Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)
Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog
Newsletter 92 – Summer 2021

Paper Making in Breconshire

by Sue Ashton

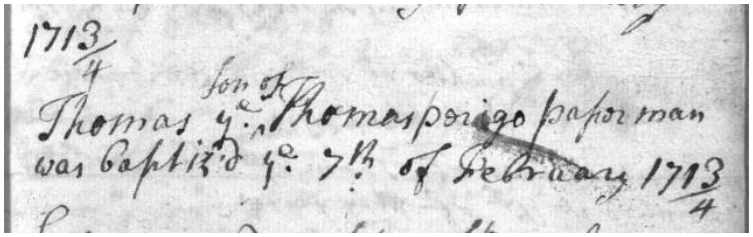
Until around the end of the 17th Century paper making was confined to the areas around the Home Counties. Most paper had in fact been imported up to this time and so paper making as an industry was only ever small and largely family run. In 1816 it was estimated that there were only about 15 mills in Wales [Customs and Excise Authorities General Letter 1816 lists them for excise reasons][1] many of which were located in the north of the country. By 1851 the number had dropped to around 8 with two of them located in Breconshire; Golden Grove at Llangenny and Llanroyney at Glangrwyne. A third Mill called Millbrook also existed although it is possible that this was an early name for the Mill at Glangrwyne. The 1832 First Series OS map shows clearly two paper mills, one at Llangenau [Llangenny] and further south a paper mill near Millbrook.

Mills were usually found situated along a river valley near a clear and fast flowing stream as the nature of paper making required a high volume of water both to power the mill and to be used in the paper making process. One valuable element of the paper produced in Wales was that the water was particularly pure which helped make Welsh paper high quality.

OS 1st Series 1832.

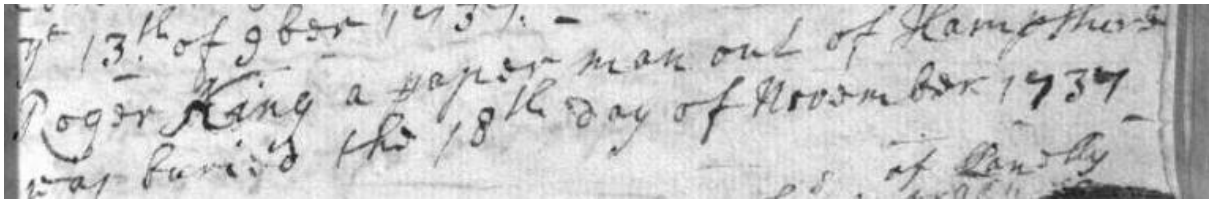
Early paper was made using rags which were sorted at the mill. Depending on their composition the rags with the highest quality went to make the highest quality paper. Most of the rags were collected from the surrounding villages although some were brought in from South Wales. By mid-19th century rags were being replaced by esparto grass and wood pulp.

The earliest mill in Breconshire was possibly the mill at Llangenny. In 1713 parish records record the baptism of Thomas son of Thomas Porigo, paperman. It was largely uncommon for the occupation of the father to be cited in the records but there are occasions when they appear and these can be very useful in determining factors such as local employment options.



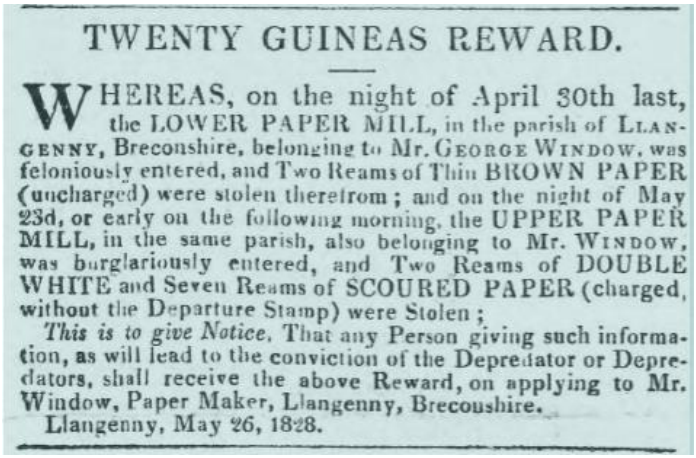
Baptism of Thomas, son of Thomas Porigo paperman. Llangenny, 1713

In 1737 the records for Llangenny record the burial of Roger King a paper man.



Burial record for Roger King a paperman. Llangennin 1737

Further evidence of the early dates for this mill are found in the Apprentice records[2] where George Window, Master and owner of Llangenny Mill takes on William Bassett in 1787 followed in 1790 by William James and in 1803, James Window, possibly his son. James took over the Mill in the early 19th century after George's death in 1841 at age 86. The British Book Trade Index[3] lists the Mill at Llangenny with dates from before 1790 to post 1839.



TWENTY GUINEAS REWARD.

WHEREAS, on the night of April 30th last, the LOWER PAPER MILL, in the parish of LLANGENNY, Breconshire, belonging to Mr. GEORGE WINDOW, was feloniously entered, and Two Reams of Thin BROWN PAPER (uncharged) were stolen therefrom; and on the night of May 23d, or early on the following morning, the UPPER PAPER MILL, in the same parish, also belonging to Mr. WINDOW, was burglariously entered, and Two Reams of DOUBLE WHITE and Seven Reams of SCOURED PAPER (charged, without the Departure Stamp) were Stolen;

This is to give Notice, That any Person giving such information, as will lead to the conviction of the Depredator or Depredators, shall receive the above Reward, on applying to Mr. Window, Paper Maker, Llangenny, Brecoushire.

Llangenny, May 26, 1828.

In 1828 a report of burglary at the Upper and Lower Mills at Llangenny appeared In the *Cambrian* on the 31st *May 1828*. A reward of 20 guineas was a generous reward and perhaps indicates the value of the paper being produced.

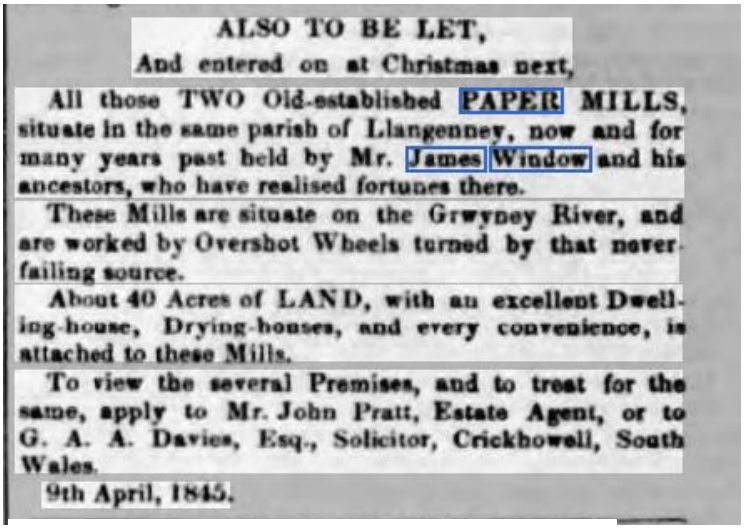
As most Mills were family concerns they tended to be quite small and employed families from the local area. In the Llangenny census for 1841 there are six people employed as papermakers, all men, but by 1851 this figure has risen to over twenty with wives, sons and daughters all being employed carrying out a range of different tasks. Women and children were usually employed in the sorting and cutting of rags with the men and boys doing more of the technical work. Until 1867 children under 16 could be employed and it was not uncommon to find those as young as 8 working in rag sorting. Workers at the mill include Elizabeth Warren, wife of John a papermaker, employed as a paper sorter; Arthur Parry, son of William a paper manufacturer, employed as a clerk on the paper mill whilst his brother Arthur was an assistant in the business. Mary Pritchard wife of William is listed as a sorter of rags and a pauper whilst Helen Salter, daughter of Henry a papermaker, is also a rag sorter. One interesting fact is that many of the men listed in the census and employed in the paper making trade are not born in the area but have moved from England, largely from the South West although there were others from the North and West. Examples from the 1851 Census for Llangenny are Valentine Champman (77) from York, William German (24) from Wiltshire, James Jones (47) from Shirenewton and Henry and William Salter 17 and 16 from Devon. Henry Salter father to the two boys is from York suggesting that the family moved around.

Rag cutting was dirty work as the rags came from a variety of places and often needed to be cleaned before chopping. The rate of pay was an average of 2s 6d week but the day was a long one only helped by a break for dinner of around an hour and some time for breakfast. After the stripping the rags were pounded and pulped to break down the fibres. Both Mills only had one beating engine[4] in 1851 so output was limited. The troughs within which the rags were pulped were fed by a stream of running water to flush away any impurities. Horse hair mats prevented the pulp from escaping. After this the pulp was removed to a second trough for a lighter pounding. Half a ton of water was needed to prepare enough fibres to make one pound of paper.

To sort the rags the women would sit on benches with a knife and board cutting and scraping the dirt off the

different rags. In front of the bench would be a box divided into separate spaces to take different types of fabric scraps. The quality of the finished paper depended on the quality of the rags so it was important that the scraps were separated out at the beginning of the process. Rags were sometimes fermented and this is why early paper tends to be cream but as the century progressed many Welsh mills bleached their paper white. One of the first books printed on Welsh paper was Theophilus Jones' History of the County of Brecknock which was produced by the Llangenny Mill and published by William and George North.

At some point the Llangenny Mill changed its name to the Golden Grove. The British Book Trade Index lists James Window as the proprietor but gives trading dates as 1835-1839. Both Mills in Llangenny traded well beyond these dates but the proprietor changed many times over. In 1845 the Mill was put up for rent but the 1851 Census still lists James Window as residing there



ALSO TO BE LET,
And entered on at Christmas next,

All those TWO Old-established PAPER MILLS, situate in the same parish of Llangenney, now and for many years past held by Mr. James Window and his ancestors, who have realised fortunes there.

These Mills are situate on the Grwyney River, and are worked by Overshot Wheels turned by that never-failing source.

About 40 Acres of LAND, with an excellent Dwelling-house, Drying-houses, and every convenience, is attached to these Mills.

To view the several Premises, and to treat for the same, apply to Mr. John Pratt, Estate Agent, or to G. A. A. Davies, Esq., Solicitor, Crickhowell, South Wales.

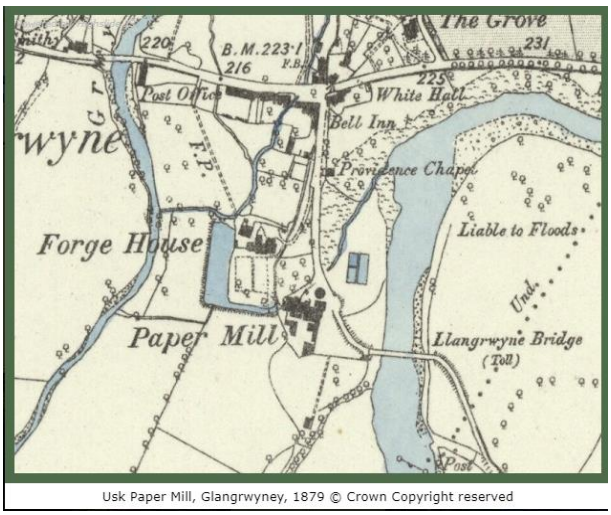
9th April, 1845.

Worcestershire Chronicle 16 April 1845. P3

By the census of 1861 we have a James Rumsey listed as a Millboard Manufacturer living at Golden Grove Mill so perhaps the management changed but the ownership remained the same.

At the same time that the Llangenny Mill was put up for rent so was an old iron forge at Glangrwyne upon which the Glangrwyne papermill was established. Available records are quite sketchy so it is difficult to ascertain exactly who owned the Mill and who managed it.

Some of those in the Census perhaps inflated their occupations as there would appear to be too many manufacturers for the number of mills running.

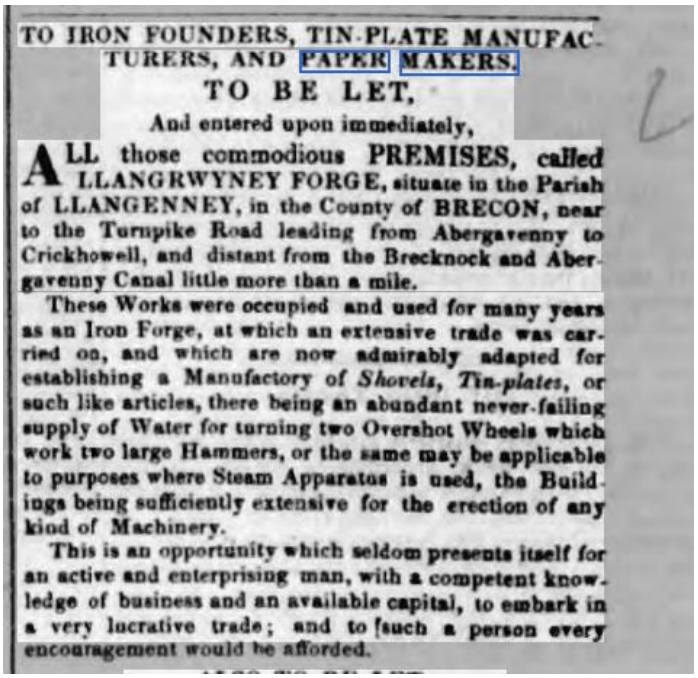


Usk Paper Mill, Glangrwyney, 1879 © Crown Copyright reserved

Once established the Glangrwyne Mill became well known for producing brightly coloured shop and grocery papers. Sugar was known for being wrapped in blue paper, perhaps produced at this Mill. Situated near the River Grwyne like the Golden Grove it had plenty of water to power the mill wheel and the raw material for the making of the paper.

Map showing the location of the Glangrwyne Mill[6] Llangenni. CC.Vision of Time[5]

For a time the Window family were involved in the running of the mill as cited in the British Book Trade Index where [William] Parry and Window were joint managers. Their partnerships was dissolved in 1850[6] by mutual consent probably because the Mill had earlier been put up for rent.



TO IRON FOUNDERS, TIN-PLATE MANUFACTURERS, AND PAPER MAKERS.

TO BE LET,

And entered upon immediately,

ALL those commodious PREMISES, called LLANGRWYNEY FORGE, situate in the Parish of LLANGENNEY, in the County of BRECON, near to the Turnpike Road leading from Abergavenny to Crickhowell, and distant from the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal little more than a mile.

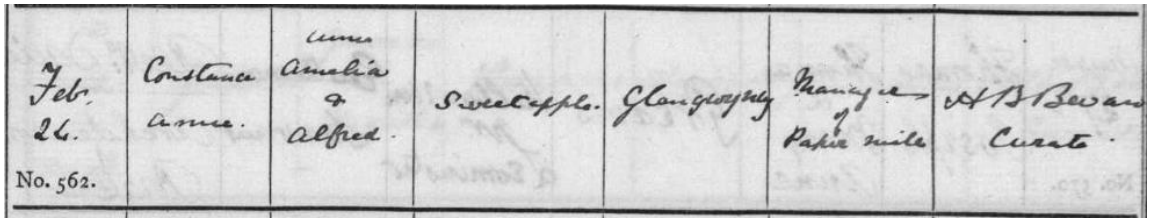
These Works were occupied and used for many years as an Iron Forge, at which an extensive trade was carried on, and which are now admirably adapted for establishing a Manufactory of *Shovels*, *Tin-plates*, or such like articles, there being an abundant never-failing supply of Water for turning two Overshot Wheels which work two large Hammers, or the same may be applicable to purposes where Steam Apparatus is used, the Buildings being sufficiently extensive for the erection of any kind of Machinery.

This is an opportunity which seldom presents itself for an active and enterprising man, with a competent knowledge of business and an available capital, to embark in a very lucrative trade; and to such a person every encouragement would be afforded.

By the mid-19th century Golden Grove was in the management of James Jacob and Co. The company is listed In the Papermakers Directory and Diary for 1876 and in the Directory of Paper-Makers of the United Kingdom, London. 1885

As the papermaking process became more mechanized the Mill turned to making Millboard. As an experiment Jacob entered into an arrangement with the Mayor of Burton on Trent to experiment with using spent hops from the brewing industry. It was a successful arrangement but only a certain portion of the examples produced were felt to be competitive when compared with the strawboard coming in from abroad. However, although the English market was small the millboards were of great use to the bookbinding industry.[5]

By 1875 Alfred Sweetapple takes over. It is likely that the dates of the respective managers overlap as the 1871 census lists Alfred as "manager of papermill" and he also baptized a first child in February 1871 at Llangenny parish church.



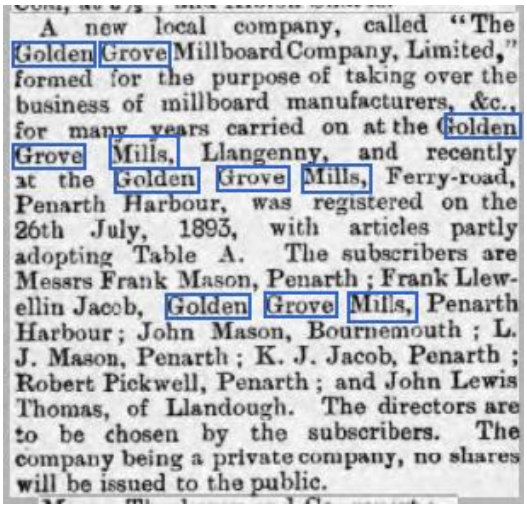
Feb. 26. No. 562.	Constance Anne.	Amelia & Alfred.	Sweetapple.	Glangwyny	Manager of Paper mills	A.B. Bevan Curate.

Both Golden Grove and Glangrwyne continued working well into the 19th Century. The Papermaker's Directory and Diary for 1876 lists both as does the 1886 edition. In 1894 the Alphabetical List of Paper and Millboard Makers in UK lists Millbrook at Llangenny owned by the Breconshire Millboard Company. Millbrook may have been part of the Mill at Llangenny as it appears in a list of Mills dated 1851 and the newspaper article referring to the Upper and Lower Mills perhaps refers to Golden Grove and Millbrook.

On Thursday afternoon Messrs Straker and Son sold by auction at the Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, the Courtygollen estates, situated on the borders of the counties of Brecon and Monmouth, with about 2¼ miles of fishing in the Usk and about 1½ mile of fishing in the Grwyney, which is a noted trout stream. The sale was held in the large ballroom of the hotel, and was attended by a large number of people, including many of the tenants of the estate. The Courtygollen estate was first put up, comprising the mansion, with park and buildings, covering an area of 149a. 0r. 2p.; Pen-y-rhiw Farm, 115a. 3r.; Golden Grove, Millboard Mill, and land 9a. 0r. 30p.; Dragon's Head Inn and church lands, 24a. 3r. 12p.; Llwyncytrach and Llanwyske Villa, 128a. 3r. 7p., with a mile of fishing in the Usk; the Forge Farm lands, 66a. 1r. 17p., with a mile of fishing; Llangrwyney Paper Mills and Llangrwyney House, 7a. 0r. 14p.;

In 1891 the Courtygollen Estate was sold which included Golden Grove and Glangrwyne Mills. The Golden Grove moved to Cardiff and a new company was established in 1893 to continue producing the Millboard it was known for. The new Mill does not seem to have been successful as it was wound up in 1896.

South Wales Daily News 20 Nov 1891. P7



A new local company, called "The Golden Grove Millboard Company, Limited," formed for the purpose of taking over the business of millboard manufacturers, &c., for many years carried on at the Golden Grove Mills, Llangenny, and recently at the Golden Grove Mills, Ferry-road, Penarth Harbour, was registered on the 26th July, 1893, with articles partly adopting Table A. The subscribers are Messrs Frank Mason, Penarth; Frank Llewellin Jacob, Golden Grove Mills, Penarth Harbour; John Mason, Bournemouth; L. J. Mason, Penarth; K. J. Jacob, Penarth; Robert Pickwell, Penarth; and John Lewis Thomas, of Llandough. The directors are to be chosen by the subscribers. The company being a private company, no shares will be issued to the public.

South Wales Daily News 28 July. 1893 p8

Legal Notices.

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACTS, 1862 to 1890,
AND
IN THE MATTER OF THE GOLDEN GROVE MILL BOARD COMPANY, LIMITED.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the **CREDITORS** of the above-named Company are required, on or before the 28th day of February, 1896, to **SEND THEIR NAMES and ADDRESSES**, the **PARTICULARS** of their **DEBTS or CLAIMS**, and the names and addresses of their solicitors if any, to the undersigned, the Liquidator of the said Company, and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are by their Solicitors to come in and prove their said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts are proved.

Dated this 15th day of January, 1896.

FRANK MASON, of
No. 100, St. Mary-street, Cardiff,
The said Liquidator.

7937

South Wales Daily News 21 Jan. 1896 p1

Whilst the Golden Grove was re-established in Cardiff the papermills at Llangenny and Llangrwyne continued working as evidenced by the 1901 and 1911 Census' which list a variety of inhabitants of Llangenny and Llangrwyne employed in the paper mill. In 1901 Arthur Beckwith and William James are listed as employers in Paper Manufacturing and Millboard making respectively. The range of jobs within the paper mill are also more detailed listing Willliam Pearce [19] a paper chopper and his brother Albert [17] a paper pulper. Willie Saunders [14] is a machiner.

Re R. H. HAWKINS.
IN BANKRUPTCY.
THURSDAY, AUGUST 29th.
MILLBROOK MILLBOARD MILLS, LLANGENNY.
Midway Between Abergavenny and Crickhowell

J. STRAKER, SON & CHADWICK (F.A.I.) are instructed by L. S. Findlay, Esq., A.C.A., of the Firm of Messrs. Poppleton and Appleby, 35, Windsor-place, Cardiff, the Trustee in Bankruptcy, to SELL by AUCTION, upon the Premises, the VALUABLE

PLANT AND MACHINERY,
with
SURPLUS MATERIAL, FRENCH BARN, SCRAP, &c.,

Including Scrap Iron, several Tons of Baled Scrap Paper, about 10cwt. of Finished Millboard (Assorted), Quantity of Sheet ditto, Dismantled 2 Span French Barn (6 Girder Standards).

PAIR CALENDAR ROLLS.

2 Stands high, 2 Sets Spur Gearing, Table, Tension Screws and Brass Bearings; Pair ditto, but of lighter pattern; 5 and 4 Cwt. Platform Weighing Machines; Countershaft with 2 Bearings and 27in. Pulley; 2 Lineshafts, 14ft. x 2in. and 7ft. x 2¼in., with Hanger Bearings and Pulleys; Double Hand Pump; Double Throw Hydraulic Pump with Fast and Loose Pulleys; Balata Belting.

CAPITAL GUILLOTINE COMPLETE,
with Fast and Loose Pulleys, Flywheel, Table Clutch and Knives; Various Shafting, C.I. Beater Tank, Mortice Wheels, &c.

GOOD HYDRAULIC PRESS,
with 1 Ton Chain Blocks over; Hand Winch and Chain; Drying Timbers; New C.T., Spur, and other Wheels; Hand Cutter, &c.

Sale at 2.30.
Terms: Cash. 14 days given for clearance.
Auctioneers' Offices: Abergavenny. 'Phone 24.
u2701

In 1935 the Western Mail[7] reports yet another bankruptcy as the Millbrook Millboard Mill at Llangenny fails. Whether it was bought and resurrected has not been established but the Mill had managed to keep producing for over a century, despite the turbulence of the industrial revolution, and this must be a testament to the quality of its products.

The paper-making industry in Breconshire was a long and illustrious one and this article can only scratch the surface. I am grateful for the article by Alun Eirug Davies[8] which enabled me to delve into this industry and extract the basics.

Western Mail 21 Aug. 1935 p1

References

1. Customs and Excise Letter
2. County Apprentices 1710-1808. [Find My Past]
3. British Book Trade Index http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/
4. Paper Mills and Paper Makers – Table II [GENUKI as below]
5. Llangenni. www.visionofbritain.or.uk/place/10740
6. Hereford Times 7th Dec. 1850.p.4
7. Western Mail. 21st Aug. 1935.p.1
8. Paper Mills and Paper Makers in Wales 1700-1900. Alun Eirug Davies National Library Wales Journal. 1967. Summer. Vol.XV/1 [extracted into the pages of GENUKI]

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. Latest issues cover the Hay Railway.

The Hay Railway

Shortly after the Abergavenny to Brecon canal was opened in 1800, it was decided to construct a plate-way tram-road between Brecon and Hay. It was called The Hay Railway and was opened in 1816. The tram-road was later extended to Kington.

The Brecon terminus was at the Watton Wharf, where Morrison's filling station is today. Look at the bridge over the canal and you will see the much filled in tram-road tunnel.

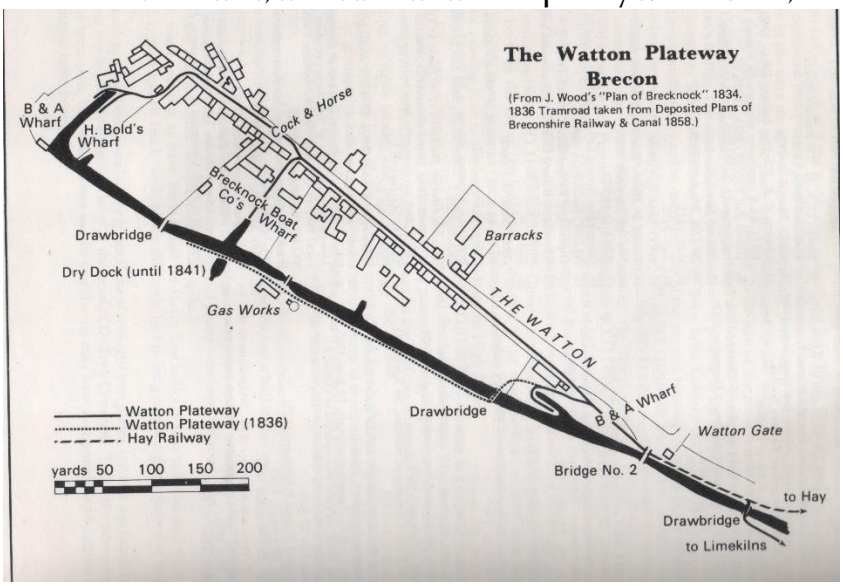
Independent carriers operated the horse drawn drams, paying tolls to the tram-road Company according to types of goods carried and distance covered. Coal and lime, farm produce, timber and beer were amongst the goods transported.

One horse could pull a train of six trams. The tram-road was single track with regular passing places. In cases of two tram trains meeting between passing places, the empty tram train had to give way to the loaded tram train.

Other strict rules included, that a load should not exceed two tons and the speed allowed was walking pace, with the driver leading the horses.

The Hay Railway was absorbed into the local Railway Companies from 1860 and the line was converted to standard gauge for operation by steam locomotives.

The Brecon end of the plate-way terminated at Watton Wharf, which was convenient for the lime kilns. There were other wharfs on the canal, and the plate-way was extended along the Watton, branching left to the Brecon Boat Company Wharf, lately called Tom Cross's yard. The plate-way then turned down Dan-y-Gaer road to Bold's Wharf, now filled in and occupied by Robert Price, Builder's Merchant.



The plate-way along the Watton was a disruption to people and horse drawn traffic and attempts were made to have it removed by the towns' people.

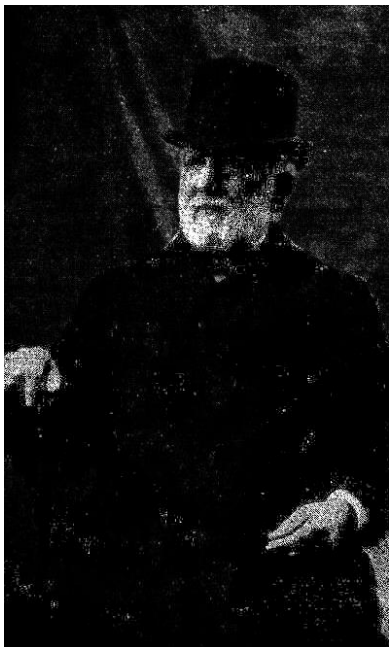
Then the cost of maintenance increased and the plate-way was removed from the Watton in about 1833. A new plateway along the present tow path was laid to deliver coal to the Gas Works, now Elliot Place and Gas Works House. Materials were brought along the plate-way, to make the Dry Dock, now the site of Theatr Brycheiniog.

The new plate-way required a draw bridge, constructed across the canal where ATS tyres are today.
The date when the canal tow path plate-way was removed is unknown.

♦

His Bethlehem was the Rose & Crown, Llanfaes, Brecon.
Part Two

The Hirwain Will Cause



Cenad Hedd, May 1903
© Union of Welsh Independents.
With grateful thanks for permission to reproduce.

Last time we heard of the Llanfaes, Brecon-born David Evan Williams (1821-1902) and how he left to become apprentice to Hirwain grocer Phillip Taylor (1790-1859), marry his employer's adopted niece, Anne Edwards (1817-1883) and take over the business. However it was not all smooth sailing with much wrangling in court. Was Phillip Taylor an old wealthy man of weak intellect being kept against his will? Could they prove his insanity?

The 1841 census shows Phillip Tayler, Shopkeeper (50) and Ann Tayler (45), with David Williams (20), Evan William (18), Roger Jinkins (25), Ann Edwards (20), Mary Jones (30) and Ann Evans (15) all living together in Hirwain. Phillip also had a niece – Helen Eliza Taylor (ca. 1820-), the daughter of his only brother Thomas, a West India planter, after whose death in 1838 Phillip paid her passage back to Britain to live with them. Helen Taylor moved in later in 1841.

By 1847 she found living under the same roof as Mrs Taylor had become intolerable and Phillip arranged for her to move to Bristol, granting her a £50 annual allowance. The following year Mrs Taylor died and Helen immediately returned to Hirwain.

In 1851 Helen married David Tudor Evans, (1822-1896) the founder in 1847 of the weekly English language newspaper *The Principality*, and a proponent of the teaching of the Welsh language and literature. They lived in Cardiff and Manchester, before returning in October 1855 to Hirwain.

Phillip Taylor had done very well for himself. He claimed wealth of £15,000 accumulated from his business, farming and some fortunate purchases of land, which contained coal. But who would he leave his wealth to? The tussle for influence was hard-fought and saw several court actions.

Phillip Taylor died 23 July 1859 and by May the following year the two nieces were back in court, this time Helen Evans was opposing probate on the grounds that Phillip's will was not duly executed, that he was of unsound mind and undue influences had been brought to bear on him in drawing up the will.

It emerged that two wills had been made before the current one, with the bulk of the legacy going first to one niece and then the other. In 1856 Helen had tried to get an irrevocable Power of Attorney over her uncle's affairs, and upon embarking on the transfer of some Vale of Neath Railway shares to Helen, Phillip went to the Williams distraught feeling the Evans' were attempting to gain his property piecemeal and moreover had treated him badly. He asked to move in with the Williams', to which they agreed.

A new will, dated 5 December 1856, had been drawn up now naming Anne Williams sole executrix and leaving Helen Evans with just £70/an. Documents left in the Evans' house were not handed over to Phillip and this led to further legal action.

At the start of 1857 the Evans' had petitioned the Court of Chancery to have Phillip Taylor declared insane. Four medical men interviewed Phillip to assess his capacity, but concluded he was of perfectly sound mind. The court had felt it wise to commission yet further evidence and so sent Dr Forbes Winslow who examined

Phillip twice in London and 3 times in Hirwain. Winslow found no evidence of delusion, nor hallucination. In fact Phillip could converse about the Russian and Chinese war and Winslow could only say as he tired his memory flagged a little. The petition was dismissed by April 1857.

The following June 1858, believing her uncle was being held against his will by the Williamses, Helen made application for a *habeas corpus*. This was refused, with costs.

Now, with the will and its execution being contested, the medical men were recalled but reiterated their earlier conclusions. Phillip Taylor's solicitors were questioned about the drawing up of the will, leases and other business they advised him on, and various other people were called with whom Phillip had had transactions. All stated that Phillip had been able to conduct his own affairs in 1856 and 1857 without signs of mental incapacity.

The judge asked one witness the population of Hirwain and how many might have known Mr Taylor. About 6,000 and most of them, was the reply. To laughter, the judge said he could then conclude how long the case might now take.

It was in 1848 when Helen returned from Bristol to Hirwain after Mrs Taylor's death that that she says she was asked to look over Phillip's papers and found a draft will in the hand of David Evan Williams with blanks where amounts to Anne Williams and others should be filled in. There was an annual allowance for Helen herself if she agreed to emigrate to Australia or New Zealand! She brought this to her uncle's attention and he confronted David Evan Williams. Phillip then said the draft had been destroyed.

At the start of 1856 Helen returned to Hirwain after a 5-6 weeks stay in Swansea and noticed a great change had come over her uncle. His memory was poor and he was unable to look after his financial affairs, she testified. In June 1856 he had suffered a fit and afterwards become greatly worried by his financial security and 'poverty', sometimes refusing to eat. In business papers drawn up on 6 September Phillip made everything over to Helen except a £500 allowance for himself. Believing the Williamses would contest the will and that she would need cash for the defence, Helen asked that the Vale of Neath Railways shares *themselves* be given to her *now* – and not just the income later. It was then that Phillip made his move to the Williamses, convinced that Helen was wrestling all his property from him whilst still alive.

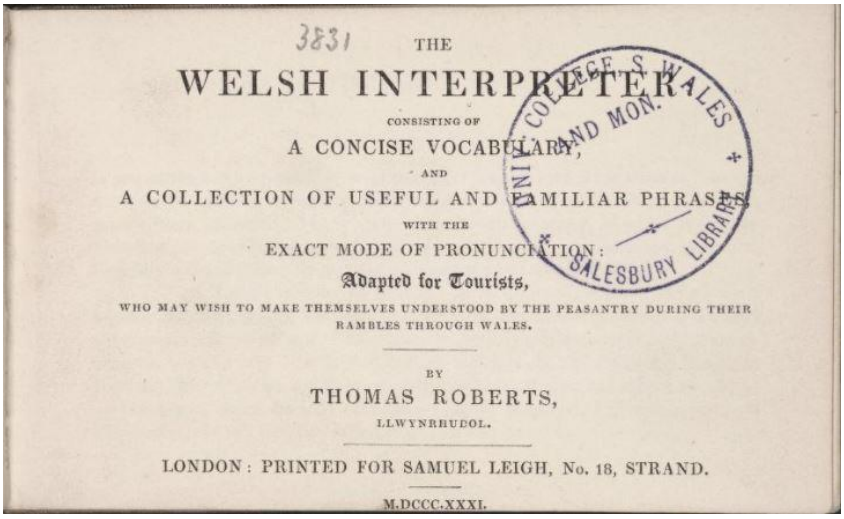
The third day of the trial heard evidence from William Davies, surgeon, of Phillip's paralysis in May 1855 and fit in June of the following year, after which he appeared 'quite childish'. The judge had heard enough and conferring with counsel, they together concluded that it would be hopeless to attempt to establish the plea of undue influence and consented to a verdict for the plaintiff.

The Williamses offered to pay costs if they were paid from the estate, so that Helen might enjoy the annuity of £70 left to her in the will. The will was finally proved with £9,000 left after deductions.

A full account of the latter trial can be read here:
https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3381328/3381334/20/

David Irwin. BLFHS member

A phrasebook for the English rambler



The Welsh language has always been considered a bit of an enigma by those who misunderstand its intricacies and special construction but in 1838 a phrasebook was published in London which aimed to overcome the difficulties visitors to Wales had with the language. Unfortunately, the tenor of this publication was that Wales was full of peasants and to this end the title and introduction are somewhat insulting to the people of this wonderful land. But, it was of its time and so has to be seen in this context.

Called the Welsh Interpreter it consisted of a concise vocabulary and a collection of familiar phrases alongside instructions as to the words' pronunciation. The phrasebook was intended to accompany the rambler as they "rambled" their way through Wales and to help them be understood by the "peasantry". If the Welsh thought they were second class citizens then this publication did little to make their situation better nor improve their standing amongst ordinary folk outside the country. The author Thomas Roberts was well known as a founder of the Cymreigyddion Society, a social, cultural and debating society for Welsh expatriates living in London. One wonders how he viewed these expatriates given his manner of describing the Welsh in their own land!

The book is divided into sections with headings such as "arriving at an inn", "with the ostler", "going to bed" and "meeting a peasant" as well as "travelling over the mountains" and "supper".

Introductory remarks to the phrasebook say:

"If any apology were necessary for presenting 'The Welsh Interpreter' to the notice of the public, it might suffice simply to state the impossibility of English tourists being understood by the mass of the Welsh peasantry, of whom it may be exceedingly convenient occasionally to

ask a few useful and necessary questions, especially while travelling through the more obscure and remote districts."

The phrasebook can be looked in more detail online and in person at Cardiff University's Special Collections and Archives service. Cut and paste the following address into your browser to see it online.

https://archive.org/details/SAL001

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I am always pleased to receive subject suggestions on which to base the lead 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.

Alternatively if anyone would like to write an article on their suggested subject I would be very pleased to receive it.

Send submissions to me at the usual address

editorblfhs@outlook.com

Ystradgynlais History & Heritage

Our own Hilary Williams has been assisting in the research and preparation of articles on the Gough/Awbrey family for this new website which may be of interest to our members. As well as articles there are many photographs of the area as well as sections covering the archaeology of the landscape, buildings, industries and church history. It's well worth a look. The website can be found at www.ystradgynlais-history.co.uk/

Meeting Reports

Meetings are still paused until such time as it is safe to begin again.

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

We are still not planning any meetings for the foreseeable future but there is the possibility that our AGM in June could be run as a Zoom (online video) meeting. This would enable those members who wish to "attend" to take part. The meeting may also incorporate a short question and answer session on family history. Trying this out will help us to assess how helpful running a meeting in this way might be. Further details will be released when and if this idea is felt workable. Aside from this we will keep members informed as and when we intend to restart face to face meetings. In the meantime it is intended that a mini bulletin will be sent out to members each month containing a short article of interest.