

Merthyr Notes

Cyfarthfa Castle

Was built in 1825 for the Ironmaster, **William Crawshay II**.



William Crawshay II (27 March 1788 – 4 August 1867) was the son of William Crawshay I, the owner of Cyfarthfa Ironworks .

William Crawshay II became an ironmaster when he took over the business from his father. He was known as the 'Iron King'. He was considered a hard master by some, and his employees took part in the protests that led to the Merthyr Rising of 1831.

Robert Thompson Crawshay (1817 – 1879)

On 15 May 1846 he married the 18 year old Rose Mary Yeates in Oxfordshire. She became the mistress of the 72 roomed Cyfarthfa Castle and she joined an unsettled marriage.

The marriage was not happy but they did have five children:- William Thompson in 1847, Rose Harriette Thompson the following year, Henrietta Louise in 1851, Robert Thompson in 1853 and Richard Frederick in 1859. The following year her husband had a stroke which left him deaf. Crawshay had been very interested in music but with his disability his leisure time was taken up with the expensive hobby of photography.

On 30 June 2007, Donny Osmond, who traces his family history to Merthyr Tydfil, performed the 'Donny Comes Home' concert in the park grounds. The concert was attended by 15,000 people despite unseasonably heavy rain.

Joseph Parry

Joseph Parry (21 May 1841 – 17 February 1903) was a Welsh composer and musician. Born in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales, he is best known as the composer of "Myfanwy" and the hymn tune "Aberystwyth". Parry was also the first Welshman to compose an opera; his composition, *Blodwen*, was the first opera in the Welsh language.

Born into a large family, Parry left school to work in the local coal mines when he was nine years of age. He then went to work at the Cyfarthfa Ironworks, where his father was also employed. In 1854 the family emigrated to the United States, settling at Danville, Pennsylvania, where Parry again found employment at an iron works.

Though Parry had a great interest in music, he had no opportunity to study it until there was a temporary closure of the Rough and Ready Iron Works. Some of his co-workers were also musicians, and they offered music lessons while the iron works was closed. Parry joined a music sight-reading class taught by one of the men. He continued to study harmony with another co-worker, and learned how to read and write while he was learning about harmony.

Parry soon began submitting compositions to eisteddfodau in Wales and the United States and winning awards. During a return visit to Wales for the National Eisteddfod at Llandudno, Parry was offered two music scholarships, but was unable to accept due to family obligations. A fund was established for the support of Parry and his family while he studied music.

Parry went on to receive a doctorate in music from the University of Cambridge; he was the first Welshman to receive bachelor's and doctor's degrees in music from the University. He returned to Wales in 1874 to become the first professor of music at Aberystwyth University, later accepting a position at Cardiff University.