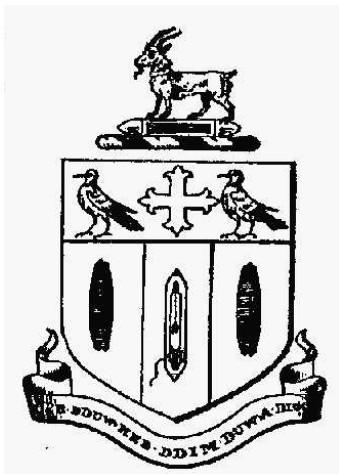


Royal Warrants and the art of self-promotion

Pryce Jones and his Royal Welsh Warehouse.



Sir Pryce Pryce-Jones had a personal coat of arms that was probably created at the time of his knighthood in 1887 or possibly when he was appointed High Sheriff in 1891, with segments of a shuttle and two spools of wool incorporated in the design. But for his brand, he made extensive use of the Royal Warrants and 'special appointments' given to him by various members of the Royal family, including many of the European Royalty who were Queen Victoria's children. It could be

said that he was a master in the art of self-promotion. It is interesting to follow the story of his use of the warrants over the years.

The Museum has the Lion and Unicorn from the Royal Arms of the Pryce Jones Royal Warrant, taken from above the door of the extension building on Kerry Road, Newtown which was built in 1895, and linked to the main warehouse with a bridge¹. These animals were donated to the museum by a local builder in the 1960s. The central piece of the insignia was not retained.



However, to this day, over the main entrance to the RWW there are a lion and unicorn on either side of a shield with four quadrants containing

the four symbols of the UK – the three lions (in two diagonal quadrants) the Irish harp, and a single upright lion (known as a lion rampant) representing Scotland – collectively known as the Royal Arms. Wales is not represented because *“its special position as a Principality was recognised by the creation of the Prince of Wales long before the incorporation of the quarterings for Scotland and Ireland in the Royal Arms”*.²

Each Monarch grants their own Royal Warrants and on the death of Queen Victoria the initial warrant would have lapsed. The design of the Royal Arms varies with each member of the Royal household. Pryce Jones and the Royal Welsh Warehouse continued to receive patronage from various members of the Royal Family for many years and it is not clear when this ceased. In general, the warrant allows the user to continue to display the Royal Arms for up to two years after the death of the grantor³.

This image of an elaborate header⁴ shows Pryce Pryce Jones's appointment to HRH Queen Victoria, and her daughters the Princess of Wales, the Imperial Empress of Russia, and the Imperial Empress of Austria and may have come from one of his catalogues. The earliest known catalogue is from 1882.⁵ In 1889 Pryce Jones purchased his own printing press so that he could produce his own catalogues rather than using an external printer.



² <https://www.royal.uk/coats-arms>

³ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_warrant_of_appointment_\(United_Kingdom\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_warrant_of_appointment_(United_Kingdom))

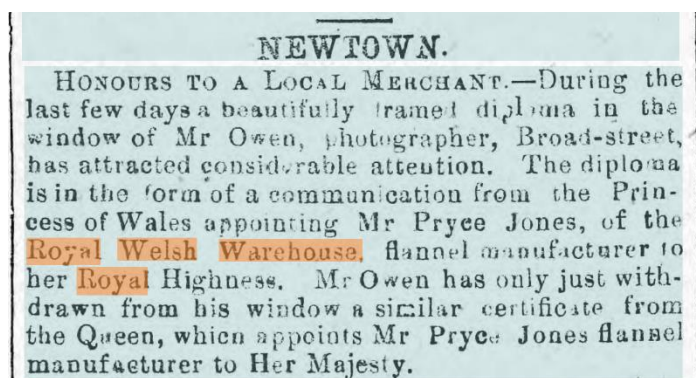
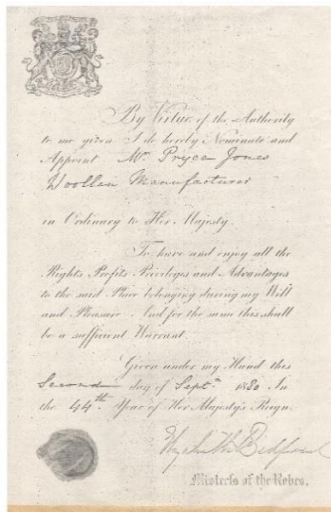
⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-55244397>

⁵ Held by Powys County Council according to <https://welshhat.wordpress.com/manufacture/manufacturers/pryce-jones-newtown/>

The earliest catalogue owned by the Museum is dated 1896⁶ and it has an impressive list of European royalty who reputedly patronised his shop. It also includes his Trademark which seems to have been an addition to his promotional tools in the 1890s.



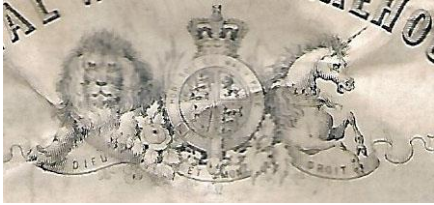
We have a copy of the document in which a Royal Warrant is issued to Pryce Jones, which is dated September 2nd 1880⁷. This authorised him to use the insignia. We believe this to be the first official warrant under Queen Victoria. By January 1881 the warrant from the Princess of Wales was added.



We have not been able to find any earlier evidence of warrants, but it is clear from earlier records such as an invoice to Amelia Ray dated June 28th 1873, that he was in fact using an insignia at that time, but a close

⁶ N.2022.4.1b
⁷ N.1991.57

look at the image would lead one to believe it was not the official version as the lion and unicorn are not quite 'proper', the unicorn seems to be lying down on the job, and the lion is without his crown⁸. So it seems to reinforce the view that he did not have the royal seal of approval at that

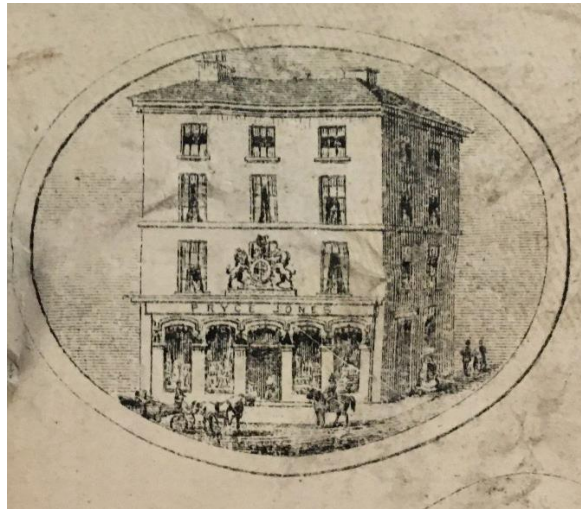


point.

Even without the official warrant it was fairly common for businesses to indicate that they sold items to the Royal Family without the official warrant and so the rules governing their use were tightened during the 1870s and 1880s⁹. 'It takes at least five years of supplying goods to the royal family before a company is eligible to have its application considered'¹⁰.

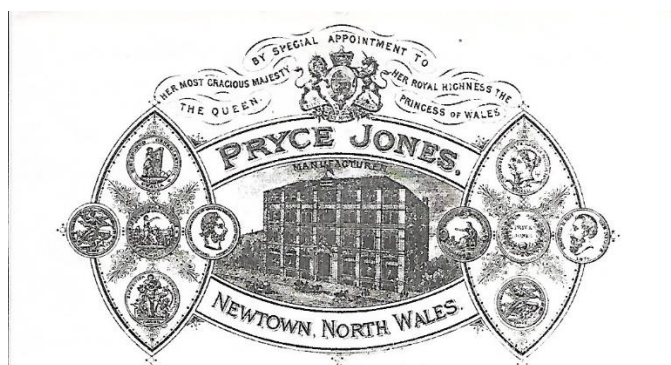
On the same document, in the picture of the Pryce Jones shop in Cross Street at the bottom of Broad Street in Newtown you can see a different insignia displayed on the wall above the name. The Lion and Unicorn used on the building seem to be the correct versions, seven years before authorisation was given!





The medal displayed on the left on this invoice above, is from the Great Exhibition of 1851 at Crystal Palace in London and is one of ten medals awarded at international exhibitions that feature on Pryce Jones' invoices and catalogues on numerous occasions. The Museum has several of the medals he was awarded, from Caerlion (Chester), Vienna, Philadelphia, and Sydney. It is interesting to note that according to an article ¹¹ detailing his work and history, 'there is no evidence of any Pryce Jones display in that exhibition [1851]', and as he would have been just 17 at the time and was an apprentice to draper John Davies in Newtown it seems very questionable.

A letter written by Pryce Jones in 1883 to accompany the prospectus for the sale of shares in the Severn Valley Mills has a heading to show his royal patronage and includes the Royal Arms¹². as well as his new building near the station.

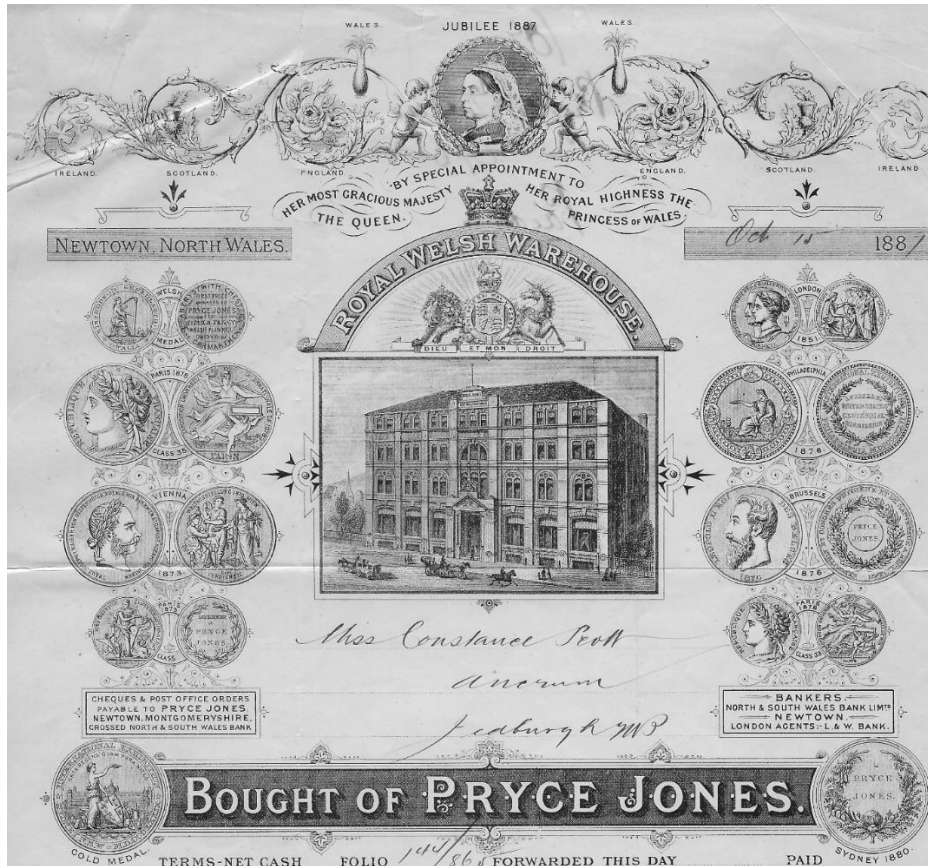


¹¹

¹²

<https://welshhat.wordpress.com/manufacture/manufacturers/pryce-jones-newtown/>
N.2022.7.3

The 1887 Jubilee year of Queen Victoria gave Pryce Jones the opportunity to really go to town with the printing of his invoices.



He made some (small) effort to include Wales in the elaborate acknowledgement of the component parts of the United Kingdom at the top by adding a leek¹³ even if Wales was not included in the Royal Arms. It is also of interest that on this invoice the Unicorn, while more elaborately decorated than in the invoice of 1873, is still not standing up to his job!

An invoice from 1904 shows a different layout and a warrant from Queen Alexandra¹⁴.



¹³ N.2013.3

¹⁴ People's Collection Wales GT180876

A catalogue from 1907 shows the same Royal Arms design but with different wording – saying that the company was ‘Specially appointed by Her Majesty the Queen’ and that the Princess of Wales also granted a Royal Warrant¹⁵.



By 1922 the Royal Arms remained the same, but the heading had varied to add in the Queen of Norway but exclude the Princess of Wales¹⁶. Twelve medals are displayed.



¹⁵ N.2021.5.1

¹⁶ People's Collection Wales GT180871

This 1929 postcard¹⁷ seems to be using the original warrant and shows the 10 medals rather than the 12 displayed on the 1922 invoice, and the trademark is also shown.



By the time of this 1933 Catalogue¹⁸ there is another variation in the Royal Arms. The insignia on the left (below) is that of Queen Mary, wife of King George V. The shield inside the white circle contains many more segments denoting her lineage as shown in more detail.



¹⁷ N.2021.4.7
¹⁸ N.1991.58

The elaborate stonework above the side door to Pryce Jones's main building, on the corner of Kerry Road has yet another variation, perhaps indicative of the Welsh connection with the central harp. This portion of the building was built in 1901 so possibly the only Royal Warrant that was current at the time was that of the Princess of Wales. The harp is not the same as the Irish harp of the Royal Standard but is similar to the one used in the company's trademark.



19

Recent photographs of the Pryce Jones Royal Welsh Warehouse building show that there is still a large version of the original royal warrant above the main door. As the building is no longer the headquarters of the original business, or indeed has any remaining connection with Pryce Jones other than the large sign of his name on the roof, one might wonder whether this should be retained as it is long past the two years when showing the royal arms should be allowed.

