



Breconshire Local & Family History Society (BLFHS)

Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol a Theuluoedd Brycheiniog

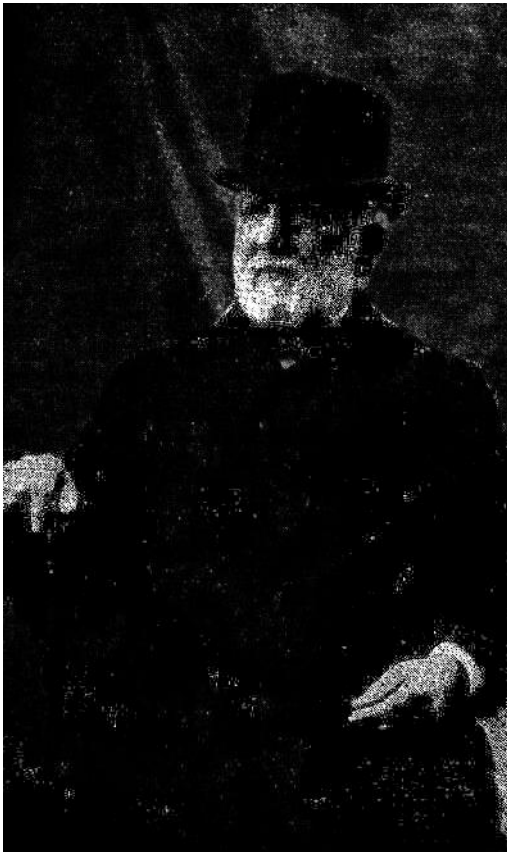
Newsletter 91 – Spring 2021

Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi
Ac i bawb sydd yn y tŷ
Dyma fy nymuniad i
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi

[TRANSLATION]

A happy new year to you
And to everyone in the house
This is my wish
A happy new year to you

A Happy New Year to all our members. After a very difficult year let's hope that 2021 will see a return to a more normal way of life. The song above was sung traditionally in mid Wales as part of the New Year Calennig tradition



David E Williams. Cenad Hedd, May 1903
© Union of Welsh Independents
(with grateful thanks for their permission to reproduce it here)

His Bethlehem was the Rose & Crown, Llanfaes, Brecon

David Evan Williams was born 200 years ago on 1 March 1821 to Evan (1787-1867) and Alice Williams (1792-1855) at his father's inn. He went on to be a prosperous shopkeeper, to inherit a business, to be involved in legal wrangles in Chancery and become a respected magistrate, if loathed by landlords.

David's siblings included Jane who married Richard Fryer, innkeeper of The Sun, and The Bell and finally of Wellington Place, and whose children formed Fryer Brothers, ironmongers of Brecon, and William (my great, great grandfather), a Newport timber merchant, councillor, mayor in 1857 and magistrate before moving to Clifton, Bristol.

According to an obituary, he left Llanfaes aged only 13 to become shop assistant to the draper Phillip [sic] Taylor (1790-1859) of Taylors Row, Hirwain. Within two years he was made a partner and in 1837 was given management of the growing business. On Taylor's retirement in 1842 the business was transferred to him, with Phillip moving next door.

At Aberdare Church the week before Christmas 1841, David married Anne (1817-1883), second daughter of Walter Edwards and Alice née Watkins of Ystradyfodwg & Abergorky

Farm. Anne had been adopted by her aunt Anne (1793-1848), wife to Phillip Taylor - on whose death in

This month on our website

A new publication has been announced by the Society.

Monumental Inscriptions for St Illtyd's, Myndd Illtyd. The booklet contains details, including photographs, of the gravestones. Copies can be purchased from the Society at a cost of £5.00 or £7.50 inc pp.

Members can also access this information on the BLFHS website.

1859 she came into a considerable inheritance. How she eventually came by this wealth can be read in a future newsletter. At Anne Williams's death in 1883 the Aberdare Times reported, "All the shops in the place were closed throughout the whole day, and signs of mourning were manifested at nearly every house both in Hirwain and along the line of route." 35 carriages were required to convey the mourners to Penderyn Church. At Ponmark Place, 100 year-old William Felish Davies sat outside and "wept bitterly as the body of his benefactress was being conveyed to the "bourne from whence no traveller returns".

Although he and all 12 of his siblings was baptised at St. David's, Llanfaes his allegiance shifted towards nonconformity. He may have been influenced by his mother who, according to a report of her death in 1855, had been "for many years a member of the Calvinistic Methodist Connexion ... departing after a long and painful affliction quite resigned to the Divine will, and in full hope of Salvation through Christ Jesus" [Hereford Times 3 Feb 1855]

David was an ardent radical, nonconformist member of the Nebo Congregational Church, advocate of Unitarian causes, and temperance worker, being treasurer to the Gwent and Morganwg Temperance Festival and a member of the South Wales Temperance Associations – at whose meetings 'the vernacular was spoken', i.e. Welsh.

He was an energetic Liberal Party supporter, particularly in the 1868 election campaign, and in 1870 was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Glamorgan and then also for Brecon, serving for many years at the Cefn and Penderyn Petty Sessions. What dreadful experiences had David had as a child of a publican back in Llanfaes that in 30 years on the bench he never signed a new license nor an order for an extension of hours?

On the passing of the Education Bill of 1871, he became chairman of the Rhigos School Board. He served on the Aberdare School Board too, and from 1876 until 1888 he represented Hirwain on the Aberdare Local Board of Health.

During his 40 years on the Merthyr Board of Guardians he promoted a resolution in favour of the taxation of ground rents and royalties, a reform which he advocated far and wide. Every envelope used by him had the following lines printed:- Royalties, ground rents, and way-leaves, from which the enormous sum of £120 million pounds is obtained in the year, but not a single penny is received from the same in aid of local taxation, when the poor man's working Cottage is rated to the utmost, is the greatest injustice known, and should be made the test question at all future parliamentary and other elections. Thus saith David Evan Williams, of Hirwain. There are several printed letters of his and reports on the subject to be found in local newspapers. He even used endorsements for a cure for piles to promote the cause.

David and Anne had two daughters: Alice Catherine (1843-1916) who married the Rev. Howel Kirkhouse (1839-1914) of Cyfarthfa in 1865, and Agnes Anne (1847-1895) who married firstly John Edwards Price (1838-1884), solicitor of Pontypridd in 1869 at Aberdare and then John Thomas Coe (1855-1896). There may well be as yet untraced children of David and Anne who died in infancy. Alice and Agnes are the only children to appear in the family's 1851 census entry, and are known to have attended both their parents' funerals and are mentioned in their father's will.

Despite leaving at such a young age he retained a life-long fondness for Llanfaes and Brecon, distributing coal to the 'outdoor paupers' and in September 1900 even giving a sit-down tea to 900 Board School children in the Brecon Market Hall.

He died on 1 April 1902 following a fall returning from a court hearing. Like his first wife he was buried at Penderyn where a tablet reads: "A loyal friend, a fearless champion of liberty, a devoted servant of Jesus

Christ". In his memory, his wife presented an elaborate memorial tablet to the Tabernacle Congregational Church, which David had helped to found and where he had been a deacon.

He left £2469. 2s. 9d. and an annual rent charge of £70 from farmland and minerals called Hendre Wen in the parish of Ystrudyfodwg, Glamorgan. This land had been vested in him by an indenture of conveyance, dated 14 Feb 1863, by his late sister Jane Fryer. He bequeathed it to his older daughter, Alice.

In 1885 David married Miss Elizabeth Anne Henry (1851-1924) in St Clement Danes Church, in the Strand, London. After David's death she continued to live at Cartrefle, 36, High Street, Hirwain and died March 1924. She was buried in her home parish of Newton Nottage, Glam. 8 March 1924, aged 72.

If anyone can shed further light on David Evan Williams' very full life or those of his extended family, I would be most glad to hear.

[Part Two of this article will appear in our next Newsletter]

David Irwin. BLFHS member



Census 2021 and release of the 1921 Census

The 2021 Census will take place on March 21st 2021.

Whilst the 1921 Census will be opened in 2021 access is not due until the spring of 2022. The Census, the first undertaken after the 1920 Census Act, was taken on June 19th 1921 and will first be available as part of the Find My Past genealogy service. This census provides more detail than previous censuses in that it asks householders to reveal their place of work and name of their employer as well as what materials they work with. Anyone older than 15 was asked to state their marital status including if they were divorced. For those under 15 the census asked if both or either parents were alive or dead. It was also the first Census to allow family members to make separate confidential returns. The Census was due to have been taken on the 24th April but was delayed because of the Black Friday strike by railway workers, coal miners and transport workers. On 31st March a state of emergency was called when the coal miners called a national strike. By the 3rd of April coal was being rationed. The strike eventually ended on the 28th June.

Find My Past won the contract to index and digitize the Census and will undertake the work in conjunction with the Office of National Statistics.



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 lead 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

Brecon's Victorian Schools

In early Victorian times, education for the poor was spasmodic and often children received no education at all. Emphasis was placed on learning to read, write and the scriptures.

It was estimated that by the end of the Georgian era only half the child population of Brecon had received any kind of schooling. A charity school tradition was set up in the town, using the English language as the method of teaching, which probably helped to destroy the use of the Welsh language. Two Benevolent schools were set up in 1810 when at a meeting it was agreed to build schools for the children of the poorer inhabitants of the town.



Postern School

The 1846 "Enquiry into the State of Education in Wales" concluded that central National Schools were required with provision for infant education. In 1850 the Postern School for girls and infants opened. The vacated girl's school at Pendre became known as St. John's Boy's School which was replaced by a new school in 1868.

In 1868, to serve the Nonconformists, the Dr. Coke Memorial Schools were opened for juniors and infants; they were destroyed by fire in 1890. Dr Coke's Chapel was on the site of the present-day Cooperative Supermarket.

As the Victorian era progressed there was an increasing desire for education. Forster's 1870 Elementary Education Act was passed, paving the way for elementary education. Board Schools were set up and controlled by a School Board consisting of local ratepayers. The Brecon Board was set up in February 1871.

Following a survey and census of school age children, a decision was taken to build a school. Land was acquired in Llanfaes and the school officially opened in January 1875.

Following the disastrous fire at the Dr. Coke Memorial Schools in November 1890 there were inadequate funds to rebuild them. It was decided to transfer control of the Dr Coke Schools to the Brecon School Board and work commenced on the building of Mount Street School, the foundation stone of which was laid in March 1892.



Llanfaes School

Schools were uninspiring environments in which to learn; teaching was often unimaginative and discipline was very severe. Conditions were poor for teachers and their pay was low. The headmaster of Mount Street was paid just over £16 per month and his staff received sums of just over £3 to £8 a month.

There was little in the way of secondary education in Brecon in the latter part of the 19th century, apart from Christ College and a few private schools. A report published in 1881 recommended the establishment of new

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. Latest issues cover the Victorian Schools of Brecon.

and extended Grammar Schools. In 1895, at a meeting of school managers of Brecon County School District, it was resolved to build two secondary schools in the town. Some months later it was decided the most suitable site was a field

belonging to the Marquis of Camden on Cradoc Road. Pupils would have travelled from Hay and Sennibridge, for example, and it was felt that the distance from Brecon railway stations to Cradoc Road, was too far to walk, except for the strongest girls. It was decided to build the girls school on Cerrigcochion (School Gardens) on the field where the National Eisteddfod had been held in 1889. The Cradoc Road site would be for the



Boys Grammar School

Powys Archives offers a couple of entries for documents relating to the two schools referred to in the Beacon article.

Dr Coke Memorial Infant School. Logbooks 1868-1890. B/E/PS/6

Postern Voluntary Primary School, Brecon. No 2 Girls Department. Logbook 1909-1965. B/E/PS/9/L/4

boys. In the interim period while the schools were being constructed temporary accommodation was found for girls at The Elms, 10, The Struet, and for boys at Dr. Coke's church, Lion Street. The two schools were opened on 10th July 1901 by Charles Morley MP.

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Historical Street Maps

When researching family history it can help to know where our ancestors lived. Streets often disappear with time and street names may change. An old map can sometimes help to overcome these issues. Alan Godfrey reproduces old Ordnance Survey Maps for many areas of Wales including Breconshire. Whilst the range of available maps is varied there are a few for Breconshire which members might find useful. The following maps are all taken from the OS 25" maps and reduced to a scale of approximately 15 inches to the mile. Each map costs £3.00

Brecon 1903: A detailed map double-sided map of Brecon. The main map covers the central area of the town, with coverage extending southward to Peny-lan and the River Usk.

Crickhowell and Llangattock 1903: This detailed map covers the small town of Crickhowell, plus the village of Llangattock across the River Usk. On the reverse are useful extracts from a 1906 directory listing commercial names and private residents.

Brynmawr 1915: This detailed map covers the town of Brynmawr, with coverage extending southward to Winchestown and the northern part of Nantyglo. On the reverse is a directory of Brynmawr, plus a railway timetable for the Brynmawr-Newport line in 1906. This map also includes a portion of Monmouthshire (sheet 11.07). The map links up with Monmouthshire sheet 11.06 [Beaufort](#) to the west.

Gurnos and Ystalyfera 1914: This detailed map covers an area divided between Brecknockshire and Glamorgan. It covers the area from the eastern part of Ystalyfera eastward to Ystradgynlais station and colliery. On the reverse are directories of Ystyfera and Gurnos.

Alan Godfrey also publishes a range of 1" to the mile maps of the area, Go to the website at <https://www.alangodfreymaps.co.uk/brecknock.htm> to see the full range.



Searching the Church in Wales Diocesan Records

In 1944 the Church in Wales began depositing their records with the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. Included in these were the four dioceses of St Asaph, St Davids, Bangor and Llandaff as well as the modern dioceses of Monmouth and Swansea and Brecon. Documents, maps, manuscripts and drawings are all included in the collection. Most of the records relate to legal and administrative systems of the church so charting the history and development of the dioceses. Information contained within the collection is of great use and importance to those interested in ecclesiastical, family and local history. The collection is extremely large and is still growing. In the main the collection is well organised but there are anomalies which the user might like to take note of. Each collection is broken into sections covering things like Bishops' Transcripts, Consistory Court Papers, Chapter Records and so forth. Not each Diocese will have all of these and the amounts collected vary. Browse the catalogue under the Diocese interested in and then drill down to each section beginning with the main description. This will give a brief idea of what documents are available and the time periods covered. Although searching by Diocese will usually provide access to the available documents in the collection there are anomalies and some documents are indexed in unexpected places. Some documents are not found in the general categories but have been located in the miscellaneous sections. An example is found in the St David's Diocesan records where information on the Non-conformist chapels of Breconshire is located, perhaps of interest to our members.

NLW Blog 27.7.2020 by Lorena Troughton. Assistant Archivist. With thanks.



Unwanted Certificates

Death

THOMAS, George Henry. 86 yrs old.
Hanworth Park House, London

DAVIES, Thomas. 7 days old.
Heolrhydd, Brecon.

Contact Hilary Williams for further
information on

blfhsenquiries@gmail.com

Membership

Despite the challenges of the past year our membership numbers are holding up. At the end of 2020 we had 100 paid up members and renewals for 2021 are holding up with 39 already renewing. We also had 21 new members last year which is very good news. Since 2011 our membership has always averaged around 98 members which is very healthy.



New Publication



St Illtyd's Church, Myndd Illtyd, Breconshire

In 2015, members of the Society and other volunteers recorded the Monumental Inscriptions and graves in the burial ground of St Illtyd's Church, Mynydd Illtyd, Brecon. This Church became the Chapel of Ease for Defynnog Parish Church.

Hilary has now written up all the transcriptions and the results are published in a new book. This lists the MI and graves, cross-references to the Parish Records for burials, a surname index and a place name index.

While the book is available for the general public to purchase, members of BLFHS can look on the Members' Section of the website to find photographs of all the gravestones taken by Rob Eckley.

Price: £5.00 or £7.50 with p&p [UK]. Pay by cash OR cheque made payable to "BLFHS"

Meeting Reports

Meetings are still paused until such time as it is safe to begin again.

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

Future Meetings

We are still not planning any meetings for the foreseeable future until the situation re Covid-19 is much improved. We will keep members informed as and when we intend to restart. In the meantime it is intended that a mini bulletin will be sent out to members each month containing a short article of interest.

