



Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)

Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

Newsletter 53 – April 2016

Welcome to the latest Newsletter and the first one under my editorship. My name is Sue Ashton and I have been a member of the Society since its inception. My “Welshness” comes from my mother’s side of the family. She has links with both Breconshire and Glamorganshire and it has been a real experience to build my family tree. Living away from both of these Welsh Counties has meant that the role of the family history societies in these areas has been crucial, particularly as visits to local archives are not easily managed and have to be planned well in advance.

As a child of a Service father I was born abroad and as a family we frequently moved house. I never really knew where I belonged and when friends asked me where I came from I found it quite difficult to come up with an answer; I was a child of everywhere and nowhere!

I want the Newsletter to be representative of all our members; those researching from a distance, those living locally, those just starting out and looking for help in researching Welsh ancestry (fraught with unique issues such as patronymics) or those with more experience. So whether you live locally or at a distance I hope that it offers each one of you something useful. If you have any items you would like to contribute or any subject matter suggestions for future issues then please send them to me at my email address

editorblfhs@outlook.com

I am fortunate this month to be able to kick off my editorship with a very useful article from Helen Ball about BMDs. Helen is a qualified genealogist and her piece reminds us all that we can’t always take for granted the veracity of what our families might tell us. I know from experience that family myths can knock you off your way and send you on a tortuous route to nowhere.



REVISITING CHURCH and CHAPEL RECORDS

Sometimes we become fixed in our facts about the old folk. It may be we have heard a story, a scrap of information — *George’s brother William was the one who had the sheep farm. It was James who went away, gone to America, and he never came back to the place again.* — Something as simple as that can take hold and keep us spinning our tyres in genealogy for years and years.

This month on our website

As well as the regular maintenance tasks to keep our website running smoothly, John has added several new items since the last Newsletter.

Parish Pages

Currently working on a set of webpages for Llandeilo’r fân parish, including transcriptions of baptism records for Siloh Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel.

www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes/index.htm

Newsletter

Added Newsletter 53 (the one you are now reading)

www.blfhs.co.uk/members/newsletters.htm

Noticeboard

Updated 8 April 2016.

www.blfhs.co.uk/noticeboard.htm

Public News Pages

Updated 8 April 2016

www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm

Members’ News Pages

Updated 8 April 2016

www.blfhs.co.uk/members/news.htm

Check the News Pages every few days and the Noticeboard at least weekly.

HELP NEEDED!

The next parish to be tackled is Llandulas / Tirabad.

If you can contribute any photographs or textual material relating to this parish, or if you wish to report any problems with the website, email our webmaster John Ball at john@jlb2011.co.uk

Little bits may be passed on that get embedded into the history like grit: *our family were always Church of England, never changed; my great grandfather wouldn't work in the mines, scared of being underground; All the children were born on the farm; I know her name is Maryann, because everyone in the family called their first daughter after their mother and her name was Maryann.*

These sorts of statements crop up again and again in family history research and before very long they stop us in our tracks. The most tenacious of the so-called facts seem to spring from our searches in parish, church and chapel registers for births, marriages and deaths. To do it properly we have to forget all that we have, until now, treated as facts.

Problems result from misconceptions and overlooked history. For before 1837, the records we need depend largely on religion, but the aspect of religion that seems to cause confusion most in family history is terminology. Certain terms in Britain have particular connotations and denotations.

TERMS:

- The 'Church in Wales' came into existence in 1920 as a separate Welsh religious organization distinct from the Church of England.
- 'Non-Conformist' refers to all those religions which are not Anglican including Catholics and Jews, although most often the term means the Protestant religions such as Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Congregationalists, Independents, Unitarians, the United Reformed Church, Moravians and the Salvation Army.
- Non-Conformist or Dissenting religions (those who drifted away or broke away from the Church of England) began to get a firm foothold about the middle of the 17th century. The first Quaker records, for example, are in evidence from 1656. 'Parish' or 'Parish Church' refers to the Anglicans, the Church of England or Church in Wales. Occasionally a large or widespread parish will have both a 'Parish Church' and an additional 'Chapel-of-Ease'.
- Otherwise 'Chapel' refers to the building where non-conformist religions hold their services, although Catholic places of worship are 'churches' and Presbyterians also build 'churches' with conventional steeples and naves and chancels.
- 'Chapel' may also describe a non-conformist person or family.
- For many of our ancestors in parish and in non-conformist registers there may be both—a birth and a baptism entry, a death and a burial entry. Marriages, on the other hand, before 1837—regardless of what religion the participants professed—had to be in the Church of England (except Quaker marriages). Jewish rites including marriage were governed by Jewish law.
- Note that in North America, many immigrants arriving from Britain declared their religion by default as "C of E"; sometimes the forms were filled in by clerks or officials who took it for granted that someone from Britain would naturally be "C of E". [Canadian Census records are good examples of this declaration, but it can be misleading when doing family history.]

Parish records are pretty widely available on the internet, in County Record Offices and archives, and through many county and regional genealogy societies. See, for example, www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes. Non-Conformist registers are just a bit more elusive but they're there.

To begin a search, as with any quest for family records, the best place to start is with FREE information (the WIKI) on *FamilySearch*, the LDS genealogy website. Merely enter the term 'Non-Conformist registers' in the WIKI search box. https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page. Both *Ancestry* and *FindMyPast* also have some Non-Conformist registers available.

To research thoroughly however we cannot forget the website BMD REGISTERS <http://www.bmdregisters.co.uk/> the Official Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial BMD source for records of birth, baptism, marriage, death and burial.

We may get a hit, as in the line from *Hamlet*: “A hit, a very palpable hit!” and so, our fixed ideas about old ancestors should crumble or even better, they’ll turn a corner that leads us to more, even more avenues to explore. That’s how it is in genealogy. Enjoy.

Helen Ball, CG



March Meeting Review: “Tregunter House”

by Jill Fawke

Jill gave us a very interesting illustrated Talk regarding the more recent occupants of this now demolished house and Estate on the outskirts of Trefecca near Talgarth.

Its most famous connection is probably with the Harris Family, the three brothers being,

- Joseph (1702 – 1764) was a British blacksmith, astronomer, navigator, economist, natural
- Philosopher, government adviser and King's Assay Master at the Royal Mint.
- Thomas (1702-1782 tailor for army contracts
- Howell (1714-1773) was one of the main leaders of the Welsh Methodist revival in the 18th century, along with Daniel Rowland and William Williams Pantycelyn.

Tregunter House was built by Thomas Harris, on the Manor of the Norman, Sir Peter Gunter.

Jill showed us how families of some consequence married into the descendants of Thomas Harris, but that the family were not lucky in that there were early deaths and subsequently no heirs. Finally, the property was put up for sale during WWI, at the worst time for these large estates and with no purchaser, it was mostly demolished in about 1925. Some farm buildings remain, as does the “Ha-ha”.

For further research:

The House:

- <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/wa-16313-tregunter-farmhouse-tregunter-talgarth>
- <https://www.facebook.com/TalgarthHistory/posts/839807299445586>

Articles on the Harris family:

- <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s3-HARR-JOS-1704.html>
- <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-HARR-THO-1705.html>
- <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s3-HARR-HOW-1714.html>
- <http://www.welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/> (search the “Brycheiniog” Journals)

Jill made reference to Blanche Parry, Chief Gentlewoman of Queen Elizabeth I's Privy Chamber and Keeper of Her Jewels. There is a book and website concerning Blanche Parry, who had land holdings and relations in the Llangorse and Talgarth areas.

- Richardson, Ruth E. “Mistress Blanche: Queen Elizabeth I's Confidante” published 2007 by Logaston Press. <http://www.blancheparry.co.uk/>

Jill also mentioned Thomas Harris’s illegitimate children; especially Thomas Robinson who married Mary Robinson (née Darby) nicknamed “Perdita”. An actress, poet and novelist she later became mistress to the Prince of Wales, later King George IV.

- <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/robinson/biography.html>



Free Online Resources

There are lots of free resources out there on the Internet. Here are a random selection I have come across recently. Copy and paste the web address into your browser.

Parish Registers

Registers of Glasbury, Breconshire 1660-1836
<https://archive.org/stream/registersofglasb52glas/>

Transcribed by Thomas Wood. Privately printed for the Parish Register Society. 1904.

Background information on Breconshire

Poole, Edwin. History & Biography of Brecknockshire.

[PDF available for download from the British Library website]

<http://www.bl.uk/> [search by title or author]

I found this a riveting read particularly with regard to the Monumental Inscriptions he includes from many places in Breconshire

Names of the Poor in Brecon 1796

<http://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/8449>

This is a scanned copy of the actual document and again is a very interesting read particularly if you had ancestors in Brecon at this time.

Memorial Inscriptions

Friends of Llanspyddid: gravestone and tablet listing.

http://www.llanspyddid.org.uk/gravestone_listing.html

Gravestones in Wales

A collection of photographs of various gravestones and monuments in Wales posted by a gentleman who goes by the moniker of Cold War Warrior. There is no index but there is a map of sites covered and it does include gravestones from a variety of Breconshire graveyards including St David's Llywel, St Cattwg Llanspyddid and St David's Llanfaes. Not all the inscriptions are readable but the site is worth a look; you never know what you might find.

<https://www.flickr.com/groups/1708950@N24/pool/16498755@N07>

BRECONSHIRE STRAYS

Marriages

Llangibby, Monmouthshire

21 June 1703

David Jones, Exciseman, Brecon
Elizabeth Richard

7 Nov 1724

Roger Vaughan, Talgarth, Brecon
Rebecca Prutherch
By Banns

25 May 1776

Edward Richard, parish of Langattock Crickhowell, Brecon
Elizth Lewis of Langibby
Witnesses: Thos Lewis (signed by mark), Richs Madocks
Married by Licence

Burials

Rachel Sadler, 11 Ship Street, Brecon. Buried 4 Nov 1893,
aged 68



This month thanks go to Dave Woolven who has kindly sent us a transcribed copy of a Monmouthshire Will with Breconshire interests.

MARY LLOYD. LLANWENARTH ULTRA. MONM. WILL

Proved 13th May 1817. LL/1817/79

In the name of God Amen I **Mary Lloyd** of the parish of Lanwenarth Ultra in the County of Monmouth do make and publish this my last will and Testament in the manner and form following (that is to say). I give and devise unto **Walter Lewis** of the said parish of Lanwenarth all that my lands messuage or tenement with the appurtenances thereunto belonging situate lying and being in the said parish of Lanwenarth Ultra and County of Monmouth to hold to him the said **Walter Lewis** and his heirs and assigns for ever. I also give and bequeath unto **Ann Meredith** the daughter of **Walter Meredith** of the parish of Lanely in the County of Brecon one small box. Also I give and bequeath unto **Mary Bowen** the wife of **James Bowen** the small millpuff bed with the appurtenances thereunto belonging. Also I give and bequeath unto **Elizth Watkins** daughter of **Edw^d Watkins** the chest and the best fine sheet. Also I give and bequeath all the residue and remainder of my household goods and furniture unto **Sarah Jenkins**. Also I give and bequeath unto the two daughters of **Thomas Mathews** two yearlings yews one each daughter. Also I give and bequeath unto **David** the son of **Thomas David** of Langinidr in the County of Brecon one yew. And lastly as to all the rest residue and remainder of my personal estate goods and chattels of what kind or nature soever I give and bequeath the same unto the before named **Walter Lewis** whom I appoint sole executrix of this my last Will and Testament hereby revoking all former wills by me made. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this tenth day of June 1816. The mark of **Mary (X) Lloyd**

Signed sealed published and declared by the above named **Mary Lloyd** to be her last will and testament in the presence of us who hereunto subscribe our names as witnesses in the presence of the testator. **Israel Morgan; John Jayne; Edmund Rogers**

13th May 1817

Walter Lewis the sole executor in this Will named was duly sworn as such. And that the personal estate and effects of the deceased do not amount in value to the sum of twenty pounds before me Benj Hall, Chancellor

[Transcribed from a photocopy by Dave Woolven]



Can you help?

During the last century many chapels in Breconshire and other counties were demolished, often to make way for new road systems or simply because they had fallen into disrepair. To accompany our transcriptions the transcription group are looking for photographs or illustrations of the following Chapels. If you can help by providing us with photographs or illustrations please contact John Ball by email on john@jlb2011.co.uk

Defynnog Welsh Methodist Chapel which was beside the River Usk and was demolished during a road widening scheme in the mid-twentieth century

Lock Welsh Methodist Chapel which was beside the canal on the boundary of Llanhamlach and Llanfrynach parishes, demolished during the twentieth century.

Pwylgloyw Welsh Methodist Chapel in Llandyfaelog-fach parish, demolished in the 20th century.

Siloh Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in Llandeilo'r fan, probably demolished early in this century.



Next Meeting

Date/Time: Tuesday 3rd May 2016. 2pm

Place: Brecon Library. (Entry to the Library is through the main entrance door, although the lift from the garage area is available if you cannot manage the stairs to the upper floor of the library.)

Subject: **Raikes Family History**

In 2015, we visited Treberfydd, Llangasty, home of the Raikes family. Today, present occupier David Raikes will talk about his family and their links with Llangasty and the surrounding countryside.

Website

Our website address is www.blfhs.co.uk

If you have any comments on this Newsletter please contact me. Sue Ashton. editorblfhs@outlook.com

And Finally...

I am sure I speak for everyone in wholeheartedly thanking Hilary for all the work she has done for the Society. In setting up the Newsletter she has set the standard for the future. She has been a marvellous Editor and looking back at the old editions it is obvious how much time and effort she has put into producing useful and informative updates.

From a personal perspective Hilary was the first person to help me begin my Breconshire family history journey. She enabled me to get off to a flying start, something I am most grateful for. Her encouragement to “plough my own furrow” with the Newsletter is representative of the great generosity of spirit she possesses.

I hope that in trusting me with the editorship I can maintain her standards but know that should I hit a problem she will be the first person to offer assistance.

