



Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)

Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

Newsletter 79 – August 2018

Cistercian Monks at Trawscoed

The monastery at Trawscoed owed its origins to the grant to Abbey Dore (1173) by Walter de Clifford, Lord of Bronllys, of land in Cantref-selyf (most of old Breconshire) for an abbey, for an increase of the Cistercian Order, together with the timber for the construction of the building. He hoped that 'the abbey shall remain in Cantref-selyf for ever' it didn't; Giraldus Cambrensis mentioned a visit to the new abbey by Abbot Cynog of Cwmhir but in a later writing grumbled that Dore had degraded Trawscoed from the status of a conventional abbey into merely a grange by 1263.

Walter Clifford's grant of 'all materials in his forest' suggests that the transient Trawscoed Abbey was largely a timber building.

In central Wales Dore Abbey owned substantial parts of Cantref-selyf with four granges- Gwenddwr, Nant Eglwys (Llaneglwys), Trawscoed and Wernddyfwg. Many Granges were model farms of their day with the necessary farm buildings being built of a mixture of timber and stone.

The early Grange buildings were largely in timber and the various usages of such wood was demonstrated where Dore (1241) was allowed timber in Cantref-selyf 'for building, for fuel and making hedges' at its Granges at Trawscoed and Gwernddyfwg.

Records show that the Trawscoed's Grange output was 75% wool/sheep and 25% arable (oats). The care given to sheep rearing is also evidenced by many documentary notes of monastic sheep cots, 'sheep folds' or 'sheep houses'. Sheep cots/folds could be of a size like Dore's great house called Sheepcote in Trawscoed (Brecon 1536).

In Welsh Wales the term 'mynachdy' often denotes a former Cistercian grange.

An unusual lease occurred (December 1351) when probably, as a consequence of the Black Death and its resulting severe shortage of labour, Dore demised (rented out) all its lands in Cantref-selyf for ten years. Many other monasteries did the same.

Most monasteries had a life span of barely forty 400 years. By the late Spring of 1539 medieval religious life in Wales had been extinguished, the monastic buildings soon fell into decay and ruin, their former monks being dispersed.

SUMMARY

Gwenddwr Grange, chapel now St Dubricus

Tir-y-Cwrt (Aberedw) – Court Farm today.

Nant Eglwys – now Llaneglwys

Nant Mynach – a Pont Mynach was noted in 1268

Trawscoed Grange – site of a late 12th century abbey reduced to grange status – came to incorporate Wernddyfwg formerly a separate Grange.

New Website now accessible

Update: The new website is now online although is still being fine-tuned. Whilst this is happening we are running the old website alongside. Parish Record transcriptions to date are now available. The task of loading the Monumental Transcriptions has now begun so these will begin to appear throughout the summer.

Economic Resources: Water mills, two or three in Cantref- selyf, perhaps at Gwenddwr, Wernddgrwg and Nant Eglwys. Fulling mills – two in Cantref-selyf of uncertain location. Enclosure of note – bank forming eastern border of Trawscoed. Sheep cote of note, Trawscoed (location lost), probably Lower House).

Cistercian life in Wales has again found a home in the Principality. Monks once again live and worship on the island of Caldy.

TRAWSCOED (TROSCOED)

By the 1300's the Cistercian monks of Abbey Dore had established a large sheep walk reaching from Trawscoed up through Gwenddwr and out onto the Eppynt, known from place names such as Nantymynach (Monk's Brook), Cwrtyabad (Abbot's Court), Tirabad (Abbot's Land).

At Trawscoed they had their Grange (farm buildings, sheep pens etc). Foty Wen (Hafodtywen) would be one of their summer huts for the shepherds.

On the Dulas they built fish ponds where they kept fish, possibly brought from Llangorse Lake, for consumption on non-meat eating days (Fridays, Lent etc.)

1540: The total population of the UK was about three million – about the same as today's population of Wales. In this area people would have been very thin on the ground. At this time Henry VIII closed down all monasteries and sold all the goods, properties etc to his cronies. With the monks being a major employer in this area the closing of Trawscoed would probably have been a major local disaster. Much of the land went to waste.

1700's: By now people had very little money but some had acquired land. Some of these people built themselves manor houses. Pentwyn Trawscoed was one such place.

1841: Pentwyn, Trawscoed (Tithe Map) was 167 acres owned by Lewis Williams and farmed by David Williams.

Lower Trawscoed 120 acres. Owner Rev. Richard Davies. Tenant, John Williams.

Upper Trawscoed (Ty Uchaf) 63 acres. Owner Elizabeth Williams. Tenant John Jones.

Lower House, Trawscoed is shown on the Tithe Map as a house/building with no land. However, the length and quality of stone in the surrounding walls suggest that these may have been sheep pens built and used by the monks as part of their Grange because:

1. It is very unlikely that any tenant of the cottage would have gone to such lengths to obtain new stone, and then built this length of wall just for a garden.
2. It is equally unlikely that anyone would have moved the stone from a wall or building elsewhere and rebuilt it at Lower House.

1865: By now the population of the UK was growing rapidly – more food was needed so large areas of often waste common land was enclosed and divided up amongst neighbouring farmers. That included 125 acres in Talachddu Parish, but none in the Hamlet of Trawscoed.

BRECONSHIRE STRAYS - MONMOUTHSHIRE

Llanover

Burials

Mary Yarworth, Llanellie, Brecs. Buried 5 Jun 1814 aged 38

Sydney Hicks, Brynmawr, Buried 15 Oct 1854 aged 2mths

Wm Henry Hicks, Brynmawr, Buried 1 Jan 1857 aged 3yrs 7mths

Sarah Ann Hicks, Brynmawr, [Buried] 1 Apr 1862 aged 11 mths.

Edwin Hicks, Brynmawr. [Buried] 11 Apr 1862 aged 3yrs. Brother of preceding?

Wm Edwards, Llanbedr, Crickhowell. [Buried] 4 Dec 1863 aged 24

George Hicks, Ealing, London. Buried 24 Aug 1893 age 72: Late County Councillor for Breconshire.

Margt Lewis, Brynmawr. Buried 21 Jan 1902 age 73

1898: William John Phillips (Bill), father of Mansell and Rees was born at Trawscoed House (Lower House) Gwenddwr. Trawscoed was still part of Gwenddwr at this time. His father Rees Phillips moved from there to Pentwyn, Trawscoed sometime before 1915.

1906: Pentwyn, Trawscoed was still owned by Gwilym James. Rees Phillips must have purchased it off him at some time, then gifted or sold part of Pentwyn to his son William (Bill) Phillips, thus forming the present acreage of Lower House.

leuan Jones (by permission)

BRECONSHIRE STRAYS - MONMOUTHSHIRE

Llanover

Marriages

Evan Evans. Llanelly, Brecs., Batch. & Mary Phillips.
Otp. Spin. 1 Jun 1775
Witnesses: Ann Read, Edward Phillips. By Licence.

Francis (FP) Powell. Llanelly. Brecs. & Elizth Lloyd. Otp.
Spin.
22 Apr 1788
Witnesses: Thos Lloyd, Rachel Lloyd. By Licence
Francis Powell only signed with his initials. It did not say
if he was a Batchelor or not

Edward James, Llanelly, batch & Mary James X Otp
Spin.
15 Apr 1803
Wits: Edward Jenkins, Elizth Morgan, By Banns.

Thos Thomas X Llangattock, Brecs., Batch & Margt
Davies Otp, Spin
22 May 1806
Wits: Edward Edwards, Mary Edwards. Banns

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 month: Brecon Guildhall

BRECON GUILDHALL

A 'Council House' where the administration of the Borough was carried out, existed on this site from 1556.

A Guildhall replaced the old building in 1624. It was built by John Able, from Herefordshire and was constructed of wood and had an upper floor. Andrew Maund a Brecon builder replaced it in 1770.

The army stored arms and gun powder in the Guildhall during the early nineteenth century, until public alarm persuaded the military to move them.

In 1809 Sir Charles Morgan of Tredegar House, Newport and MP for Brecon Borough, restored the hall at a cost of £500.

In 1888 Colonel John Morgan, High Sheriff of Breconshire and Mayor of the Borough of Brecon, paid £3000 to restore the Guildhall again, creating a theatre on the first floor, installing gas lighting and a town clock.

Until 1888 the ground floor of the Guildhall was used as a produce and meat



market. The thirteen brick arches we see today, allowed access into the area and to stairs to the upper floor. At this date the produce and meat market moved to the Market Hall in High Street Superior.

The open arches of the Guildhall were closed and replaced with ten windows and three doors and the ground floor was converted into a magistrate's court and Council Chamber.

Glen Harris



UNWANTED CERTIFICATES

So often we end up with certificates which prove not to be our ancestor. Rather than let them go to waste we are instituting a section each month listing them for the benefit of any member who might be able to use them. If anyone has any they would like to donate please let me know. Here are a few offerings. If you are interested in any of them please email me on editorblfhs@outlook.com with details of which ones interest you.

DEATHS

Quarter	District	Name	Age	Other info
Jun 1862	Hay	Thomas Lewis	59	Labourer
Sep 1875	Abergavenny	Mary Ann Lewis	28	wife of George Lewis
Dec 1841	Knighton	Ann Price	81	Labourer's wife

MARRIAGES

Quarter	District	Parties	Place
Jun 1869	Hay	Thomas Lewis & Mary Ann Morris	Hardwicke Parish Church

BIRTHS

Quarter	District	Name	Place
Jun 1892	Pontypridd	James Edward JAMES	Primrose Hill, Tonypany



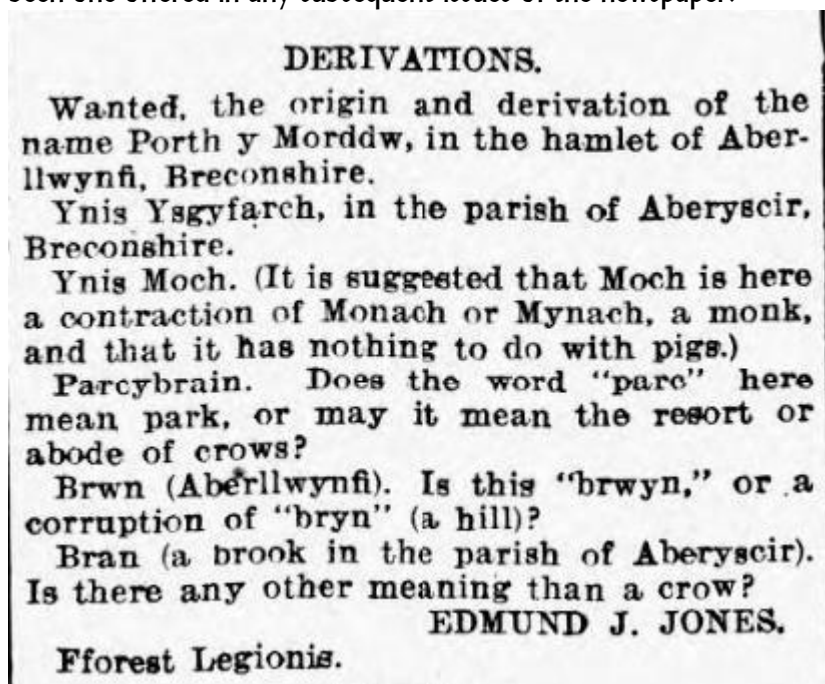
Don't forget – I am always looking for interesting article subjects so let me know if you have anything you would like to share!!!!

I am looking for interesting subjects on which to base the monthly 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

If anyone would like to write something I would be very pleased to receive it – I do find sometimes that the month comes around very quickly so an offering from a member would give me a bit of respite!

Breconshire Place Names

This cropped up in an issue of the Weekly Mail. Can anyone provide an answer? There doesn't seem to have been one offered in any subsequent issues of the newspaper.



From: The Weekly Mail 9 May 1903



Brecknock History Festival – September 2018

The Society's exhibition will be erected on Monday 3rd September at Brecon Library and will be in place for a month. The subject is Dr Mary Elizabeth "Eppynt" Phillips. The exhibition will also include brief accounts of the lives of four more Brecon women: Gwenllian Elizabeth Fanny Morgan, Elsie Ray Pritchard, Frances Elizabeth Hoggan and Olive Annie Wheeler.



August Meeting Review: Ewenni Potteries

A good number of members and visitors were present at Brecon Library to listen to the talk on Ewenni Potteries given by Ieuan Evans (assisted by his wife Gwyneth) at the August meeting. All were enthralled by the information he gave about the potteries and the families who ran them. He explained the processes and the development of techniques over the years. Of special interest were the items he brought with him from his own family collection – a variety of both small and large jugs, pots, money boxes, and animals. Pride of place went to a jardinière on which was etched an image of a church which had been copied by the potter from a drawing. Members were delighted to be able to see the items close up and to handle them.

Ann Voss



Eweny [sic] Church on the jardinière

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

Next Meeting

Date/Time: Tuesday 4th September 2pm

Place: Brecon Library

Subject: Last days of WWI and Local Connections. David Ross will bring the anniversary of the end of WWI to a fitting conclusion with a talk on local men involved in the War

Free Online Resources

There are lots of free resources out there on the Internet. Copy and paste the web addresses into your browser.

No new websites this month