

## A Guide to Street Names of Brynmawr ©Eifion Lloyd Davies 2015.

As we all know by now, the town of Brynmawr is very young, no more than about 200 years old. St Mary's Church for example celebrated 100 years in the year 2000. We must also remember that the main part of the town was planned, this is not some haphazard built centre, it was laid out on a grid system.

Many ago, I was a young teacher being guided by Edwin Jones who was the authority on Brynmawr's history. I put it to him that I would like to run a project with my class on local names. Working through, it became obvious that there were three, maybe four distinct periods of building and the street names reflect this. At first, the moor land on which the town grew was criss-crossed by mule tracks carrying the raw material needed to feed the hungry furnaces of Nant y Glo. In time, tram roads were constructed and it is along the side of these tram roads the first houses in the town were built. The Nant y Glo to Darren Disgwylyfa Tram road made its way towards the Heathcock Pond, now the Welfare Park. It ran up Well Street, so called because of wells that were there, into Clydach Street, around Aneurin Crescent and finally up the Dingle and across the moors to the quarries where today the Lowly Shepherd stands. Those streets are probably the only ones in Brynmawr that wind and follow the contour as much as possible.

The Nant y Glo to Llangattock quarries tram road starts on the West side of the works coming on to Limestone Road. It pulled on up Station Road and across the Market Square. A market has been held here for over a hundred years. In Mr. Bainton's memories he states that the market would run from where the Museum is now as far as the old Semtex site. He also says that women would hang their washing on the square as it caught the breeze. The line continued along Lower Bailey Street and into Intermediate Road. This was also called County School Road at one point. The Intermediate School was here. Other streets that follow tramlines are Greenland Road, (Greenland Farm). Darrenfelen Road, (was there a path to Darrenfelen?), Pound Road (there was a pound there, it's now called Trafalgar Road), Alma Street, (the battle of Alma and a pub named the Alma) and Warwick Road.

The earliest purposely built streets were Beaufort and Glamorgan Streets. Built on land owned by the Duke of Beaufort, these early streets built on the grid system were named after the Duke's family. We have Somerset Street, Fitzroy Street, which I believe might have been a pack mule track coming down off the Patches and finally Worcester Street. I seem to think someone told me that Worcester Street was to be the main street and it's certainly the longest street in the town. (King Street does not count as it was the King's Highway built in 1812 as the Govilon to Merthyr turnpike Road). That was the first period of building.

This was followed by the Victorian period of building. First up was the area known as Newtown that is around the Bus Station. The streets are named accordingly; we have Gladstone and Curzon Street and Clarence Street. Then the socialist period as the red flag became such an important icon to the town's people. The New Houses or Twyncynghordy Estate to give it the correct name was first and many more followed. The street names reflect the impact of socialism on the town's history.

Today? Well, not as much fun really as the old names are disappearing, Prospect Place has become Sunnybank Court, the Heathcock has become Heathcote, what was Blewett Square became Council Offices and Aspen Park does not have aspens growing there. (Were they thinking of making it a ski resort?). To all the pupils who might remember doing the project, thank you for your enthusiasm and here's part of the end result finally published.

Aneurin Crescent. Aneurin Place.	Named after Aneurin Bevan, M.P. for Blaenau Gwent, who instigated the National Health scheme. The crescent also follows part of a tramroad, which then runs above the Clydach River towards the highest point of the Heads of the Valley where it turns back on itself along the other side before taking a sharp left to cross the moor towards Darran Disgwylfa quarry.
Alma Street. Alma Terrace.	There was a pub on the corner with Factory Road called The Alma. During the Crimean War a famous battle was fought at "Alma".
Alexandra Terrace.	Named after Queen Alexandra, the wife of King Edward VIIth.
Bailey Street. Lower Bailey St.	The iron master Crawshay Bailey lived at Ty Mawr, Nant y Glo. One of his tramroads, (built in 1830) ran along Lower Bailey Street and on across the Hafod Road to an incline above Llangattock where the trams would descend to the canal. On Bailey Street you will find the pub named "The Cymro". This is in memory of the Cymro engine owned by Crawshay Bailey that ran along the tramroad. There was a wall mural on the side of the pub showing an artist's impression of the engine. On October 20 <sup>th</sup> 1871, Joshua Morgan of Brynmawr died from injuries caused by the Cymro engine. He is buried at Llanelli Church.
Bath Lane.	This ran to the open-air swimming baths built during the 30's by volunteer workers as a means of giving the unemployed of the town something to do. Locally known as Bars Lane.
Beaufort Street. Beaufort Buildings.	The Duke of Beaufort owns all the land around the town. When Brynmawr was first planned the earliest streets built were all named after the Beaufort family or estates they owned. Beaufort Buildings was the name for the row that includes the Community College facing the Market Square.
Blaenafon Road.	This was the original path/road leading to Blaenafon.
Blaina Road.	This leads towards Blaina.
Blewett Square.	Family named Blewett.
Boundary Street.	Stand on the corner of Boundary Street with Bailey Street and you'll find a boundary stone marking where three parishes meet, Llangattock, Aberystroth and Llanelli Parish. Half way down the street is the site of "The King Crispin" pub whose landlord was David Lewis, the leader of the Brynmawr Chartists.

Brook Street.	Below the road runs the Ebbw Fach river. It once filled the Heathcock Pond with water, a reservoir for the Nant y Glo iron works. The pond was drained and is now of course the Welfare Park. The Ebbw Fach flows through Nant y Glo and on to join the Ebbw Fawr at Aberbeeg and the Usk at Newport.
Bryn Awel.	Translates as "Breezy Hill".
Bull's Gully. (Also called Coalman's Lane).	Mr Bull lived at the bottom of the lane. He owned a coal level, which ran into the hillside near the house.
Catholic Road.	The Catholic Church and school are on the road.
Cemetery Road.	This leads to the town's cemetery and to the Jewish Cemetery.
Chapel Street.	Libanus Chapel is on the corner of the street with Worcester Street.
Church Lane. Church Terrace.	The lane leads to St. Mary's Church and the church cemetery. There is also a plaque on the wall of the terrace stating when it was built.
Clarence Street.	At the corner of the street is the pub called "The Clarence" (it became the "The Gwesty Bach" for a short time).. It was probably named after the Duke of Clarence.
Clydach Street.	Part of Crawshay Bailey's tramroads that led over the moors to the Darren Disgwylfa quarries from where limestone would be taken to the iron works at Nant y Glo. The street also leads to Clydach Dingle. You crossed the River Clydach over a small bridge just below Aneurin Crescent. The narrow path down to the river can still be followed though care should be taken.
Curzon Street.	Part of what was known as New Town; the street was probably named after George Nathaniel Curzon who was Viceroy of India in 1898.
Darrenfelen Road.	Leads towards Darrenfelen/Llanelli Hill.
Davies Street.	Or should it be Davis Street?
Dumfries Place.	Absolutely no idea, can anyone help?
Factory Road.	First site of the Brynmawr Boot Factory.
Fairview.	Well, it really has got a fair view.

Fitzroy Street.	Named after the Beaufort-Fitzroy family
George Street.	Originally called Worcester street West it was renamed in honour of George Vth.
Gladstone Street	William George Gladstone, prime minister during the reign of Queen Victoria. One of the streets that made up the Newtown area around the bus station.
Glamorgan Street.	Another named after the Beaufort-Fitzroy family. The Duke of Beaufort owned land on Glamorganshire; until very recently his estate was handled by solicitors at Swansea.
Gordon Terrace.	Running up towards the Recreation Park from Greenland Road, the terrace was named to honour Charles George Gordon (of Khartoum) who died in 1885.
Greenland Road. Greenland Row.	The "Row" is where the Hobby Horse (previously the Belle View) pub stands. Both the Road and Row are named after Greenland Farm on whose land they were built.
Gurnos Estate.	Named after Gurnos Jones, Councillor.
Harcourt Road.	A Liberal politician, William George Harcourt.
Hatter Street.	An indication of one of the cottage industries of Brynmawr, hats were made here.
Henderson Road.	A Labour politician, Arthur Henderson won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1934.
Heol Derw. Heol Helyg. Heol Onnen.	The three roads on the Brynfarm Estate built on land held by Bryn Farm. They translate as Oak Road, Willow Road and Ash Road.

Heol Ganol. Heol Isaf.	Part of the planned estate that was to be built to house workers at the Enfield/Brynmawr Rubber Factory (Dunlop Semtex eventually) which is now (apparently) under ASDA.
Hill Crest. Hill Crescent. Hill Street.	Built on the steep hill running up from King Street.
Intermediate Road.	The site of the Intermediate School. The road has also been named County (School) Road and it leads towards the Hafod Road.

John Thomas's Row.	Built by John Thomas. There are quite a few terraces in the town that bear a plaque to commemorate the builder; unfortunately reckless rendering has destroyed some of the plaques. Sadly, John Thomas's Row is no more. You would have found it off Catholic Road next to Miles' Row.
King Edward Rd.	Probably named after King Edward VIIth.
King Street.	This is the King's highway, the turnpike road from Govilon to Merthyr Tydfil. It was completed and opened in 1812. From Govilon you entered Brynmawr via a tollgate more or less where the Bridge End pub now stands, (you would have come down "Joby's Pitch"). You left Brynmawr via a tollgate near the A.T.S. garage in Beaufort. This tollgate was called "Beaufort Gate".
Lansbury Road.	Named after the labour politician George Lansbury who also founded and was the editor of the Daily Herald. His grand-daughter is the actress Angela Lansbury.
Lake Road.	Well, it is near a lake, actually more of a pond really.
Market Square.	There was a market held on the square for many years, so popular there were stalls as far as the new roundabout for Blaenafon and up Beaufort Street.
Miles Row.	Another terrace named after the builder. Sadly no longer there.
Morton's Farm.	I believe the Morton family lived here (a farm)

New Houses.	This was the first Council Estate built in the town and even though many other council estates have been built since, it will always be known as the "New Houses". The correct name is Twyncynghordy Estate. Most of the streets were named after socialists or liberals.
Old Blaenafon Rd.	Old path heading towards Blaenafon.
Osbourne Road. (Note the spelling)	Ralph Bernal Osbourne, Liberal M.P. Unfortunately this road suffers from a change in spelling, lately it is spelt Osborne.
Orchard Street.	There is no orchard here but there was once an Orchard Court that lay behind the street.
Park Crescent. Park View.	A crescent overlooking the park, but Park View does not give you a view of the park.

Pleasant View.	It really has got a pleasant view but a few years ago some of the houses cracked due to subsidence and were demolished.
Pont y Gôf.	Here stood two smithies to shoe horses working locally and to repair miners' tools and so on. The Clydach Rail Road from the canal at Gilwern ran between the two smithies.
Pound Road.	(Also known as Trafalgar Road, the Town Council Offices were at Trafalgar House). There was a pound where stray animals were kept until claimed. There was also a short tramroad siding here.
Prospect Place.	Not much of a prospect now, it was demolished and flats have been erected on the site. Naturally they called the flats Sunnybank Court. What was wrong with Prospect Place?
Queen Street. Queen Square.	Probably to remind us all about Queen Victoria. There is a very interesting wall plaque naming the countries of the Empire on the house next to the Blaenafon road roundabout. Queen Square is behind the current Fire Station.
Rhyd Clydach.	Rhyd is the Welsh word for a ford and the River Clydach flows nearby.
Somerset Street.	Another in the Beaufort-Fitzroy family. Badminton House, which is now the family seat of the Beaufort family, is in Somerset. Previously, the family seat was of course Raglan Castle.

Station Road.	Curiously enough this road led to Brynmawr Station from where you could catch a train to Abergavenny, Merthyr and Blaenafon. Eventually, after the missing link to Nant y Glo station was opened in 1905 you could catch a train to Newport. The Bailey brother's tram-road ran along the route having come up from Nant y Glo iron works along Limestone Road.
Sunnybank.	Catches the sun all day long.
Thornhill Close.	Why?
Tudor Crescent.	Named after Tudor Watkins M.P.
Twyncynghordy Rd. (And Place).	Translates as "The meeting place of the council". Possibly where tribes met in pre Roman times to trade? There was also a tree known as the "Chartist Tree" here where the chartists met secretly.
Warwick Road.	Probably named after Frances Evelyn Grenville, the Countess of Warwick and a keen socialist.
Well Street.	Quite a few wells found along this road, it was originally part of the tramroad that turned into Clydach Street and on to the incline above Llangattock. I wonder if Well Villa stood on this road.

Western Avenue.	Part of the "New Houses". I wonder if it's aligned to the west.
Windsor Road.	Probably after the Windsor pit (coal mine) and not after the Duke of Windsor. About half way up the road there once stood a boundary stone, one in a series to mark parish boundaries. Some are still standing especially along the Milfrain Mountain and one on the corner of Boundary Street.
Worcester Street.	Another of the Beaufort-Fitzroy family, they owned land in Worcestershire.
Aspen Park.	Why? There are no aspen trees growing here but there was a camp on the site that housed Canadian soldiers during the 2nd World War. The estate has been built on the site of the old Tuff boot factory and some of the street names reflect the old trade, for example: - Shoemakers' Close.