

Pryce Jones Vienna Exhibition medal



Pryce Jones, a native of Newtown, began life as a humble draper's apprentice but became a pioneer of the mail order business and revived the flagging mid Wales textile industry in the second half of the nineteenth century.

He was one of the first entrepreneurs to recognise the potential of the new universal postal system and the growing railway system. From his magnificent Royal Welsh Warehouse in Newtown he established a global trading empire based on mid Wales woollen cloth. Each day three special rail carriages ran daily to London Euston carrying his goods for onward transit to all parts of the UK and the world. He directly employed more than 300 workers in his factories in Newtown and Welshpool and indirectly provided a livelihood for many hundreds more.

A master of publicity, he capitalised on the patronage of the crowned heads of Europe. He also displayed his wares at the great trade exhibitions at Vienna, Sydney, Philadelphia, Paris and Berlin where he won prestigious awards for the quality of his produce. This medal was given to him in Vienna in 1873.

Sadly, success did not last, as mid Wales ultimately could not cope with the more efficient textile centres of Lancashire and Yorkshire. By 1914, the mid Wales textile industry was in terminal decline but the buildings that housed his shop and factory remain in the town as a reminder of his success. The building continued to be used as a department store and mail-order business until recently, though no longer trading as Pryce Jones.

For more information on Pryce Jones:

http://a-day-in-the-life.powys.org.uk/eng/home/eo_pryce.php

<https://historypoints.org/index.php?page=royal-welsh-warehouse-newtown>

For more information on the 1873 World Exhibition in Vienna:

<https://chelseawald.com/2014/10/a-magnificent-failure-the-1873-world-exhibition-in-vienna.html>