth of the insurance business is also notable, with at least nine offices operating from or immediately adjoining the town centre (four are recorded in Pigot, 1822/3).

100 Swansea in 1830 is recorded as having no fewer than eleven hatters and straw hat manufacturers (six in Wind Street and High Street); this was an important trade in Swansea in the eighteenth century and the tradition was obviously still very much alive.
Unsurprisingly, many of the craft and maritime services, merchants and the more utilitarian retail businesses, were located in the Strand, to take advantage of the custom from the port, the importance of which was to increase throughout the nineteenth century (albeit some of the new docks were constructed some distance from the Strand). Virtually all the maritime trades recorded by Mathews in 1830 could be found there, with two more sailmakers and one ropemaker on the Quay adjoining. No doubt other, unrecorded, services were available in the Strand, particularly for mariners, and despite its relative proximity to Wind Street and High Street, this was a street probably avoided by most smart tourists, especially at night. But the Strand possessed (after High Street) the second highest number of businesses in the town, although instead of tailors, drapers and dressmakers, customers had to be content with four slopsellers (retailers of ready-to-wear clothing). In close proximity to the Strand, the fashionable Burrows supported a sprinkling of professional services, including two academies; also, at the comparatively late date (for the resort) of 1830, Mathews lists there twenty lodging houses for the accommodation of the visitor, out of a total for the town of fifty-one.

Table 5.3 below shows a percentage breakdown of businesses in Swansea as recorded by Pigot in 1822/3 and by Mathews in 1830.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business (type)</th>
<th>Pigot (1822/3) (%)</th>
<th>Mathews (1830) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional and financial</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(fewer streets sampled)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and crafts</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution/merchants</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution/retail</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inns and public houses</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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It is impossible to draw any sensible conclusions from this comparison except to repeat that the data in *Pigot* is deficient in that many smaller businesses, especially those in the unfashionable areas of Swansea, were omitted. Indeed, except for the percentage of retail businesses, it might have been expected that the percentage increase or decrease for each sector between 1822/3 and 1830 would have been the reverse of that in Table 5.3.\(^{102}\)

Generally, shops developed from market stalls and, as the documentary evidence reveals, did exist in some numbers in Swansea in the eighteenth century (and are recorded in the town as least as early as the fifteenth century). Until the middle of the eighteenth century, however, they were modest in appearance, with customers often being served across an open counter during the day, which was locked up at night. The 'moveable shambles' in St Mary Street mentioned in the 1820 advertisement in the *Cambrian* (see above) was doubtless a survival of this form of retailing. From about the middle of the eighteenth century glazed shop fronts made an appearance in provincial towns although the goods were inadequately displayed behind small panes.\(^{103}\) By the time of Nixon's painting of Swansea Market Square (1799 - Fig. 5.4 above) glazed shop fronts, with the name of the retailer inscribed on the frieze of the shop entablature, were probably a common-place in the town, as the business of Williams & Humble, glimpsed through the classical pillars of the Market Hall in Nixon's painting suggests. Nixon's painting also suggests that shops developed partly in response to the nuisances found where buying and selling took place in the open air (especially the selling of meat in shambles). Corporations, including Swansea's, tried to eradicate these nuisances, and

\(^{102}\) Non-directory data on occupations from an earlier period are scarce. Some information may be extracted from the Hearth tax assessment of 1670, and from probate inventories 1660-1700, and although these sources obviously provide a very incomplete picture, it is clear that a wide range of occupations could be found in the town in 1700. For a list of Swansea occupations in the sixteenth century, see Thomas, *History of Swansea*, p.92.

\(^{103}\) M. Girouard, *The English Town* (Yale, 1990), pp. 233-4. In Butler's painting of Wind Street, the shop windows continued to be small-paned in 1849.
the complaints they generated, by building market halls to contain at least part of the market activities. Market accommodation in the eighteenth century was often incorporated in open-sided ground floors of town halls, but the space available quickly proved to be inadequate. In Swansea, the Corporation built the simple market house, shown in Nixon's painting, which consisted of a roof and ten pillars, in 1651, and this also quickly proved to be insufficient with stalls spilling out into Castle Square and surrounding streets (particularly Butter - St Mary's - Street). The Corporation tried to deal with the problem of butchers' shambles by constructing, in 1774, a new building on part of the castle garden or postern, behind the 1585 Town Hall. Despite offering inducements, the Corporation failed to persuade butchers to move from their traditional pitches (the inferior trading location of the new site being the obvious explanation), and traders stayed put until the Corporation constructed, in 1830, the new covered market near Oxford Street.104

Advertising before the nineteenth century was in its infancy, and the notices which appeared in local newspapers were deferential in tone and aimed primarily at existing customers. The most frequent advertisers in the Cambrian were those selling luxury goods, L. & J. Michael being regular promoters of their teas, jewellery and other luxury items brought from London.105 Care was taken to stress that the provenance of the products was the metropolis. With the growth of towns, however, and the decline of custom based on kinship and friendship, the effective display of goods and eye-catching and persuasive advertising became a priority. Shop architecture and the design of internal fittings developed in parallel with better glazing, and was a distinct selling point in itself. On the 11 February 1804, the

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104 J.R. Alban, Markets in Swansea (Swansea, 1991), pp.1-8. This was the first of three covered markets on the present site.
105 For example, see the Cambrian for 2 June 1804, 6 July 1805, 30 April 1825.
Cambrian carried an advertisement for two houses to let in Wind Street (probably nos. 53 and 54) with shops on the ground floor possessing

handsome bow windows.....the front of the premises is handsomely furnished

with polished brick, supported by free stone pillars, pilasters, arches and cornices

....the premises are situate in the most desirable part of the Town of Swansea.

The living accommodation above was advertised as ideal for letting as lodgings in summer 'when the town is filled with fashionable Company to breathe the salubrious air for which Swansea is so justly celebrated.....'. Separation between shop and home was, in fact, confined from about 1800 to the more prosperous shopkeeper. Most smaller traders, especially those out of the centre of town, continued to live over the shop until the end of the nineteenth century and beyond. The revolution in shop display in the main streets of the provincial towns of Britain originated in London, and corresponded with the ability to produce larger panes of glass behind which goods, brilliantly lit by gas, could be more effectively and imaginatively displayed. The coming of the railways from the late 1830s encouraged this process in market towns, a process which accelerated throughout the nineteenth century.

The corresponding rapid increase in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries of the urban middle ranks, and the concomitant growth in their disposable incomes and opportunities for leisure and sociability, changed the patterns of consumption, and made towns into 'arenas of public consumption', so that shopping and shops became 'central to

107 Girouard, English Town, pp.233-4. The paintings of Atkinson Grimshaw, later in the nineteenth century, of night-scenes of brightly lit and inviting shop windows reflected onto the dark and wet streets of Liverpool, are extraordinarily evocative.
consumption, the social use of urban space and the changing social and physical structure of
eighteenth century towns'. The phenomenon was, of course, confined to the main streets of
a town; the shops and businesses of the unpaved and undrained side streets, catering mainly
for the 'non-respectable' and lower classes were far from being 'social spaces'. Inextricably
linked with the development of the main streets as 'social spaces', was the desire - the need -
to improve the fabric and infrastructure of a town. Cleaner and better paved and drained
urban spaces, and the formality and regularity of classical architecture, were intrinsic to the
new realisation that certain areas of a town could be attractions in their own right, and
shopping a leisure activity. The process evolved in Bath and York much earlier, and in
Liverpool, Manchester and Chester earlier, than in Swansea; in Swansea's case it hardly
started before 1789. In practical terms, this meant that traditional craft industries in the
town centre, such as leather goods, textiles and metal working (on a small scale) declined,
and businesses catering for the leisured and moneyed classes increased rapidly and
concurrently with the improvement in appearance of the town. The process was, however,
complicated in Swansea's case because although traditional crafts declined, the rapid growth
of industry and the port paralleled that of leisure and commerce, ultimately to the detriment
of the resort function. Nevertheless, Butler's 1849 painting (Fig 5.5), whilst no doubt
presenting an idealised view, certainly shows Wind Street as a pleasant and civilized 'social
space', in vivid contrast to Nixon's view fifty years earlier of the Market House throng (Fig
5.4).

108 J. Stobart, 'Shopping streets as social space; leisure, consumerism and improvement in an
109 This is nicely illustrated (allowing for satiric intent) by Moses Harris' famous cartoon of
1787 of Gabriel Powell standing in an unmade and dirty street outside Swansea's first theatre.
110 Stobart, 'Shopping streets', pp.5-6.
4. Conclusion

Travellers and tourists to Swansea in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seemed to have been mostly unaware of (or did not remark upon) the social problems arising out of overcrowding, poor water supply and almost non-existent facilities for drainage mentioned in this and the previous Chapter. A 'content analysis' of their descriptions of the town, particularly when read with other contemporary sources such as plans and artistic representations, provides an often vivid, if not always consistent, image of the place.\textsuperscript{111}

Certain travellers, notably Byng and Evans, appear to have had low expectations of Welsh towns, based perhaps on prejudice, and were predisposed to have their prejudices confirmed in the interests of producing an entertaining account of their travels. Swansea did not escape their censure although Evans' main criticism of the town as a resort amounted to little more than it did not measure up to the standards of Weymouth. Malkin, Warner, Skrine, Donovan and Lewis, all admired the natural beauty of Swansea's location and generally considered the pretensions to resort status justified.\textsuperscript{112} Other travellers were favourably impressed by the copperworks, and some thought the complaints of smoke nuisance exaggerated. If, however, there was a difference of opinion with regard to the effects of copper-smoke, this may have had more to do with the prevailing wind on the day of visit. All, however, appeared to be struck by the appearance and fabric of the town itself, and the rapid development consequent upon the increase in population attracted by the opportunities generated by the increasingly healthy local economy.\textsuperscript{113} Many English travellers of this period were, in fact, impressed, if


\textsuperscript{112} Although plagiarism is apparent.

\textsuperscript{113} Nothing was said of the substandard housing thrown up around courts in the spaces between the main streets, and the resulting dirt and degradation. Although Swansea was considered by most visitors to be clean, by the 1830s this was not a view universally shared. For example, the view of the anonymous contributor to the \textit{Cambrian} of the 30 May 1835 already quoted that the residents 'keep their town so dirty you will hardly believe what you
not surprised, by the physical quality of some Welsh towns, including Tenby, Pembroke and Brecon, although a few (notably George Lipscombe) were not indifferent to obvious urban defects, in particular, the 'mean hovels' and 'huts' occupied by the poor.\textsuperscript{114} Most expressed the opinion that, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, Swansea had become, if not the chief town in Wales, then one of the most important - and this had been achieved in a relatively short time. But to all these travellers, and even to Wyndham and Wynne as early as the 1770s, it seemed highly likely that Swansea's port and industrial roles would quickly come to dominate at the expense of its resort pretensions, and, despite the enthusiasm of Iolo Morganwg, Eric Svedestieerna and Elizabeth Spence for the sublime aspect of the industrial spectacle, they were to be proved right. The 'Brighton of Wales' was metamorphosing into 'Copperopolis'.

Contemporary pictorial evidence of the town, particularly the work of the Buck brothers, Rothwell and Padley, suggests that eighteenth century Swansea was an attractive, well-built town, situate on a beautiful bay, with a mixture of buildings ranging in date from the medieval (for example, the castle, St David's Hospital, Place House) through to contemporary houses of Georgian and Regency design. Some idea of Swansea's physical appearance in the early to mid-nineteenth century may perhaps be gained from visiting modern Carmarthen, Brecon or Pembroke, where the form and layout of the Norman and medieval towns clearly survive (including well defined burgage plots) forming a framework for a promiscuous mix of building styles, eighteenth and early nineteenth century Georgian and Regency classical alternating with sixteenth and seventeenth century vernacular and ornate early Victorian

could see in that way here'; and de la Beche's Report on the State of ....Towns (London, 1845), pulls no punches on the condition of Swansea's provision of housing for the poor: see Chapter 4 above.
\textsuperscript{114} G. Lipscombe, Journey into South Wales in the year 1799 (London, 1802).
neo-Gothic. In Pembroke particularly, the source of the original settlement - the castle - continues to dominate the town. The visual and directory evidence for the most part supports the observations of the travellers; after a difficult transitional period from about 1760 to 1800, Swansea was, by 1830, economically healthy with its shops and businesses offering a comprehensive range of goods and services, including those of a luxury nature, to customers from a mix of social backgrounds (see Table 5.2). Those customers lived in the fashionable areas of the Burrows or Mount Pleasant, or in the growing gentry suburb forming an arc overlooking Swansea Bay. They came also from the less fashionable and poorer streets near the centre and to the north of the town; and from the small, substandard houses squeezed behind Wind Street, High Street and elsewhere. The size of the purse obviously determined where the contents of it would be spent and the shops of Wind Street, Castle Street and Lower High Street would not have been much frequented by the majority of the poorer sections of Swansea society to whom the type of marketing experience depicted by John Nixon (Fig. 5.4) remained of rather more relevance than the 'arena of public consumption' portrayed by William Butler (Fig. 5.5). There is, therefore, clear evidence of zoning (see Table 5.2), although Wind Street would, from the 1840s, begin to lose its status as principal shopping street to Oxford Street. The Strand and the Quay were not remarked upon by travellers but the former especially was an important contributor to Swansea's money economy providing essential goods and services and not only for the maritime industry. At the other end of the social scale, the Burrows had a certain social cachet as a place of residence and as a location of good class lodgings and professional services (including teaching academies).

All this activity added up to a town which, after undergoing steady population growth from about 1760, and experiencing tension as it struggled to accommodate the workers essential to
its growing economy, nevertheless appears to have enjoyed, in the mid-eighteenth century, reasonable political stability owing perhaps to the strict control exercised by the duke of Beaufort's steward, Gabriel Powell, and the congruity of interests of the industrialists and the duke.\textsuperscript{115} Then, in the 1770s and 1780s, Robert Morris' campaign, ostensibly supported by the local gentry and in the name of the freeholders of Swansea, against the self-elected Corporation and the 'vexatious, oppressive and unfounded claims' of the duke, led to further tensions which did not begin to be resolved until after Powell's death in 1789, and the ascendency of the reforming element on the Corporation led by Charles Collins.\textsuperscript{116} It was at this point, in the 1780s, that the growth in population and development of the economy began seriously to impact on the town's inadequate fabric and infrastructure, and the resulting stresses were then reflected in the political confrontations between the urban oligarchy, the aristocratic interest and the industrialists. The town faced further challenges and uncertainty into the nineteenth century, again owing mainly to its accelerating population increase with which the slow improvement of the infrastructure could not keep pace; but also over the question as to whether resort or industrial/port function would provide the more secure economic future. This uncertainty over the route to take is reflected in the contemporary images and descriptions discussed in this Chapter. The condition and salubrity of the streets, important both for the health of the people and the town's economy, would continue to give cause for concern until after the middle of the nineteenth century when public awareness of the link between dirt and disease, the introduction of effective legislative machinery, and the availability of funds sufficient to tackle the problems at source, coincided.

\textsuperscript{116} NLW, Bad, ms.1326, Election Address, 1789; Sweet, 'Stability and Continuity', pp. 21-25, 28-31.
By the 1820s, therefore, there were obvious signs that Swansea Corporation, the *Cambrian* and other leaders of opinion, including J.H. Vivian, recognised that resort and industrial functions could not exist together indefinitely in the face of increasing pace of development of the latter; and with the failure, at this time, to find a means of removing the sulphurous content of copper smoke, Swansea would soon cease to be a viable resort. Lewis (1833) propped up the facade in his description, but Black (1853) was clear that smoke and seaside did not mix and, by 1859, Bevan was able to write that Swansea's glory as a fashionable watering place 'had long since disappeared', the remaining undeveloped part of the Burrows and the Promenade having been swallowed up by the docks. Swansea's resort status, like that of Liverpool and other industrialising ports in the eighteenth century, had gone, if not for all time, then as long as the port and industrial functions dominated: 'ports as they developed in Britain could be either pretty or prosperous, but rarely both'. Swansea, in reaping the profits of its industrial function, in the end willingly paid the price in terms of its resort status. But, overall, Swansea had made impressive progress as a town, both in terms of its economic growth and its ability to support a variety of functions unparalleled in any other town in Wales. According to Carter, Swansea in 1830/1 was firmly in Grade 1 at the top of the Welsh urban hierarchy equal with Cardiff, Brecon, Carmarthen and Aberystwyth. The evidence shows, however, that the last three towns were no longer in the same league as Swansea at this date, and would be left further behind as the nineteenth century progressed so that, by 1901, Swansea's population exceeded 134,000, second only to Cardiff in the Welsh urban hierarchy. This process of transformation from market town and minor port, to polite resort, and finally to industrial and trading centre had not been smooth, and was achieved not

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117 Jackson, 'Ports', in *Cambridge Urban History*, p.731.
118 On the basis that each possessed a market, was head of a Poor Law Union, had over 500 employed in trade and handicraft and more than ten in the professions, and possessed one or more banks and a theatre: Carter, *Towns of Wales*, pp.52-3.

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without a price; but it was intriguing to outsiders, and attracted the attention of travellers who wrote about it, and artists who depicted not only the town itself but also the industry which was to be the bedrock of its economy throughout most of the nineteenth century and up to the First World War. And Cardiff, although its population growth would soon outstrip that of Swansea, remained dominated by its coal-port function until late in the century, and did not compare in terms of historical curiosity and variety of function with 'Copperopolis'.

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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

What counts most is the careless, graceless nature of Swansea, its lordly
assemblage of chimney-stacks, its position at a river mouth between
mountains, and the neighbourhood of the sea. Cheapness, clapham-
junction squalor, or actual hideousness is everywhere in contrast with
grandeur, and even sublimity, and these qualities do not alternate, but
conflict, or in some way co-operate.¹

Edward Thomas was a frequent visitor to Swansea, and his deeply affectionate portrayal of a
decaying, polluted town of diversity and contrasts was corroborated a generation later by
Dylan Thomas, born in the 'ugly lovely town.....crawling, sprawling, slummed, unplanned,
erry-villa'd and smug suburban by the side of a long and splendid-curving shore....'.² Edward
Thomas, even in 1914, considered Swansea more of a village than a town, notwithstanding
its 120,000 inhabitants, because 'its activity in spreading hither and thither has kept it from
thinking about anything but factories, docks and the necessities of life'.³ That comment
suggests at best a partial recollection: it seems certain that the urban elite of 1800, striving to
transform Swansea into a polite resort town on a par with any in England, would have
received Edward Thomas' opinion with puzzlement and indignation. Swansea's journey from
Norman military settlement to post-industrial decay, World War Two bombing and modern
regeneration has been extraordinarily eventful and full of interest and, as this thesis has tried
to demonstrate, has made the town unique in Wales and unusual elsewhere.

¹ Edward Thomas, 'Swansea Village' in English Review (1914), reprinted in J.A. Davies (ed.),
² Dylan Thomas, 'Reminiscences of Childhood', The Broadcasts (1991) [broadcast in 1943],
reprinted in A Swansea Anthology, p.76.
³ E. Thomas, 'Swansea Village', p.68
This journey must, however, be placed in context. Carter has visualised the development of the urban system in Wales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as an ineffectively executed palimpsest, a succession of networks partially superimposed one on the other corresponding to each phase of urban development from Norman genesis to industrialisation and beyond. With each phase, the inhabitants of the towns of south Wales re-arranged and segregated themselves in response to the pressures and exigencies of in-migration according to class and income, a process which continued into the twentieth century with the building of suburban estates and commuter villages.  

4 The redistribution of population which accompanied the growth of Welsh towns had a corresponding far-reaching effect on the rural areas: the labouring poor left the land in droves attracted by the prospect of higher wages and a better standard of living derived from the new urban industries. At first, migrants came from adjoining areas and were almost exclusively Welsh; later as the coal industry developed from the 1840s, they came from England, Ireland and overseas. As we have seen, Swansea conformed to this model, except that each succeeding phase of development tended to be incremental rather than having the effect of abrogating the existing functions so that, by about 1800, the town was notably polymorphic and unorthodox. At this time, Swansea's layers constituted market centre, industrial town and port; from 1780 the resort function began to be engrafted but the town elite quickly appreciated that a scenic, even sublime, location was insufficient to tempt polite society away from English resorts and that it was also necessary to be able to offer accommodation in houses of fashionable classical design, shops displaying goods from London, the provision of professional and specialist services and, of course, diversions such as a theatre, libraries and clubs, assembly rooms, walks and pleasure grounds. This new appreciation of the importance of presentation, appearance and

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entertainment corresponded with, and was fed by, an emerging Welsh self-consciousness and interest in the culture, language and history of Wales, a self-consciousness stimulated by the works of romantic visionaries such as Iolo Morganwg, artists of the Welsh countryside and industry from Richard Wilson on, and, more prosaically, English topographers such as Wyndham and Malkin.

Conveniently, Swansea's urban progress and multifunctionality has been sign-posted by hyperbole: 'the Mecca of nonconformity', 'the Metropolis of South Wales', 'the Brighton of Wales', and at a time in the mid-nineteenth century when the town was almost certainly the world's leading metallurgical centre and port, 'Copperopolis'. These labels were attached by contemporaries, impressed, even inspired, by Swansea's progress and difference. The town, not without difficulty, had adjusted to changing circumstances (although adequate 'sanitary' provision, and full appreciation of the importance of public health, lagged behind) with such success that, by the end of the eighteenth century, Swansea was able to break away from the economic dominance of English towns, particularly Bristol, and take a pre-eminent position in a legitimate Welsh urban network driven by its own economy.

But Swansea's heterogeneity became progressively obscured in smoke as the industrial function increasingly dominated from about 1820; and then the metallurgical industry began to decline. Some time before Edward Thomas' comments quoted above, the quantity of copper exports had begun to reduce in the face of South American competition, the loss only partly compensated for by an increase in the production of tinplate and coal. The start of Swansea's economic slide from about the final quarter of the nineteenth century was mirrored by a rise in fortune of its chief rival, Cardiff. A relatively unimportant place in the 1830s, with less than half Swansea's population, Cardiff became, in 1871, Wales' largest town.
According to Daunton, the reason for Cardiff’s rise to the top of the Welsh urban hierarchy was 'simple': the new and improved dock facilities were provided earlier and on a larger scale than elsewhere on the south Wales coast. The Marquis of Bute’s decision to invest heavily gave Cardiff a substantial lead over its rivals, a lead which was to be consolidated (notwithstanding the lack of financial success of the docks) by the development of services for the mining communities and the coalfields in the hinterland thus leading to the transformation of the town in the later nineteenth century into an administrative, commercial and regional centre. Swansea never caught up, and the granting to Cardiff in 1905 of city status reinforced the latter’s place at the head of the Welsh urban rank order.

Swansea suffered additional blows to its urban self esteem in the twentieth century, notably a further decline in trade of the port after 1918, and the destruction by bombing of the town’s central area in 1941 resulting in a reconstruction not noted for its contribution to the townscape. A heavy price was also paid for the town’s years of success in metallurgical production: dereliction and pollution on an epic scale. In 1971, Swansea had over 200 hectares of abandoned industrial sites, the largest in south Wales, but substantial effort and investment between 1966 and 1989 has resulted in a transformation of the Lower Swansea valley, and the removal of much polluted material. The Burrows area has also undergone metamorphosis with the restoration of many Georgian and Regency houses built at the time of Swansea’s resort aspirations, and the re-excavation and redevelopment of the South Dock as a tourist attraction. Work, however, remains to be done to bring the potentially still attractive central area of ‘old’ Swansea, including Wind Street and St. Mary Street, to the condition suggested by Butler’s painting of 1849 (Fig. 5.5), and to redevelop the area rebuilt after the last War. But plans are afoot: The Western Mail of the 26 July 2002 trumpeted news

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'Making a splash on the waterfront') of a £200m project to transform Swansea into 'one of Europe's leading waterfront cities' to include further expenditure on the 'Maritime Quarter', housing on the still run-down east bank of the Tawe and a scheme to 'radically revamp' the central area around the castle. The wheel may be turning almost full circle: Swansea after two hundred years is attempting again to transform itself into a resort of a standard not only able to compete with England's best, but perhaps with the finest in Europe. And it seems certain that these aspirations will not again be frustrated by smoke.

6 *The Western Mail*, 14 June and 26 July 2002. The competition with (and resentment of) Cardiff remains alive and flourishing - the later article begins: 'Swansea has long lived in Cardiff's shadow. While the capital gathers plaudits for the Millenium Stadium and the trendy Bay development, the less fashionable second city has been in danger of missing the boat.'
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