



Newsletter 32 – April 2014

Welcome to our 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.

April Meeting Review: “*Archaeology at Risk*”: Natalie Ward, Archaeologist with the Brecon Beacons National Park gave an excellent illustrated presentation in which she explained how many sites within the Park were suffering and needed conservation. Using a variety of sites as illustrations from all over the Park, she explained how difficult it could be to preserve sites such as prehistoric cairns and burial areas, iron age forts and castle mounds and industrial buildings from the ravages of environmental as well as human activities. Here are some interesting links:

www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/planning/heritage2/archaeology

www.beacons-npa.gov.uk/the-authority/planning/heritage2/heritage-in-the-brecon-beacons-national-park

Where is this place? I think we have solved this puzzle, thanks to Susan Morris. John Ball also gave more information about the artist and engraver.



Pont Pwl Gwyn, River Usk
from the Mail Road between Trecastle & Brecon

John Ball writes “Geoff Sykes’s picture is intriguing. A black and white version is on the NLW’s **Peoples Collection Wales** feature: www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/items/20634 where the artist is named as **David Cox**. W. Radclyffe is the engraver. AncestryImages.com has more details: “**Pont Pwl Gwyn, River Usk**” engraved after a picture by D. Cox, published in **Roscoe’s Wanderings in South Wales**, 1838. Steel engraved antique print, with recent hand colouring:

see www.ancestryimages.com/proddetail.php?prod=g6028

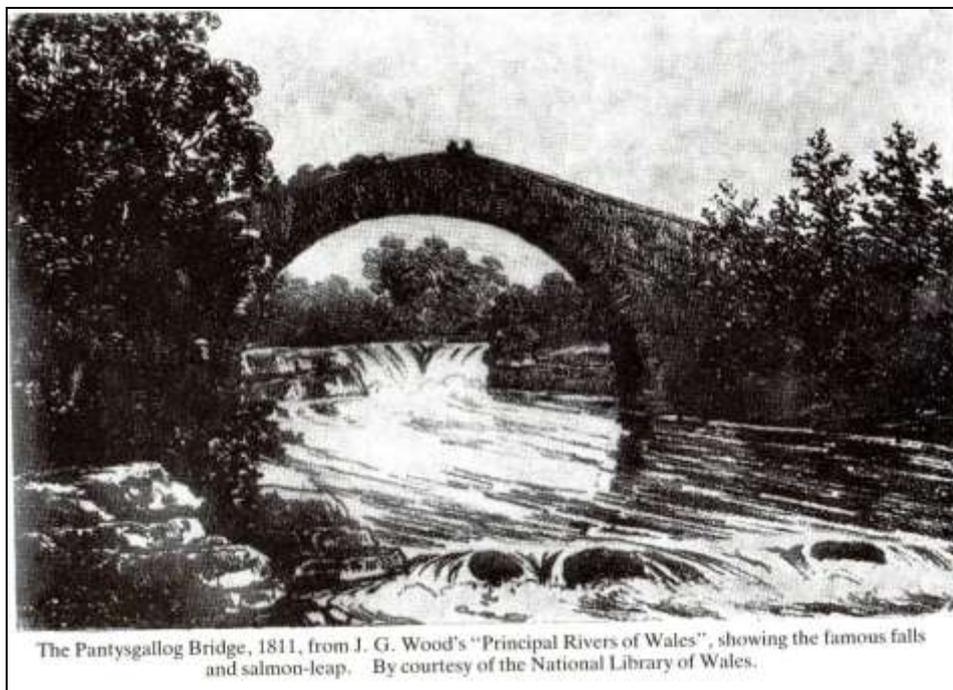
I have both volumes of Roscoe’s *Wanderings* (North Wales and South Wales), published circa 1837. In the South Wales volume, the monochrome engraving faces page 260 and shows the words “D. Cox” at bottom left of picture, and “W. Radclyffe” at bottom right. These books are available to download on Internet Archive.

Roscoe refers to "Pont Pwl Gwyn" in his accompanying text on page 260.

"The river Usk rises in the mountain range called the Carmarthenshire Fan, which divides the counties at their westerly point, near Trecastle. From this place it rolls its tide in an easterly course towards Brecknock and Crickhowel, where it enters the county of Monmouth, and passing by the towns of Abergavenny, Usk, Caerleon, and Newport, empties itself into the estuary of the Severn. The lower vale is the most luxuriant and romantic; but the passage of the river from Trecastle to the town in which I was sojourning, or along the Upper Vale, as it is called, has its own peculiar beauties. The road from Trecastle runs on the right of the river, sometimes rising in the form of a terrace above it, and again tracing its undulating line by its silvery stream, sharing in all the beauties of its devious course. The Cray and the Isker pour their waters into its channel before it reaches Brecknock. The pleasant villages of Lanspyddid and Aberisker may be seen from its banks,—and the Roman encampment on a rising ground, near the confluence of the Isker and the Usk, will detain and delight the antiquarian in his researches. This beautiful river derives much of its captivating character from the magnificent timber that decorates its shelving banks, and from the occasional glades and openings they afford, through which the clear bright stream is seen meandering and flowing in its course. The eye of the Wanderer, which had gazed with inexpressible delight upon these enchanting scenes, was in an especial manner refreshed when he came, unexpectedly, within sight of the romantic bridge of Pont Pwl Gwyn, stretching its single chord across the channel of the river. Fir trees of prodigious growth, such as are rarely seen but in this district, reared high their green peaks in the foreground, and groves of majestic oaks mingled their varied autumnal hues in one rich and harmonious combination, from the summits of the verging banks to the water's edge. The looming line of distant hills, irradiated with the last rays of the setting sun, formed the back-ground of this exquisite picture, while the gentle Usk glided in soft unruffled beauty through the tranquil scene."

Member Susan Morris, was able to identify the actual bridge as Pantysgallog Bridge, situated on the Usk between Trecastle and Sennybridge. There is a famous Salmon Leap above the bridge.

On page 28 of the book, "*Bridges of Breconshire*" by Dewi Davies, there is another view of the bridge, as seen below. The view is taken from a closure vantage point, but the distinctive hump of the bridge and the falls behind show that it is the same bridge. Note the walkers leading two pack horses over the bridge in this picture.



In Dewi Davies' book, the following is written:

Pont Pantysgallog – About a quarter of a mile below its junction with the river Crai, the Usk is crossed by a bridge known as Pont Pantysgallog. J.G. Wood, in his book "Principal Rivers of Wales" refers to it as Pont Rhyd (bridge of the ford) and Pont y Gôf (bridge of the blacksmith), but it is only known as Pont Pantysgallog today. Pantysgallog is the name of the farm nearby and means "the hollow of the thistle". It is a single arched bridge of striking appearance, 48feet

in span and only 8 feet of roadway, an example of a bridge which has not been adapted to modern needs. Unfortunately, we have no documents dealing with its erection or maintenance at the Brecon Museum. But there is a reference in the Llywel churchwardens' accounts for the 24th May, 1762, to the fact that 109/- had been allowed to Pont y Gôf.

As to whether this is the present bridge it is difficult to say for certain, although, of course, the present bridge was there when Wood drew it in 1811, i.e. 49 years later. It could well have been built in 1762.

Madame Adelina Patti at Pantysgallog – Close by the bridge is Pantysgallog pool, famous for its Salmon Leap and like many such pools it has its legend. [see next Newsletter].

But first let us hear a true story about the Pool. It is said that Baron Cederstrom, third husband of the world-famous singer of Craig y Nôs, Madame Adelina Patti, used to fish the pool. When the fish were not going and the Baron was bored, he used to throw his gillie into the pool and fish him out again with the aid of his gaff! What the gillie really thought of it is not known, but the bottle of whisky which he was allowed to share with his master after the “ducking” must have helped greatly to restore friendly relations.

Indeed, it was not an uncommon sight to see a party from Craig y Nôs spending the day at this delightful spot and it was said that Madame Patti often entertained the company with a song on the river bank. It would be difficult to imagine a more ideal setting, the Queen of Song matching her wonderful voice with the beauty of the romantic scene on the banks of the Usk. The remains of the old fishing cabin were still there when Roy Saunders [a Welsh author and artist who wrote about rural topics visited the spot in 1936.

see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Saunders_%28author%29”

*Madame Patti Watching
Nicolini Landing a
Salmon, Pont
Pantysgallog*
by John Ernest Breun
c.1880.
Brecknock Museum and
Art Gallery
[Nicolini was Madame
Patti's second husband]



This month on our Website

In this section I intend to update you with a list of what has been added to our website in the month since the last newsletter. I will include a direct link to the relevant pages. If anyone has difficulty navigating the website, please do ask for help by e-mailing our webmaster, John Ball at john@jlb2011.co.uk

Parish Pages (last updated 10 April 2014):

This section of our website provides details such as **church and chapel records, photographs, histories, and maps** of the parishes in Breconshire from a local perspective. As we are creating a separate webpage for each of the seventy-five parishes in the county, this is a major long-term project. Since February 2014, we have been adding snippets of information to each of the Breconshire parish pages, working through them in alphabetical order.

Go to www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes where the seventy-five Breconshire parishes are set out in a table. The links in the table become live as information is added. To date, there are live links to 13 parishes:

Aberllynfi	Brecon St Mary
Aberyscir	Bronllys
Alltmawr	Builth
Battle	Defynnog
Brecon Christ College	Llanafanfawr
Brecon St David (Llanfaes)	Merthyr Cynog
Brecon St John	

News Pages (last updated 19 April 2014):

Perhaps the first port of call when you visit our website is the News page. There are two sets of news pages: one for the [general public](#), and a more detailed one for [members](#). The news pages are updated every time a new item is added to the website, every time an existing item is changed, and every time we have some Society news for members.

Noticeboard (last updated 17 April 2014):

The [Noticeboard](#) is updated regularly and is the same for members and for the general public. It contains General Announcements about the Society, plus notices of Forthcoming Events that we think may interest Society members.

NEXT MEETING

Date and time:	Wednesday, 7 May 2014 at 2.00pm
Venue:	Brecon Library
Subject:	<i>"Photographs from the Society's Collection"</i> : Rob Eckley will present a selection of old photographs kindly donated to the BLFHS, showing Brecon's people and buildings. If you have any photographs that we could copy, please bring them along so that we can scan them at the meeting.

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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