Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)
Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

Newsletter 23 – June 2013

Welcome to our latest Newsletter. We invite you to contribute articles, tips, questions and answers for others to share. Feedback is always welcome. Have you missed an edition? Read the archived Newsletters on our website.

June Meeting AGM

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the AGM, whether by sending in voting papers, or by being present on the day. All those who sent in postal voting papers were counted as if they were present on the day.

Your officers – Chair, Secretary and Treasurer were re-elected for another year and the rest of the committee members were also re-elected.

Following the AGM, Roy Davies gave us a very interesting talk on the make-up and usefulness of Tithe maps in family history research. Using his technical skills, Roy is in the process of making the Breconshire tithe maps and tithe schedules more user friendly. His work will eventually be available for purchase on CD. Roy's presentation is available on the members section of our website.

Using the National Library of Wales at a distance

The National Library of Wales (NLW) **http://www.llgc.org.uk/** is the depository in Wales for family, estate, legal and other manuscripts.

The catalogues give key personal names and place-names in the documents held in the archives. The manuscript and document collections may be searched in a number of ways:

- ISYS: **http://isys.llgc.org.uk/**
  - Marriage Bonds (index of applicants for marriage licences 1616-1837).
  - Pre 1999 catalogued archives and manuscripts collections can be searched from here. The catalogue of an individual collection may also be saved from here as a Microsoft Word document.
- Full Catalogue: Search for: books, periodicals, newspapers and electronic publications: Films, sound recordings and videos; maps and other cartographic material; graphic materials; digitised materials; archives and manuscripts; University of Wales dissertations after 1984.
- Other searchable collections include:
  http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=searcharchivaldatabases
  Probate - Wills Online: Free access is now available to digital images of wills through the new online index. At the moment no digital images are available for Hawarden, Brecon or St Asaph pre 1660.
  Crime and Punishment: Index to the Gaol Files of the Court of Great Sessions in Wales, 1730-1830
  Schedules: Finding-aids containing detailed descriptions of the archives housed at the NLW (incomplete, but growing).
  Manorial Documents Register: A guide to the manors and manorial records of Wales searchable through The National Archives (TNA) website.
  Basic Inventory: Descriptions of NLW acquisitions year by year since 1909, based on the appendixes of the library's annual reports
  Archival Holdings: Brief descriptions of the Library's archival holdings

The NLW's on-going digitisation programme, accessible on-line, includes:

- **Welsh Journals Online http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/**
  This webpage lists the journals identified for digitisation
  http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=5668
- **Welsh Newspapers Online http://welshnewspapers.llgc.org.uk/en/home**
  This webpage shows what is planned for the current year:
  http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=4723

The NLW has a copying and posting service for any documents you require.
It is well worth exploring the various pages of the website for a better understanding of what is available from NLW: **http://www.llgc.org.uk/**

The Role of Brecon and Breconshire in British History (occasional series)

Many members will be familiar with the excitement in the media in February 2013 generated by the discovery and identification of the body of King Richard III in the foundations of a car park built upon the ruins of the Greyfriars Priory Church in Leicester, England. A useful overview of his life and death can be found in **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_III_of_England**

Brecon was central to parts of the story of the downfall of Richard.

The ruined tower which stands on the castle mount in Brecon is called Ely Tower and the area below it being known as Ely Place. Tradition has it that it was named after John Morton, Bishop of Ely, an early supporter of Richard. Richard III placed Morton in the custody of Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, for opposing his rise to the throne on the disappearance and probable death of the Princes in the Tower. Stafford took him to Brecon where he was imprisoned in Brecon Castle in 1483. **https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Morton_%28bishop%29**

How was Henry Stafford, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, connected with Brecon? The Stafford family's considerable land holdings in Wales and the Marches (including Breconshire), contributed to the great wealth and power of the Buckingham family. Eventually, Stafford, one of King Richard's main supporters, realised that he was on the wrong side and at Brecon Castle plotted the downfall of the king with Bishop Morton. Both became supporters of the Duke of Richmond (Henry Tudor), who was in exile in France. Stafford, with other county leaders in the south west, raised an army of their tenants (probably including many Breconshire men) and planned to cross the River Severn, join forces with the other rebels and intercept Richard on his royal progress and put the Duke of Richmond on the throne. The rebellion failed, and Henry Stafford, once so close to Richard III, was executed and his lands seized for the king.

Buckingham Tower, St Mary's Church, Brecon

Bishop Morton fled abroad and joined the Earl of Richmond who was soon to defeat Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth and to become the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII. Henry VII employed the bishop as one of his most efficient tax collectors. The new king also rewarded the Stafford family for their loyalty. Edward, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, who was born in Brecon Castle in February 1478, was granted all the honours, titles and lands that had belonged to his father. It was he who built the tower at St Mary's Church in the centre of Brecon (right). Called Buckingham Tower, it would have represented the return to power of this great dynasty. Buckingham Place also preserves this dynastic link with Brecon.

Edward Stafford was powerful in the English Court. In 1521, Edward Stafford rashly flaunted his royal connections and claim to the throne at the time when Henry VIII (son of Henry VII) had no legitimate heir. Consequently, Henry VIII found it necessary to execute Stafford, the third and last Duke of Buckingham. The Buckingham estates, which included Brecon, reverted to the Crown. The Lordship would not be restored and in its place there appeared the County of Brecknock.

For more information on this period:

- *Brycheiniog*, the annual journal of the Brecknock Society and Museum Friends.
  Vol XXXIV (2002) "Bishop Morton and the Ely Tower at Brecon" (available to read at Welsh Journals Online **http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/**)

- Jones, Theophilus: *History of the County of Brecknock* (Glanusk Edition, four volumes), 1909-1930.

- Thomas, W. S. K: *Brecon 1093-1660,* Gomer Press, 1991.

NEXT MEETING

Date and time:	Wednesday, 3rd July 2013 at 2.00pm
Venue:	Brecon Library, Ship Street
Subject:	Geoff Brookes, *A Welsh Crime Miscellany* – the author of the popular *Stories in Welsh Stone* will describe three aspects of his research into crime in 19th century Wales.
	Prior to the main talk, Helen Whyte will continue her series of short presentations on family history sources.

BLFHS WEBSITE: Our website address: **http://www.blfhs.co.uk/**

CONTACT DETAILS:

If you wish to respond to or comment on an item in this newsletter, or contribute to the next newsletter or to our website, please contact our Chairperson:

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