

## A stroll between Argoed and Hollybush

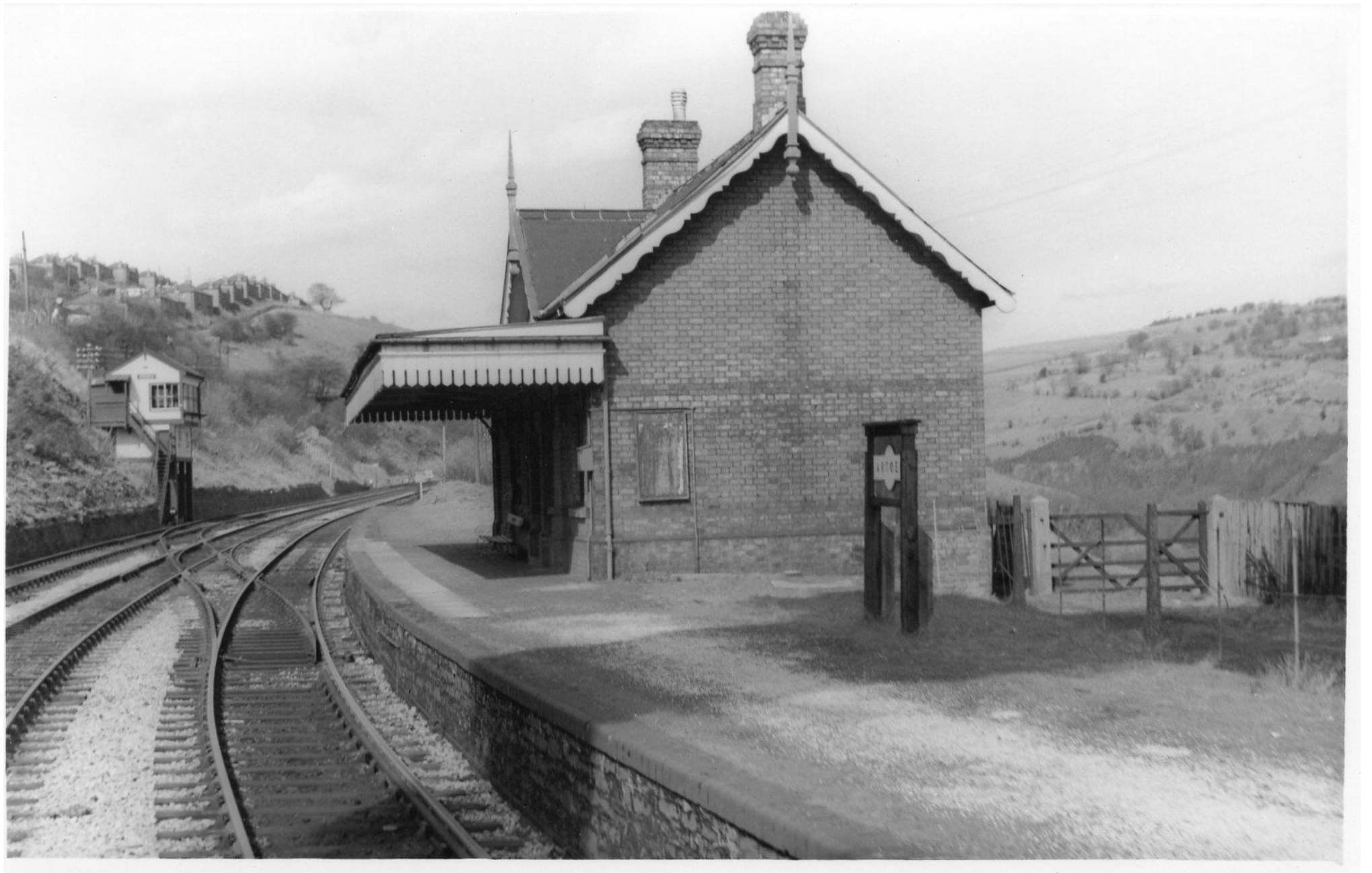


Although Argoed High Street at the beginning of the twentieth century was no longer the route of the Sirhowy Valley railway, the tracks are clearly visible in the middle of the road in this picture. Excavation work a few years ago revealed that they still lie buried beneath the present-day surface.

The next two photos - looking north and taken in 1960 - are of Argoed railway station. Argoed signal box can be seen on the left-hand side of the tracks and Penylan Road is just visible on the horizon. This site is now part of the Sirhowy valley cycle track and scarcely recognizable among the forest that has grown here! Part of the edge of the platform is still there if you know where to look among the undergrowth!



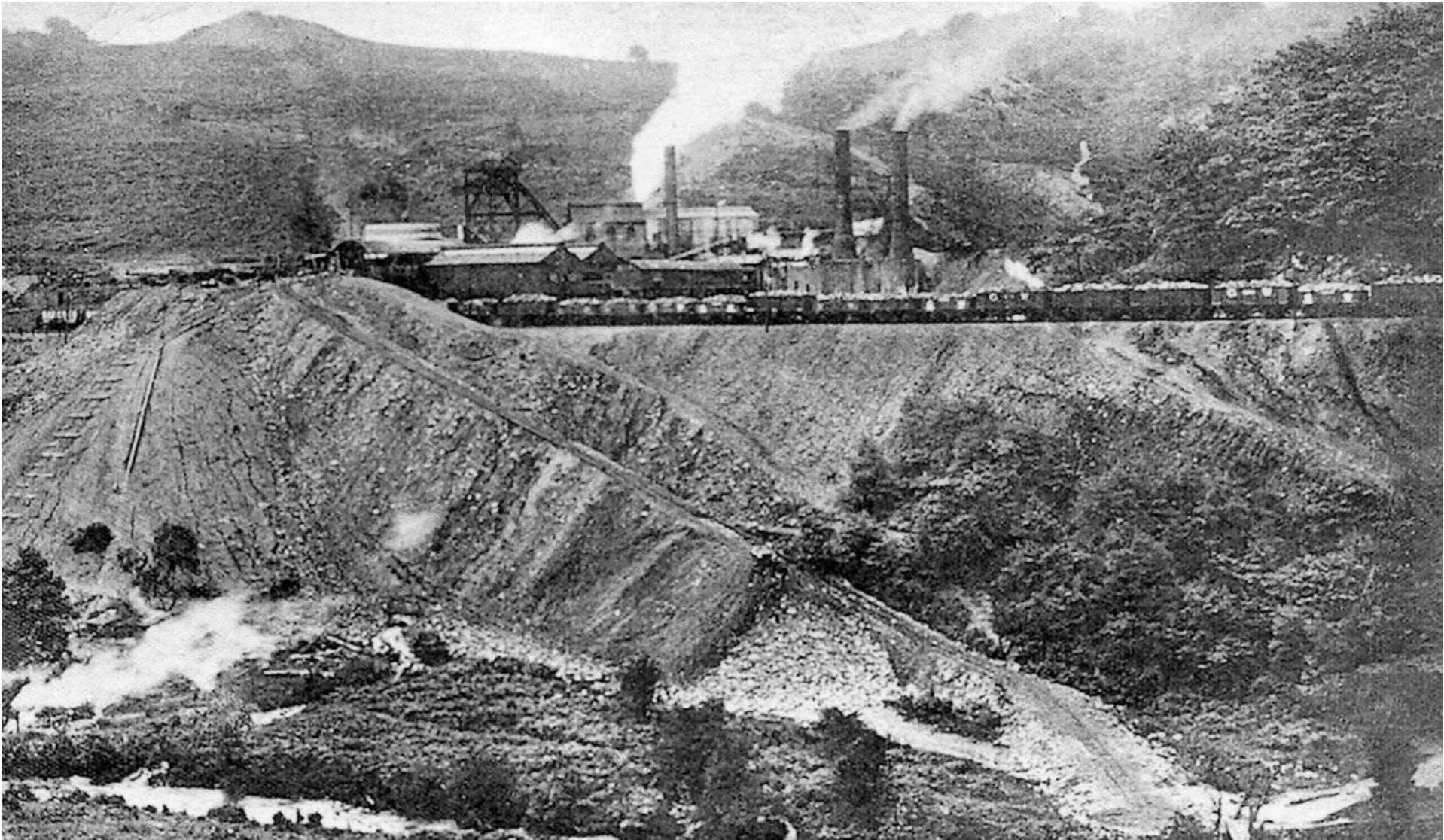






Another view of Argoed railway station this time looking towards Oakdale and probably taken from a point somewhere on the A4048. The scene is now completely obscured by trees.





A view across to the eastern side of the valley just opposite Penylan Road and north of where Argoed station used to be. This is the site of the old Llanover Colliery which was sunk in 1912 to the Brithdir house coal seam. During the sinking of the shaft two men fell to their deaths when the cage rope broke. By 1923 over four hundred men were employed in this colliery but there were problems with flooding. Pumps had to be installed and later on the pumping at this colliery prevented flooding in Oakdale colliery further down the valley. Llanover closed in 1930. This slope is now completely tree clad.





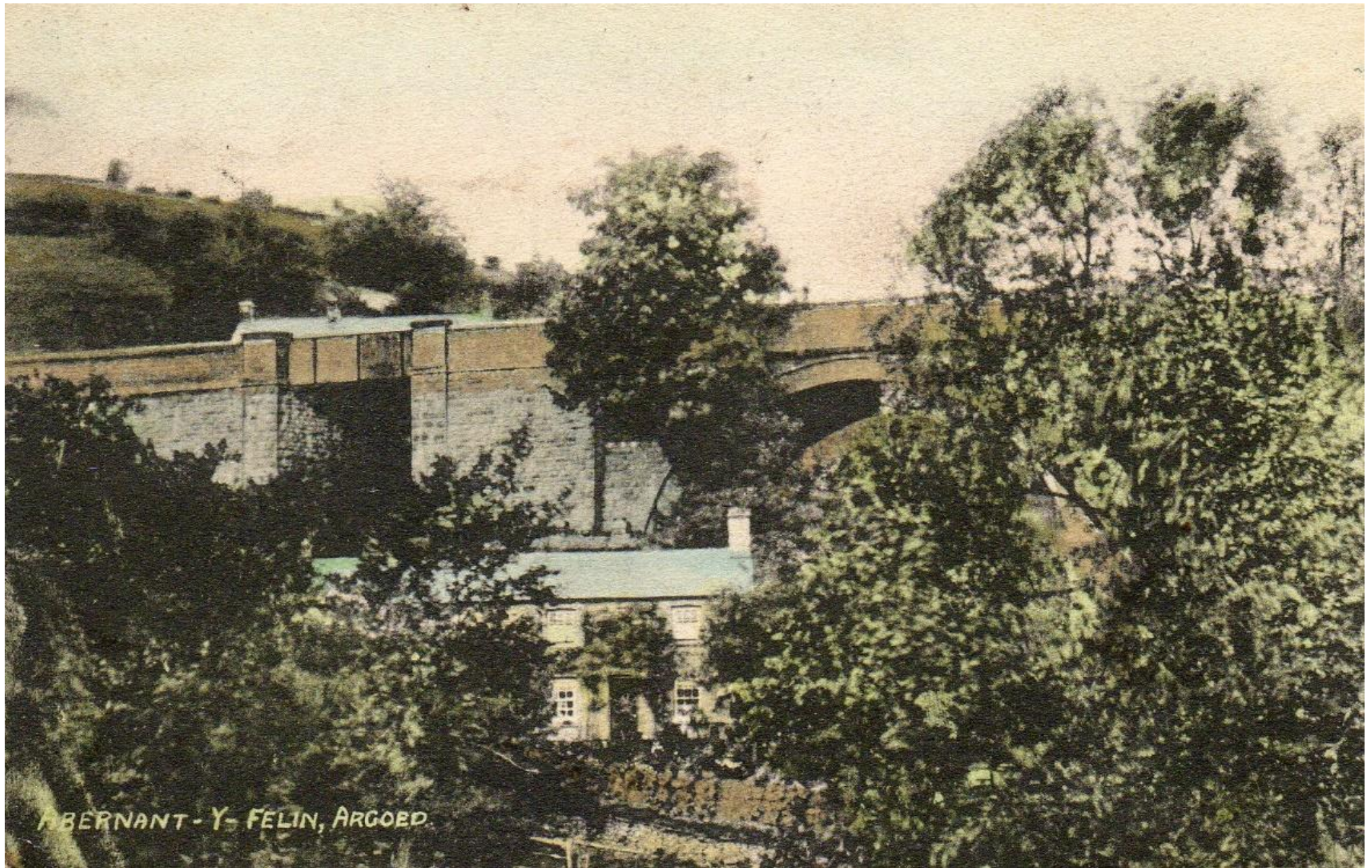
Again, almost opposite Argoed station, on the eastern side of the valley, was the site of Cwrt-y-bella school and church. Sadly, both have long since disappeared.





A view of Abernant-y-felin viaduct over which the railway line serving Markham Colliery used to run. This picture was taken at Manmoel Crossing and in the foreground the old Tredegar to Newport railway line can still be seen. The valley which the viaduct spans was later filled in when the viaduct became unsafe. Some of the tops of the arches can still be seen – if you know where to look! – to the present day. Nant-y-felin means “mill stream” and it now flows through a culvert under the viaduct joining the river Sirhowy at this spot. The water driven mill was situated in the centre of Manmoel village and the water from the mill pond flowed down through what is locally known as “the Dingle”.





A close-up of the northern end of the viaduct with houses visible on both sides of the bridge. None of these exist any longer.





This is a view of Abernant Colliery looking south. This site was located directly opposite Markham Colliery and the two capped shafts can still be found among the woodland. The colliery first began producing coal in 1890 and during the First World War the number of men working there rose to nearly 500. By the mid-twenties the work force had halved and in 1932 the colliery closed.





Markham's Collieries, Argoed

An early view of Markham Colliery. This postcard is postmarked 1919 which was not long after the colliery opened. The shaft sinking began in 1910 and the first coal was produced in 1913.

The colliery was named after Sir Arthur Markham and it was the first pit in the Sirhowy to employ electric winding gear.

During the sinking of one of the shafts an explosion occurred which killed six men. By 1918 just over a thousand men were

working in this colliery and by 1923 the figure had risen to 2117. During the Second World War Markham colliery became linked with Oakdale thus providing an alternative escape route in the event of bombing. After 1979 the coal produced at Markham reached the surface at Oakdale Colliery. Markham closed in 1986.





Hollybush & River. (from Markham Village) 1602.

Looking north from Markham colliery towards Hollybush.





Hollybush station in the early 1900s. The station house with its many chimneys still stands and William Street can be seen just beyond the footbridge over the railway.