



Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)

Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

Newsletter 60 - November 2016

WHY 1901?

Local research in our community and family research in fairly recent times will give a centre of focus for one year in our Society.

1901 is a plan to revisit and reawaken the town and its people in that year. It is a project that we can all work on—together. And True: it could be any year, or any certain point in our sphere of interest, or we could all choose our own. But, for Family History at least, this is not a hermit thing, a solo; we all benefit from participating in a society, from sharing. And we all have a link, backwards, to that year. For many of us, the families of our grandfathers and our great grandfathers were very much alive and for many of them, in the prime of their lives in 1901.

That year marked the end of the century and with the death of the Old Queen in Britain, the world tilted slightly on its axis. It was a year of considering things in a slightly different way; it offered the possibility of new directions and opportunities. It was the turn of a century.

All of us who are interested in Family History know the benefits of pulling out the old files and taking a fresh look at research we may have done years ago. So much has changed in genealogy in the past few years and now there is a wealth of resources, of possibilities for getting to know who our people were, what was happening in their lives in 1901—just in that year alone. We can help one another in the BLFHS and we all will benefit.

But what can we do? Let's just have a look at our Grandfather and Grandmother: How old were they in 1901? Had they already married or were they still footloose and fancy free? And what was going on around them? Were their parents both still alive? What was their work? What was their place? What was the health in the family? Were they in the 1901 Census? What part did religion, or music, or sports, or education play in their lives?

Those questions are just the beginning of Family History, and 1901 can be a pivotal year in learning the real story about

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

Church/Chapel records for the following parishes have been uploaded: Brechfa (Bethesda Chapel) and Maesyronen in the section on Llandefalle parish.

Additional web pages on Llandulas (Tirabad) [See also the announcement later in this Newsletter about public access to our transcriptions]

[Updated 20 November 2016]

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

Newsletter

Newsletter 60 (the one you are now reading)

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

Members' News Pages

[Updated 20 November 2016]

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

Public News Pages

[Updated 22 November 2016]

www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm

Noticeboard

Link to 1901 Project and quiz as well as details of the January 2017 monthly meeting. [Updated 20 November 2016]

www.blfhs.co.uk/noticeboard.htm

Don't forget! Check the News Pages every few days and the Noticeboard at least weekly.

our ancestors. We can see those who came before us, two or three generations before us, in the actual context of their lives. Perhaps we can tackle the project of a house history for them. And yes, even if none of them lived anywhere near Brecon, we can apply anything we learn about Brecon to almost any place in the Western World.

In the meantime, we can take part, and infuse the Society with enthusiasm. Join in a project to reawaken a whole town, to recreate it as it was 115 years ago, and to bring back those people as they were then in their own time and place. If it will help the Society, why not?

Helen Ball



Brecon 1901 Project

Answers to last month's quiz

1. What was the "old head" that appeared to almost everyone in Brecon in 1901?
The Queen Victoria Penny. The Old Head penny was struck at the Royal Mint between 1895 and 1901. [Wikipedia]
2. To the nearest 500 what was the population of Brecon in 1901?
The population in Brecon Town (three parishes) was 5,741 [Kelly's 1910 Directory]
3. What new school building opened in Brecon in 1901?
(Either answer is correct)
Brecon Intermediate Boys' School – opened by Charles Morley M.P July 10 1901.
Brecon Intermediate Girls' School – opened by Miss Williams of Penpont July 10 1901.
4. Who was the Mayor of Brecon in 1901?
Mr. W. Powell Price (until 9 Nov 1901) followed by Mr. David Powell.
5. Where was the "Tommy Jones Memorial" obelisk located in 1901?
Just below the ridge immediately above and overlooking Llyn Cwm Llwh.
6. What was the "Dinas House" and where was it located?
"a small building in the Dinas Road, opened in 1882, for the reception and maintenance of (female) children bereft of one or both of their parents, and training them for domestic service" [Kelly's Directory 1901].
7. What well known person and official in Brecon died in the same month as Queen Victoria?
The late Henry de Winton, Esquire, J.P. Died 30 Jan 1901. Also held a Commission in No 1 Brecon Company of Volunteers, Chairman of Brecon Gas Co. & Vargoed Coal Co., and President of the Breconshire Liberal Association.
8. What was the name of one of the Railway Companies in Brecon in 1901?
Brecon and Merthyr Railway Co. and /or Neath & Brecon Railway Company.
9. What hotel was sold in Brecon in 1901?
The George Hotel, Nov 1901.
10. What title did Mr. Geoffrey Wheatley Cobb, Nythfa, hold in Brecon in 1901?
Brecon Lord of the Manor – The London Gazette.
11. What British Regiment was resident in Brecon in 1901?
The 24th Regiment of the South Wales Borderers.



New Resources for Family History researchers

General Record Office. PDF Pilot Scheme

The GRO is now legally able to issue registration information other than as a certificate. From November 9th the GRO has been trialling emailing PDF copies of registration records. The records will not be immediately available but will be emailed to the customer as a pdf. The pilot scheme is in three phases beginning with those records already digitised:

Births 1837- 1934 and 2007 onwards.

Deaths 1837 – 1957 and 2007 onwards.

Marriages 2011 onwards.

Civil Partnerships 2005 onwards.

Phase 1 will close on November 30th or when 45,000 pdfs have been ordered, whichever is sooner. This phase is intended to test demand for uncertificated copies of the civil registration entries that are already digitised (listed above). Details of Phases 2 and 3 will be announced on the GRO site shortly. Any applications must be submitted online and contain a GRO reference. The cost of each PDF is £6.00 (as opposed to the normal cost of £9.25). There is no indication as to how long this price will be available.

General Register Office Historic Indexes

In addition to the PDF Pilot Scheme the GRO historic indexes to births and deaths can now be searched via the GRO online ordering site. The Index covers the following records and periods.

Births (July 1837-December 1915)

Deaths (July 1837-December 1957)

Unlike other indexes available this Index also includes the following details for all years back to 1837:

Births: the mother's maiden name

Deaths: the age at death.

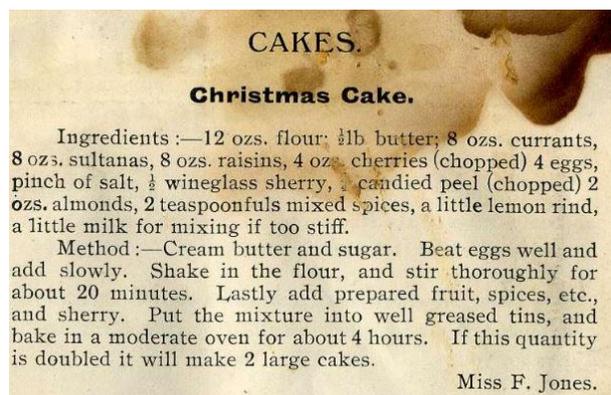
This will help the researcher in identifying the right person.

The index is available free of charge for customers, but you must have a registered GRO online certificate ordering account. This can be set up via the GRO online ordering site.

The new GRO indexes are very cumbersome to use as you have to specify the year (plus or minus up to only 2 years) and also the gender of the person concerned. But as there have been few free options available this will be of benefit to many family history researchers.

It's nearly Christmas time!

A timely recipe from an old Brecon cookery booklet published around the period before the second world war. The recipes appear to have been sent in by various people on the area. Thanks to Colvin Parry for allowing us to reproduce parts of it.



For more information go to the General Record Office [site at www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp](http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/certificates/login.asp)



Explore Your Archives Week - November 19th – 27th

Have you ever thought of browsing through the catalogues of archives covering the places you are interested in? Although quite random if your ancestor had an unusual name or lived in a property with an unusual name putting these into the catalogue search page might turn up something unexpected.

Although I have ancestors from Breconshire many migrated to the valleys of South Wales and ended up in Glamorgan. If I have a spare moment I often have a browse through the Glamorgan Archive catalogue looking for possible documents to help me in my research. I was doing this one afternoon when I suddenly noticed a group of names which are found in one branch of my family tree. Although you can't access the actual document from the catalogue entry many of them have such detailed precis' that they often indicate a lot about the document's content as well as the names and places of those involved. Finding this document broke down an enormous wall for me as I discovered the patronymic names of my ancestors so enabling me to go back a further generation. Without this lucky find I would still be stuck looking for the father of two brothers whose father I

could not trace, largely it would seem, because beyond a certain point their names were referred to patronymically. Finding these brothers in this document also led me to a story of lost inheritance, penury and the debtor's prison so it was well worth a few hours browsing time. The Powys Archives uses the same catalogue system and whilst I have not yet had such a find as in Glamorgan I have still found useful bits and pieces which slot into my tree. Copy and paste this link into your browser to begin your search. <http://calmview.powys.gov.uk/CalmView/>

Changes to the Parish Pages on our website

After the decision to make more of our website accessible to the general public in the hope that this would raise the online profile of the Society and lead to an increase in membership some ten percent or our current collection of parish pages is now available free on the public section of our website. The following parishes are now available to all visitors to our site.

Brecon St John

Crickadarn

Llanelly

These join records from Llanafanfawr which have been available publicly for some time.

These parishes have been chosen because they provide a wide geographical coverage of the whole of Breconshire including both urban and rural parishes and include an example of a heavily industrialised parish, that of Llanelly. All the parishes provide good examples of transcribed records and photo-galleries as well as maps booklists and website links.

Access to these records can be found by clicking on the "Parishes" button on the public Homepage of the website.

Remember....

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



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

Free Online Resources

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

Clergy of the Church of England Database (CCed)

The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835 (CCed), launched in 1999 and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, makes available and searchable the principal records of clerical careers from over 50 archives in England and Wales with the aim of providing coverage of as many clerical lives as possible from the Reformation to the mid-nineteenth century. The Database fills major gaps in our knowledge of one of the most important professions in early modern England and Wales. It provides an invaluable research tool for both national and local, academic and amateur historians, and genealogists who often need to discover biographical information about individual clergymen or more about the succession of clergy in a particular place.

<http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/>

The Surman Index

Charles Surman's biographical card index of Congregational ministers was given to Dr Williams's Library in 1960. The Surman Index Online makes the contents available electronically via the internet. The index includes the names of about 32,000 ministers, and, where known, their dates, details of their education, ministries or other employment, together with the sources used. It covers the period from the mid-seventeenth century to 1972, and though it focuses on England and Wales, it includes Congregational ministers serving abroad provided they trained or served as ministers in Britain. Although intended as an index of Congregational ministers, it also gives details of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Presbyterians.

The records can be searched in a variety of ways including by name or place. Clicking on the name of the relevant Minister opens up the record where additional information is found. An option to view the original card images is also given. Below see an example of that for David Jones who served in a number of places including Brechfa, Llandefalle 1797-1834, and Llangatock [n.d].

Access the Online Database by cutting and pasting the following link into your browser.

surman.english.qmul.ac.uk/

JONES, DAVID

891

b. Trefawr, Llanfyrnach, Pems.,
CARMARTHEN 1788-

In Carnarvonshire
Llangatock, Crickhowell
Maesyronen, Radnors ord. 1797-1846.
& Brechfa, Brecons 1797-1834?

Died 1 November, 1848.

Hanes, i. 528, 530f.; iv. 349;
Thomas & Jones, Brecon & Radnor Conglm.,
pp. 80, 99;

Image of original card for David Jones

Free Genealogy Course

If anyone is looking for some help with research techniques Strathclyde University is offering a new genealogy MOOC (Massive Online Open Course). "Researching your Family Tree" will be available from the Open University's Future Learn programme. The course begins on Mon 16 Jan 2017 but you can now sign up now at <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/genealogy>.

MOOCs are free and you can pick the course up and drop it as it suits you. It is easy to repeat/recap sessions. More details on the website. I thought this looked very interesting so have signed myself up. I will let you know how I get on.



November Meeting Review: An afternoon of "Show and Tell" 1st November 2016

A group of members joined together for our "Show and Tell" afternoon. We had a good chat and three very enjoyable short accounts of items of interest belonging to the speakers were heard. These were accompanied by cake, biscuits and fruit juice as this was our last meeting before Christmas. An enjoyable time was had by all.

Prize Winning Sheep and a Royal Show Cup – Rob Eckley

Our Chairman, Rob Eckley brought along a Challenge Cup won by his family for prize winning sheep. This cup was given to the Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1932 by the Clun Forest Sheep Breeders Society as a challenge Trophy to be presented to the champion exhibit in the Clun Forest Sheep Classes at the Royal Agricultural Show. The cup could be won outright if it was won three times in succession or four times in all. My father first won it in 1951, and the sheep that won the competition spent a week on display at the Festival of Britain held in London that year. We again won the cup in 1955, 1957 and 1960, thereby winning the trophy outright. Our winning streak continued in 1963 and 1970, making it six Royal Show Championships in all. Sadly, the English Royal Agricultural Show is no longer held.



The Royal Agricultural Society of England Clun Forest Sheep Challenge Cup

Turntables on the Brecon Railway- Glen Harris

I have Two GWR "Guard's Whistles". The whistle is blown, with the wave of a flag, as a signal by the Guard for the train to leave the station.

There were three Signal Boxes in Brecon. One was on the town side of the railway bridge at Camden Stores (Dering Lines end of Camden Road) , which directed the goods trains and cattle trains from the main line East of Brecon down into the Lower Yard Depot, where the Police Station is today. Another was opposite the half way point along Alexandra Road, the town side of the Viaduct which crossed the river Honddu and the Struet used by trains coming from the West. This Signal Box controlled the trains entering the Goods Yard sidings and the double rails to the station, where the Inner Relief road is today. Cattle and Sheep were taken down a slope to the Cattle Market. The Main Signal box was at the station where Abbeyfields is today, against the wall that runs next to the footpath to the Bus Station and Council Offices. This controlled all the four lines which entered and left the Station from East and West, including the rail line onto the turn table alongside the Station building. The turn table was much used because no driver liked to drive cab first into the wind and rain. In the Signal boxes the levers which the Signal Man pulled to change the Signals were interlinked/connected in most cases to the changeover rail points, which moved at the same time. Signalmen had to be strong because cables could be up to a mile long.

Both the outer Signal boxes had gone by the nineteen thirties, to be replaced by "Ground Frames" which were operated by hand alongside the track. The Station Signal Box was closed when passenger services ceased on the 31st of December 1962.



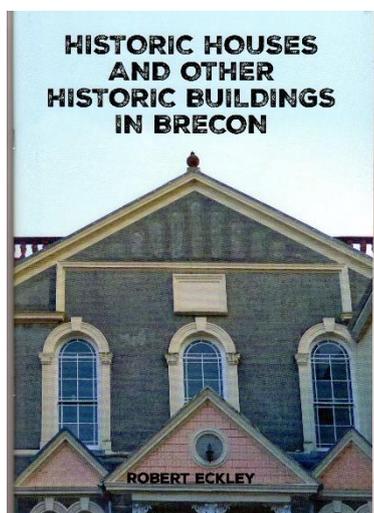
The turntable by the Free Street Station, off Camden Road

Margaret Sommers account will appear in the near future. No recordings were made of this session.



New Publications

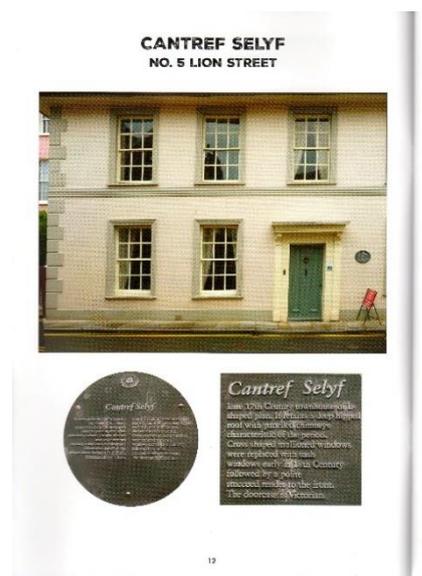
Historic House and Other Historic Buildings in Brecon. Robert Eckley.



Produced with the support of Brecon Town Council and BLFHS. The book retails for £9.00 (£8.00 to BLFHS members) plus £2.50 p&p and is available from the author Rob Eckley 42 Pendre Close, Brecon, Powys LD3 9EW. Rob can be contacted by email at r.eckley@btinternet.com

information to make it easier to read."

Rob says: "The purpose of this new book is to provide a record of the old buildings and other places that have Historic Plaques on their walls or historic information about them on the display panel on the front of the Guildhall. I have used the information that is on these display panels, in conjunction with photographs, taken by me, of the various buildings to make this book and in places I have transcribed the



Website

Our website address is www.blfhs.co.uk

Next Meeting

Date/Time: Tuesday January 10th 2017 2pm (There is no meeting in December)

Place: Brecon Library

Subject: Magic Lantern Slides from Brecknock Museum