



# Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)

## Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

### Newsletter 86 – Winter 2019

#### The WHY, HOW, WHEN & WHERE of recording Grave Stones.

Writing up the results & using Parish Records, The Bible etc and  
Censuses to fill in the blanks.

A couple of years ago, the BLFHS recorded all the Memorial Inscriptions in St Illtyd's churchyard on Mynydd Illtyd, Libanus. We hope to publish all the research soon but in the meantime, in August the monthly meeting discussed why and how we record the MI. We also looked at some of the memorials from St Illtyds. This is Part One of Two articles. The next will appear in our Spring Newsletter 2020.

One of the grave stones reads:

In  
affectionate  
memory of  
Jane POWELL,  
of Newgate St. Llanfaes, Brecon.  
who died 30<sup>TH</sup> July 1914,  
aged 86 years.  
This stone was erected by her nephew  
Lewis POWELL.

Stonemason: Watkins, Brecon

In order to find out more about Jane Powell, I looked at Welsh Newspapers on-line and found an obituary for Jane.

The Brecon County Times  
Thursday August 6 1914

"POOR OLD *JANE*."

DIES WORTH £250.

Brecon Woman's Singular Life.

No one can have lived long in Brecon without becoming familiar with the bent figure of "Poor old *Jane*," so bent that her head seemed to nearly touch the ground, as she hobbled along. Suggesting by her garb and dingy old bag she generally carried about - obviously a "collecting bag" - that she was extremely poor, "*Jane*" excited the compassion of most people and it has come as a great surprise, even to those who knew her best, that she was possessed of a considerable sum of money.

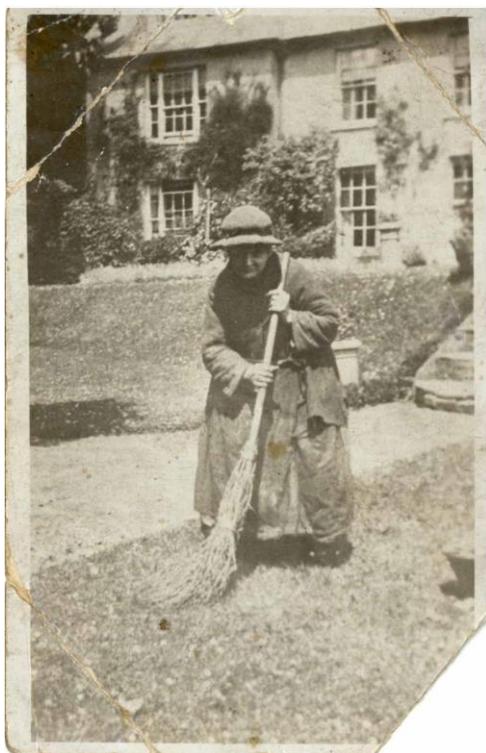
Miss *Jane Powell*, to give the old lady her full name, lived alone in a small cottage, No. 5, Newgate Street, and was nearly 90 years of age. She was last seen alive on Wednesday evening last week, by some neighbours, and

as she made no appearance on Thursday morning, and it was known she had become very infirm, the Police were communicated with. Forcing an entrance to the cottage they found the old woman lying dead on the bedroom floor. Dr. Rees was summoned, and as he was satisfied that death was due to natural causes, an inquest was not deemed necessary.

The deceased was an eccentric character. She jealously guarded her seclusion in her cottage, and a piece of paper stretched across the ground floor window facing the street indicated at about other people's tea hour that the occupant had retired for the night. It fared ill with anyone who ventured to intrude on her solitude, even though with good intentions, for *Jane* had a sharp tongue, and used it freely if annoyed.

*Jane* could claim to be unique in one respect. For about 60 years she was employed as a gardener at the Castle Hotel, her period of service going back a long time before the present Castle Hotel Co. took over the premises in 1866. For some years old age and infirmity had prevented her doing any work at the hotel, but she kept up a nominal connection with her old place of employment, and until recently went there regularly. In the last three or four years she had been a pensioner of the Castle Hotel Co. Some years ago she made friends with several cats at the hotel, and undoubtedly she had some mysterious attraction for them, as it became their daily custom to go to meet her at the bottom of the hill near the Honddu Bridge. Before old age had told too greatly on her she was more sociable with her fellow humans, and visitors to the Castle Hotel derived much amusement from her quaint sayings and stories of old Brecon.

An examination of her cottage after her death - a task which her singular habits made none too agreeable -



resulted in the discovery of two bank books - one showing a deposit of £137 7s. 4d. in the National & Provincial Bank, and the other a deposit of £111 in the Post Office Savings Bank. In the house there was also a sum of about £5 in gold and silver. "*Jane*" was a woman of method, too, if she was eccentric. She had made a will, leaving her money to a nephew - a Mr Lewis *Powell*, of Cwmdare, near Aberdare - with the exception of £10 left to St. Illtyd's Church, near Brecon. We understand that she was an old age pensioner, in addition to being a pensioner of the Castle Hotel Co., and during her long career as gardener at the hotel she must have received an enormous number of tips from visitors. She spent little beyond the rent of her cottage, and her accumulation of wealth is thus explained.

"*Jane*" was buried on Saturday afternoon, at Llanilltyd Churchyard, and the staff of the Castle Hotel sent a wreath.

If wanted here is her Probate.

*A picture of Jane Powell from the collections at Brecknock Museum*

### Probate

**POWELL, Jane** of 9 Newgate Street, Llanfaes Breconshire spinster died 30 July 1914 Probate HEREFORD

2 September to Lewis Powell collier. Effects £267 17s 8d

This total of £267 17s 8d was money she had saved from her earnings. It is always difficult to give current values of money from the past but this amount can be valued at £50,000 in 2019

Alison Noble





### 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 quarter: Notable places in Brecon

### Dr. FRANCES HOGGAN [1843-1927]

Frances Elizabeth Hoggan was a Welsh doctor and the first British woman to receive a doctorate in medicine from any university in Europe. Frances was born in No. 19 High Street, Brecon, now part of Nicholls shop, her father Richard Morgan being a curate. She was brought up and educated in Cowbridge, Glamorgan and later Windsor. Women were excluded from taking professional examinations in England, so she went on to study in Paris, Dusseldorf and Zurich. She obtained her medical doctorate from the University of Zurich in March 1870, completing the six-year course in three years. In 1874 she married Dr. George Hoggan. She later practiced in London as a specialist in women's and children's diseases. Together with her husband, she opened the first husband and wife general medical practise in the United Kingdom. Frances Hogan became a campaigner and social reformer and toured the United States of America lecturing. She had a particular interest in racial issues and was a speaker at the Universal Race Congress in London in 1911. Her cremated remains are buried with her husband's in Woking cemetery.

© Breconshire Local & Family History Society



### Welsh Festivals



*We recently received this article from a member of the Society about the Welsh community in Idaho. It is a very interesting read and shows how the Welsh influence still flourishes across the World.*

There are several communities in Utah and Idaho that centre their annual summer celebrations on their Welsh heritage. One of these communities is Malad Idaho.

Malad Idaho boasts of having the largest per-capita concentration of people of Welsh ancestry outside the country of Wales itself. One of my

Welsh relatives John Evan Price, born 3 March 1817 in Llandeilo'r fan, and his wife Ruth nee Williams, born 14 April 1816 Llandeilo'r fan, were the first to settle this area of Idaho in the 1860's.

This summer I had the opportunity to participate in the Malado Idaho Welsh Festival which is held the last week of June each year. Much of the celebration is held at a local chapel that has a city park and pavilion next to it. In the chapel recreation hall Welsh family histories are proudly displayed with art work, stories and poems located in the halls as you enter the chapel itself. This is part of the Eisteddfod they have for all ages. The entries are judged and prizes awarded and the winner of the adult poetry competition is chaired as a “bard”.



Also in the chapel speakers give talks about Wales while live Celtic music is enjoyed at the pavilion outside. One of the speakers, Dr Ron Dennis from Provo Utah, spoke about the tradition of Eisteddfod and the honour he received in August 2018 at the National Eisteddfod of Wales when he was invited to join the “Gorsedd”, also known as the “Bardic Circle”.

In the park Welsh food is sold and enjoyed. I had a pretty good Welsh cake for desert. A Welsh country

store sells Welsh memorabilia and books about Wales. Children play traditional pioneer games and work on arts and crafts.

In the nearby town of Samaria, population 150, there is a Welsh heritage square where log cabins of the early settlers have been restored and their Welsh roots are explained and celebrated. I was so impressed that a small community had put forth so much effort to preserve their Welsh heritage.

Robert Price

### Free Online Resources

#### China Families

A University of Bristol initiative providing free access to information about men and women who worked and lived in China between the 1850s and the 1940s. Not specifically related to Breconshire but it is always useful to know about these free websites as it might be possible one of your ancestors went to China during this time. It is still under development so worth keeping an eye on.

<https://www.chinafamilies.net/>



### PRICE REDUCTION FOR PROBATE RECORDS

The cost of English and Welsh Probate Records has been reduced. Post-1858 probate records for documents and wills (England and Wales) will now be £1.50. This is a considerable reduction on the original price of £10. It is unknown for how long the price will remain at this level. Searches and orders can be made on the government's website <https://www.gov.uk/search-will-probate>. A new probate record will be online approximately 14 days after probate has been issued. We have learnt that there is a backlog at present so you may have to be patient!

## County Rifle Competition 1866

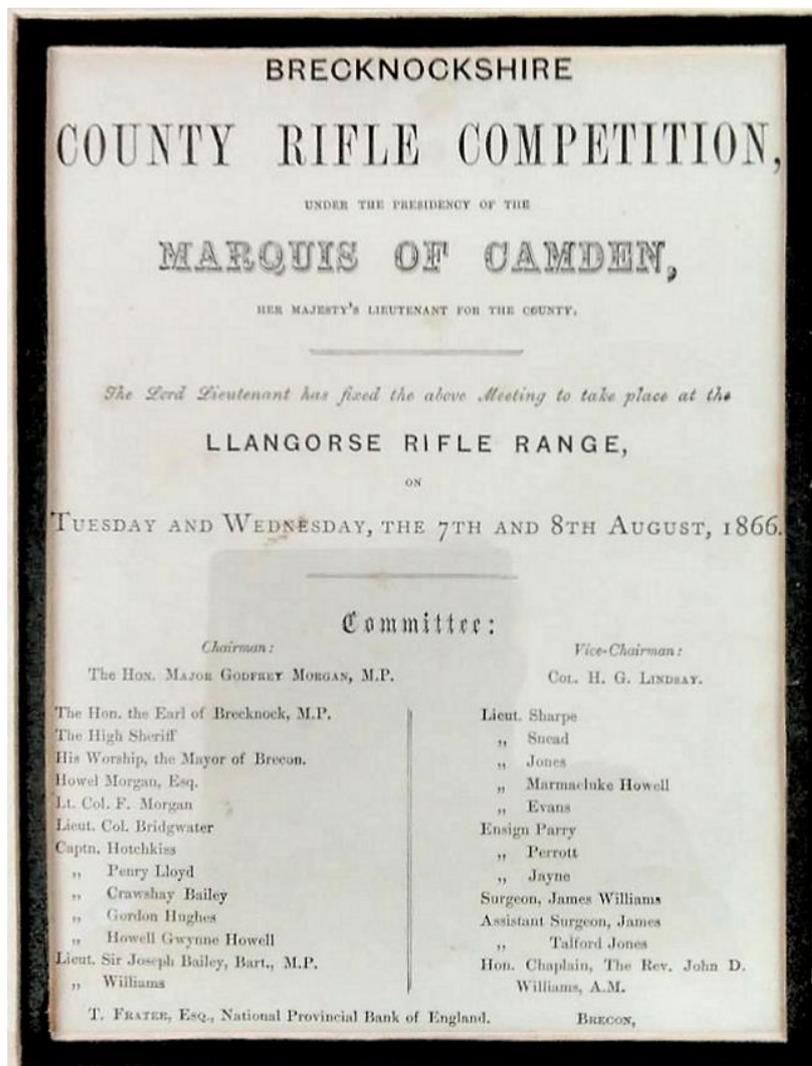
Referring back to the piece about the County Rifle Competition in the last newsletter (No. 85)

The competition was reported in the Brecon Reporter, dated 11/8/1866, including a list of winners. Sadly I have not been able to find out anything of note about the people named in the advertisement.

Sue Ashton

### Federation of Family History Newsletter

The latest issue of the Newsletter concentrates upon the D Day Landings. Sign up at [www.familyhistoryfederation.com](http://www.familyhistoryfederation.com) to receive future newsletters detailing events and news from their member societies.



## The Big Switch On



We all take for granted switching on the lights, running a washing machine or using a computer. But it wasn't until 2005 that one small place in the shadow of the Brecon Beacons was finally connected to the electricity grid. They were the last community in Britain to have access to mains electricity.

*Engineers install electrical power lines to the Nedd Valley. © Alamy*

Jannet Llewellyn, sheep farmer and mother of seven, had a moment of doubt as she handed the homemade fruitcake and cups of tea to the steady stream of curious visitors who turned up at her remote farmhouse yesterday.

*"I've just suddenly wondered what the ones who have gone before would make of what's happening. What would they say if they could see those new poles marching over the hill? What would they make of just touching a switch and seeing the light come on?"*

To the rest of the country, electricity at the flick of a switch is, of course, nothing remarkable. For Mrs Llewellyn and her neighbours in the remote Nedd valley it was a cause for rejoicing yesterday. At 3pm this valley in the Brecon Beacons - a place of thundering waterfalls, riverside caves and thick forest where wild boar are bred - was hooked up to mains electricity for the first time.

The 16 souls who live in four farmhouses in the valley are the last community in England and Wales to have survived on the unreliable power supplied by generators and the flickering light of candles and lamps.

Over the past two months almost three miles of power line has been built over the hills which divide the Nedd valley from the village of Ystradfellte.

Yesterday afternoon the first of the farmhouses was finally connected, and the others will follow in the next few days. The valley dwellers celebrated with champagne and mince pies as they emerged blinking from the dark ages and began to shrug off the rather unkind label of the place that time forgot.

At Berthlywd farm, Mrs Llewellyn, 72, contemplated not having to feel for her torch if she needed to pop to the bathroom in the night, and watching television whenever she fancied. *"It will be much more convenient than it is now."*

Until 1972 Berthlywd was lit by candles or Tilleys, portable lamps which burned oil or paraffin. The Llewellyns, like their neighbours, used to go to bed soon after dark, not wanting to waste lamp fuel. Then came the first generators, which provided a comforting hum and reasonably reliable, if quite pricey, power.

The children were allowed to watch television on special occasions such as Christmas Day - the rest of the time they entertained themselves with board games, cards and their schoolbooks. The television was only switched on in the day at harvest time when the weather forecast was crucial. Once the "genny" as it was called was turned off at night, that was it - no more light, save for torches, until the morning.

Mrs Llewellyn's daughter, Jean, 41, said: *"It didn't seem odd. It was just what we were used to. We used to play outside and visit the other farms rather than watching television. I think it made the community a closer one."* They were never scared of the dark - although Mrs Llewellyn's 11 grandchildren, who have grown up with electricity, did get frightened when the generator went off.

A little further up the valley at Blaennedd-Isaf farm, Daisy Lewis is looking forward to being able to run her washing machine and boil a kettle at the same time. Until now it has been one or the other when the lights are on.

*"That can be a bit of a nuisance," said Mrs Lewis. "I came here from London nearly 50 years ago and it was a bit strange not having electricity, but you soon get used to it. But I don't think we'll get rid of the generator - you never know what's going to happen, do you?"*

In the kitchen of Duffryn Nedd farm, Eifion Davies, 36, father of Wyn, six, and Gethin, three, blamed the Brecon Beacon national park for the delay in getting mains electricity to the valley. The park has been

reluctant to agree to power lines being strung across the unspoiled hilltop. "It's about time we had mains power. I can't wait until it comes and the kids can have computers on whenever they want. It'll also be nice that the hum of the generator will go and we'll have peace at night. We might even be able to hear the river, which would be lovely."

*The Guardian. 2 December 2005*



I hesitate to mention "Christmas" but again it is fast approaching. As well as the regular recipes for mincemeat, Christmas cake and pudding I came across this amusing piece in the *The Weekly Mail of 27 December 1902*, p.2

### CHRISTMAS CAKE IN COURT.

Among the applicants at the South-Western Police-court, London, was a woman who showed a badly burnt cake to the magistrate. She said that it was her Christmas cake, and that the baker to whom she entrusted it had spoilt it.

"He has made a very bad job of it," said his worship, "but I am afraid I cannot assist you." The woman said it had cost her between 4s. and 5s., and the top part had been knocked in.

The Magistrate: Your only remedy would be an action in the county court to recover damages, but I should not care to advise you to take such a course. The next time you make a cake be sure to take it to another baker.

Applicant: I'll do it myself the next time; I could make a better job of it.

### CHRISTMAS RECIPE.

*Another Christmas Cake.*—Half a pound of semolina, half a pound of flour, twenty eggs, a pound and a half of butter, one pound of raisins, one pound of sultanas, one pound of almonds, one pound of sugar, one pound of dried fruits of any kind, cut, washed and dried; four ounces of peel, a teaspoonful of hot spice, two wine glasses of brandy. First mix and beat the sugar with the yolk of the eggs for about half an hour, and the white of the eggs separately. Then add butter well beaten to a cream. Mix well, add almonds, dry fruit, raisins and sultanas. Then add semolina and flour and the white of eggs. Bake immediately.

*Weekly Mail 25 12 1886 p.1*

I love that this recipe contains 20 eggs! It is an unusual recipe and I would love to try it – but 20 eggs seems a bit prohibitive.

If anyone is mindful to make it please let me know how it turns out and what it tastes like.



## Welsh cakes

Flour was short during the First World War so recipes had to be adapted. This recipe for Welsh Cakes (Teisenau Crynion) uses oatmeal to bulk out the flour and has no currants in it; these also being difficult to find during the war years. Rather than baking them on a griddle they are put into a hot oven.

4 ozs flour (wholemeal was often used)

2 ozs coarse oatmeal

2 ozs sugar

2 ozs lard

Pinch bicarbonate of soda or baking powder

Mixed together with a little milk or buttermilk or water. The paste is rolled

cut to about half an inch and cut into rounds. Put into a hot oven and bake until brown. They eat very crisp and short.

### WELSH CAKES.

Long before the world war created a shortage in the world's flour supply the sturdy Welshwomen used oatmeal in their cakes. A recipe handed on from mother to daughter in all the old farmhouses is the following simple mixture for making dainty little cakes: Four ounces of flour (wholemeal is very often used, fresh from the grinding-stones of the water mill), two ounces of coarse oatmeal, two ounces of sugar, two ounces of lard, with a pinch of carbonate of soda or baking powder. These are mixed together with a little milk or buttermilk or water, and the paste rolled to about half an inch thick on an oatmeal-floured board. With a cutter this is cut into rounds, which are put in a hot oven and baked till a nice brown. They eat very crisp and short, and if it is to be had a little butter makes them into cakes "fit for a king."

*Brecon County Times*

28 Mar 1918 p.7



### Website Statistics

Month	Unique visitors	Number of visits	Pages	Hits
Jan-19	986	1,258	4,460	11,523
Feb-19	705	872	3,221	10,304
Mar-19	1,200	1,579	4,635	10,913
Apr-19	554	727	2,672	8,499
May-19	604	789	2,748	8,978
Jun-19	907	1,154	3,473	10,196
Jul-19	702	919	3,364	12,895
Aug-19	647	837	2,993	11,669
Sep-19	241	292	1,203	4,246
Oct-19	0	0	0	0
Nov-19	0	0	0	0
Dec-19	0	0	0	0
Total	6,546	8,427	28,769	89,223

Jan – Sep 2019

**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 quarterly 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](mailto:editorblfhs@outlook.com)

### Website

Our website address is [www.blfhs.co.uk](http://www.blfhs.co.uk)

### Facebook

The society now has a Facebook page. Check it out at [www.facebook.com/breconblfhs](http://www.facebook.com/breconblfhs)

### July Meeting Review

The July meeting took the form of a visit to Llanwrtyd Wells. A small group from BLFHS were warmly welcomed to the Llanwrtyd Wells Heritage Centre by Lyn Brooks, the manager, who explained the origins of the Centre and how contributions to the history of the town were collected. Members then had time to explore the exhibits and to look at the current art exhibition in the gallery. Tea (and cake) was then enjoyed at Caffi Sospan, before returning to the Heritage Centre to meet our guide for the town walk, Jim Davies. He was very knowledgeable about the buildings and entertained us with tales of his youth in Llanwrtyd Wells. Altogether, a very enjoyable afternoon.

Ann Voss

### August Meeting Review

There was no report but the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting recorded that the talk was well received. "If Gravestones Could Talk" looked at how and why it is worth recording MI's. As so many become damaged and worn through time the information contained on them is lost and as such the recording of the information becomes much more significant particularly for the genealogist.

### Future Meetings

Meetings will continue to be held in the Brecon Library for the time being as "Y Gaer" is still work in progress.

#### October

Date/Time	Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2019 2pm
Place	Possibly "Y Gaer" Glamorgan Street, Brecon – but please check beforehand
Subject	The Great War Imagined – History v Literature

A talk by Arthur Gwynn of Talgarth

#### November

Date/Time	Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 2pm
Place	Possibly "Y Gaer" Glamorgan Street, Brecon – but please check beforehand
Subject	The Catholic Church in Brecon.

Monsignor Clyde Hughes Johnson will talk about the history of the Catholic congregation in Brecon. Light refreshments

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will be available.

### December

There is no meeting in December

### January

Date/Time                      Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020 2pm  
Place                              Possibly "Y Gaer" Glamorgan Street, Brecon – but please check beforehand  
Subject                            Knock down that that brick wall  
Bring along your family history queries and let's see if we can solve them together.



*To all those members who have contributed to the newsletter this past year - thank you!*

Wishing all our members a  
*Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.*

The next newsletter will be January 2020

