

**Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)**  
**Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog**



## **Newsletter 51 – February 2016**

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.

**February Meeting Review:** In the absence of Hilary Williams, Alison Noble commenced proceedings with news of forthcoming events and some dates for our diaries. She then introduced the popular speaker for the day, Ken Jones, President of the Brecknock Society and Museum Friends. Ken continued the story of Captain John Lloyd that he had begun in September 2015. Ken's talk was entitled "Captain John Lloyd (Part 2)". For the benefit of those who had missed his presentation last year, Ken began his talk by reprising the early life of John Lloyd and the time he spent with the East India Company. He then moved on to give an entertaining and detailed account of John Lloyd's life in Breconshire following his return from India, eventually exploring Capt Lloyd's life in Brecon itself. Ken included many details of the way in which John Lloyd managed not only his major financial affairs and land transactions but also his domestic life and household spending. The talk ended with a number of questions from the floor.

The sound and slides of this talk are now available on our website.

### **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:

- **Monthly Meeting Report:** added slide show and sound files from the Feb 2016 meeting: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/meetings/index.htm>
- **Management Committee Minutes:** added minutes of Nov 2015, Dec 2015, and Jan 2016 meetings: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/minutes.htm>
- **Welsh Tithe Maps:** added step-by-step guide to using this recently available collection <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/tithe-map-guide.htm>
- **Parish Pages:** added slide show of 36 photos to Llandefalle parish pages <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes/index.htm>
- **Newsletter:** added Newsletter 51 (the one you are now reading): <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/newsletters.htm>
- **Noticeboard:** updated 15 Feb 2016: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm>
- **Public News Pages:** updated 15 Feb 2016: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm>
- **Members' News Pages:** updated 15 Feb 2016: <http://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 Llanfihangel Cwmdru.

*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](mailto:john@jlb2011.co.uk)*

### **Rice Price Pritchard, 1781-1863 Biography: Part 2**

Read and enjoy the second part of Gwyneth Morris' account, below.

#### **Rural discontent**

From 1815 through to the 1850s, there was acute agricultural depression and social misery in the country generally. There were high rents, low prices, new machinery, unemployment, enclosures, bad harvests and high taxes - all leading to a sense of insecurity and resentment. The gentry were sometimes largely anglicised and Anglican, while the rest of the rural population were poor, increasingly non-conformist and Welsh speaking. The Poor Law Act of 1834 imposed a much harsher code on the able-bodied pauper, reducing payments by about a half. By the Commutation of Tithes Act in 1836, which was deeply resented by non-conformists, the tithe charge increased by 7 per

cent. Civil unrest erupted in the Rebecca Riots, from 1839-1844, directed against the toll gates of the turnpike roads.

### **Estates**

In this area of the Usk valley the local estate was Buckland Hall. The first house on its current site was owned by Dafydd Gam, who was killed fighting at Agincourt with Henry V. Shakespeare is thought to have based his character Fluellen on Dafydd Gam. In 1756 Buckland was bought by Roderick Gwynne of Glanbrane, Carmarthen. He replaced the Jacobean house with a handsome Georgian mansion with a large Coach House and courtyard. Down the lane, the mansion was served by the "home farm" which had a large walled garden supplying produce for his family and guests. In 1830 Roderick's great grand- daughter, Anna Maria Eleanor, married James Price Holford, squire of Kilgyn in county of Carmarthen, who had fought at the Battle of Waterloo. For the family, who were subsequently known as the Gwynne-Holfords, the rest of the 19th century were 'halcyon days'.

This wealthy landowner enjoyed the fruits of his industrial enterprises and the rents of the numerous tenant farms on his 25,000 acre estate. Families were often permitted to stay for generations on the same farm on the estate. Preference was given to a family member and often a widow was given the tenancy of her dead husband. Tenants often took as much pride in their heritage as if they owned the land themselves.

### **Rice Price Pritchard's Life**

It is difficult to say how far contemporary social and economic events influenced Rice's life. His mother Mary Price farmed at Llanfellte Farm, Llansantffraed, probably from an early date until her death in 1858 at the age of 96. She was helped by his children, her grandchildren. It is uncertain whether Rice ever lived at the farm. After his marriage in 1809 to Jane Williams, Rice farmed at Gwern-y-berllan. This was the "home farm" of Buckland Hall mentioned above, named as such on the 1814 OS map. It is now known as Buckland Farm. It covered 114 acres and also adjoined his mother's farm, which was owned by Lord Camden.

After the death of Rice's first wife, Jane, in 1823, at which time they had 10 children, he continued to farm at Gwern-y-berllan until after his marriage to Mary Pugh on 09 May 1830. Mary's family home was Bailiau, Crickadarn, near Builth Wells, Breconshire. Around 1836 Rice and his family moved north to rent Aberduhonw in the parish of Llanddewi'r Cwm, near Builth. Perhaps there were family reasons for the move. His children could possibly provide the manpower for a larger enterprise. Financial considerations such as the payment of rent or the tithe are possible. Aberduhonw covered 507 acres and the tithe paid was £3-19-0d. This was less than the £10-0-0d Rice's mother paid at Llanfellte Farm in 1841 to Lord Camden for 105 acres in the fertile Usk valley or the £18-10-0d due to the Rector for Gwern-y-berllan for 114 acres.

Aberduhonw was owned by Sir Joseph Bailey (1783-1858) baronet, iron-master, landowner and MP. Having amassed a large fortune, Joseph bought many estates, including Glanusk Park, where he lived for the rest of his life. It is still the home of his descendant, the Hon. Shan Legge-Bourke, the present Lord Lieutenant of Powys and a staunch supporter of local agriculture.

In 1849, Morgan, the youngest of Rice's 21 children, was born. By 1851 he and his family had moved to Pwllgwyn in the same parish of Llanddewi'r Cwm, a farm of 150 acres. Rice ran the farm with the help of his three older sons, working as labourers. No mention is made of his other older children. The tithe payable was £6-1-0d and £3-0-6d.

The 1861 census shows 79 year old Rice living with his 56 year old wife Mary and their two youngest children - Susannah, aged 14 and Morgan, aged 11, in Talgarth Road, Llangorse in the parish of Llandefaelog Tre'r Graig. His occupation is listed as carrier.

Rice died on 12 November 1863 at Pendre Cottage, Llangorse. His death certificate cited "gradual decay". Mary Pritchard was present at his death and signed with a mark. He was buried in Llangorse Churchyard on 16th November.

In the 1871 census Rice's 66 year old widow Mary is living at Heol Draw, Llangorse, with her youngest son Morgan, 21, who continued the trade of carrier. Also there is his brother Sam, who is 31 and an unemployed gardener.

In the 1881 Census, Mary Pritchard, aged 75, is listed as an annuitant, living on her own, at Heol Draw, Llangorse. She died of senile decay and cerebral haemorrhage, aged 79, on 19th July 1883 at Lower Pendre Cottage, Llangorse. Present at her death

was Morgan Pritchard, her youngest son. She also was buried in Llangorse Churchyard - on 23rd July.

Morgan Pritchard was then living at 26 Silver Street, St David's, Brecon. He was employed as a railway signalman at Tallylyn, near Llangorse. The advent of the railways (1850-1860) thus offered new prospects of employment - away from agriculture - for the youngest member of Rice Price Pritchard's family. The number of farm workers actually declined by 46% between 1851 and 1911.

### **Subsequent Developments. Advent of Tourism in the Brecon Beacons National Park**

Canals and railways did not prove to be permanent. In 1812 the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal (running from Brecon to Newport) was completed. However, the importance of canals declined with the coming of the railways. In 1865 the canal was sold to the Monmouthshire railway for £70,000 less than it cost to build. After later falling into disuse it was recently restored and now serves as a leisure amenity, but runs only from Brecon to Govilon, near Abergavenny.

The railways also refashioned the landscape and enabled wider travel. Goods and people were transported to the industrial valleys of South Wales and beyond. In 1856 the Swansea to Brecon railway opened. In 1863 the Brecon to Merthyr railway opened. In 1868 it was extended to Merthyr Tydfil, featuring Britain's highest railway tunnel (1,313 feet above sea level) at Torpantau. By the 1950s, with the decline of steam, branch railways became uneconomic. Much of the coal traffic in the South Wales valleys had ceased and road transport was quicker and more popular.

On 31 December 1962, three months before the publication of the "Beeching Report", the Brecon line closed and the tracks were later removed. In 1980 the now popular tourist attraction narrow gauge Brecon Mountain Railway opened, running from Pant, near Merthyr Tydfil, to Pontsticill.

Today many of the landed estates have been sold and there are fewer working family farms. Many farm houses have been extended and modernised and either sold to newcomers for large sums of money or are holiday lettings featured in glossy brochures. The farm land is often let to neighbouring farmers.

Thank you, Gwyneth, for a lovely account of your Pritchard family.

### **The Webb family: Trade and Businesses in Brecon (Part 1)**

A gentleman from Norway saw the archived Newsletter 8 with the article about Breconshire Clock Makers, on the public section of our Society website. He has a long case clock which he had inherited from his grandfather and contacted me for more information about the clock. It had "Rich<sup>d</sup> Webb, Brecon" on the dial. Following some on-line research, I was able to give him information about the clock maker.

The Webb family tells an interesting story, of a family entering a variety of trades in Brecon, which I thought that I would share with you. Here is the first of three parts.

#### **Webb, the Saddlers**

I was able to trace the family, with certainty, back to Edward Webb and his wife Rebecca.

Edward was born about 1764, according to his age at burial in 1821 [57 years], and was a Saddler by trade, living in High Street Inferior.

They had at least five children according to Baptisms found for them in the St Mary's Church Register. They were Edward, 1789; Lewis, 1791; John, 1794; Thomas, 1796 and William, 1798.

Edward died in 1821, aged 57 years and his wife, Rebecca died in 1822, aged 62 years. They were both resident in High Street Inferior Ward on their deaths. There is no Will for Edward, so we are able to calculate neither his wealth nor status in the town.

The 1841 census shows that their second son, Lewis Webb, aged about 50 years, had become a Saddler, running the business from Ship Street, with his son Lewis, aged 17 years. Lewis's 15 year old son Edward was a Cabinet Maker.

In 1851, Edward, the Cabinet Maker, and his London born wife, Amelia and their son Edward A. were in the Watton, but I cannot find any of them after that.,

In the census for 1851, Lewis was still the Saddler, aged 61, as was his 27 year old son, Lewis.

In 1861, living at the "Three Cocks", Ship Street, 72 year old Lewis was still a Saddler, whilst 25 year old son, Walter, was a Watchmaker. Walter, however, died in 1870.

Lewis senior died in 1862 and again there is no Will available for him. Lewis, junior, seems to have disappeared after the 1861 census and the Webbs did not have a Saddlery business in Brecon after 1862, according to the Trade Directories.

Part 2 will be in the March edition of the Newsletter (No 52).

**PLEASE NOTE: Day change for our monthly meetings for 2016.**

For 2016, our Meeting day has changed to the **first Tuesday in the month**. The time remains as 2.00pm and entry to the Library is through the normal route, although the lift from the garage area is available if you cannot manage the stairs to the upper floor of the library.

**NEXT MEETING**

Date and time: Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at 2.00 pm.

Venue: Brecon Library

Subject Rosie Burton: "Discovering the Historic Buildings of Brecon." Rosie Burton, Building Conservation Officer with the Brecon Beacons National Park, will talk about a new project that she is developing.

**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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