

BRYNMAWR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS UPDATE

August 2021. Issue 23 – Another Late Issue

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Yes, I am aware this issue of News Update is late but I have been polishing an article on David Lewis (King Crispin), the Brynmawr Chartists leader. It will be available online in the latest Chartism eMag and also in the Blaenau Gwent Heritage Forum Journal which is due out in the autumn. Whilst I was beavering away researching and writing about David Lewis, coincidentally Edmund Jones (Ivan, who was our treasurer for many years) was reading about another David Lewis from Brynmawr. This is his email to me:

“I am reading a book about the British nuclear program and William Penney, who is widely credited as the "father" of the British nuclear research which led to the development of the Bomb. The book mentions David Lewis who was a chemist and Penney described him as his second best scientist, a tremendous compliment in such a large development team. David Lewis was the son of a miner and was from Brynmawr; he went to the "County School", later the grammar school in Brynmawr and studied Chemistry at Aberystwyth and got his first degree and PHD at that university. He was an expert on Tritium which is an isotope of hydrogen and used in thermonuclear weapons, his nickname was "Dai Trit" for obvious reasons. I wonder does anybody in the society know of him or his Brynmawr connections. He was born in 1909 and died in 1992”.

Sandra Plaister did some research on the 1911 census and found one David John Lewis who could be our person but born in 1905. His father was a coal hewer, i.e. a coal miner and they lived at 72 Clydach Street. He had a sister named Blodwen and she was 2 years younger.

Over to you readers, do any of you have a connection to Dai Trit? If you do know of the family then please contact the society at the usual email. Many thanks to Ivan for bringing this to our attention and thanks to Sandra for the extra information.

The society will reopen in September but there will be some restrictions. Below are the Blaenau Gwent guidelines which are a good indication of what we could follow.

From a BGCBC view point we are still all working from home if we can and meetings face to face are discouraged but not banned. Any gatherings are now not restricted to six but they are restricted to the risk assessments of the meeting venue. There seems to be different interpretations of the regulations but unless you are eating or drinking it is a case of masks on inside. Restaurant, pubs and cafes are masks on unless you are sitting down. The regulations for places of worship are masks on apart from the preacher, singing with masks on but can be removed for communion. Workplaces can remove masks. Ultimately it will be up to the host venue to make a decision on this but they may limit numbers and may request mask wearing. As to the talks, if they are in a café you may be able to be mask free. One thing I am sure of, most people are still wearing masks in public and even when they can be removed, many are choosing to stay masked up.

Due to the guidelines as they currently stand the Historical Society will probably have a policy of **up to the individual if they wear a mask** as many members are still concerned. Ditto if you wish to sit 2m apart. There won't be a **Track & Trace** form to fill on entry. It is quite possible that by the time this News Update goes out all restrictions will have been lifted or we are going into another lockdown. Let's hope it's the first option.

See you (hopefully) on September 15th.

Our programme to the end of the year has been arranged and it looks like this:

September 15th a talk by myself on Crawshay Bailey. On the first evening we will familiarise members on the various rules etc.

October 20th Gillian Wakely talking about Plas Gunter Mansion. (Held over from 2020)

November 17th Janet Karn and "Murder most foul" (Held over from 2020)

December 15th Andrew Brown and his talk on Shipwrecks. (Held over from 2020)

The December meeting is when we normally have our Christmas Buffet. The committee will decide if we go ahead with this at the next committee meeting which will be on September 1st. You will be kept informed.

On the 3rd of May 1904 the Evening Express reported the following: At the Brynmawr Police court on Monday, Leon Vint, theatrical performer of Ebbw Vale, was summoned under the Motor-car Act for not giving audible warning of his approach. Police-constable Baille said the defendant, in his car, had nearly come to contact with a nurse and two children, who had great difficulty in getting out of the way, owing to their not hearing the approach of the car. Henry Gouins, Ebbw Vale and George Sydney King, manager of the King's Theatre, Ebbw Vale, stated that they heard the defendant give warning, *(they must have been in the car with him)*. The Bench considered the case proved, and imposed a fine of 20 shillings inclusive of costs. Defendant asked what time would be allowed him for making an appeal. I wonder if this was the first motoring offence in Brynmawr.

During the lockdown I have been trying hard to catch up on my reading, too many magazines are piling up by my chair. I managed to get hold of issue 63 of the Gwent Local History magazine (Autumn 1987) and a very interesting article by Frank Olding about King Arthur. This is not the King of the round table but the ancient Welsh warrior. Frank says:

"Whatever the origins of the great hero, it is obvious that Arthur was a popular figure in the folklore of this area". He goes on to say:

"Sometime in the 1070s or 1080s a monk from Llancarfan by the name Lifris wrote a biography of St Cadog (as in Llangatog) and he includes an account of his birth. A local Gwentian king called Gwynllyw eloped with Gwladus, a daughter of Brychan, king of Brycheiniog. Brychan gave chase with his warriors. When he had almost caught up with the couple, Gwynllyw and Gwladus came to a hill named Boch Rhiw Carn (Carn is a cairn) where they met Arthur, Kai and Bedivere playing dice. The three vigorous heroes promptly defeat Brychan and his men in a bloody battle. The happy couple go on their way and the result of their passion is the holy St Cadog.

It has been suggested that Boch Rhiw Carn is to be found on Mynydd Llangatog, north of Beaufort though Frank favours one of the cairns on Mynydd Fochriw above Rhymney, possibly Carn y Bugail. It is of course quite possible to connect Fochriw with Boch Rhiw, just change a few letters.

Frank also mentions Ystrad Yw which today is represented by the village of Llanbedr Ystradyw near Crickhowell but at one time the name covered a much wider area which stretched as far as and included Brynmawr. In the Legends of the Mabinogion we come across Culhwch and Olwen. Culhwch had asked for Arthur's help to hunt the Twrch Trwyth, (one of many tasks Culhwch had to complete to win the hand of Olwen). Arthur's men joined Culhwch and they hunted the Twrch Trwyth through Gwent. Some of Arthur's men had special powers; I wonder if this is where Marvel Comics had their ideas? There is a wealth of information about the presence of Arthur in Gwent and I urge you to seek out a copy of Journal 63. (There may well be one in the Brynmawr Museum).

As the society is due to restart future News Updates will not be monthly but will contain information about what is happening within the society, visits considered and snippets of information. In the meantime I found this link on the BBC website. Well worth checking it out.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00dtqf8>

Keep safe. The secretary.