

In the 1850s, John Lloyd (a blind man), and his son George, eked out an existence at Graig Fawr, (just under an acre of land with a small cottage) part of Y Graig, now an abandoned community, on the banks of Llanwenath Hill near Abergavenny.

The family had kept a few animals on the property for which they had not, in living memory, paid rent to anyone, and believed they were entitled to live there. No action was taken against John's mother, Gwenllian, when she had refused to pay rents thirty years earlier.

In August 1855, Sir Joseph Bailey, Ironmaster of Glanusk - one of the wealthiest men in the country - and Rev. Richard Davies of Cwrt y Gollen, the Archdeacon of Brecon Cathedral, asserted their ownership of Y Graig and brought a case of trespass against the Lloyds. They won and the judge imposed damages of forty shillings on the Lloyds.

Clearly unable to pay the debt, soon afterwards the Lloyds were detained as Prisoners of Debt in the gaol at Monmouth. Records indicate that on 16 April 1860 John Lloyd, then aged about 67, had been there for over four years. There is no evidence of them ever regaining their freedom.

Sources:

<http://www.abandonedcommunities.co.uk/ygrraig.html>

<https://herefordshirehistory.org.uk/archive/herefordshire-newspapers/hereford-times/hereford-times-1855/hereford-times-august-1855/hereford-times-11th-august-1855/502520>

### The Forty Shilling Debt

**Hear the vindicated ironmaster, the clergyman so righteous.  
See them celebrate their victory in the opulent Glanusk.  
Note each other's virtue, with the benefit of law  
- as they toast the judge for granting them a forty shilling debt.**

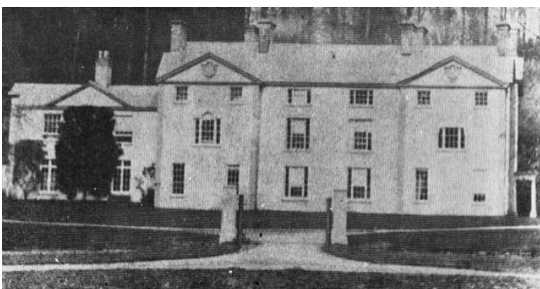
**Hear the clink of fine crystal, toasting their success.  
See the quaff of rich port on their supercilious lips.  
Note the glint of satisfaction in the rheumied eyes of wealth  
- smell the foulness of conceit bought by a forty shilling debt.**

**Hear the clink of rusted iron as the debtors' gaol is locked.  
See a stance of hopelessness, the silent sobs of fear.  
Note the tears of injustice from the blinded eyes of Lloyd  
- evicted from his home, Y Graig, by a forty shilling debt.**

**Was it worth it Mr Bailey? Did you sleep well that night?  
The eviction of a blind man - a pauper - from his home;  
Did you value that extra acre? Did you abide in those poor walls?  
May God forgive you Baileys - and your forty shilling debt!**



Remains of Graig Fawr, home of John Lloyd



Cwrt y Gollen, home of Rev. Richard Davies



Glanusk, home of Sir Joseph Bailey