

## LEWIS, RICHARD ('Dic Penderyn '; 1807/8 - 1831), miner and revolutionary martyr

**Name:** Richard Lewis  
**Pseudonym:** Dic Penderyn  
**Date of birth:** 1807/8  
**Date of death:** 1831  
**Parent:** Lewis Lewis  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** miner and revolutionary martyr  
**Area of activity:** Anti Establishment  
**Author:** David Williams

He was a native of the Aberavon neighbourhood (*Cambrian*, 20 August 1831). A letter recounting a conversation with an old man who knew him (*Y Drysorfa*, 1919, 418-9; both the writer and the old man are anonymous), states that he was the son of Lewis Lewis, who lived at a cottage named Penderyn in the parish of Pyle. An elder sister (she was said to be 41 when she died in 1841) married, in September 1827, the [Rev. Morgan Howells](#).

There is no certain evidence of Dic Penderyn's movements until the outbreak of the Merthyr Tydfil riots of 1831. He was then a married man living at Merthyr, and was a miner by occupation. Rioting began on 2 June with an attack on the house of Joseph Coffin, clerk to the Court of Requests, and the destruction of his furniture (see Lewis Lewis, ' [Lewsyn yr Heliwr](#) '). There is no evidence that Dic Penderyn took any part in this action. Troops were then called for by the magistrates, and a company of the 93rd (Highland) Regiment arrived the following morning. A number of these entered the Castle Inn. Others, who were left outside, were hemmed in by a crowd, among whom was Dic Penderyn. Incited by [Lewis Lewis](#), the crowd tried to rush the soldiers and seize their muskets. A scuffle ensued, until soldiers within the Castle Inn fired through the windows into the crowd. A number of persons were killed and wounded, and several soldiers were injured. It is not known that Dic Penderyn took any part in the activities that followed, such as the waylaying of an ammunition-party from Brecon and the ambushing and disarming of the Swansea Yeomanry.

Dic Penderyn was arrested and charged with riotously assembling at Merthyr Tydfil and feloniously attacking and wounding Donald Black, of the 93rd Regiment, while in the execution of his duty. He was tried at Cardiff Assizes before Mr. Justice Bosanquet, and, on the evidence of James Abbott, hairdresser, and William Williams, tailor, both of Merthyr, was found guilty. He was, therefore, condemned to death, the execution being fixed for 31 July. There was considerable doubt as to whether it was Dic Penderyn who had, in fact, wounded Donald Black. The soldier, who had seen Dic in the crowd, freely admitted that he did not know who had wounded him. A petition, said to have been signed by 11,000 persons, was drawn up for Dic's reprieve. The Quaker philanthropist, [Joseph Tregelles Price](#) of Neath, was convinced of his innocence. He sought an interview with the home secretary, lord Melbourne, but without success, until, through the good offices of the lord chancellor, lord Brougham, Melbourne was induced to grant a respite of two weeks. When this elapsed Melbourne intimated that he saw no reason to change the verdict.

Dic Penderyn was publicly executed at Cardiff goal at 8 o'clock on Saturday, 13 August 1831. He was then said to be 23 years of age. Four Wesleyan Methodist ministers, among them William Rowlands ([Gwilym Lleyrn](#)), who had been with him during the previous hours, accompanied him to the scaffold. An eloquent letter to his sister, written by or for him in gaol, asked that arrangements be made for his burial. The funeral procession through the Vale of Glamorgan on the following day, Sunday, 14 August, became swollen to a considerable size. He was buried in S. Mary's churchyard, Aberavon, the funeral service being read by the incumbent. His body was not taken into the church. Outside the churchyard wall his brother-in-law, the [Rev. Morgan Howells](#), addressed the crowd in a scene of great emotion.

In 1874 a reputable Congregational minister, the [Rev. Evan Evans](#) (1804 - 1886), reported a deathbed confession to him in America by a man who alleged that it was he who had wounded Donald Black.

### Author

Emeritus Professor David Williams, (1900 - 1978)

### Sources

*The Cambrian*, 4 June to 20 August 1831

*Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, 1865, 1870

*Western Mail*, 12-14 October 1874

*Y Drysorfa*, 1919.

## Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dic Penderyn](#)

## Additional Links

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