

A PROUD PAST PRESERVED FOR THE FUTURE



*Des at Lewis Merthyr Colliery
Closing Down Presentation
1983, six months before the
National Strike.*



Des Dutfield – Taking Care of Business

He was greatly respected within the mining communities throughout the UK.

Lewis Merthyr Colliery is a testament to the coal mining history of the Rhondda Valleys, which until the end of the 20th century was one of the most important coal mining areas in the world. In an area only 16 miles long, the Rhondda, alone, had at one time over 53 working collieries.

A Tribute to South Wales Miners

Teyrnged i Lowyr De Cymru

A permanent reminder of the big wheel and the winder
And the men who risked their lives to hew the coal.
The hardship and the tragedies for miners and their families,
Explosions, falls and gas that took their toll
And wrecked and maimed the body not the soul.
The monument – miner's lamp to show we'll not forget
The fortitude and suffering, their spirit, toil and sweat.
These giants of yesterdays, whose struggles time cannot erase,
Their sacrifice and courage we extol.

HAWYS GLYN JAMES

The Association of Friends of Rhondda Heritage Park
wish to express their gratitude to
all those who have supported and contributed in any way to this event.

WHEN COAL WAS KING, RHONDDA REIGNED SUPREME

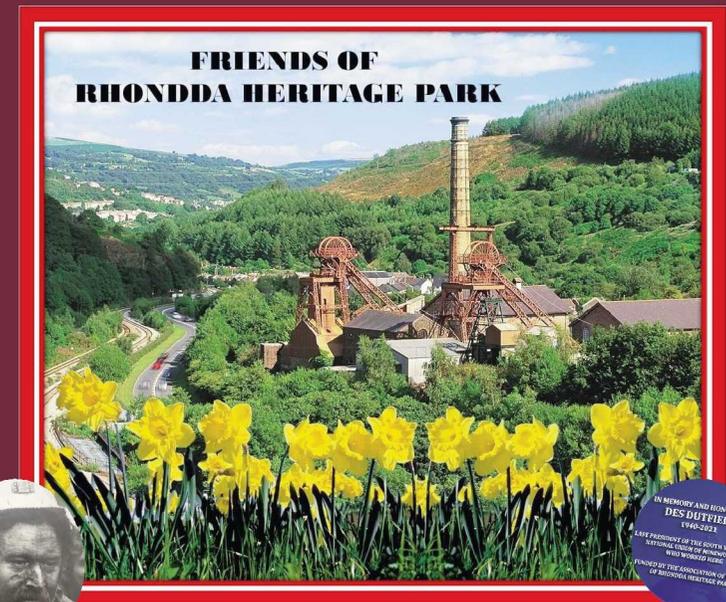
THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF RHONDDA HERITAGE PARK Souvenir Programme

In Loving Memory of Des Dutfield

4th June 1940 – 22nd September 2021

and in Commemoration of
the Official Unveiling of the

DES DUTFIELD PRESENTATION PLAQUE



Friday 11th October 2024 at 12 noon

FUNDED BY

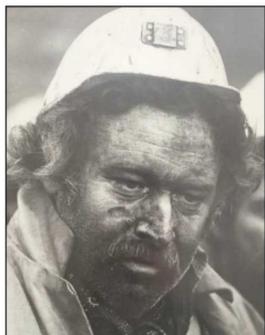
THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF RHONDDA HERITAGE PARK

Des Dutfield served as President of the South Wales Area of the National Union of Mineworkers, from 1985 to 1991, and was the last President of the South Wales N.U.M.

Des Dutfield led a 'Stay Down Strike'. On 21st February 1983, miners at the Lewis Merthyr Colliery refused to come up the pit after the day shift and began their 'Stay Down Strike' in protest at plans to close their colliery. The men came up the pit to a hero's welcome after a four-and-a-half day 'Stay Down Strike'.

'Stay Down Strike'

following the announcement of the closure of the Lewis Merthyr Colliery in February 1983



Des returning to the colliery surface following the 'Stay Down Strike'.

Des and fellow miners returning to the colliery surface following the 'Stay Down Strike'.



Des and fellow miners returning to the colliery surface.



Des and his son Lee in the Lewis Merthyr Colliery canteen, shortly after returning to the colliery surface.



History of Lewis Merthyr Colliery

David and John Thomas had sunk the Hafod Colliery in 1850, but it was abandoned because of geological problems before any coal was produced.

In 1872, Thomas Jones took over Hafod Colliery which by 1877 was known as Jones' Navigation in the List of Mines.

On 11th February 1882, the Colliery was owned by the Lewis Merthyr Navigation Collieries Company Limited. The name was changed back to Hafod and from 1885 to 1887 to Jones' Navigation again. William Thomas Lewis (later Lord Merthyr) had sunk the "Bertie" shaft by late 1880. A year later a second shaft the "Trefor" was sunk. The shafts were named after his two sons.

At this time, the Colliery was known as Merthyr Navigation. From the Inspector of Mines list 1896, there were 599 men employed at Hafod Colliery and 778 at the Bertie pit, each producing Steam Coal and there were 754 employed at the Trefor pit producing House Coal.

During the late 1890's, the owners had become Lewis Merthyr Consolidated Collieries Limited and it had developed into a unit with four winding shafts (including Coedcae and Hafod), with a total weekly output averaging 20,000 tons, known as Lewis Merthyr.

By 1908, there were 1053 men employed at the Bertie pit and 1066 men at the Trefor pit.

The Colliery was using the latest blast-driven (compressed air) coal-cutting machinery in some seams well before the First World War, the annual output reached 1.500.000 tons.

In 1918, the Bertie and Trefor pits employed: 1792 men, Coedcae: 556 men and Hafod Nos. 1 & 2: 1496 men.

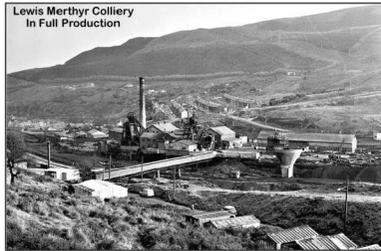
From a list in 1923, the Bertie employed 1243 men working the Six Feet, Red and Nine Feet seams. The Trefor employed 829 working the Upper and Lower Five Feet and the Gellideg seams.

Coedcae employed 585 producing house coal. Hafod No.1 employed 928 working the Upper and Middle Five Feet. Hafod No. 2 employed 569 working the Two Foot Nine seam.

Powell Duffryn became the new owners during 1929. In the same year, Coedcae ceased winding coal followed in 1930 by Hafod No. 2 and in 1933 Hafod No.1 also closed.

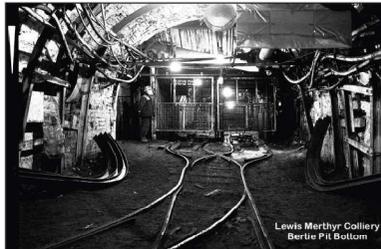
During 1945, Bertie and Trefor pits employed 1433 men between them. In 1956, the output at this time was around 1250 tons per day, with a workforce of 1160 men.

In 1958, Lewis Merthyr Colliery was merged with Tymawr Colliery. All the coal was then brought to the surface via Tymawr and the materials were supplied via Lewis Merthyr. Tymawr and Lewis Merthyr collieries closed in 1983.



Lewis Merthyr Colliery

There were no greater mineral treasures than the riches of coal found in such abundance in the Rhondda Valleys and South Wales Coalfield.



Lewis Merthyr Colliery, bottom of the Bertie Pit

Production ceased in June 1983. The last dram of coal was raised on 21st June 1973. Tymawr Colliery was merged with Lewis Merthyr Colliery in 1958 and was closed in 1983 by the National Coal Board.



Des' Fund-Raising Strike Meeting in Reading 1984

There was always tremendous courage and staunch camaraderie with Rhondda Miners and the South Wales Miners in the deep and dangerous pits. The pithead gear and buildings now form part of the Rhondda Heritage Park.

THE ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF RHONDDA HERITAGE PARK

Councillor Robert Bevan
(former Lewis Merthyr Colliery miner)

Côr Meibion Morlais

Maerdy Community Primary School Children's Choir

The Maerdy Archive

Ferndale History Group

Glamorgan Family History Society

Cynon Valley History Society

Cynon Valley Museum

Siân Williams South Wales Miners' Librarian

*Banner of
South Wales National Union of Mineworkers*



PROGRAMME

Master of Ceremonies
Councillor Robert Bevan

—

Côr Meibion Morlais
“*Cwm Rhondda*”

—

Maerdy Community Primary School Children’s Choir
“*I’m A Working Man*”

—

Welcome and Opening Remarks

David Owen
*Chairman of The Association of Friends of Rhondda Heritage Park
and former miner*

—

Setting the Scene

Ivor England
former Lewis Merthyr Colliery miner

—

Speeches

Mike Richards
former Lewis Merthyr Colliery miner

Mark Adams

Darren Macey
Heritage Operations Manager RCTCBC

—

The Official Unveiling of the Des Dutfield Presentation Plaque

BY COUNCILLOR DAN OWEN-JONES
MAYOR OF RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

“*Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*”

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Cwm Rhondda

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven
Feed me till I want no more.
Feed me till I want no more.
Open thou the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream shall flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer
Be thou still my strength and shield.
Be thou still my strength and shield.
When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell’s destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan’s side:
Songs of praises, songs of praises
I will ever give to thee.
I will ever give to thee.
O! am aros

JOHN HUGHES, 1907

—

Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau

Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl I mi,
Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o fri;
Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwladgarwyr tra môd,
Dros ryddid collasant eu gwaed.

Cytgan

Gwlad, Gwlad, pleidiol wyf i’ m gwlad.
Tra môr yn fur i’ r bur hoff bau,
O bydded i’ r hen iaith barhau.

EVAN JAMES, 1856

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