



Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)

Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

Newsletter 80 – September 2018

Brecknock History Festival 2018. “People of Breconshire”

Our article this month introduces two eminent women from Breconshire who were pioneers in their field and tried to make a difference: Elsie Ray Pritchard and Gwenllian Morgan. In the next few issues of our newsletter more women will feature; Frances Hoggan (another article on this woman can be found in Newsletter No 70, Oct. 2017) and Olive Annie Wheeler. All of these women will feature in the BLFHS Exhibition which will be staged as part of the Brecknock Festival. Next month’s newsletter will focus on Mary Elizabeth Epynt Phillips the first woman to qualify as a doctor from Cardiff University.

Elsie Ray Pritchard

10 October 1918 – 12 August 1982
Local Historian and committed Breconian

Elsie was born in Brecon and was educated at the Postern and Brecon Girls Grammar Schools.

She served during World War II with the 40th Brecknock Platoon ATS and rose to the rank of Sergeant.

Elsie’s love of Breconshire history led to her becoming the Secretary and a tutor of local history for the Brecon Branch of the Workers Education Association.

She was also a part time tutor in Brecon for the Department of Extra Muriel Studies of The University of Cardiff. The University still awards an annual “Elsie Pritchard Prize” to the best student submitting work for either Welsh or Local History.



Website updates [members only]

Llanfeugan Parish has recently been added. It is still work in progress and we have more information to add. At present transcribed records for Aber Independent Chapel and a transcription of the History of Non-conformity in Aber have both been added along, with maps and websites.

She was a member of The Executive Committee of The Brecknock Society.

Elsie wrote many articles and booklets about Brecon and Breconshire people, including;

- “With Pleasure and Pride. Brecon Beckons from the Past”
- A biography of Gwenllian Morgan for “Brycheiniog” volume 12.
- “Penoyre” - a history of the mansion.
- “Brecon From The Struet”

The booklet “Bulwark & Bridge” includes a biography of Elsie, written by her good friend and fellow historian, Huw Williams.

Elsie died, aged 63 years, at her home, 28, The Struet, Brecon. This was before she could realise her aim of restoring the footbridge from the Struet into the Priory Groves.

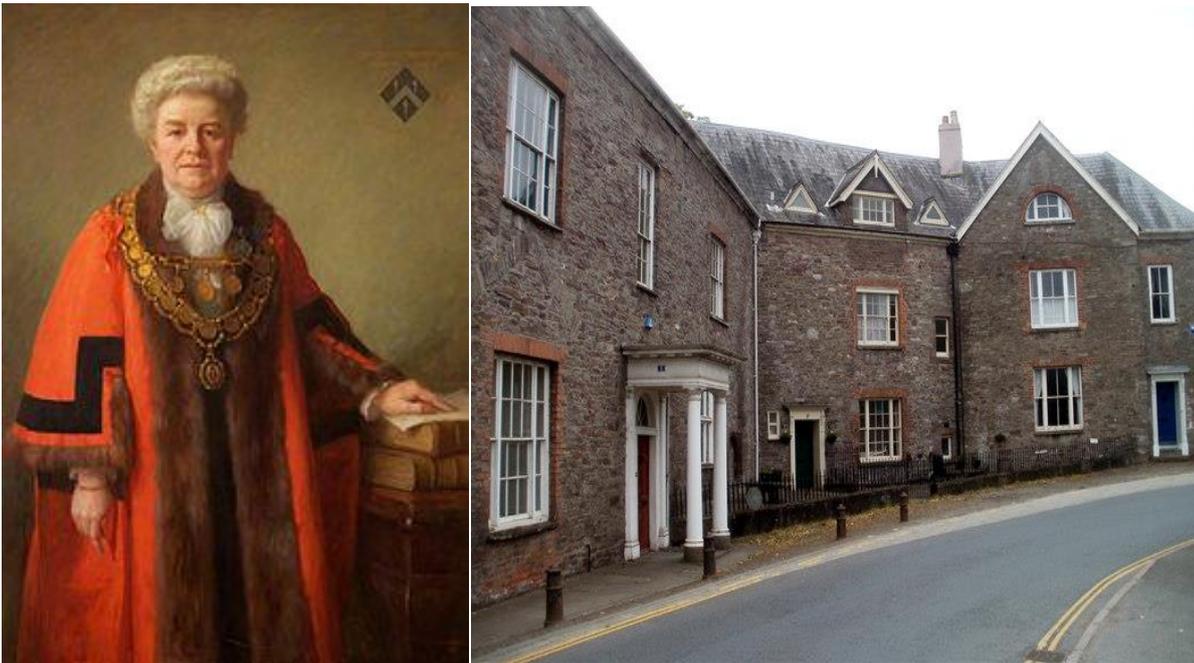
Reference:

- Williams, Huw [Ed.]. *Bulwark and Bridge* (Privately printed, 1984)

Gwenllian Elizabeth Fanny Morgan aka Miss Phillip Morgan

9 April 1852 – 7 November 1939

Politician and Historian



Gwenllian Morgan was born at Penpentre, Defynnog, and her father was Rev. Phillip Morgan, who worked at Penpont, Battle and Llanhamlach Churches. She was often known as “Miss Phillip Morgan”. Both parents had Breconshire ancestry.

As an adult Gwenllian lived at 2, Buckingham Place, Brecon and willingly gave her services to practically every branch of social work in the county.

She was known as a philanthropist, educationist, magistrate, and local historian.

Gwenllian is especially known for her work with American, Louise Imogen Gurney, on the life and work of the poet, Henry Vaughan, of Llansantffraed, Breconshire.

Gwenllian was a woman of great gifts of mind and character. Her genius for public affairs culminated in her election to Brecon Borough Council, the first woman in Wales to be so elected.

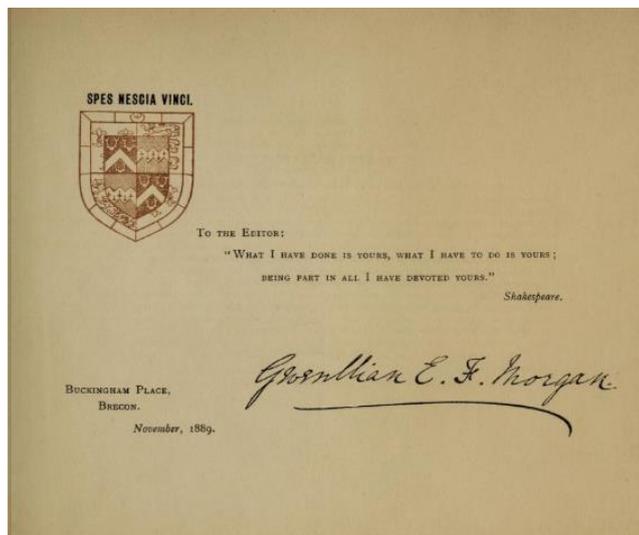
In 1910 she was also the first woman in Wales to be elected to the office of Mayor. She was an eloquent speaker, showing clear thinking and balanced judgement in her official deliberations. By her example, she widened the horizons of women the world over.

She was honoured with an honorary MA degree from the University of Wales in 1925.

On her death, aged 87 years, her ashes were buried in her sister's grave at Penpont Churchyard.

References:

- Pritchard, Elsie. Gwenllian Morgan 1852-1939. Brycheiniog Journal Vol. 12 1970. Free download: <https://datasyllwr.llgc.org.uk/journals/pdf/AWJATO12005.pdf>
- National Library of Wales: Dictionary of Welsh Biography - <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-MORG-FAN-1852.html>



The signature of Gwenllian Morgan on the last page of a book about Eastnor Castle.



Brecon Congregational Memorial College 1869-1959

The building in Camden Road now containing apartments and called Camden Court originally trained non-conformist ministers and missionaries.



Originally the College was housed, from 1839 to 1869, in St Mary Street, in the building now occupied by the Conservative Club.

The new College opened in Camden Road, in September 1869, to perpetuate the memory of the 2,000 clergymen ejected from the Church of England in 1662. Planning was by Rev Thomas Thomas and construction by Messrs Watkins and Jenkins of Swansea.

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 Congregational Memorial College 1869-1959

The foundation stone was laid in June 1867 by Mr Samuel Morley M.P. The college, including four and a half acres of land, cost £12,000.

The three-storey building, of Gothic design, is of native stone with Bath stone dressings. The ground floor housed a large dining room and a handsome library. The next floor accommodated classrooms and studies.

On the top floor were twenty four studies and dormitories. There were also residences for the tutors. The tower of the building is sixteen foot square and about one hundred foot in height. There is a fine staircase in the building which can still be seen in its original state today.



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!



Here is a novel way to display your family tree!

Alison Noble passed this to me. Seen on a house in Lucerne, Switzerland. It truly is a labour of love – let's hope they never have to move out!

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.



September Meeting Review: Last Days of WWI and local connections

David Ross gave an excellent account of the Hundred Days Offensive of WWI, from the Battle of Amiens on 8th August to the Armistice on 11th November 1918. He included plenty of detail of the conditions of the battles and the state of the soldiers as the war drew to a close. The Talk was well illustrated and examples of Brecon soldiers were included in the Talk. A lively discussion followed the Talk.

For details of Brecon men who died in WWI download a pdf version of the A3A Book "Brecon Remembers World War One" at http://www.breconremembers.co.uk/WWI_Brecon_U3A.pdf



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 9th October 2pm [Note change of date]

Place: Brecon Library

Subject: "Remembering Aberfan" with Gwyneth Evans

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



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.