



Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)

Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

Newsletter 87 – Spring 2020

A new year and a new decade. Happy New Year to all our members.

TWO CENTURIES OF BRECONSHIRE ANCESTRY

By Myra Jones

FROM PRITCHARD TO RICHARDS-

Eighteenth Century beginnings

In 1733, Edward Lewis married Jennet Jones in the parish of Llangasty Tallylyn, Breconshire. They had a daughter Jane (1747-1819) who married James Pritchard (1747-1824) in 1779 in Llanfihangel Tallylyn. At some point after that, James and Jane moved to the parish of Llanfihangel Abergwesyn where in 1791, their son John was born.

Pritchards of Abergwesyn

On the 24th of November 1815, in Llanfihangel Abergwesyn, John Pritchard, by now a farmer, married Margaret Evans (b 1791). They went on to have five children;

William b 1816 at Goytrefan, Llanafan Fawr

Anne b 1818 at Goytrefan, (no trace can be found)

John b 1821 at Goytrefan, (no trace can be found)

Eleanor/Elinor b 1824 at Goytrefan

Thomas b 1830 at Argoed

The baptisms of these children took place at the Troedrhiwdalar Chapel, Llanafanfawr; a Presbyterian chapel for dissenting Protestants. Goytrefan and Argoed were part of the Llwynmadoc estate so John and Margaret would have been tenant farmers. John Pritchard Senior died in 1845 and is buried at Troedrhiwdalar. On his gravestone it states that he was of Park Farm, Llangammarch and had been a member and Deacon of the chapel for many years. Census evidence reveals that his wife, Margaret Pritchard nee Evans died, aged 90yrs in Beulah on January 25th 1881 and is buried with her husband in the same grave (A 112). She had lived in Ty Cornel 1851, Dolrannell Cottage 1861 and finally at Ty Clyd. She left the sum of £225 5s to her eldest son William who was a labourer living in Court Llwyn, Llanfilo near Bronllys, Breconshire.

The Davies' of Cwmddylan

The Davies family had been at Cwmddylan, a farm of 106 acres, since the late 1700s. In 1810, John Davies (1784-1867) married Elinor Williams (1786-1878) in Llangammarch church. They had eight children that we know of;

Thomas b 1810

Elizabeth b 1813,

Mary b 1816

James b 1818

David b 1822,

Ann b1825
 Jane b 1826
 Benjamin b 1829

Except for Thomas, all children were baptised at Troedrhiwdalar chapel.

On the 1841 census, John and Elinor appear to be away from home and the farm is being run by James, David and Jane with their farm servant, Hannah Bevan. By 1851, James and David have married and moved away. Helping John and Elinor with the farm are Ann and Ben. Jane has married Thomas Jones, a prosperous farmer of Llanfechan but is staying at Cwmddylan with her two-year old daughter Jane. John and Elinor continued to farm at Cwmddylan well into their seventies with the help of their family. On the 1861 census, their son Ben is still at home and unmarried. They also have three grandchildren staying with them and probably doing some of the lighter farm tasks. John died in April 1867 aged 82yrs and Elinor went to stay out her remaining years with her daughter Ann at her farm in Gwenddwr, south of Builth. Elinor died in October 1875 aged 90yrs. John and Elinor's grave is in Llangammarch churchyard.

Note: According to family supposition, someone in the Davies family at Cymddylan found the barium wells at Llangammarch whilst searching for a lost pig! This type of well is only found in Wales and Germany.

Davies/Pritchard

On the 2nd May 1850, Eleanor Pritchard married David Davies at Llangammarch church. Eleanor was living at Park Farm which was the neighbouring farm to Cwmddylan so it is possible that they met by being neighbours. On the marriage certificate, Eleanor put her mark which indicates that she was illiterate. They set up home at Esgairmoel Uchaf in Llanwrtyd and later the same year, Eleanor gave birth to a baby girl. That baby, Margaret, would, in the future, as 'Granny Price', play an important role in the upbringing of four motherless children.

On the 1851 census, the family appear to be doing well and David is a farmer of 83 acres and employs a house servant and a farm servant. Interestingly, the couple appear to have an older child, a boy of four called David as well as baby Margaret. This seems to suggest that they have known each other for a number of years especially as the boy had been born in Llangammarch. Perhaps Eleanor's second pregnancy had prompted the marriage ceremony!

The 1861 census shows that the family's fortunes seem to have taken a dip. They are now living at Esgairmoel Ganol in Llanwrtyd and David senior is simply an agricultural labourer. They have had two more children, John (b 1853) and Harriet (b 1855). All four children are receiving education, presumably at Llanwrtyd school.

By the time of the next census in 1871, the family's situation has worsened further. In fact, there is no family. David senior is now 48yrs old and a farm servant at Dolgaer. Eleanor is not with him. Their daughter Margaret is now aged 20yrs and a domestic servant at Garth Inn. There is no sign of the whereabouts of her siblings David, John and Harriet.

NB.....It was once mentioned by Margaret Worthing, a great grand-daughter, that David Davies liked a drink and this could be a reason for the family's decline in fortune and the scattering of its members.

Records have been discovered which show the reason for Eleanor's absence from the 1871 census. In October 1869, she was admitted to the Three Counties Lunatic Asylum in Abergavenny. Her condition is stated as 'melancholia brought on by a reverse in fortune'. Clearly, her husband's behaviour was responsible for her suffering and her records make for depressing reading. Before her admission, (which was overseen by her nineteen year old daughter Margaret), she had attempted suicide by jumping into a deep pool. In today's enlightened times, she would have been diagnosed with depression and prescribed appropriate medication but a century and half ago, the only cure was to be locked up. Eleanor's condition deteriorated both mentally and physically over time and she died of carcinoma of the liver in December 1882.

In the middle of the 19th century, mid-Wales would have had a simple road system and getting to Abergavenny would have been taken many days. In her records, no mention is made of any visitors and it is unlikely that any of her family would have been able to make that journey. Poor Eleanor, what a life she had! On the 1881 census, David Davies Sr is, at this time, 58yrs and a farm labourer at Newell, Penbaultt, Llangammarch. Also living with him is a Thomas Jones his nephew aged 2yrs and Anne Morgan a domestic servant who presumably also cares for the little boy.

Ten years later not much has changed for David Davies. He is now 68yrs and still a labourer living at Newell. His nephew Thomas Jones is now 12yrs but interestingly he is entered as a grandson this time. Also recorded is that David is a widower. David Davies died in 1893 aged 71yrs. On the 1901 census, young Thomas Jones can be found, at the age of 20yrs, living at Pencaerhelem near Builth and working as a 'carter with horse'. No more is known of him after this time.

There are questions which will never be answered.....Had David Davies ever felt remorse for his family's troubles? Had he been able to visit Eleanor in the asylum?

Price/Davies

On the 3rd April 1872 at the Congregational Church in Builth, Margaret Davies married Thomas Price. On the certificate, Margaret's address is Garth Inn and she signs with her mark which indicates that she is illiterate. Thomas Price was a 27yr old farm labourer, living and working at Llwynpiod, Llanfechan. Born in St Harmon, Radnorshire, he was the son of Edward Price a carpenter.

The couple set up home at New Well, Penbaultt, a hamlet in the parish of Llangammarch, where, five weeks later on the 14th May, Margaret gave birth to a boy, John. Her advanced pregnancy may have been the reason for the non-conformist marriage!

Within the next couple of years, the Price family moved down to Dowlais in South Wales, where, according to Margaret Worthing, Thomas could find work in the mines. Whilst there in 1874, a baby girl Eleanor was born. It is believed that Thomas was involved in a mining accident at that time.

By 1881, Margaret and her children had moved back to (Penybont) Penbaultt but without Thomas of whom there is no sign although there must have been contact because later that year, Margaret gave birth to a daughter also called Margaret.

The 1891 census shows some interesting facts about the family. Thomas is the head of the family but recorded as being an imbecile. This seems to back up the earlier suggestion that he had been involved in a mining accident and perhaps he was suffering from what we today would call Post Traumatic Stress. Margaret his wife is the bread winner and working as a charwoman. Eleanor is 16yrs and now a general domestic servant and Margaret junior is still in school, presumably in Garth. Their son John is 18yrs and living as a general servant to the gamekeeper and his wife at Garth House. The census also reveals, for the first time, that Margaret senior and her son John can speak Welsh and English but the rest of the family only English.

The Twentieth Century

The 1901 census shows Thomas and Margaret Price living at no 1 Penybont (demolished when the new bridge was built) in Garth. Thomas has recovered from his illness and is now at the age of 58yrs, a general labourer. His wife Margaret is 52yrs and still a charwoman. Their son John aged 29yrs and still single has moved to Bwlchmawr, Eglwys oen Duw where he is a cattleman. Their daughter Eleanor is 26yrs and, like her mother before her, is living at Garth Inn where she is a barmaid and domestic servant. She is recorded as being able to speak both Welsh and English.

The family has, however, experienced its share of sadness because the youngest daughter Margaret died in 1898. She is buried in Llanlleonfel churchyard. On her gravestone are inscribed the words,

Day by day we watched her fade
And gently sink away.
God thought it best
That she should rest
And eased her of her pain.

It is at this point that our family history enters the modern era and recent memory because also living at Garth Inn was a John Hotchkiss Richards. He had come from Beguildy in Radnorshire and had been employed from a hiring fair to work as a farm servant for Garth House.

The Richards of Radnorshire

In 1800, a **Lewis** Richards was born in Llanidloes, Montgomeryshire. Around 1830, he married Mary Vaughn from Bleddfa, Radnorshire. Despite these villages being in different counties, they were only a few miles apart so it is likely that they met whilst working at the same farm. They began their married life at Lettermoel farm, Llanbadarn Fynydd which is about five miles north of Llandrindod. By 1851, they have had seven children;

Thomas	b 1831
Jane	b 1832
Joseph	b 1836 farmed at Shirl Heath at Beguildy.
William	b 1838
Elizabeth	b 1841
James	b 1847
Ann	b 1848. (She was the mother of John Hotchkiss Richards and great-grandmother to David and Gordon Richards, Rosemary Worthing and Myra Jones).

In April 1871, Ann was a 25yr old domestic servant to a retired farmer in Cryg y Byddar and four months pregnant. From there, she went to her brother Joseph's farm at Shirl Heath, Beguildy to have her baby John who was born in August of that year. There is no father's name on the birth certificate but John was given the middle name of Hotchkiss which may be connected! One year later Ann had died leaving John to be brought up by Joseph and his wife Mary. It is to Joseph's life that we now turn our attention.....

Joseph Richards (uncle of John Hotchkiss Richards)

In the middle of the nineteenth century, children, if they had any education at all, could leave school at twelve so that they could relieve the financial burden on their families by earning a living. By the time of the 1851 census, Joseph, as a 14yr old boy, was already working as an 'in and outdoor servant' for a curate in the parish of Caroge. Ten years later, Joseph is to be found as a carter on a farm in Clewilsey. This means that he had access to a horse and cart and could transport peoples' goods.

In 1866, he married Mary Francis from Kerry in Montgomeryshire. They may have met through working on the same farm. Joseph must have been a hard worker because, by 1871, he has become the farmer of a small holding at Shirl Heath in Beguildy. He and Mary begin to raise a family. In 1867 their son Edwin was born although, sadly, he died at the age of 6yrs. Mary may not have found pregnancy easy and, although she may have had other babies, her next child was Eliza born in 1874. In 1877, Mary gave birth to another daughter, Maria. Mary died that same year, possibly in childbirth.

Poor Joseph, at only 41yrs was left to raise two small girls and his nephew John. At this point, his widowed mother, already in her mid- seventies, came to live with Joseph and they took on a servant, Mary Owens, as is clearly shown on the 1881 census.

At this point things began to get interesting as, over the next five years, the servant Mary Owens gave birth to three children; Ann b.1881, Price born 1883 and Sarah born 1885; all bearing her surname Owens. Joseph was almost certainly these childrens' father as, in 1888, he married Mary Owens and she gave birth to a daughter Martha Jane Richards.

Joseph's life continued to have its share of sadness. The 1891 census shows Joseph and Mary, the three Owens children and their own three year old Martha living at Shirlheath.

Of Joseph's other two daughters, Eliza died in the census year aged 17yrs but Maria married William Owens, a farm labourer, in 1899 and had two children, Mary Ann b 1900 and William Pryce b 1906. The Owens children, at some point adopted the Richards surname. Price Owens became the more gentrified Pryce Richards who married Annie Price in Beguildy in 1907. He was a waggoner on a farm and they had two daughters, Mary Elizabeth Annie 1909-1925 and Margaret Jane b 1911 who, at the late age of 39yrs, married Milwyn Powell and lived in Llandrindod. Pryce died in 1959.

Sarah Owens Richards married John Albert Price in 1903. He was from Bettwys in Shropshire. They had five children and for a while they lived in Bridgend, Glamorgan while John was a coal miner. There appears to be no trace of Ann Owens Richards so far.

Martha Jane Richards, Joseph's youngest child, married William Venables in 1915. They had three sons; Richard, William and Alfred. It was she who would sometimes go to assist her cousin John and his wife Eleanor with their family in Llangammarch where she was known as 'Aunty Jennie Venables'

Back to John Hotchkiss Richards

John was brought up by his Uncle Joseph and after leaving school, he worked locally in that area until, in 1900, he came to work, after being hired at the fair in Knighton, as a general farm servant at Garth Inn. Here, he met the barmaid Eleanor Price and on December 22nd 1904, they were married in Llangammarch church. On the marriage certificate, Eleanor's residence is Garth Inn and John's is Dolgaer. Also to be noted is that, on the marriage certificate, John's father (also John Richards) is named even though he was absent from his birth certificate!

Their first son, John Pryce Richards was born on the 25th September 1905 at Chapel House, Clunfawrarth (?), Llangammarch. They were living at Penstar when Fred Llewellyn was born on the 9th December 1906 but by 1908 had moved to Gwarallt Lodge, Llangammarch where Margaret Ann was born on the 27th June. The family seemed to settle there and on the 14th April 1911, Gertrude Mary was born. The 1911 census tells us that John is working as a gardener. His wife Eleanor is the only one in the family to speak Welsh and English.

The years pass and in 1915, another daughter, Eleanor Freda is born. This is the point in our story at which two tragedies change the lives of this family for ever. In February 1917, the baby Eleanor Freda died of bronchitis at the age of fourteen months and less than three months later, her mother died of cancer at the age of 42yrs.

This left John with four small children to provide for and at that time, there was no welfare state to give support.

Margaret & Thomas Price

On the 1911 census, the couple were still living at Penbont in Garth. We learn that even though they were in their early sixties, they were still working and it would appear that Margaret, as a charwoman, was still the main breadwinner. She cleaned Llanlleonfel church and some houses in Beulah as well as taking in washing. Thomas is entered on the form as a labourer but also working at home which indicates that he probably didn't ever fully recover from his previous health problems. We also learn that Margaret had originally given birth to five live babies but only two had lived to adulthood, John and Eleanor. She spoke Welsh and English. Their son John had by now moved to England and was working as a gardener on an orchid farm in Trowbridge, Wiltshire. Here, he met a lady's maid, Elizabeth Jane Trinder who was to become his future wife. In 1914, the couple were married in Westonbirt, Gloucestershire, where Elizabeth originated from. They settled in the area with John continuing to work as a gardener for the large estate there. They had one daughter, Winifred but always known as Betty. Thomas died in 1914 and was buried with his daughter in Llanlleonfel churchyard. With the death of her other daughter, Margaret spent the rest of her life, as 'Granny Price', helping her son-in-law, John H Richards to bring up his four remaining children.

1920 and beyond

John H Richards, with the help of Granny Price and other relatives managed to raise his four children. The family moved to Afon Lodge then Goitre farm, Llangammarch and finally, Garth Mill when John became bailiff to a Mr Bligh of Cilmery.

John Pryce Richards met Edith Meddings in a shop in Garth. She was from Norton and was in service at Garth House. They set up home at 2 Post Office Terrace and had two sons, David and Gordon. John was in the army during WW2. They later moved to Station House in Garth where John worked on the railway station. The house is still owned by the family.

Margaret Ann married Jack Worthing from St Harmons near Rhayader in Radnorshire. After their wedding they lived with John H Richards at the Goytre as by then, Granny Price had died and he needed someone to look after him. They

had a daughter Rosemary and in the early fifties they all moved to Station House in Llanwrtyd. Jack worked for the railways, walking ten miles every day, inspecting the line.

Fred Llewellyn, in his youth, was a member of St Cadmarch's church choir and a keen horseman; he won many 'point-to-point' races. In 1928, he married Bet Jones of Brongulent, Abergwesyn. They set up home at Glanirfon farm, Llanwrtyd and then Penyrhyddfa on the Abergwesyn-Tregaron Road. In the early fifties, they moved to Hafod Villa, Llanwrtyd with their daughter Margaret. Fred worked for Breconshire Highways but was a life-long learner who loved to read and improve his knowledge. He was a staunch Labour supporter and local secretary of the Municipal and general Workers Union. He was always proud that he had received a personal letter from Lady Megan Lloyd-George.

Gertrude Mary left school and went to be a housekeeper for the manager of Barclays Bank in Llandrindod who lived at Montpelier Park. She joined the WAAF during WW2 and met Richard Thouless at RAF Andover. They were married on the 6th March 1943 in Llangammarch church and settled in Abingdon, Berkshire. They had a daughter Myra. Gertrude was killed in a car accident on the outskirts of Gloucester in 1979.

Granny Price died in 1935 aged 85 years and joined her husband and daughter in the same grave in Llanfionfel churchyard.

John Hotchkiss Richards is buried with his wife Eleanor and daughter Freda in Llangammarch churchyar

The family lived in this remote area of mid Wales for over two centuries, making their living from farming and later, the railways. By today's standards, their education was meagre and none were schooled beyond the age of fourteen. Nevertheless, they were intelligent, hard-working people, living in a world with none of the luxuries of today and perhaps because of this, there are genes of longevity running through the family. Margaret Worthing (nee Richards) died aged 101 years! By the middle of the twentieth century, the post-war generation of this family had to leave this beautiful area of mid Wales to find further education and employment, thus ending two hundred years of Breconshire ancestry.

Many thanks to Myra Jones for this wonderful article which really underlines what it must be like like to have a family history so embedded into a particular place.



BRECONSHIRE STRAYS

MONMOUTHSHIRE

CWMCARVEN

Baptisms

This register is in very poor condition –
torn/rotted/creased pages

“10 March 1688 Bap – Elizabeth d/o Wm
Lewis of Lanelle, Brecs”

FREE ONLINE RESOURCES

Powys War Memorials – 1914-1919: a mark of
respect

A website seeking to find and record all Powys
War Memorials and to provide funds for
maintenance and restoration

www.powyswarmemorials.co.uk/



NOTABLE GRAVEMARKERS

Looking back at the family tree noted in our Newsletter No 80 September 2018, here is another interesting take on genealogy. Found by Alison Noble in the Museum of Archaeology, Como, Italy the grave marker shows the family tree of the incumbent from 1250 -1580. What an amazing gift for the family historian!

Brecon U3A

Brecon U3A has produced a book "Brecon Remembers World War One". The book was produced through a grant from HLF so is free of charge. The Society has been offered some of these books for our members.



BRECON RECOLLECTIONS

By Mike Butcher

How much notice can you take of the recollections of a child, when recalled some sixty years later? Well the answer seems to be like the curate's egg, good in parts. My mother, Vesta Macadam, had lived in 2 Bethel Terrace, Lion Street, Brecon, from 1912 until 1920, and had rarely visited Brecon after that time. I visited with her in 1983, then made a recording of her recollections in 1985, but did not transcribe them until this year.



She lived with her mother and four brothers after her father, Thomas Macadam, left for Australia. He had been a sergeant in the South Wales Borderers, although born in Edinburgh, and was recruited direct from Dundee at the age of 15 years in 1890. Her mother was born in Gloucestershire, but had been apprenticed to Adcock's in High Street. They were married in St Mary's Church, Brecon.

I had grown up believing that the family was as poor as the proverbial church mice and indeed Bethel Terrace was owned by the Bethel Chapel Trustees. Bethel Terrace to me was the picture of poverty, so here was an opportunity to see how the poor lived in Brecon early in the 20th century. As the youngest in the family and the only girl, my mother had a unique position in the family. Her world was a small one: Lion and High Streets and eventually the convent in

Buckingham Place, but after she was moved to the convent she loved it and was a bright child.

She seemed to be surrounded by dangers: when collecting the bread, she had to be on the lookout for Mr Davies, who was a deaf mute. He was teased by the neighbourhood boys, but he tried to talk to the girls. She was frightened of him, but there was no harm in him, she said. The 1911 Census has David John Davies, dumb, retired farmer, at the Green Dragon Hotel/Restaurant in High Street superior, just up from the junction with Lion Street. My mother said the shop was a superior one and at the top of Lion Street. The business was run by Magdalen Davies and a bit of a landmark for catering. It sounds as though this might be the place she collected the bread from, although not called a bakery.

There was a showdown when Mr Davies chased the teasing boys into the toilet block beside Bethel Chapel, and was poking at them through the windows with his walking sticks. My mother's screams brought her mother to the rescue. There was a deaf mute domestic servant also at the Green Dragon, perhaps suggesting a compassion for those similarly afflicted.

Lacking in female company, Vesta remembers the kindness of the young neighbours, daughters themselves. Jessie Price was the daughter of the Thomas's at 3 Bethel Terrace, who used to make small gifts for my mother. Poor Jessie died from influenza in 1918 at the age of 21 years. She had been born Jessie Farrar in London and adopted by the Thomas's by the age of six. They had no children of their own and Jessie must have been everything to them. Jessie had only been married for six months (to a bandsman) and her death left her mother so deranged that she had to be taken away 'to the asylum'. She and Jessie are buried together in the Brecon cemetery. There was an influenza epidemic in Brecon at the time, but it might have been too early for the Spanish 'flu pandemic of a year later.



The Green Dragon – face on



Vesta on a Rocking Horse

Porcelain head and body and it moved in every joint.'

It was during her father's visit that my mother was sent to Elston's the butchers in High Street for two shillings' worth of chops. Mrs Elston sent her home for a note, because this was so much more than the family had previously purchased. She keenly felt the humiliation at the age of five years. Harold Elston was an engineer living at home in

Bethel Chapel had a caretaker who lived on the site at 9 Lion Yard, opposite Bethel Terrace. Her name was Hannah Williams, and she terrified my mother. Hannah's husband was John Williams, a gardener, who had become crippled and unable to work. Hannah seemed to believe that children should make no noise and was down on my mother if she even tried to bounce a ball. However, she had a daughter who was very kind. My mother had no dolls and when a teddy bear was required for a school function, she had to hire one. It was when her father visited in 1916, on leave from the Western Front, where he was serving with the Australian Army, that he sent his wife out to buy a good doll for Vesta: 'It was a German one with a very pretty face.

1911, before he went on to make his own name in the history of Brecon with the introduction of hydro-electricity to the town.

Having lived in terror of Hannah Williams in Brecon, after the family had moved to Hereford, my mother was alarmed to find she was being sent back for a holiday with Mrs Williams. In fairness, she said she was very kind, but she could not forget the torment of the Brecon years. Hannah gave her a small dish when she left, that my mother kept throughout her life in memory of the pleasure and the pain. It was her sole physical reminder of Bethel Terrace, except for a couple of photographs.

Since demolition of Bethel Terrace in 1994 and its resurrection as Bethel Square shopping centre, the former Golden Lion Inn, from which it came, has received attention from archaeologists and historians and a sort of celebrity as the only secular historical site excavated in Brecon.

Many thanks to Mike for sending this article for inclusion in the newsletter.



The Beacon

This free A5 monthly glossy magazine distributed in Brecon and its surrounding villages contains a "Your History" column, contributed by the BLFHS, which often offers an interesting article about the area. This quarter: a cornucopia of subjects.

Brecon Market Hall

Always an important market town, trade played a large part in the life of Brecon. Most business was done in the open streets of the town. Under the Guildhall meat, cheese and butter were sold. There is evidence that there was a market cross in front of the building now occupied by McCartneys, Estate Agents. The adjoining street, where 'Clarks Toys' is situated, is still called Butter Lane

By 1838 it was felt that the town needed a market hall and an application to parliament for permission to erect a market hall was successful. The land was purchased, the building designed by T. H. Wyatt and the builder was local man, Thomas Griffiths. The total cost was £4,500 and Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar donated £200 towards the cost of widening Castle Street. The hall was opened on 4th April 1840 by the mayor Mr. Henry Lucas.

In 1845 the hall was extended but there was a deficit of £9,000.

Proceeds of an eisteddfod in 1894 provided money for more improvements to the hall and it became suitable for holding large assemblies as well as for its original use. Apart from some alterations over subsequent years the hall of 1897 is the one we know today.



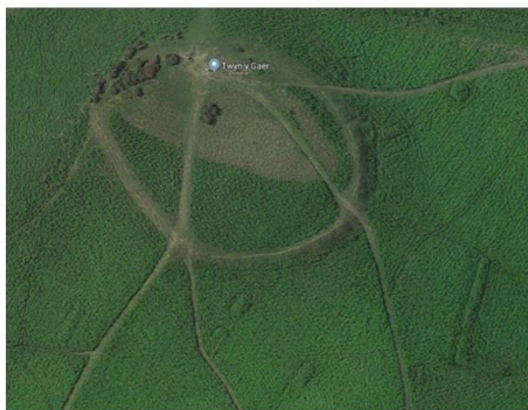
Rabbit Farming near Brecon.

Brecon residents will be aware that the road to Mynydd Illtyd, which passes Brecon Enterprise Park, is called Warren Road. This refers to the ancient practice of rabbit farming, a valuable "crop" in the marginal uplands of Breconshire. From Medieval times, rabbits were farmed as they were then uncommon in the wild. Demand for their meat and fur saw the breeding of rabbits develop. Evidence of these domestic warrens dating from the 18th and 19th centuries still exist if you know what to look for.

The warrens, called “pillow mounds” are oblong cigar shaped mounds with flat tops and on a slope for drainage. These artificial burrows were “farmed” by “warreners”

In the Brecon area there are disused warrens at Twyn-y-Gaer, Mynydd Illtyd, surrounding the slopes of this hill fort are a number of pillow mounds [see photograph].

Cefn Cul, off the A4067: the pillow mounds are behind Cefn Cul farm house on the right-hand side of the road. This was probably the Warrener’s home and is part of the vast Cnewr Estate.



Pant Mawr, near Ystradfellte: a remote location.

“Google Map” these places and you will clearly see the pillow mounds in the aerial images.

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“Your Local Lock up” project

This has been set up to run alongside the 19th Century Prisons database. Created by Dr Rosalind Crone of the Open University in 2018 [www.prisonhistory.org] Your Local Lock-Up is a public engagement project that aims to compile data on any place or structure used for temporary imprisonment between the 16th and early 20th centuries. These structures could include purpose built lock-ups, police stations, cells in town halls, courthouses, workhouses, stocks and even rooms in pubs where prisoners were guarded overnight. The accused might have been held there until they appeared before a magistrate, or the structures could even have been used by the community to punish anyone misbehaving in the parish.

The project is now looking for help from member societies to augment the information they currently have. The database has information on over 700 English lock-ups but only 7 for Wales. It is anticipated that there are countless others we know nothing about and so the project is asking member to tell them about any that know of in their area. It may be that Wales has a different history of local imprisonment and lock-ups were never used. If that is the case they would like to hear from anyone who can tell them how practices differed locally. Similarly if anyone has written books or articles on the history of imprisonment in Wales as the known literature currently concentrates on English prison history. To help with this you can get involved in a variety of ways:

- Contribute information directly into the database through an online form at www.prisonhistory.org/locallock-up/submit-lock-up.
- Supply them with old photographs of structures long demolished or pictures of those still in existence
- Add extra details and photographs of some already listed in the database by using the “Anything to add” button on each lock-up entry.
- Join the team if you are interested in lock-ups and penal history at www.prisonhistory.org/local-lock-up/become-a-contributor
- Tell a story about a lock-up and how it might have been restored and used for local events at www.prisonhistory.org/category/stories



Meeting Reports

October

The Great War Imagined - History v Literature. A talk by Arthur Gwynn of Talgarth.

Mr Gwyn gave a very interesting talk about the methods by which we learn about historical conflicts from literature. Historically most factual books about WW1 & WW2 for example, were written from the point of view of the officer class. It is only recently that the memoirs of the ordinary soldier has been preserved in print. Our literature also gave the point of view of our side in the battles. "All Quiet on the Western Front", was one book written by a German soldier; the book was banned by Hitler. The initial work of the War Poets was patriotic and spoke of the glory of war. As WW1 progressed, the poetry became brutally realistic in its description of War.

November

The Catholic Church in Brecon

Monsignor Clyde Hughes Johnson talked about the history of the Catholic congregation in Brecon.

The Talk was largely based on his article "The Catholic Congregation of Brecon since the Reformation" in the booklet Bulwark & Bridge: Essays in Memory of Elsie Pritchard of Brecon" Edited by Huw Williams. 1984.

The Brecon area with areas of Monmouthshire kept alive the "Old faith" of Catholicism, following the reformation under Henry VIII. Old Brecon families, such as the Havards, provided Jesuit itinerant priests who travelled the countryside providing secret mass at sympathetic houses. The Senni Valley near Senni-bridge was known as Roman Dingle due to the number of Catholics there. The spiritual health of Brecon Catholics was served by two ladies who made their house on the site of the present Watergate Chapel, available to the itinerant priests. In 1805, when some of the restrictions on Catholics were lifted, the house was sold to the Baptists, who built the present chapel on the site. On the junction of Wheat Street and the present St Michael's Street, the Catholic congregation bought the "Three Cocks Inn" and the present St Michael's Catholic Church was built there and opened in 1851.

Website

Our website address is www.blfhs.co.uk

Facebook

The society now has a Facebook page. Check it out at www.facebook.com/breconblfhs

Future Meetings

The location for this year's meetings has yet to be confirmed so please check before attending.

February

Date/Time	Tuesday 4 th February 2020. 2pm
Place	Yr Gaer – but to be confirmed
Subject	Guided visit around y Gaer

March

Date/Time	Tuesday 3 rd March 2020 2pm
Place	To be confirmed
Subject	Rowena Akinyemi: Giraldu Cambrensis

April

Date/Time Tuesday 7th April 2pm
 Place To be confirmed
 Subject The Struet Forge

May

Date/Time Tuesday 5th May 2pm
 Place To be confirmed
 Subject Visit to the Struet Forge



Website Statistics. Jan – Nov 2019

Website Report				
Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
Jan-19	986	1,258	4,460	11,523
Feb-19	705	872	3,221	10,304
Mar-19	1,200	1,579	4,635	10,913
Apr-19	554	727	2,672	8,499
May-19	604	789	2,748	8,978
Jun-19	907	1,154	3,473	10,196
Jul-19	702	919	3,364	12,895
Aug-19	647	837	2,993	11,669
Sep-19	696	1,005	4,045	12,251
Oct-19	729	1,079	4,858	14,029
Nov-19	457	539	1,543	5,245
Dec-19	0	0	0	0
Total	8,187	10,758	38,012	116,502



Don't forget – I am always looking for interesting article subjects so let me know if you have anything you would like to share!!!!

I am looking for interesting subjects on which to base the quarterly article. If you are passionate about a subject which you think would be interesting to our members please let me know by sending me an email at the usual address editorblfhs@outlook.com