

Early Education in Brynmawr.

The Brynmawr School Board was established in 1875 and the new Board School was opened in 1903, but I came across a reference to a Brynmawr British School built in 1846. The debt on the British School (about £200) was taken over and paid, one-third by Libanus Calvinistic Methodist Church, one-third by Rehobeth Congregational Church, and one-third by Calvary and Tabor Baptist Churches jointly. The “British Schools” were Protestant or non-denominational so obviously connected to those chapels but sadly no mention of where it was built? A school connected to the Catholic Church was opened in 1871 and a National School in 1876.

Education in Brynmawr had taken some great leaps forward but in a letter to the then Home secretary John Russell in 1848. William Williams had written

“.... the morals of the population congregated about Brynmawr, and Beaufort, are deplorably low. Brynmawr contains a population of 5,000, all of the lowest class, with the exception of two shopkeepers. Nearly every family in it is employed by one great Ironmaster. Neither Church nor School has been established by those who employ the people or own the land”.

This was in complete contrast to an article in “The Principality” in 1848 stating that *“The increase of this place (Brynmawr) in building and population is wonderful... now it comprises at least 5,000 inhabitants, of whom a large number dwell in their own cottages. Where there are so many houses continually being built, it can hardly be expected that Brynmawr should exhibit the order and cleanliness of long-established towns and we believe the streets and the drainage of the place could be improved. We find here many respectable tradesmen fast thriving in business, a commodious market- place, with a large hall most convenient for the holding of public meetings, a magistrate's hall, and one of the largest shop buildings within the whole of the principality..... there is here also ample religious accommodation for the whole of the population at one and the same time”.*

So William Williams didn't do his research as there were chapels in the town and some form of schools had been started before 1848, there had been Dame Schools in the town and the already established churches and chapels were teaching reading using the Bible. This letter written in 1853 by The Committee of the Brynmawr British Schools to the Duke of Beaufort states that

“....the only schools at present in the district are the Brynmawr British Schools, which were erected in 1846, (with the exception of a few pounds) at the expense of the dissenting congregations of the town”.

Any help in finding where these schools were within the district would be appreciated.

(Extract from the article “The Growth of Education in Brynmawr”).

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