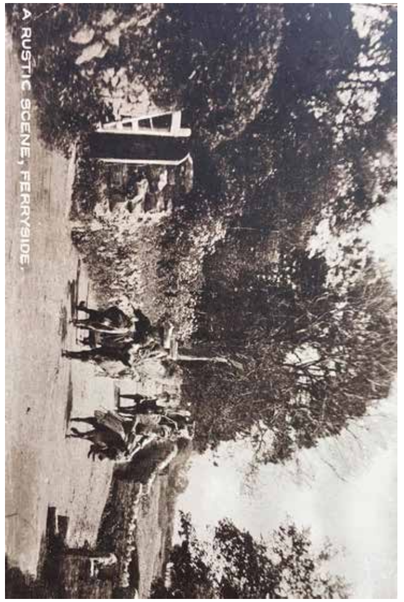
Gather










A RUSTIC SCENE, FERRYSIDE.

Simultaneously, the numbers of women who had previously gathered cockles to augment family income began to decline. The introduction of a hand-dredge finally banned by the SWSFC in 1969 further re-enforced this trend. As the intensification of hand-fishing increased, the lack of any formal regulation started to put excessive pressure on the cockle stocks.
Prior to the regulating order, a reduced number of 40-50 gatherers regularly worked, casual entrants increasing the number to around 80 when stocks were plentiful. Only 23% of these gathers were men; the majority were still women. However, as the men were likely to be more dependent on the fishery, they were also given greater priority in the issue of the first 50 licensed.

The first clear indication of the emergence of cockling in the region was noted in 1862 when a cockle fishery was marked on Llanrhidian sands in an Admiralty chart. Thereafter records show the fishery gained importance initially as a means for women to supplement the family income. Traditionally women harvested cockles whilst men worked in industrial manufacturing and local mines. At the start of the 20th century, around 500 people were estimated to be working in cockle gathering and processing. This included 250 exclusively female gathers in Penclawdd each collecting 60-150kg per day using donkeys to recover their harvest..

An additional 150 female gatherers from Ferryside and Llansaint on the Three Rivers Estuary.

Landings were cooked near the gatherers homes and most of the output of this cottage-industry was also locally retailed by the gatherers themselves - dividing their time between the various production and marketing activities. The introduction of horse-drawn carts permitted gatherers to increase their individual harvest to around 500kg per day.

The possibility of recovering more cockles within narrow tidal-limits also required a matched increase in physical effort and inevitably more male gatherers entering the industry as a full-time occupation and primary source of household income.

An economic impact assessment of cockle mortality in the Burry Inlet and Three Rivers cockle fisheries, South Wales UK 24 gatherers whilst women were more likely to go on the waiting list further skewing the gender balance in favour of men.

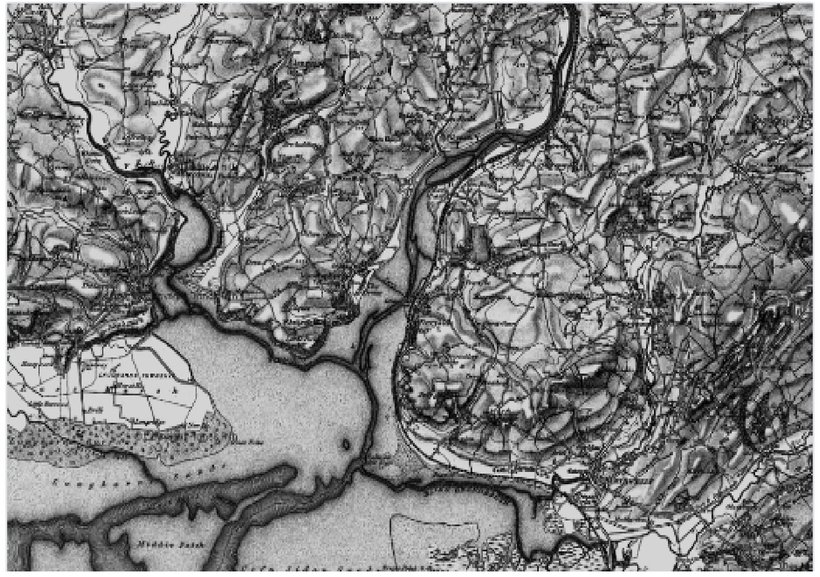
Today only 3 women hold licenses, all granted in the 1960's and 1970's pointing to on-going lack of female recruitment in primary production.










Middle Patch







From 2000 a combination of poor stock levels, mass mortalities and temporary closures linked to water quality issues and undersized stocks resulted in negligible or no recorded yield in all but five of the years to 2014. Low and undersize stock estimates have resulted in concurrent closure of all the Three Rivers cockle beds since June 2012 under byelaw 24 which permits 'Temporary closure for the protection of shellfish'.

Heavy sewage discharges associated with a broken pipe and discharge of primary effluent from storage lakes are alleged to have occurred in June and July of 2005 which, if true, would have compounded already severe mortalities. The south beach was closed for bathing in June and contemporary reports noted 'the smell of decaying cockles spread for miles inland' in late July.

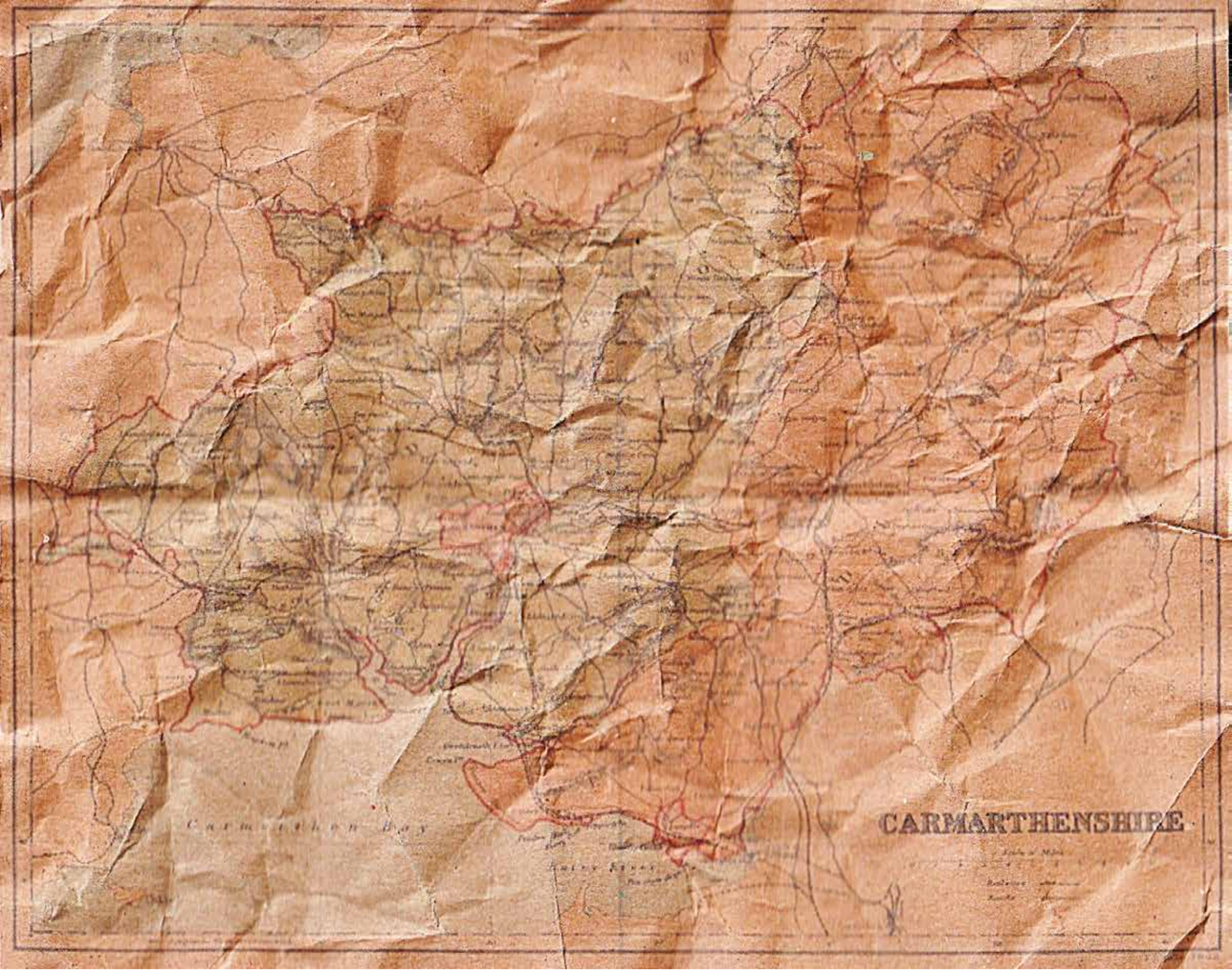
In 2006 SWSFC again permitted fishing of undersize cockle.

As in the Burry Inlet in 2005 problems were compounded by a sewage 'flush' which also lead to bathing closures from early June 2006 and loss of a prospective. In 2007 limited mortalities were observed from as early as February including for the first time, under one-year old juveniles. Chronic mortalities then persisted in the Laugharne, Gwendraeth and Llanstephan beds for which a 4000t September tonnage had been estimated. Mortalities peaked in mid-June, correlating again with a sewage flush event. Gathering ended in mid-July with mortalities still on-going. No in-depth causal studies of the kind undertaken on the Burry Inlet have been conducted. Management by the Welsh Government instead relies on 'snap-shot' stock assessments on which to base fishery opening decisions.

Poor stock-levels linked to on-going mortality have meant that only one sizeable harvest occurred in the last five years when the fishery was opened for several weeks in 2010.

In 2012 17 cases of 'no licenced illegal fishing' were recorded on the Burry Inlet. Around half of these incidents were attributed to licence holders collecting above their quota or using illegal methods such as less selective net bags rather than riddles to gather cockle.

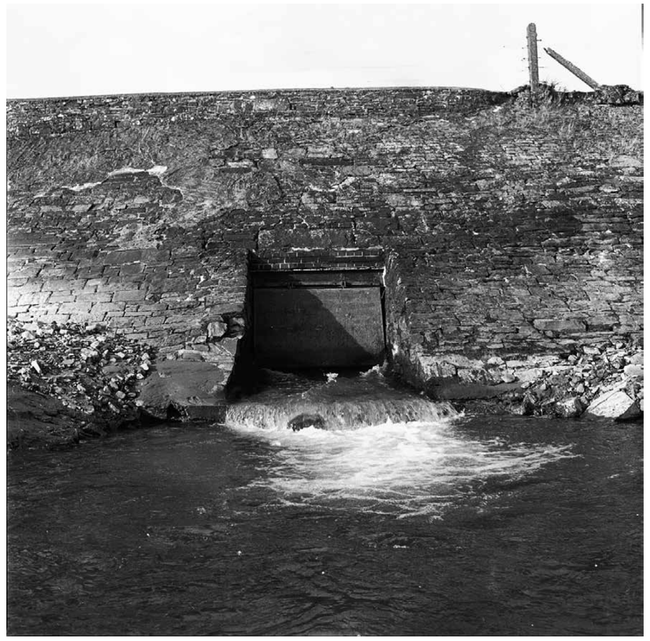



Carmarthen Bay
CARMARTHENSHIRE

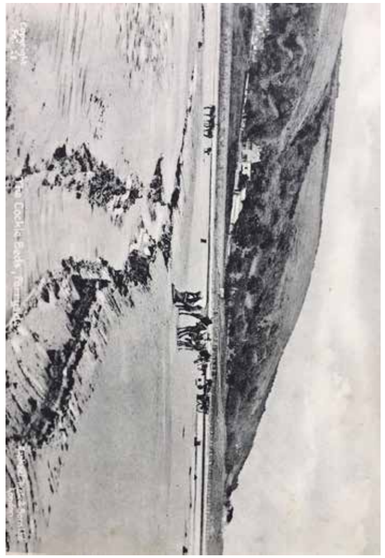










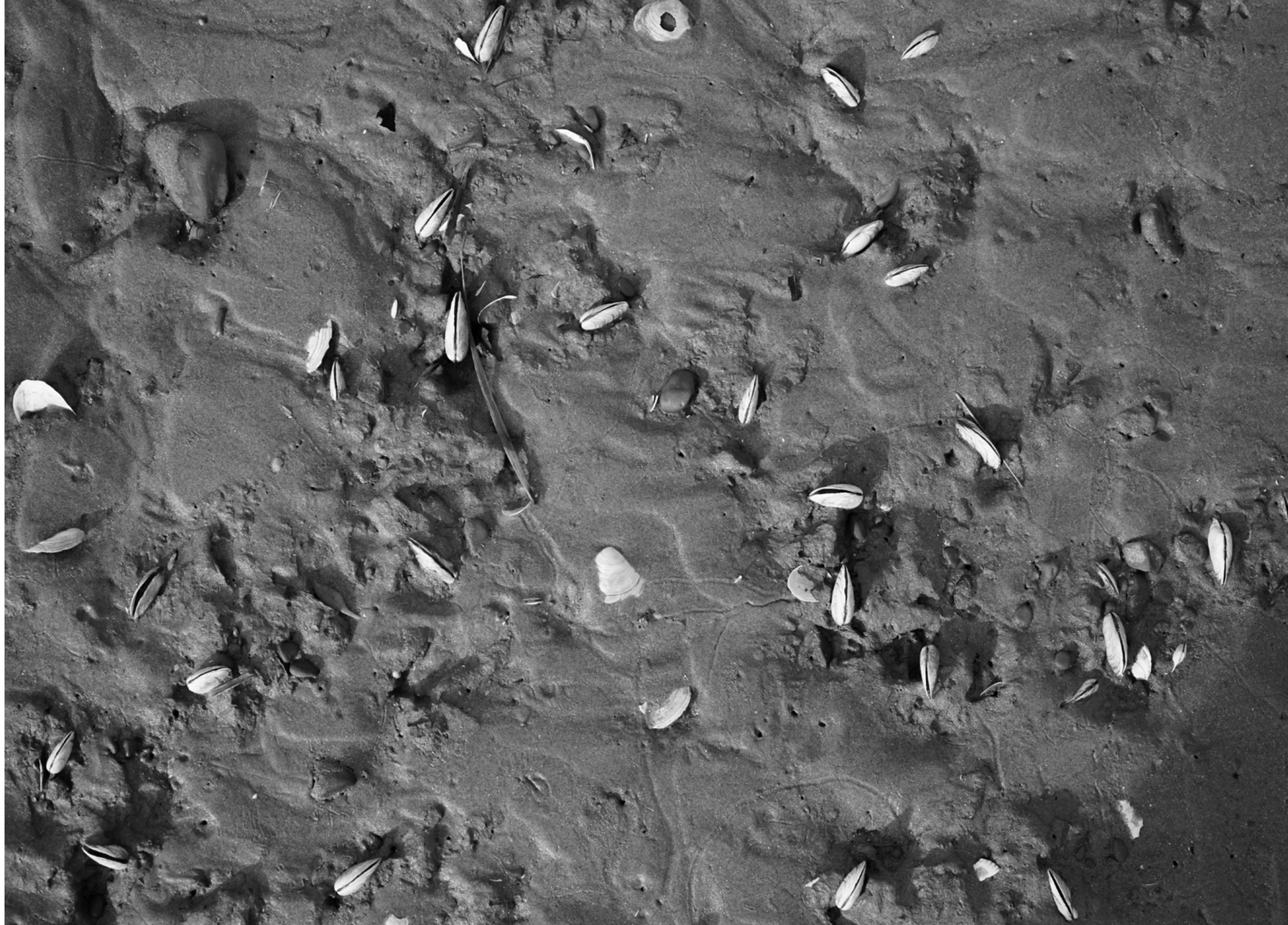




Gatherers have correlated more serious sewage spill events with acute mortality episodes though whether, and to what extent sewage effluents are contributing to on-going chronic mortalities is highly contentious.

To be effective such efforts must be coordinated with improved regulation of other potential contamination sources.

It should be noted that improved sewage management may also reduce nutrient inputs that were likely to have contributed to the pre-mortality productivity of the cockle fishery.





COCKLE GATHERERS AT FERRYSIDE.











COCKLE GATHERERS. FERRYSIDE.

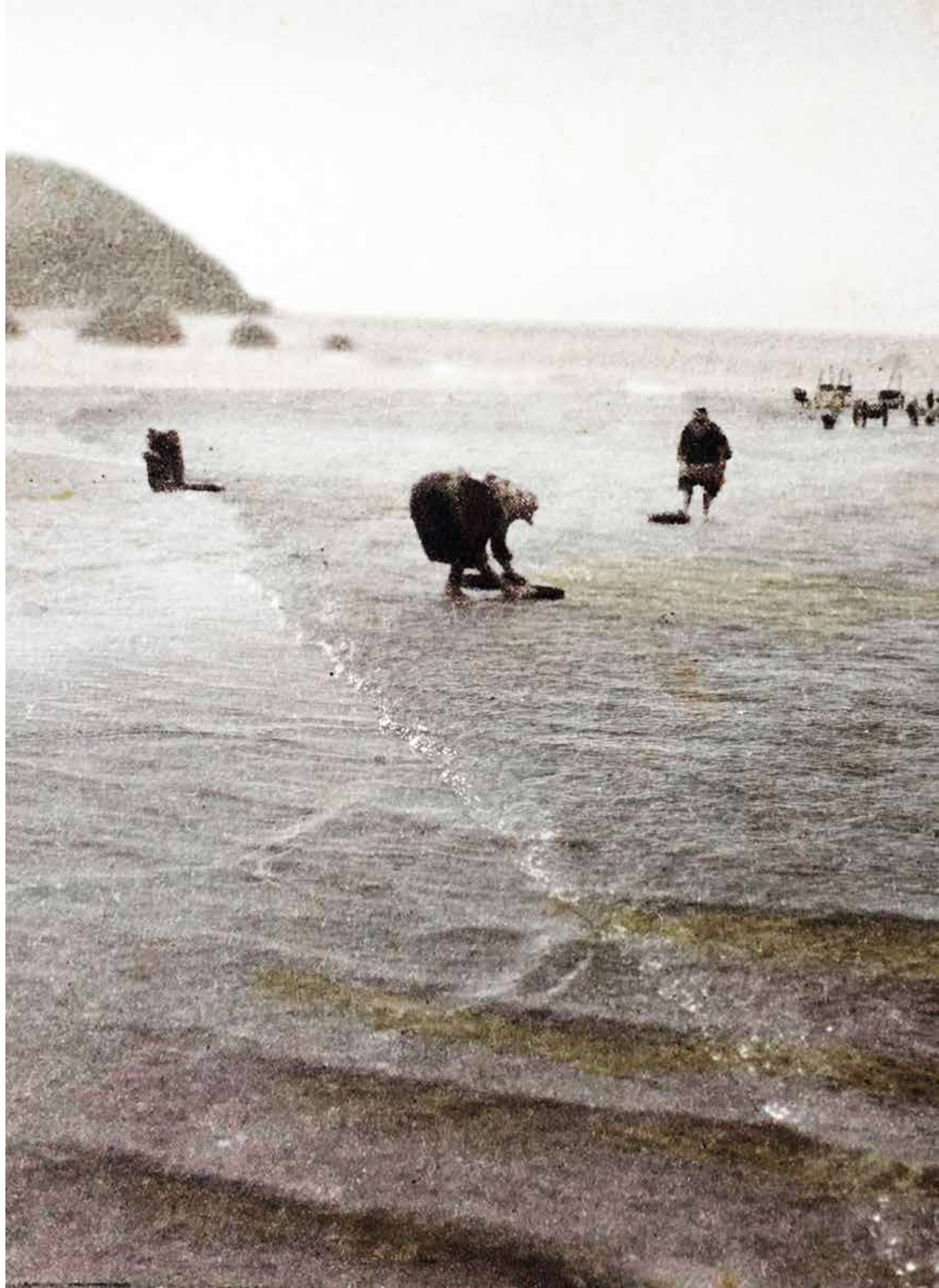


Consistent with an ecosystem management approach, regulation of both fisheries also entails environmental as well as social and economic objectives, further complicating any cost-benefit analysis.

Such assessments, which would require application of contingent valuation methods to monetize social and environmental value of these functions to different interest groups is beyond the scope of this report.

It is clear however that on-going improvement in the management of sewage treatment and effluent disposal should continue to take high priority.

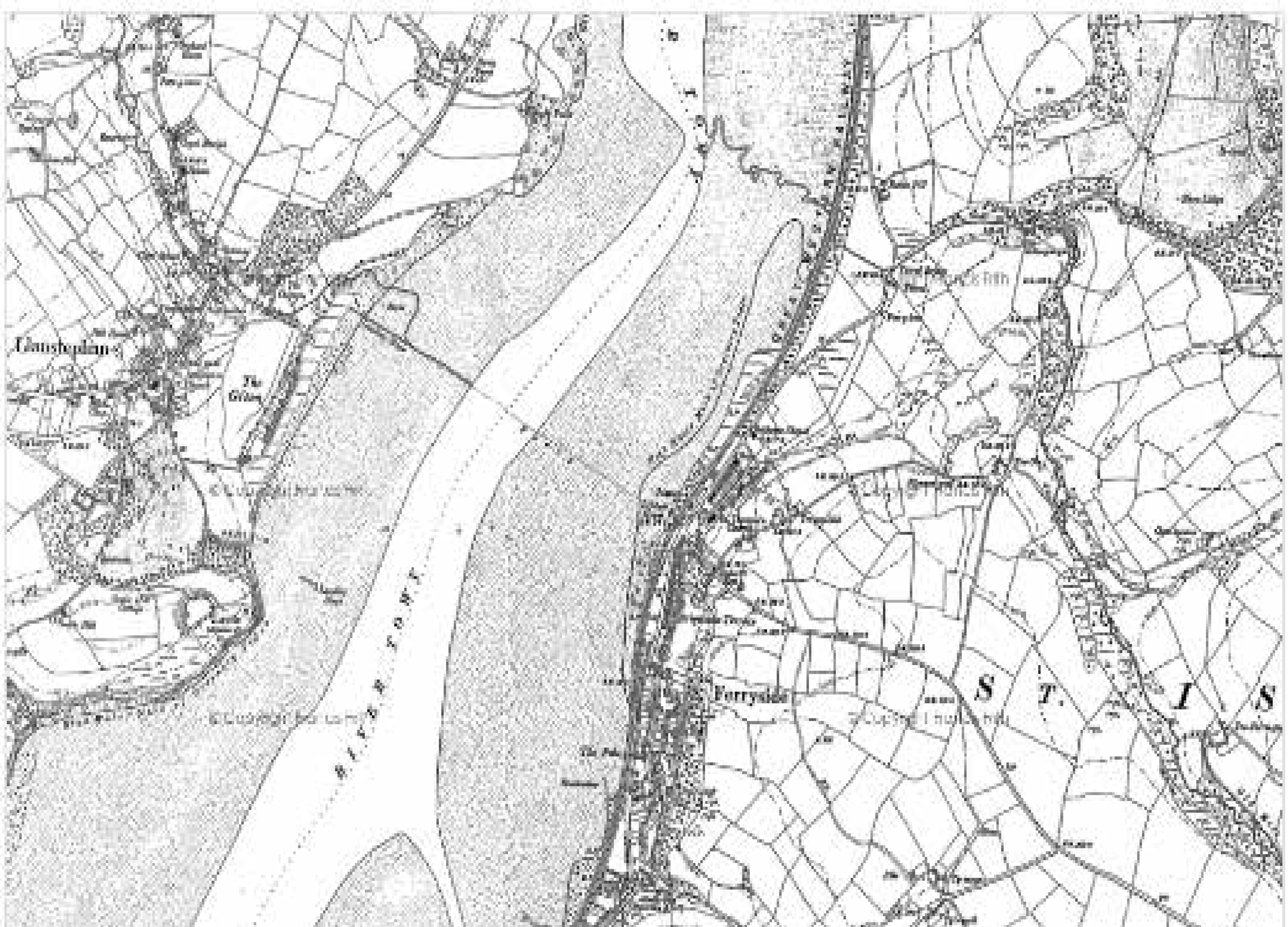
Exactly what resources the Welsh Government choose to devote to the fishery in future will also be shaped by political factors, including trade-offs between on-going public expenditure cutting and the iconic and cultural value of these historic cockle fisheries to south Wales.




Unloading Cockle Boat, Laughanure
B. R. Thomas & Co., Drapers, Laughanure


RYC 2003


RYC 2003


Llansteffan
The Green
RIVER TOWY
Ferryside
S T. I S







Dysconnectivity;

Our immoral and defunctive relationship with the earth and its bounties.

In past times it was a necessity to harvest food from the sea and surrounding lands, be that fishing, foraging or farming. A small village and its residents would rely heavily on the mutual responsibility to feed the whole community, of course, this wasn't an easy burden.

The term community here, holds far more prominence than that of what we know it today. Connected by the common goal for survival; people would simply have to rely on one another to be able to eat and live. The importance of precipitation was indisputable, but also seen as completely equal, for everyone had a skillset and commodity to contribute.

In comparison to our sense of community today, where a small group of people join together to share common interests or identities, with no other purpose than that of a sense of equality within a world of difference and prejudice. It seems as though the both are worlds apart.

We, within modern society, seemingly need not to rely on anyone but ourselves. Is this a mental constrain, a metaphysical common ground which we have constructed through misogynistic and egotistical tendencies, a capitalistic conformity we've inherited through habit, or is it a complete lack of purpose and community, connection and dependence on those and that which surrounds us.



