

## BRACE, WILLIAM (1865 - 1947), miners' leader and M.P.

**Name:** William Brace  
**Date of birth:** 1865  
**Date of death:** 1947  
**Spouse:** Nellie Brace (née Humphreys)  
**Child:** Ivor Llewellyn Brace  
**Parent:** Ann Brace  
**Parent:** Thomas Brace  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** miners' leader and M.P.  
**Area of activity:** Politics, Government and Political Movements  
**Author:** Griffith Milwyn Griffiths

Born at Risca, Monmouth, 23 September 1865, son of Thomas and Ann Brace; ed. at Risca board school. When he was 12 years of age he began to earn his living as a collier at Risca colliery, and as he grew older he took a keen interest in labour problems.

In 1890 he married Nellie, daughter of William and Harriet Humphreys of Cwmcarn, Monmouth. In the same year he was appointed miners' agent for the local branch of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. At that time one of the major controversies in the south Wales coalfield was the sliding scale arrangement for paying miners. At the head of those who favoured the sliding scale principle was **William Abraham** (Mabon). Brace became the leader of the opposition movement, and the activities of the two men brought them into official and personal conflict. This antagonism led to successful legal proceedings for libel being taken by **Abraham** against Brace. At the conclusion of the miners' strike of 1898, however, the South Wales Miners' Federation was formed, with **Abraham** as president and Brace as vice-president of the executive council.

In 1899 Brace, along with **Abraham** and John Williams, attended the annual conference of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, to seek (successfully) the affiliation of the South Wales union to the national body. In 1901 he was asked to serve on a Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the coal reserves of the United Kingdom. Five years later he entered Parliament as Labour member for the South Glamorgan division, defeating **Colonel Wyndham-Quin, later earl of Dunraven**. He continued to represent that constituency until 1918. During this period he maintained his connection with the South Wales Miners' Federation and in 1912 became its president. There was, however, by now, some opposition to his policies from amongst the miners on the grounds that he was not sufficiently radical.

In 1915 he became under-secretary at the Home Office in the wartime coalition government, and the following year was appointed a member of the Privy Council. He remained a member of the government until the Labour Party withdrew from it in 1918. From 1918-20 he served as M.P. for the Abertillery division, and in the latter years he accepted the position of chief labour adviser to the Government Mines Department, a full-time post which necessitated his resignation as a M.P. In 1922 he was asked to serve as one of the four members of a Royal Commission set up by the government of South Africa to investigate economic conditions in that country after industrial unrest amongst the miners.

He retired in 1927 and died 12 October 1947.

### Author

Griffith Milwyn Griffiths

### Sources

Ness Edwards, *History of the South Wales Miners Federation* (London 1938)

L. Twiston Davies, *Men of Monmouthshire* (Cardiff 1933), vol. II

E. W. Evans, 'A history of industrial relations in the South Wales coalfield to 1912', University of Wales Ph.D. thesis, 1955

E. W. Evans, *Mabon, William Abraham, 1842-1922, a study in trade union leadership, etc.* (Cardiff 1959)

Brinley Evans, 'A history of the Trade Disputes ... in the South Wales Coal Trade ...', University of Wales M.A. thesis, 1944

*Who was who?*, 1941-50

*Western Mail*, 14 October 1947

*The Times*, 14 October 1947

*Who's who in Wales*, (1921)

## Further Reading

NLW Archives: General Election 1906 Wales and Monmouthshire. A Souvenir containing photographs, biographical sketches etc., of all the Welsh MPs: William Brace

Wikipedia Article: William Brace

## Additional Links

VIAF: 306324726

Wikidata: Q8005819

**Published date:** 2001

**Article Copyright:** <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/>

PDF Print Cite

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

Donate

### APA Citation



Griffiths, G. M., (2001). BRACE, WILLIAM (1865 - 1947), miners' leader and M.P.. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 8 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s2-BRAC-WIL-1865>

Copy to Clipboard

Privacy & Cookies  
Copyright  
The Project  
Help  
Contact

LGC  
NLW

LLYFRGEL  
THE NATION



Yn ddiolch i  
Llywodraeth Cymru  
Sponsored by  
Welsh Government