



## **Newsletter 52 – March 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.

### **March Meeting Review: Rosie Burton “*Historic Buildings of Brecon*”**

Rosie Burton, Buildings Conservation Officer with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, gave an illustrated talk about a new project that she is developing. As part of her role, she keeps an eye on building work being carried out on listed buildings, which can often lead to the discovery of hidden architectural features. There are many gaps in the information held by BBNP about the buildings in Brecon and their usage over time. She is exploring ways of filling in these gaps and as a Society we look forward to working with her on this project in the future. Note that we are already conducting relevant research with our ongoing shops and businesses project.

Useful websites relating to this topic include:

- Listed Buildings in Brecon <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/wales/powys/brecon>
- *Brycheiniog* journals at <http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/listissues/llgc-id:1380216>

A sound file of Rosie Burton’s talk and a slide show of her illustrations will be uploaded onto our website soon.

### **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:

- **Management Committee Minutes:** added minutes of Feb 2016 meeting: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/minutes.htm>
- **Parish Pages:** added a set of webpages, for Llanfihangel Cwmdy parish, including all the available records for St Michael’s Church (Cwmdy) and St John’s Church (Tretower) <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/parishes/index.htm>
- **Newsletter:** added Newsletter 52 (the one you are now reading): <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/newsletters.htm>
- **Mynydd Illtyd Information Booklets:** PDF files for two BLFHS booklets on the history of the area around the Mountain Centre on Mynydd Illtyd: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/members/more-resources.htm>
- **Noticeboard:** updated 20 Mar 2016: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm>
- **Public News Pages:** updated 20 Mar 2016: <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/news.htm>
- **Members’ News Pages:** updated 20 Mar 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 Llandeilo'r F&#226;n.

*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)*

### ***“He Died at his post” – Shadrach Jones, builder of the kingdom***

**by Jill Morgan**

[Jill Morgan thought her article might be of interest to our members. Thank you, Jill]

Shadrach Jones was born in Llanely, Breconshire in 1832; he was buried in Swansea in 1883. In many ways a very ordinary man, and one who had no posterity, but during the fifty years of his life he travelled more than five thousand miles to the Utah frontier and back and left a legacy in fine stone houses in northern Utah.

Shadrach Jones was born to a mining family in 1832 and the records of the Wesleyan Circuit for Glamorgan, Brecon and Monmouth show that he was christened in December of that year. In the 1841 census the family are listed in Cwmcelyn, Aberystwith, but they moved around the area, as was common enough, pursuing work in the different mines. Shadrach it would appear became a stone mason. In the late 1840s, his father David went to America for work, intending to send for his family later, and wrote in 1849 to tell them he'd saved enough money for their fare. Meanwhile, Shadrach and his older brother John had met the Mormon<sup>1</sup> missionaries, and were baptised into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) in Nantyglo on 9 June 1849. David never did send the money, and the family later learned that he had died in a mining accident in the US.

By 1853 Shadrach was married to Mary Williams whose family had also converted to Mormonism, and in 1856 they emigrated to Utah, crossing the Atlantic on the *Columbia*, and then joining up with brother John and his wife to cross the plains to Utah Territory. They settled in Willard, a new settlement about fifty miles north of Salt Lake City, and it was there that Shadrach Jones built – and became famous for – his stone houses. Earlier houses in Willow Creek were adobe, but within easy reach were the canyons with a plentiful supply of rock. In his book *The Founders of Utah*<sup>2</sup> Levi Edgar Young says:

The most beautiful old homes possibly of early days were rock homes. It is said that the best and oldest of those are at Willard. There was a humble old Welshman in early days who used to build rock houses. His name was Shadrach Jones. One writer tells us that one of the walls is two feet thick and the stones were laid in lime mortar.

This type of house, so common in Wales, would no doubt have been considered a very superior style of dwelling in Utah Territory in the mid-1800s as the first Mormon pioneers had only arrived in the Salt Lake valley in 1847, some ten years before Shadrach and Mary emigrated, and early settlers had survived the first harsh Utah winters in tents and dugouts.

Shadrach and Mary had no children, but their own stone house was apparently open to all. They took in a number of children and young people over the years, and often used their upstairs as a dance hall.

In 1883, Shadrach was called to serve as a missionary in his native Wales. He left in April, but within three months he had died and was buried in the graveyard of Calfaria Welsh Baptist Chapel<sup>3</sup> in Ravenhill Swansea. He'd contracted a cold which developed into pneumonia, and he died in the night – though there's also a theory that he died of asphyxiation, not realising that gas lamps should not only be blown out but the gas turned off, too. Shadrach's gravestone reads:

*In Memory of Elder<sup>4</sup> Shadrach Jones, Missionary from Willard City, Utah, U.S.A., died at Fforest Fach June 24 1883. Beautiful in good work he died at his post*

Mary outlived him by almost forty years. The stone houses he built in Willard are still standing, and are now on the Utah Historical Register as listed buildings – monuments to 'a humble old Welshman'.<sup>5</sup>

Notes:

1. Mormons are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
2. Available on googlebooks. See also *A Heritage of Stone in Willard*, by Teddy Griffiths at: <http://content.lib.utah.edu/utis/getfile/collection/USHSArchPub/id/7109/filename/7144.pdf>
3. GPS: 51°38'30.03"N 3°58'45.65"W OS Grid Reference: SS631955
4. 'Elder' is the title given to an ordained minister or missionary of the LDS/Mormon church
5. More information about Shadrach Jones can be found under the *Immigrants* tab on the Brigham Young University website <http://welshmormon.byu.edu>

## **The Webb family of Trade and Businesses in Brecon (final part)**

### **Webb, the Baker then Corn Merchant**

Edward and Rebecca's youngest son, William was baptised in 1798, in St Mary's. He married Phebe Winston, daughter of Richard Winston, a well-known Brecon family, on 23 November 1820 at St John's Church. William was described as a saddler, so had also initially gone into business with his father and brother. Phebe was described as a "spinster a minor under the age of twenty one years" so they were married by licence with the consent of "Richard Winston her natural & lawful father". Both parties were literate and the witnesses were Walter and Evan Winston. It would seem that Phebe was already heavily pregnant at her marriage and their first child to be baptised at St John's, was Phebe on 7 March 1821. They were resident in Old Port Inferior Ward. Six more children came along and were baptised at St John's: William in 1822, Richard in 1824, Rebekah in 1827, Edward in

1831, Mary in 1833, and Clara in 1836. William did not remain as a saddler. By the baptism of his second child, William, he was described as a baker, living in Old Port Superior. By the time of Rebekah's baptism, the family had moved to Cantercelly Ward, where they remained for the rest of the baptisms. William, however, developed his business and by 1833, when Edward was baptised, he was described as a flour dealer, and in 1836 when Clara was baptised, he was described as a miller. In the 1841 census, they were resident in High Street, Old Port Inferior, and William was described as flour merchant. Of their other children resident at home that day, only their son Richard has an occupation recorded: watch maker. By 1851, their residence was described as High Street Corner, St Mary's, Cantercelly Ward. William, aged 53 years, was described as flour merchant and wife Phebe, aged fifty years, was described as shop keeper. William died in 1855, aged fifty-seven, but I have not found a Will for him. In 1861 widowed Phoebe was running a grocer's shop in the Struet, near the George Hotel. Further down the Struet was her son, Edward and his family. Edward was miller at the Struet Mill – the 1868 Slater's Directory refers to him. Phoebe died in 1867, aged sixty-seven. In 1871, Edward Webb, forty years old, was at 41 the Struet and was described as corn merchant. Edward died on 24 March 1872, aged forty. In his Will, he left Matilda, his widow, £1,500. In 1881, Edward's widow, Matilda, and her family were at 92 the Struet and son Charles E. Webb, aged twenty-two, was running the flour merchants and was employing three men. In 1891, Matilda was now the Corn Merchant, still living at 92, the Struet, whilst Charles E, was an employed Auctioneer. By 1901, Matilda had moved to Bristol with her married son, John and a daughter. I cannot find Charles at all in 1901. The Trade Directories for the early twentieth century do not show any Webbs as traders in Corn, Flour or Bakery products in Brecon.

### **Webb, the Clock and Watchmakers and Jewellers**

William and Phebe Webb's third child was Richard, baptised in St John's in 1824.

In the 1841 census, at the age of 15 years, Richard was already a watchmaker.

In February 1851 Richard Webb, "watchmaker and jeweller", married by licence, Elizabeth Hall, daughter of James Hall, Innkeeper, Ship Street. Both were of full age and both were literate. He was marrying the daughter of a successful Brecon family.

In the 1851 census, the newly married couple were recorded as living in Castle Street.

The couple had at least five children all baptised at St Mary's Church; Lizzie Helen, 1851 (barely a honeymoon baby); Honor, 1853; William, 1854; Richard Shatford, 1858 and Edith Harriet, 1865. They were all born in High Street, Brecon.

The 1861 census recorded Richard as a Jeweller, employing two men and one boy.

In 1871, Richard aged 46, was described as a Watchmaker, as was his 16 year old son, William. In 1879 William married Elsie, a Leicestershire girl.

The 1881 census referred to son Richard Shatford, a 16 year old Bank Clerk, but he died in March 1883 at 18 High Street. In the same census, son William, aged 26 years, was a Watchmaker, married to Elsie and living in Castle Street.

By the 1891 census, Richard, aged 66 years, had retired and was living at number 4, Lion Street. Running the business now was 36 year old William, at number 18 High Street and described as Watchmaker and Jeweller.

Richard senior died, aged 67 years on 27th September 1892. His death and burial were both recorded in newspapers in Wales, such as the *Western Mail* and a Cardiff based newspaper called *The Evening Express* and *The South Wales Daily News*. The announcements make interesting reading:

### **DEATH OF MR RICHARD WEBB, J.O., BRECON**

We regret to announce the death, after a lingering illness, of Mr Richard Webb, which took place about 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon at his residence, Lion Street, Brecon. The deceased was 67 years of age, and had for many years carried on the business of a jeweller at Brecon, from which he retired about seven years ago. Mr Webb was a director of several local companies, guardian for St Mary's parish, and an active member of the committee of management of the Brecon Infirmary.

### **BRECON**

### **FUNERAL OF MR RICHARD WEBB, - J.P.,**

On Saturday the remains of Mr Richard Webb, J.P., of Lion Street, Brecon, were interred in the Brecon Cemetery. The funeral was private, but as the cortège passed through the streets to the place

of sepulture [sic] every respect was shown to the deceased. Mr Webb for about 40 years carried on an extensive and most successful jewellery business, and upon retiring from the business pursuits a few years back was succeeded by his son, Mr W. Webb. The deceased, who was 68 [sic] years of age, was a justice of the peace for the borough, a member of the Brecon Board of Guardians and the Brecon Burial Board, a director of the Brecon Gas Company and a member of the committee of management of the Brecon County and Borough Infirmary.

Richard left £9,000 in his Will to Elizabeth, his widow.

Elizabeth died at 23 Castle Street on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1910. In her Will, she left £1,856 to "William Webb retired jeweller and John Meredith, grocer"

Son, William was listed in the 1895 Kelly's Directory as a Watchmaker and Jeweller at 18 High Street, but he did not carry on the business for much longer. In the 1901 census, William, his Leicestershire born wife, Elsie, and the only surviving offspring Reginald, had moved to Upper Holloway, London. William was working as a secretary to an Artist, whilst Reginald was a clerk at the Stock Exchange.

By 1911, William, Elsie and Reginald were living in Highgate, Middlesex and both father and son were collectors of income tax.

NOTE: this family left its mark on the business life of Brecon and as we can see with Richard, on the development of the town. That none of these trades and businesses seems to have continued with the family name is a shame.

## **Relaunch of Shops and Businesses in Brecon Project**

Project Co-ordinator Alison Noble writes:

In 2010 we began a major project – researching the shops and businesses in Brecon. The early results were displayed in a highly successful exhibition held at Brecon Library in September 2011. Since then the work has just been ticking over, but now we plan to re-launch it as an ongoing Research Project.

The focus is on developing a list of the businesses that have traded from each premises in the main shopping streets in the centre of the town. Entries have been transcribed from a number of trades directories covering Brecon, and these details, together with those from census records, advertisements and personal memories, are ready to be entered under each address.

We are now looking to establish a team of researchers to help with this process.

If you'd like to volunteer, you do not necessarily have to be based in Brecon, but to process the information in a standard format you do need to use *Microsoft Excel* spreadsheet and *Microsoft Word* word-processor on a computer.

There will be an introductory meeting in Brecon on the morning of **Wednesday 13th April**. The exact time and venue will depend on the number of people who want to attend. Please let me (Alison) know if you would like to come along.

Alison can be contacted by email at [anobleajn@btinternet.com](mailto:anobleajn@btinternet.com) or by telephone at 01874 620133.

## **PLEASE NOTE: Change of Editor:**

The April edition of the Newsletter will be produced by Society Member Sue Ashton, who will take over as Editor. She has already proved her value to the Society, as a member of the highly productive Transcription Team. Sue volunteered her services and I very happily agreed to hand over editorial responsibilities to her. Sue will be eager to receive items for publication from Society members. The new address for sending in items will be set out in the April edition. Thank you to everyone who has provided me with articles over the last fifty-two Newsletters. I wish Sue well and am sure that we will all benefit from a change in the style and editorship of the BLFHS Newsletter.

**NEXT MEETING:** Entry to the Library is through the main entrance door, although the lift from the garage area is available if you cannot manage the stairs to the upper floor of the library.

- Date and time: Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April at 2:00 pm
- Venue: Brecon Library
- Subject: Jill Fawke: "Tregunter House", Talgarth. This Grade II Listed property was built by Thomas Harris who continued to live there when he was Captain of the Brecon Militia.

**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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