

= David Watts Morgan =

David Watts Morgan CBE DSO JP (18 December 1867 ? 23 February 1933) , who later in life hyphenated his name to Watts @-@ Morgan , was a Welsh trade unionist , a Labour politician , and a Member of Parliament (MP) from 1918 to 1933 .

Described as " [straddling] the transition in south Wales miners ' politics from Lib @-@ Labism to socialism , but ... never fully representative of either " , Morgan encouraged Rhondda miners to enlist in the army in 1914 following the outbreak of the First World War , and was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his efforts . He initially served in the Welsh Regiment , before becoming a lieutenant @-@ colonel in the Labour Corps . Morgan was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for bravery at the Battle of Cambrai in 1917 , earning him the nickname " Dai Alphabet " in South Wales .

= = Early life = =

David Watts Morgan was born in Skewen , Wales , in 1867 to Thomas and Margaret Morgan . He was educated at Skewen Elementary School until the age of eleven , when he began work as a pit boy , helping miners with the less strenuous work such as manning ventilation doors . At the age of seventeen he was employed as a coal miner in Ynyshir in the Rhondda . In 1880 Watts Morgan became a checkweighman at the newly opened National Colliery in Wattstown , a responsible position that involved tallying the weight of coal extracted by each miner when it reached the surface . During his time at Wattstown he took evening classes to become a mining engineer . He never practised once qualified , but the knowledge he gained was useful to him in his role as the leader of several mine rescues , and gave him a practical knowledge that informed his later political life .

= = Trade unionism = =

From checkweigher Watts Morgan rose to the position of district miners ' agent in 1898 , becoming a member of the Rhondda Labour and Liberal Association (RLLA) . Watts Morgan followed in the political Liberalism of William " Mabon " Abraham , and began speaking at RLLA meetings and banquets . In 1899 the Porth and Cymmer seat for the Glamorgan County Council (GCC) fell vacant , and Watts Morgan was seen as a viable candidate from both Liberal and Labour standpoints , but was surprisingly defeated at the by @-@ election by local timber merchant David Jenkins . The next year Jenkins declined to stand for re @-@ election , but the miners ' district committee refused Watts Morgan time off from his agent 's duties and the seat was won uncontested by colleague James Baker .

In 1902 , James Baker died at the age of 41 , leaving an opening in the GCC . On this occasion Watts Morgan was permitted to advance as a Labour candidate and was returned unopposed . By 1903 he was being talked of as a possible candidate for a south Wales parliamentary constituency . He joined the South Wales Miners ' Federation at its inception and by 1902 he was pushing for a greater political role for the organisation . By 1908 the Federation was making great headway in the Rhondda and was substantially improving conditions for the miners . At this time Watts Morgan was Agent and District Secretary at No.1 Rhondda District under William Abraham .

A moderate leader , he worked fruitlessly alongside William Abraham to resolve the 1910 ? 11 Cambrian Combine dispute , after the two men were shunned by the more radical miners ' leaders . Although espousing Gladstonian Liberalism and opposing the affiliation of The Miners ' Federation of Great Britain to the Labour Party , Watts Morgan joined the more radical and Marxist Plebs ' League and sat on the board of governors for the Central Labour College .

= = Military service = =

On 4 August 1914 , Watts Morgan enlisted as a private in the 10th Battalion (1st Rhondda) of the Welsh Regiment , one of the service battalions formed as part of Kitchener 's Army . He was

commissioned as a lieutenant in the 17th Battalion (1st Glamorgan) on 7 October , and was promoted to captain on 16 January 1916 . Watts Morgan was not initially sent to France , being used instead as a strong voice in the recruitment of men from the Rhondda into the British Army . He also took part in recruitment campaigns in North Wales , where his fluency in the Welsh language was invaluable . Watts Morgan regularly made known his opposition to " peace cranks " who were " insulting the boys of whom we are all so proud . " In March 1915 , a committee of Rhondda figures presented Morgan with a cheque for 100 guineas to mark his contribution to recruiting , and the Western Mail named him " The Organiser of Victory " .

On 15 May 1916 Watts Morgan transferred to a Works Battalion of the King 's Liverpool Regiment , he was promoted to major on 24 November 1916 , and went to serve in France . The Works Battalions were absorbed by the Labour Corps (forerunner of the Royal Pioneer Corps) in 1917 . Watts Morgan was three times Mentioned in Despatches , and on 4 May 1918 was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for leading his pioneer unit in a counter @-@ attack against German forces that were breaking through British lines . The citation for this award was published on 5 July 1918 and read :

T. / Maj. David Watts Morgan , Labour Corps .

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty . When his camp was heavily shelled with a few N.C.O. ' s and men he turned some dug @-@ outs into a temporary dressing station and assisted the wounded in the vicinity . When shelling rendered his position untenable he brought back his men in good order . He displayed great coolness and resource .

After the armistice he commanded a demobilisation station ; for his work there he received a letter of thanks from the king . Despite the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography reporting Watts Morgan being promoted to lieutenant @-@ colonel on 8 March 1919 , his retirement from the forces , the London Gazette entry of May 1919 describes him as major . Until early June 1921 he is described in The Times and London Gazette as Major D. Watts Morgan , later in the month this changed to Lieutenant @-@ Colonel Watts Morgan . On 30 March 1920 was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire for " services in connection with recruiting in South Wales " .

= = Member of Parliament = =

In February 1918 , Watts Morgan was selected as the Labour candidate for the newly formed Rhondda East constituency . As one of the " patriotic " miners ' leaders , the Lloyd George coalition did not run a candidate against him , therefore Watts Morgan was elected to the seat unopposed . There was evidence that some wished to run a Liberal candidate against Watts Morgan , but nothing came of it . Watts Morgan made his maiden speech in the House of Commons in April 1919 , on one of his special interests , housing . He addressed the House on the state and shortage of housing in the Welsh coalfields as " the chief cause of the industrial unrest . People have been herded together , and that is the reason why there is much unrest in our district at present " .

Not a regular speaker in the House , Watts Morgan busied himself with work on various committees , dealing mainly with gas , electricity , river pollution , the Home Office and the Police Council . Despite his work on private bills and his friendly relationship with Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald he was never considered for office . In the 1922 election , Watts Morgan was forced to contest his seat for the first time when he was challenged by Frederick William Heale . Watts Morgan made it clear that he would defend the interests of ex @-@ servicemen and those injured in industry ; he opposed the temperance demand for the local veto . It was a close result for a Rhondda election ; Heale lost by just over 3 @,@ 000 votes . The 1923 election was a different affair , with Watts Morgan defeating Conservative candidate Alfred John Orchard by nearly 13 @,@ 000 votes .

Watts Morgan was a socialist and trade unionist , but he was also a strong anti @-@ communist and opposed " the local men of Moscow " , trade unionists who had embraced communism and whom he saw as extremists . In the 1929 election his main rival was well @-@ known local Liberal Dr. R. D. Chalke , but the biggest interest came from the first communist challenger in the Rhondda , Arthur Horner . Although Watts Morgan had been unwell for the first few months of the year , he roused himself to attend the Ferndale May Day demonstration . When he discovered he was sharing

the platform with Communist Party of Great Britain members , Horner , A. J. Cook and Dai Lloyd Davies , he left the stage and joined the crowd so he could heckle Horner 's speech from the floor . Watts Morgan described Horner as " the emissary of the blood @-@ stained Comintern of Russia ... working to break down the democratic Government and Trades Union organization of this country . " He had little cause for concern , and was re @-@ elected to Rhondda East by a majority of almost 9 @,@ 000 . A smaller turnout in the 1931 election and the absence of a Liberal candidate may have led to Horner making a considerable advance against Watts Morgan in the number of votes polled , but Watts Morgans ' majority remained substantial . Watts Morgan 's death in 1933 forced a by @-@ election , which was won by William Mainwaring .

= = Personal life = =

Watts Morgan was married twice , first to Elizabeth Williams then to Blanche Amy Morgan . Blanche was herself a strong campaigner for miners ' rights , and was among a group of agents ' wives who promoted the provision of pithead baths , bathing areas for the miners at the surface . She was outspoken in her views , and once supported a political rival of her husband 's party , forcing Watts Morgan to make a public apology .

Watts Morgan was a keen sportsman and enjoyed playing golf and bowls . He was a member of several organisations including the Freemasons ' , Ivorites ' and Foresters ' friendly societies and was president of the Rhondda and Pontypridd district of the British Legion . A Calvinist Methodist his local place of worship was Bethlehem Church in Porth .

Watts Morgan died at his home in Porth on 23 February 1933 while still in office . He was survived by his wife , two sons , and four daughters . Thousands of people lined the route along which his funeral cortege passed on its way to his burial at Llethr Du cemetery in Trealaw . Local shops and businesses closed as a mark of respect .