

BRYNMAWR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# NEWS UPDATE

May/June 2022.

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Recently, our website received the following email:

*"I wonder if you might be able to help me with a little piece of research.*

*Today at an antiques fair I purchases a silver snuff box with the following inscription:*

***Presented to R Percy Adams***

***as an appreciation by Brynmawr Friends May 1907***

*I am curious to know if you may have any information regarding Mr Adams in your society records as I would very much like to add to the history of the item".*

A following email had a photograph of the object plus a description:



*Just so you have the full picture from me, I can tell you the box itself is of heavy gauge silver which denotes good quality and means it would have been quite expensive to purchase at the time. It measure just a fraction under 7 cm*

*long and was made by the silversmith*

*T Beardsmore of Birmingham who's*

*hallmark was registered from 1895 to 1903 and is dated 1902-3. So the piece is a few years older than the inscription itself.*

The question now arose as to who was R. Percy Adams so I did some research (with help from Nicholas Beswick and Sandra Plaister) and found the following;

Depending on which record you use Richard Percy Adams may have been born in 1855, 1860 or even 1861 and possibly baptised on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1866 which could also be his birth year. No record of his birth month or date. His mother's name was Hannah but no father's name entered.

The 1871 census says he was born in 1855, living in Well Street and he was 16 years old. Seems his mother was not married at this time. His sister Ann also lived with the family, she was older than Richard.

By 1891, the family were living in King Street; R. Percy Adams was 31 years old and listed as an assistant school master, his mother Hannah was listed as widow

By the 1901 census he's listed as the head of the household aged 40 (therefore born 1861). His sister was still living in the household.

Local newspaper reported in January 1887 that he was unanimously appointed to the post of Assistant Master at the Boys Department of the Board School. There were six applicants for the post but he was elected unanimously. . An interesting fact from the article is that there were 111 children who, it was admitted never went to school.

In October 1910 the Vicar of Brynmawr, Canon Griffiths preached a farewell sermon at St Mary's Church. The service was attended by the Brynmawr Territorial's and also the St John's Ambulance Brigade under the command of Chief Superintendant R. Percy Adams. But it also seems that R. P. Adams was involved with the Brynmawr Territorial because at an annual Christmas prize distribution he, as Colour Sergeant seconded the proposed vote of thanks.

He served during WW1 as his name is on our war memorial, in September 1915 it was reported that "numerous friends at Brynmawr will be glad to hear that Lieut. R. P. Adams is reported by the Territorial's who have returned from active service to be in the pink of condition. Lieut. Adams is said to be one of the most popular officers in the battalion. He is a schoolmaster by profession, and received his commission shortly before the war after long service with the ranks".

Interestingly, our War memorial marks him as Capt. R. P. Adams B.T.F.

I also found a reference that he was also an accomplished musician who played the organ.

There is no record of him in the 1921 census but in 1922 there is a record of a Richard P. Adams died at Neath, Glamorganshire at 57 years old which would give his birth year as 1865.

R. Percy Adams was very popular with the Brynmawr town's people as the above reports suggest so why did he move to Neath later in life?

There are some questions to be answered and more research needed.

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In previous issues of the News Update I have mentioned Roy Francis, the Brynmawr boy who played (possibly one) game for Brynmawr rugby team before moving North to play Rugby League.

There is a new book about Roy, "Ahead of His Time, Roy Francis and Rugby League" by the author Peter Lush. The book was published in April and I have asked Brynmawr Library to get a copy. So if you are interested then do ask the library to reserve it for you.

Keeping with rugby, it was good to hear that a local girl played at the Cardiff Millennium Stadium on Bank Holiday Monday last.

Amelia Bailey of Brynmawr aged 13 attends Brynmawr Foundation School.

Amelia has played rugby since the age of 6, initially for RTB Ebbw Vale RFC and then Beaufort RFC. In 2021, due to her age, she joined Nelson RFC, Belles U15's team. The team quickly came together in pre-season and went on to win every game leading them to win the WRU South Wales Cup.

They then went on to earn their place in the WRU National U15's Cup Final that was played on Bank Holiday Monday 2nd May in the Principality Stadium against a strong Cardiff Quinns team. Despite being 0 v 7 down at half time they took control of the game in the second half winning 17 v 7 at full time.

Thanks to dad, Steve Bailey for submitting the information and well done Amelia.





P.S. Our planned visit to the Nantgarw China Museum and works has been moved again due to transport problems.

The new date is Wednesday, July 13<sup>th</sup>.

There are 10 seats available on the coach so if the date agrees with you then let us know at the next meeting (May 18<sup>th</sup>) or contact me.

Your friendly neighbourhood secretary.