

BRYNMAWR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS UPDATE

Special Lockdown Edition

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Sometimes you wait months for a News Update and suddenly two come at the same time. The lockdown has made me do a lot of catching up especially when it rains and I can't do the garden as planned.

To this end I present a special News Update in the hope somebody out there will fill in gaps in the following articles.

Update on the HOV works. This is the latest and following discussions they have chosen to implement Option B as follows:

Option B involves maintaining free flow along the elevated A465 with no roundabout to provide full access to Brynmawr and the surrounding area. For those **travelling from Brynmawr heading east**, traffic will use the new Jack Williams Bridge and eastbound on-slip with little or no impact on travel times.

For those accessing Brynmawr from the east will require a detour of circa 5 miles using the A465 and the A4281 roundabout at Rassau.

For those **travelling from Brynmawr heading west**, the official diversion involves travelling east through the works and turning around at Saleyard.

After approximately 4 months westbound traffic from Brynmawr roundabout would use the permanent and newly built westbound entry slip road meaning after that time only traffic accessing Brynmawr from the east will continue to use the detour.

For those accessing Brynmawr from the west, traffic will use the new infrastructure via the eastbound off-slip with little or no impact on travel times.

You have been warned!

Orchard Street.

Quite a few years ago I compiled a list of the street names in Brynmawr and the possible reasons why they were so called. The list is available on our website.

Orchard Street was a mystery to me as there was no orchard in the area, the town was still quite young, possibly started towards the end of the 1790s and the earlier streets were named after the Duke of Beaufort's family as he owned the land. Orchard Street came much later and was part of a grid system of streets (like New York), which included Hatter Street, Chapel Street, Orchard Street, Glamorgan Street, Beaufort Street and Queen Street all crossing Worcester Street at right angles. Also as the town is the highest in Britain, it's very unlikely someone had planted an orchard here. The 1880 map of the town also shows there was an Orchard Square off Orchard Street.

Recently someone enquired via our web site about a man named Abraham Orchard (1782-1848) who was involved with the primitive Methodist chapel on Orchard Street. He was a coal agent employed by the Baileys and owned quite a few houses that were possibly named Orchard Houses.

Could Orchard Square be the houses mentioned?

Abraham Orchard seemed to be quite a wealthy person owning a few houses and also a coal-agent; it is therefore possible that the street was named Orchard Street because of him. It was quite common here to name houses usually after those who built them e.g. Eddy's Terrace and so on. The mystery has quite possibly been resolved.

Unless of course someone knows better.

Brynmawr Sporting Hero.

As many of you know, Brynmawr has and had more than its fair shares of sporting heroes and the Brynmawr and District Museum has a very good display of those who participated in various sporting conflicts. (Incidentally, this is a good chance to check out the museum's new website).

(www.brynmawrmuseum.org.uk)

But I wonder how many of you were aware of Roy Francis who was born in Cardiff (according to Wikipedia) in 1919 but brought up in Brynmawr. The family lived in Well Street before moving to Windsor Road. His mother was Rebecca Francis. He possibly attended the St Mary's Church School on Queen Streets as some of his relatives did. As a teenager he played Rugby Union for the Brynmawr R.F.C. but at 17 years old he decided to sign on as a player for Wigan, an English Rugby League club in November 1936 and made his debut for that team on Friday, March 26th 1937.

Wigan was not the only Northern side he played for, during his career he played with Barrow, Dewsbury, Warrington and Hull F.C. He served in the army during the Second World War and reached the rank of Sergeant and naturally played rugby for the Northern Command XIII. He also represented Great Britain and also Wales in international competitions. He played his last game in 1955 before becoming a coach which is where he made his mark. His

coaching methods with Hull F.C. for example were forward looking and he took the team to title success then went on to coach Leeds when they won the Challenge Cup. He then moved to coach an Australian team before returning to Leeds and then Bradford Northern. Roy still has relatives living in Brynmawr.

Roy was married to Renee and had two boys, Ian and Jeffrey. He died in April 1989.

(This is a work in progress and will be added to and amended as further information becomes available. I'm grateful to Don Thomas who supplied some of the above).

Those of you who are lucky enough to live in the top part of Brynmawr with fabulous views over towards the Milfrain and Ben Ward's fields will be aware of the changes being made to the landscape. Sitting, as I often do in the garden in the late afternoon playing ball with the dog, I can't help but wonder exactly what it's going to look like when all the work is completed. More important is whether the new landscape will stay there when we have some really heavy rain.

Recently the site of a Hafod (summer farm) was surveyed and logged on the field above the Brynmawr cemetery on the way to slam gate. More about this in the next issue of News Update which could arrive earlier than you think.

And finally another enquiry on our website mentioned that '**Prosser**' seems to have been a prominent name in Brynmawr in the 1850s and there was Prosser's Row, Prosser's Houses and William Prosser's Houses. I didn't come across these when I compiled the list of "lost" street names so does anyone have any idea where these streets were?
