

# BRYCHEINIOG

CYFROL/VOLUME XL

2009

Golygydd/Editor  
BRYNACH PARRI

*Cyhoeddwy'r/Publishers*

CYMDEITHAS BRYCHEINIOG A CHYFEILLION YR AMGUEDDFA  
THE BRECKNOCK SOCIETY AND MUSEUM FRIENDS

CYMDEITHAS BRYCHEINIOG a CHYFEILLION YR AMGUEDDFA  
THE BRECKNOCK SOCIETY and MUSEUM FRIENDS

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Cymdeithas Brycheiniog,  
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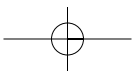
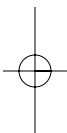
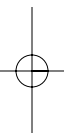
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hawlfraint yr erthyglau yn y rhifyn hwn

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## CYFRANNWYR/CONTRIBUTORS

Penelope J. Corfield is Professor of History at Royal Holloway, University of London, and (2008/9) a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford. She delivered the 11th Sir John Lloyd Memorial Lecture at the Guildhall, Brecon, in March 2008, which forms the basis of her article on Thelwall in this edition.

Robert Gant hails from Crickhowell, and is a former pupil of Brecon Boys' Grammar School. He is now a semi retired lecturer at the School of Earth Sciences and Geography at the Polytechnic of Kingston upon Thames, and is researching the social history of small Welsh market towns in the nineteenth century. He has previously contributed an article on the Townscape of Brecon (*Brycheiniog XVI*).

Alan Bowring, as Geopark Development Officer with the Brecon Beacons National Park, is closely involved in the development of the Fforest Fawr Geopark.

Brynach Parri is a native of Brecon, and, after a career in teaching and translation, returned to the county some fourteen years ago. His particular interest is the early history of the kingdom of Brycheiniog.

Anthony Bell, whose background is in education, is the Treasurer of the Brecknock Society, and has researched the history of the Camden family and their estates in Breconshire and the development of Camden Road, where he now lives.

M. Morse is a Board Member of the Brecknock Hall Society, Inc., and the notes on the history of Brecknock Hall are based on her research in collaboration with Wayland Jefferson, Southold Town Historian, and Lili Ann Motta, one time Secretary of the Society.

Handel Jones: Ar ôl gadael yr ysgol ym 1962, bu Handel yn newyddiadurwr dan hyfforddiant yng Nghaerfyrddin cyn ymuno â'r BBC yng Nghaerdydd. Ym 1979, daeth yn newyddiadurwr a darlledwr ar ei liwt ei hun, gan arbenigo mewn materion gwledig a byd natur. Oddi ar 1983, mae'n byw ar dyddyn yn Rhandir-mwyn, Sir Gaerfyrddin, lle mae'n gyfieithydd llawn-amser erbyn hyn.

*A translation of the above is available on <http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk>*

## GOLYGYDDOL

Cafwyd cryn newidadau i'n cylchgrawn, *Brycheiniog*, ers i'r gyfrol flaenorol ymddangos, nid lleiaf gan i'r golygydd newid. Yn dilyn cyfnod hir a chlodwiw o wasanaeth fel Golygydd, mae Edward Parry wedi ymddeol ar ôl cwblhau ei ddeunawfed gyfrol, gan gyfrannu'n ddirfawr tuag at gadarnhau lle anrhydeddus y cyfnodolyn fel un o'r cylchgronau hanes leol mwyaf llwyddiannus a haeddiannol yng Nghymru, yn ôl awdurdod dim llai na'r Athro Dr John Davies. Yn rhinwedd fy swydd fel Golygydd newydd, byddaf yn ymdrechu i gynnal safonau fy rhagflaenwyr dros y hanner can mlynedd a mwy o fodolaeth y cyfnodolyn.

Mae *Brycheiniog* wedi ymuno â chynllun digideiddio holl gyfnodolion hanesyddol ac enwadol Cymru a chyn hir bydd ar gael ar-lein ar wefan ein Llyfrgell Genedlathol. Ein gobaith yw y bydd y cynllun hwn, sydd ddim heb ei feirniaid, yn dod â'n cyhoeddiad at sylw gynulleidfa ehangach – bydd pob erthygl sydd wedi ymddangos yma hyd at bum mlynedd yn ôl ar y wefan, oni benderfynnodd yr awduron i gadw eu hawlfraint. Fel Cymdeithas, mae gennym ninnau hefyd ein gwefan ein hunan, sef <http://www.brecknockociety.co.uk> a fydd yn fodd i gyfathrebu'n haws gyda'n haelodau a'r cyhoedd ehangach. Bydd hefyd yn ein gwneud yn fwy hyblyg: bydd yn caniatáu inni gyhoeddi erthyglau yn y Gymraeg unwaith eto, heb y feirniadaeth bod hyn yn annheg i'r Di-Gymraeg, gan y bydd cyfieithiadau i'r Saesneg ar gael ar y wefan, a'n bwriad yn y pendraw yw cyhoeddi ar y wefan cyfieithiadau i'r Saesneg o erthyglau sydd wedi ymddangos yn Gymraeg yn y gorffennol.

Cynhwysir dwy gerdd eleni, y naill yn Saesneg, y llall yn Gymraeg, er mwyn ail-sefydlu traddodiad flaenorol *Brycheiniog* o gyhoeddi barddoniaeth sydd yn adlewyrchu agweddau o'r sir.

Cafwyd nifer o newidiadau i'r Gymdeithas ei hunan, wrth i'n Llywydd, y Chwaer Bonaventure Kelleher ymddeol, er ei bod yn parhau fel aelod gweithgar a chefnogol iawn o'r Gymdeithas. Dyrchafwyd Ken Jones, Cadeirydd y Gymdeithas dros nifer o flynyddoedd, i swydd y Llywydd, a'i ddilynwyd yn y Gadeiryddiaeth yw Dr. John Gibbs. Dymunwn yn dda i bob swyddog newydd, gan ddiolch i holl aelodau Cyngor y Gymdeithas am eu gwaith a'u cefnogaeth nawr ac yn y gorffennol.

Ar ôl cyfnod cythryblus yn hanes yr Amgueddfa, teimlwn y bydd penodiad Curadur newydd, Nigel Blackamoor, yn fodd i'r amgueddfa symud rhagddo unwaith eto i ddyfodol llewyrchus a disglair, yn enwedig yng ngoleuni'r cynlluniau datblygu sydd o flaen Cyngor Sir Powys a Chronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri. Dymunwn bob llwyddiant i Nigel yn ei swydd newydd.

BRYNACH PARRI

## EDITORIAL

*Brycheiniog* has undergone a number of changes since the last Volume appeared, notably with a change of Editor: Edward Parry has retired after a long and distinguished period as editor of eighteen volumes of *Brycheiniog*, in which he has contributed greatly to the confirmation of the journal as one of the best local history periodicals in Wales, according to no less an authority than Dr John Davies. As new editor, I shall endeavour to live up to the standards of my four predecessors over the fifty-three years of the existence of the Journal.

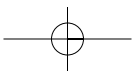
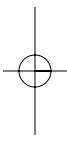
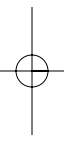
Our Journal is now part of the National Library of Wales scheme for the digitisation of all historical and denominational journals in Wales, and will shortly be available on-line on the National Library's website. This not uncontroversial development will, we hope, bring our Journal to the notice of a wider readership – all articles which have appeared in *Brycheiniog* up until five years ago will appear on the website, unless permission has been withheld by the author. As a Society, we also now have our own website <http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk> which will enable us to communicate more effectively with our own members as well as with a wider public. It also gives us more linguistic flexibility: readers will note that the items which appear in Welsh in this volume are available in translation on the website, and we aim to place on the site translations into English of other articles that have appeared in Welsh over the years.

Two poems, one in Welsh and a second in English, are included in this edition, re-establishing an early tradition of *Brycheiniog* in publishing poetry regarding the aspects of the county.

The Society itself has undergone a number of changes, with the retirement of our President, Sister Bonaventure Kelleher, who nevertheless remains a very supportive and active member of the Society. Ken Jones, for many years Chairman of the Society, has taken over the rôle of President, and is succeeded as Chairman by Dr. John Gibbs. We wish all our new officers well, and would like to thank all members of the Society's Council past and present for their hard work and support.

After a rather unsettled period in the history of the Museum, we feel that the installation of a new Curator, Nigel Blackamoor, will enable the museum to move forward once again to a bright future, especially in view of the development plans currently before Powys County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund. We wish Nigel every success in his new position.

BRYNACH PARRI





## ADRODDIADAU/REPORTS

### THE REGIMENTAL MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL WELSH, BRECON (The Royal Regiment of Wales Museum Trust)

It is ninety years since the guns fell silent on the Western Front. Events surrounding this significant anniversary have naturally prompted many people to search out their own family stories in the war that was said to end all wars. The staff at the museum have been very busy. In the four years of conflict, some 80,000 men served in the South Wales Borderers and Monmouthshire Regiment and the Roll of Honour in the Cathedral for the Borderers alone contains 5,777 names. Just before the Armistice a particularly virulent strain of influenza swept through the Brecknocks' camp in Mhow, India and 36 men were struck down. Their remains lie in the local cantonment cemetery unremembered and forgotten. Whilst the fighting in Europe stopped, many Brecknockshire men found themselves on the frontier of India and Afghanistan, keeping the peace. It was another year before they able to returned home to their families. Last December, huge crowds lined the streets of Cardiff to welcome home from Iraq the soldiers of 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh and, in a moving service inside the Millennium Stadium, the soldiers, families and veterans gathered to remember the five soldiers killed during their six months' operational tour. The pattern of commitment, courage and personal sacrifice in difficult circumstances unfortunately continues.

Supporting these anniversary events the regimental museum has provided material for both national and local television and radio in the form of letters and images from the archives. The curator took part in Roy Noble's radio programme directly broadcast from the Theatr Brycheiniog on 14 October as part of the new TV series of the '*Coal House*', which take the families involved into the 'Home Front in World War Two' scenario.

During the year the museum was able to remember in a very tangible way those who took part in the immortal defence of Rorke's Drift; the headstone dedicated to Pte Henry Hook VC at Churcham outside Gloucester has been cleaned; new headstones have been dedicated to Pte James Marshall at Ruddington in Nottinghamshire and Pte William Partridge at Blaina. A blue plaque was unveiled at the former home of Pte William Cooper in Worthing in Sussex. All these events were covered by local television and many hundreds of people attended to remember these brave soldiers.

The year has also witnessed a number of new publications. The Welsh launch of 'A Long Long War: The Voices of the British War in Northern Ireland 1969-1998' by Ken Wharton on 12 July was particularly poignant as the book contains a large number of stories provided by veterans of The Royal Regiment of Wales. When all the dreadful events of Northern Ireland over 30 years are put

together, it is difficult to absorb the tragedy that ripped apart communities in the province for so long.

More recently, Alister Williams produced his second volume of 'The Heart of a Dragon' which takes his research into VCs of Wales and Welsh Regiments on from the beginning of World War One until 1982. The museum was able to supply many fresh images not previously published. At the same time, the events surrounding the 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers' operation against the German held port of Tsingtao in 1914 – a Battle Honour that is not held by any other regiment – have been documented and will be published shortly under the title of 'A Clash of Empires'. Incidentally, Tsingtao is where the sailing events for the Beijing Olympics were held.

During the summer months, the museum provided five work experience places for local students. A further three students joined in the Autumn, one of whom had severe special needs. Two students undertook 'working with the voluntary sector' phase of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme at the museum.

Our education service continues to expand with the number of students participating in the formal workshops on par with last year. Joan Manley has joined the museum and has set about specifically targeting the local secondary schools. To this end, a new workshop 'Home Front in WW1' has been developed. A number of schools have responded to the national 'Big Draw' competition – the museum's theme was 'create a soldier from anytime or place'.

Of particular importance was the visit to the museum in February of HE Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the traditional Prime Minister of the Zulu Nation and former Minister for Home Affairs in the post-apartheid South African government. It was His Excellency's first visit to Brecon and clearly demonstrated the tremendous mutual respect that exists between the Zulu Nation and the Welsh soldiers since the bloody battles of 1879. The Prince was delighted to see a photograph of his grandfather on display at the museum. He also amusingly explained how he was chosen at the last moment to play his own grandfather, King Cetshwayo, in Stanley Baker's 1964 movie, *Zulu*. There was also an opportunity for him to visit the Cathedral to see the Colours carried by the regiment during the Anglo-Zulu war and to meet the Dean, now Bishop, John Davies.

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[www.rrw.org.uk](http://www.rrw.org.uk)

MARTIN EVERETT

## POWYS COUNTY ARCHIVES

This year approximately 1,150 visitors have used the Archives service. Staff have responded to around 1,260 enquiries by letter or email, 170 hours of research have been undertaken as part of our paid Research Service, and 1,300 items from our collections have been issued in our public searchroom.

In March, Jennifer Lewis was appointed as our new Research Assistant. Jennifer has worked as a primary school teacher in Llanbister, and has a long involvement with family and local history in the county. She is a long-time member of Powys Family History Society and a member of the executive committee for the Radnorshire Society. Catherine Richards continues as Chair of the Welsh County Archivists' Group (WCAG). She also represents the WCAG at the meetings of the Association of Family History Societies (Wales), and continues to attend the meetings of Archives and Records Council Wales (ARCW) on behalf of Powys County Council. This year Catherine was also invited by the National Archives (TNA) to join the self-assessment panel in order to represent local authority archive services in Wales. Good relationships continue with local and family history societies across Powys, and Catherine continues to attend the executive committee meetings of the Radnorshire Society, Powys Family History Society, the Powysland Club and Montgomeryshire Genealogical Society.

In July, Powys Library Service launched a research service in relation to the local studies collections which are held at Brecon and Newtown libraries. Staff with dedicated local studies responsibility are now able to undertake paid research for those who are unable to visit in person. Amongst other things, the library collections include newspapers, trade directories, Ordnance Survey maps and local history publications. There are further details on the research service on the Powys Library website ([www.powys.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.powys.gov.uk/libraries)). Most of the local history publications have been added to the online library catalogue, which is searchable via the library website.

A self-assessment questionnaire for 2007 was completed for Powys Archives and the returns scored by staff at the National Archives. The self assessment panel at TNA banded the results for each section into four performance bands (no-star; one-star; two-star and three-star). Overall Powys Archives was judged to be a one-star service – although significant weaknesses were highlighted for our service in section 5 (buildings, security and environment). The detailed score sheets revealed 0/10 for accrual space for records, and 3/9 for searchroom provision for visitors, with only basic facilities available. The questionnaire was arranged in five main sections, and the scores Powys Archives achieved on each section, compared with the regional and national averages for comparable services, are set out in the table below.

	<b>Score for Powys Archives</b>	Average score in Wales	Average score in the UK
Section 1: governance	<b>47.5%</b>	59%	64%
Section 2: documentation of collections	<b>57%</b>	55.5%	57%
Section 3: access and outreach services	<b>45.5%</b>	43%	52.5%
Section 4: preservation and conservation	<b>50.5%</b>	57.5%	62%
Section 5: buildings, security and environment	<b>35.5%</b>	53%	60.5%
Overall score	<b>45.5%</b>	52%	58%

The Authority's monthly website statistics show that the Powys Archives homepage continues to be within the top ten pages viewed on the Council's website. In total 117,000 hits have been recorded for our webpages during 2007/8. This year staff have added a significant amount of information to the Archives website, including pdf files of most of our catalogues. The majority of our holdings can now be viewed online at item level description. In effect this means that our researchers can obtain information remotely that was only accessible beforehand by visiting our public searchroom. The Archives website divides our records into different categories: public, official, ecclesiastical, non-conformist, family and estate papers, and miscellaneous records. The catalogue files vary in length, depending on the size of the collection, but, as an example, the Lewis Lloyd of Cwmteuddwr estate collection amounts to 154 pages, showing item by item, title deeds, correspondence and probate records dating from the sixteenth century (R/D/LEW). An increase in awareness of our collections has also had an impact on the number of requests for copies (photocopies and digital images) of our records, and an increase in the number of research requests.

This year Powys Archives has also arranged for four volumes to be digitised and webmounted on *Gathering the Jewels*, the website for Welsh heritage and culture ([www.gtgj.org.uk](http://www.gtgj.org.uk)). The four notebooks are those of Henry Thomas Payne, 1759–1832, Rector of Llanbedr and Archdeacon of Carmarthen. An excellent article on Henry Thomas Payne, featuring these notebooks, appears in *Brycheiniog* Vol 5, pp 35–50.

Powys Archives undertook the PSQG (Public Services Quality Group) visitor

survey in October and November 2007, with the help of grant funding from CyMAL. This is a national survey carried out across Britain every 18 months, and, on this occasion, 50 forms were completed by visitors to Powys Archives. The results for Powys indicate that:

- 97% rate our website as good or very good
- 94% think our catalogues (including online guides) were good or very good
- 96% rate the quality and appropriateness of staff advice as good or very good
- 47% feel our opening hours were the most important area to improve
- 32% want an improvement in visitor facilities
- 47% recorded their visit as their first to Powys Archives
- 48% of visitors are female; 52% are male
- 96% rate the overall service as good or very good

The Friends of Powys Archives group now has a membership of nearly 274 individuals, families or societies. Our quarterly newsletter, *Almanac*, continues to go to all Friends, Council Members, libraries and secondary schools. Newsletters are also exchanged with Archive Friends groups across Britain. Ann Roberts and Beth Williams continue to visit the Archives on a weekly basis, and both undertake invaluable volunteer work for the service. Volunteer help has also been received this year from Michael Joy, from Llandrindod High School, and Jonathan Day, undergraduate from Liverpool University. Both undertook cataloguing activities.

Powys Archives staff had a particularly successful stocktake closure this year, and we managed to catalogue a high percentage of material, including Urban and Rural District Council records collected from council offices in Hay and Crickhowell. These cover a number of authorities in Breconshire and Radnorshire, and include financial records, rating ledgers, and a large quantity of material on sewerage schemes and water supplies.

Powys Archives helped to support an appeal launched by Gloucestershire Archives to raise funds for the purchase of the Sudeley family archive. This archive was deposited in Gloucestershire in 1965, but the owner, Lord Sudeley, wished to remove it for sale unless Gloucestershire Archives managed to raise £19,500 to buy it. Gloucestershire Archives did manage to secure the funds, and the collection has now been saved. This important estate collection contains over a thousand title deeds, manorial and other records relating to estates owned by the Hanbury-Tracy family in Gloucestershire and elsewhere, principally in Montgomeryshire and Shropshire. Staff at Gloucestershire Archives wrote to thank those in Powys who helped with the appeal, and for all the donations made, including those from the Friends of Powys Archives.

Powys Archives 2007–2008 Annual Report was published in April. This

summarises the work undertaken by staff and a full list of accessions received. Details of accessions received during 2008 with particular reference to Breconshire are as follows:

*Public and Official Records*

Court registers and minute books, from various petty sessional divisions of Radnorshire, also Builth Wells in Breconshire, 1877–1988 [Acc 1792]

Poster advertising a meeting of the Trustees of the Breconshire Turnpike Trust, 1843 [Acc 1809]

Log books from Mount Street CP Infants School, Brecon, 1890–1994 [Acc 1813]

Llanfrynach Parish/Community Council: deeds & papers relating to Parish Hall, 1905–2001, minute book, 1990–2000, commons registration, 1968; Llanhamlach Parish/Community Council: deeds, 1972–1977; minute book, 1983–1994; accounts, 1985–1988, all relating to Community Hall Committee [Acc 1814]

Three box files of road classification records from Breconshire County Council, 1920–1974 [Acc 1827]

Records from Powys County Council area offices at The Strand Hall, Builth Wells: Llanwrtyd Wells UDC, 1936–1962; Builth RDC, 1951–1973; The Borough of Brecknock District Council, 1994–1995; Builth UDC, n/d [Acc 1828]

Records of Parish/Community Councils: Glyntawe, minutes 1895–1986; Traianmawr, minutes 1949–1986, finance 1960–1984; Traianglas, minutes 1967–1986; Llywel, minutes 1986–1997 [Acc 1829]

Fifty rate valuation books: Breconshire UDCs and RDCs and Borough of Brecknock District Council, c1930–c1990 [Acc 1831]

Framed school photograph of Christ College School, Brecon, 1952 [Acc 1832]

Electoral registers for Brecon and Radnor constituency, 1971–1973, 1990–2003 [Acc 1834]

Records from Ysgol Thomas Stephens, Pontneddfechan, 1930–2008; Attendance registers for Ystradfellte School, 1895–1966 [Acc 1841]

Files relating to Royal Visits to Powys, 1988–1994. [Acc 1842]

Records from Llanwrtyd Wells Town Council, 1974–2002 [Acc 1850, 1852]

*Non Official Records*

Bank, subscription, and petty cash books from Brecon Congregational Memorial College, 1907–1947; copies of wills relating to Breconshire and Montgomeryshire, [1845–1944], n/d [Acc 1795]

Photographs and slides of buildings and landscapes, Breconshire, Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire, c1960–c1990 [Acc 1799]

Copy of 'Llanthony and Mission News', vol 1 no 1, Jan–Mar 1894, published by the community founded by Father Ignatius, at Capel-y-Ffin, Breconshire. [Acc 1806]

- Photograph of servants, outside Clyro Court, c1900, taken by Thos Moxon of Hay [Acc 1808]
- Account books and invoice/letter books from Alfred J Jones, Builder, Contractor and Wheelwright, Bridge House, Erwood, Breconshire, 1893–1959 [Acc 1817]
- Additional records from the Plough Independent/Congregational/United Reformed Chapel, Brecon, 1940–1988: Photocopies of programmes and press cuttings relating to musical events, c1940-c1970; Letters and minutes of the Ministerial Committee, Province of Wales, 1983–1985; Newsletters, 1985–1988; Papers and drafts relating to the history of the chapel, 1980s [Acc 1824]
- Photographs, notebooks, programmes, albums and press cuttings, some mounted on exhibition boards, collected by Mrs Bet Richards and her brother, Dai Jones, Abergwesyn, C20th [Acc 1837]
- Correspondence, photographs, indentures, household accounts and recipes, relating to the Watkins family, Brecon, 1643–1937 [Acc 1838]
- Deeds relating to Timsbury, and Caedryssu Villa, Cerrigcochion Road, Brecon, 1892–1985 [Acc 1839]
- Deeds relating to the Prosser family of Genffordd, Talgarth, C17th–C19th [Acc 1846]
- Ystradfellte parish records: baptisms 1759–1959; marriages 1754–1971; burials 1759–1811, 1815–1882; parochial rolls 1922, 1946, 1956 [Acc 1857]
- Engraving of Adelina Patti, nd [Acc 1859]
- Local studies pamphlets and booklets, Breconshire and Montgomeryshire, 1952–1973; Brecon County Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs county magazine, 1960–1961 [Acc 1830]

CATHERINE RICHARDS  
County Archivist

## BRECKNOCK MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

The proposed temporary roofing project moves closer and as this goes to print we are developing our plans for the temporary closure of the museum. The nature and implications of the roof structure requires the upper levels of the building to be emptied and this will mark the end of the current Town Life displays. When we reopen later in the year our intention is to use this gallery as an experimental space to display some of the previously unseen collections, as well as looking at the gallery as an open space in line with our future redevelopment plans. The temporary roof project has been funded by PCC and we hope will prevent any further damage to the building and remove the threat of further damage to the collections.

In late 2008 we updated our Modes database to the latest XML version and we continue the project to enter the entire collection into this inventory – the roof development is providing us with the opportunity to progress this project swiftly and also care for the collections and package them for the first time. We are also working hard to sort and accession the excessive backlog of objects and hope some of these pieces will be available to go on public display for the first time. Also during the last 6 months we have created a new photographic store and a new natural history store. The natural history collection has also been conserved and repackaged with the help of a CyMAL grant. CyMAL have also provided significant funding towards our latest temporary exhibition ‘Ayo Gorkhali’ The Gurkhas Are Here! which has been created by the Believe Collective. The exhibition has gained much television exposure and has enabled us to achieve our aim of telling the World about Wales and Wales about the World, and furthermore reach out to the local Nepalese community and continue to develop our links with the local schools.

The Brecknock Society and Museum Friends and the Brecknock Museum Art Trust very generously donated £6000 towards the purchase of an environmental monitoring system (temperature and humidity), which has been installed and is proving priceless in providing us with up to the minute environmental readings, from throughout the galleries and stores. This information is allowing us to react quickly to environmental threats to the collections as well as the building itself. It has helped identify the areas and collections most at risk; and this has led to several collections being moved to better locations within the museum site, as well as enabling us to focus where we use our specialist equipment.

We are currently putting the final touches to our HLF bid, with various reports and statements coming from all directions, whilst letters of support for the bid have been received from all quarters. This really is an exciting and challenging time for all of us and I look forward to your continued support towards this new future for the museum.

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RHETORIC, RADICAL POLITICS AND RAINFALL:  
JOHN THELWALL IN BRECONSHIRE, 1797–1800<sup>1</sup>



John Thelwall, a redoubtable man with a radical message.

The wildness and wetness of Wales was always more proverbial than literal. Nonetheless, these traits combined together made an impressive myth. As the land of dragons, druids, mountains, rain, and yet more rainfall, the Principality had an exotic mystique in the eyes of the outsider like the East Anglian-born George Borrow. His picaresque tour, published in 1862, made the alliterative name of *Wild Wales* widely renowned.<sup>2</sup>

Yet he had hardly invented the concept. With impeccable southern confidence, the worldly matron Eliza Austen had already commented mischievously in a private letter that: ‘Wales is not really somewhere that one lived; it is somewhere to have sublime feelings about, like a Gothic ruin or a mountain crag’.<sup>3</sup> The romantic Principality might be a cut above the workaday Birmingham, which was dismissed by Jane Austen’s snobbish Mrs Elton in *Emma* as having ‘something direful’ in its sound. Eliza Austen, however, found it undeniable that the mystique of Wales was to be savoured at a distance, rather than experienced directly.

John Thelwall (1764–1834), on the other hand, was a person who was ready to challenge convention on this point, as on many others.<sup>4</sup> Without any immediate background in the Principality<sup>5</sup> or any prior experience of agriculture, he resolved in 1797 to ‘return to the land’ and raise his family as a small farmer in mid-Wales on the banks of the ‘sylvan Wye’.

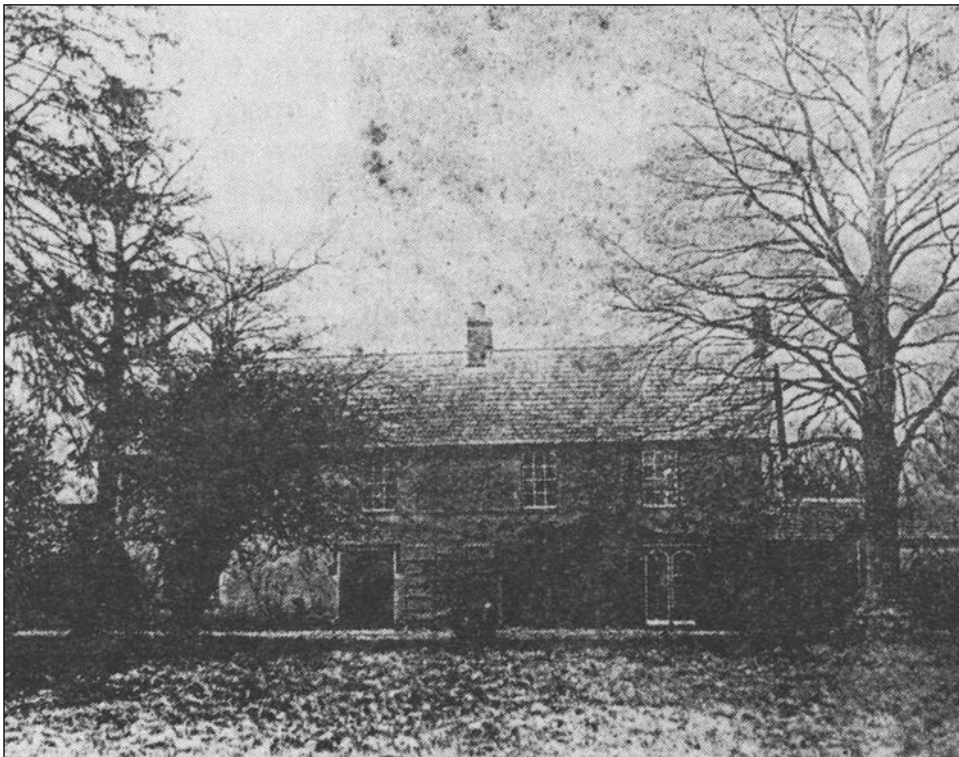
Before saying anything further about what he found there, it should be noted that one aspect of the Welsh myth became only too depressingly true for him. Thelwall's stay lasted for three years, which included two of the wettest years on record at any time throughout the eighteenth century. Not only were the winters of 1799 and 1800 exceptionally long and hard, but both years saw heavy and persistent rainfall in August and September, rotting the crops in the field. There was near famine in many parts of the country.<sup>6</sup> Food prices rocketed, which put money into the pockets of big dealers with stockpiles of grain, but devastated small producers who had no buffer against misfortune. The tone of a letter from Thelwall, written in September 1799, made his anguish apparent: 'I am almost harassed & tormented to death by the perverseness of the season; & likely to suffer incalculable injury from the Torrents of rain that are deluging our fields & destroying the most valuable part of our crops'.<sup>7</sup> After another year of miserable weather, he quit the farm and quit Wales for good.

Navigating between such individual aspirations and obdurate outcomes, this essay has three linked objectives. The first is to analyse what John Thelwall was trying to achieve in his tryst with wild Wales; the second is to reassess why his venture failed; and the third is to consider the diachronic significance,<sup>8</sup> some 200 years later, of the cultural encounter between a man who was a Londoner by birth – a classic townee who was born in Covent Garden, as the sickly son of a silk mercer – and his new neighbours in Breconshire.

### THE QUEST FOR SIMPLIFICATION

On the first theme, there is no doubt that Thelwall arrived in Wales deliberately. In late 1797, he arrived with his family in the small village of Llyswen, situated on a looping hairpin bend in the River Wye, some seven miles north of Brecon, on the route to the small spa-town of Builth Wells. He had found the place after searching for four months. It is not clear if he had any advice in his quest; but eventually he decided to lease an 'ornamental cottage' and a small farm from a local landowner-cum-industrialist.<sup>9</sup> At once, Thelwall lauded Llyswen as 'obscure and romantic', signifying that he had chosen it because it was far from the metropolitan hothouse and because it was sylvan, hilly and picturesque, far from the manicured checker-board styles of classic English farmland. His aim, moreover, was not just to admire the scenery but also to live on the land. In 1797, his attitude was thus the complete reverse of that of Eliza Austen. The romantic isolation of his Welsh village would aid his quest for personal and political 'simplification'.

Over 200 years later, it is hard to recapture just how well known or notorious this young man, still aged only 34 in 1798, had become. To his fellow radicals, who sought constitutional reform and the extension of the franchise to all adult males, John Thelwall was famed as a volcanic open-air orator, an indefatigable



The embellished farmhouse where John Thelwall lived and farmed during his green retreat in Llyswen.



Ty Mawr house (rebuilt 1895) still has wooded walkways and riverside vistas as known to Thelwall.

lecturer, and the author of a thoughtful work of political theory entitled *The Rights of Nature* (1796).<sup>10</sup> He was also a published poet and man of letters. What's more, he had been put in the Tower in 1794, tried for High Treason, and, sensationally, acquitted.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, to the conservative government of William Pitt the Younger, Thelwall remained a public threat. He was followed by spies and his post regularly intercepted. For Pitt, the priority was winning the war against revolutionary France. Plans for far-reaching constitutional changes, like those promulgated by Thelwall, were held by traditionalists to be destabilising and unpatriotic. The term 'radical', newly coined in its political meaning in 1802,<sup>12</sup> could be used either to praise a root-and-branch removal of corruption or to warn against uprooting the venerable foundations of the state.

Caught between his personal notoriety and the collapse of the reform cause after Pitt's clamp-down in 1795, Thelwall in effect retired himself from political activism and devoted himself to a simple life on the land. He stated that decision explicitly in two surviving letters to his old friend and political ally, Thomas Hardy, the Secretary of the London Corresponding Society. The first, dated from Derby on 25 October 1797, announced in jubilant capitals: 'I HAVE TAKEN A LITTLE FARM IN SOUTH WALES'. The lease began on 1 November next, and Thelwall waxed eloquent about his retirement from politics and his pleasure at his new residence: 'The house (a handsome & roomy cottage) is most deliciously situated on the banks of the River; [and] is embowered by a capital Orchard, & is altogether as desirable a literary retreat as Fancy could have suggested, or poetry has ever described'.<sup>13</sup>

His second surviving missive from this decisive moment, dated 16 January 1798 and written in a Hereford alehouse, was still as cheerful:<sup>14</sup>

Our habits are, I assure you, very simple & frugal. We drink no wines, no spirits, no sugar.<sup>15</sup> The small ale brewed for use of the farm satisfies us – & frequently I drink nothing but water Cyder or Small beer. – We eat as our servants eat – & (as far as the differences of strength produced by different habits will permit) work as they work. I dig – I cart dung & Ashes – I thresh in the Barn – I trench the meadows when the fertilizing rains are falling, & the waters rush from the mountains, to convey the stream over the grass – In short the political lecturer of Beaufort Buildings [his London residence] is a mere peasant in Llyswen; & you would smile to see me in an old thread-bare jacket – a pair of cloth pantaloons rudely patched, & a silk handkerchief with my spade & my mattock trudging thro' the village or toiling on my farm; & to this I am not only reconciled – but I am even more enamoured of it than is wise – For Literature (barring a little reading of an evening) is as much neglected as Politics – I have no appetite for writing . . .

In fact, it was characteristic of Thelwall that he had sought company in Hereford and was writing his missive amidst the clamour of 'alehouse conversation – politics & the devil knows what', so that 'I must catch my idea harum scarum as I

can'. Nonetheless, his retirement from politics, without a Thelwallite following to keep his name before the public, succeeded so well that he became forgotten in his own lifetime, and has subsequently remained lost to history, other than to specialists.

Permutations in historical reputations over time are matters of great fascination. A very few individuals, who were unknown in their own day, have subsequently become famous to later generations. These include prophets, artists, and (sometimes) authors, whose works or teachings live on after them, for subsequent adoption and often reinterpretation. In Thelwall's own lifetime, his near-contemporary and fellow-Londoner William Blake (1757–1827), the poet and artist, went almost entirely unrecognised by his contemporaries. Only a small handful of enthusiasts, in his later years, collected his works and perpetuated his memory. Yet over time, Blake's reputation has flourished remarkably; and in 1957, two hundred years after his birth, he was honoured with a memorial in Westminster Abbey.<sup>16</sup> Another example, from later in Thelwall's lifetime, was Karl Marx (1818–83). He was unknown to all but a small conclave of fellow-communists and some police surveillance while he lived. Yet he is even more famous or notorious, as a world-wide 'name', identified whether in appreciation (now by fewer than at the height of his posthumous fame) or at least in historical acknowledgement of his massive influence upon twentieth-century politics.<sup>17</sup> And an even more striking case of posthumous fame is that of Dick Turpin, a minor highwayman of the mid-eighteenth century who was fictionalised so well, if ahistorically, in the nineteenth century, that many people believe the romantic fictional version to be true and know nothing of the much less pleasant reality.<sup>18</sup>

Much more numerous, meanwhile, are the people who have some elements of fame in their own day – people of fashion, money, power, notoriety – who have subsequently been forgotten by all but specialists. Thus most if not all of the media 'darlings' of today, who appear in all the gossip magazines, will be forgotten long before their death. John Thelwall had that experience, perceived as galling or liberating according to temperament. His fame or notoriety came in his thirties, followed by a sudden eclipse and a long forgetting. In 1812 he was summarily dismissed, in a typical response from his contemporaries, as 'once fear'd, now scorn'd; once dreaded, now abhorr'd'.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, his literary and political output, unlike that of William Blake and Karl Marx, did not transcend his own time to leave a diachronic legacy. As already noted, there were no loyal Thelwallites to transmit his message to later generations. And Thelwall's older son, Algernon Sidney Thelwall, who did later write about his father, did so anonymously and very scantily,<sup>20</sup> lauding Thelwall senior as a master of elocution (his subsequent career) but remaining silent about his role as a political reformer.

Such a dramatic switch to working on an isolated farm in mid-Wales, for a man accustomed to living in the eye of the storm, might have been psychologically challenging. Thelwall, however, began his adventure with characteristic verve and resilience. He had been notably staunch when cross-examined by William Pitt at 10 Downing Street, after being arrested for High Treason. Having survived that ordeal and the subsequent public attacks by those opposed to his political agenda, he had proved himself to be personally indomitable.

So now his optimism turned to the prospects for farming. The impulsion was to make a living rather than to make money. Small farms in the long eighteenth century were facing a prolonged squeeze by large landowners and small yeomen farmers, long the fabled 'backbone' of the country, were finding themselves increasingly marginalised.<sup>21</sup> For Thelwall, however, the aim by this stage was not to reform society as a whole but rather to find a safe haven where he could live a 'good life', in simple personal circumstances of which he could approve. The move would distance him from political corruption and from economic luxury – both things against which he had for long inveighed. In formulating this project, Thelwall was particularly influenced by two brilliant young poets, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who were then radicals, though not particularly active ones. Their encounter in 1797, when the three met at Nether Stowey, near the Quantock Hills in Somerset, remains celebrated, especially among literary scholars.<sup>22</sup> The visionary Coleridge in particular had dreamed of founding a small commune, a 'Pantisocracy', meaning an equal rule by all, among a group of like-minded colleagues. For a while, the three men, talking intensely, explored the possibility of settling together, as an embryonic 'alternative' society.

However, the youthful poets were not as battle-hardened as was Thelwall. Warned on all sides against associating with such a notorious character, they went their separate ways in 1798 – William and Dorothy Wordsworth to Goslar in Germany; and Coleridge to Hamburg and Göttingen.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, it was Thelwall who settled in Llyswen. This decision, it should be stressed, was taken well before the other two poets settled in the Lakes. And, unlike either Wordsworth or Coleridge, Thelwall applied himself to living the rural dream by actually farming the land.

#### THE SIMPLE LIFE IN PRACTICE

By no means was the enterprise doomed from the start. Aware that he had no prior knowledge of agriculture, Thelwall invited his youthful but more experienced brother-in-law, Jack Vellum,<sup>24</sup> to come from Rutland to work with him.<sup>25</sup> He also employed some local farm labourers, the 'servants' mentioned in his letter to Hardy. And he did not shirk from hard work himself. The farm leased by Thelwall amounted to some 36–40 acres, with a mixed economy of grain (barley), root-crops, some livestock, and an orchard abutting the house. To

Hardy, he indicated that he was following good farming practices, marling the land with dung and ashes, and using the technique of ‘floating the water meadows’, putting land under water for winter fertilisation.<sup>26</sup>

Being a man of conspicuous energy, Thelwall also enjoyed himself remodelling the wooded land around his ‘ornamental cottage’, building an arbour with a small waterfall on the riverbank, where his children played.<sup>27</sup> He also continued with his literary output, writing in the Llyswen years a considerable amount of poetry, essays, letters, a novel, elements of his autobiography, and the start of a verse epic. Today he would be a multi-media campaigner, albeit never a predictable one.

Dramatically, he dubbed himself ‘the Recluse’ – a name echoed in the later poetic attack upon ‘the Solitary’ in Wordsworth’s *Excursion* (1814), which was part of his never-completed mega-poem.<sup>28</sup> The hostility of the Lakeland poet’s caricature indicated the force of his desire to distance himself from the Llyswen farmer. In 1798, however, Thelwall’s pose was somewhat exaggerated. He had indeed settled in a sparsely populated part of Britain; but, as will be seen, he still kept in touch with many friends and welcomed visitors. Wordsworth was one of them. It was true, however, that the move to Llyswen was more of a psychological retreat on Thelwall’s part; and his writings did become increasingly self-referential, without friendly critics to act as a counter-weight to his self-absorption. And it was also true that the move was a double challenge in that Thelwall had no prior knowledge of farming and no prior links to the locality in which he had chosen to settle.

At first, all seemed to go well. Thelwall was busy and happy. He began to write again, including a cheery poem on the merits of Welsh ale.<sup>29</sup> His library was transported from London to his farmhouse. He corresponded regularly with his old friend Thomas Hardy, asking for news about politics and the metropolitan radicals who were his cultural and political allies. And he received a stream of books, journals and letters (said with some exaggeration to amount to 12–20 letters a day).<sup>30</sup>

Some important friends also came to visit. As already noted, Wordsworth arrived on an impromptu trip, accompanied by Dorothy Wordsworth, their child protégé Basil Montagu, and S.T. Coleridge.<sup>31</sup> That was in early August 1798, when the friendship was still intact. Wordsworth mused upon the event in his *Anecdote for Fathers*, published later in 1798 amongst his epoch-making *Lyrical Ballads*. Llyswen was praised as ‘sweet Liswyn’. But there were signs of ambivalence, even jealousy. So within the poem (given in full in the Appendix) an unnamed child, representing innocence, is asked to choose between Llyswen and Kilve, close to Wordsworth’s home. Eventually, the narrator is delighted and relieved (‘my dearest, dearest boy!’) when the verdict goes against Llyswen. The poem is customarily read as an adult learning to discard abstract reasoning in favour of the spontaneous intuition of the child.<sup>32</sup> Yet there is a deeper level of

meaning. The choice, after all, was very specific and the issue was not presented as a casual one. It seems to smack of jealousy, or at least competitive anxiety, about 'sweet Liswyn'. And the outcome delivered a firm snub to its volatile weather-cock, Thelwall, who was then not the broken man of whom some Wordsworth scholars write, but an energetic activist who had switched his energies into a new track. Meanwhile, the poem's first sub-title (*Shewing How the Art of Lying may be Taught*), which was later eliminated, seems to be a blind rather than a fundamental explanation of the poem's message – unless it meant simply that children should not be pressed to make such decisions by anxious adults.

Any emerging differences between the quondam poetic allies was, however, minimal compared with the problems that began to beset Thelwall in his new locality. He did not want to mingle with the English-speaking social leaders of Brecon and the surrounding countryside, as a matter of policy rather than of personal animosity. Their balls, concerts, dinners, theatrical performances, and other social gatherings held no interest for him.<sup>33</sup> Having shunned liberal cultural networks in Brecon, Thelwall simultaneously found himself to be a target of suspicion from conservative opinion, especially among the local clergy and rural landowners. Watchers continued, with government authorisation, to monitor his movements and his correspondence;<sup>34</sup> and, since his letters were customarily left for collection in local inns, these materials were easily open to surveillance. In sum, Thelwall remained a restless metropolitan exile, without assimilating into a local role. His eventual denunciations of the farming failures of his neighbours – and the wicked ways of their sheep which ate his cabbages – were not calculated to win friends.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, his reputation in conservative circles was not helped by his maintaining contacts with Welsh radicals and visionary poets such as the irrepressible Iolo Morganwg.<sup>36</sup>

A difficult encounter in April 1798, soon after his arrival in Llyswen, indicated the potential for trouble. A disgruntled local named Rees Davies attacked Thelwall with a pick-axe. The motive remains unknown. John Thelwall, 'gentleman', responded by prosecuting his assailant at Quarter Sessions and, having won the case, pleaded for leniency. Davies was let off with a fine and bound over to keep the peace.<sup>37</sup> The episode suggested an environment of suspicion at the 'Saxon' intruder, which Thelwall noted among some neighbours – even though on this occasion the law sided with the assaulted newcomer rather than the local assailant.

Culturally and socially, Thelwall the Londoner was isolated in Llyswen. He was neither a member of the Breconshire elite, though ready to use the help of local magistrates when he needed it, nor was he on terms of companionship with the labourers and workers of Llyswen and the surrounding villages, especially in the purely Welsh-speaking localities. It was personally fortunate for Thelwall that he had a happy marriage, producing four young children with his devoted first



wife Susan, whom he renamed poetically as Stella. She, however, must have been rather lonely when he was out on the farm or away from home, though no record survives to indicate her viewpoint.

Certainly, the energetic Thelwall was often on the move. In April 1798 a hostile report to the central government confided: 'What does not a little add to my Suspicions about him is this, that he goes once a Fortnight to a Society of Jacobins at the Crown & Sceptre in the City of Hereford'<sup>38</sup> – that city being 25 miles from Llyswen. It was unlikely that the gathering was as politically organised and met as regularly as the report implied, since by the later 1790s radicals across the country were generally disheartened and disorganised. Nonetheless, it showed Thelwall's peripatetic proclivities, as well as conservative fears of his 'democratic' influence. Another report, this time in September 1800, detailed the presence of restive crowds, complaining at high food prices in Merthyr, over twenty miles distant from Llyswen. The industrialist Samuel Homfray sent a panicky report to the government, alleging that: 'Mr Thelwall has lately been at times in our Neighbourhood in different Characters & no doubt doing that which he ought not to'.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps he did go there to witness events; or perhaps his ubiquitous presence was widely feared by the authorities as emblematic of a 'trouble-maker' with potential mass appeal.

Overwhelmingly, however, it was not such hostility and suspicions that doomed Thelwall's farming venture, whatever the rhetoric directed at him or by him. It was indeed the hardship of the weather – specifically, the two worst years of torrential rainfall in the entire eighteenth century. Already in September 1799 he had confessed: 'I see nothing before & around me, but ruin to the little farmer [ie. himself] whose capital does not enable him to struggle with these disadvantages, & famine to the people at large'.<sup>40</sup> But while he was aware of the popular clamour for food, his own farm could not help with the needed supply.

One moment of comparative light relief came in the following month. Henry Crabb Robinson, the embryonic 'tuft hunter' who loved to meet literary giants, visited Llyswen. The acquaintance was slight but he was greeted warmly by the famous 'Recluse' and by Susan Thelwall, 'an amiable and interesting woman'. Robinson was then taken on a seven-mile walk to view a waterfall. He got separated from his host in the murky weather and lost a shoe in a mountain peat-bog. Thelwall, ever the civil host, was left to undertake a fifty-mile round trip into Hereford to buy a replacement pair.<sup>41</sup>

Problems, meanwhile, continued to multiply. The experienced brother-in-law Jack Vellum left in 1799, presumably because the farm could no longer sustain three adults and four young children. And later in the same year, Thelwall's treasured older daughter Maria died suddenly, at the age of six. The loss of this 'charming creature', as the normally cool Wordsworth remembered her,<sup>42</sup> was a personal disaster. Thelwall's family circle, which was his refuge from the world,

had been broken. For him, Wales was no longer romantic but benighted. He departed abruptly, negotiating a small financial compensation for surrendering the lease, from which his landlord was trying to evict him.<sup>43</sup>

Just as state repression had aborted his first career as a reformer, so the weather and unfriendly company ended his second career. ‘Having once lauded the ‘peaceful shades of Llyswen!’<sup>44</sup> he now penned a sour farewell:<sup>45</sup>

[The move] from ‘Theatres and Halls of Assembly’ to a little Village of only twenty miserable cottages – from the friendly, the enlightened, the animated circles of Norwich – from the elegant and highly intellectual society of Derby – to the sordid ignorance of a neighbourhood whose boorish inhabitants hash up a jargon of corrupted Welch [sic] with still more corrupted English, utterly indigestible to unaccustomed organs, [had proved to be stupefying].

‘Thus terminated this ill-starred experiment for uniting together the characters of the Farmer and the Poet’, he concluded with fine disgust.<sup>46</sup>

#### THE LLYSWEN EXPERIENCE OVER TIME

From John Thelwall’s point of view, the rupture was final. He did not pause long for lamentations. Nor did he ever return to Wales. Instead, he launched upon a third career as a teacher of elocution, turning his expertise as a political orator into a commercial opportunity.<sup>47</sup> He would give a voice to the voiceless, as he had once tried to give votes to the powerless. Among those whom he aided was Dudley Ryder, later second Earl of Harrowby. His debilitating stammer was mitigated with the help of John Thelwall, whom Ryder recalled, unkindly, as ‘a pompous man’ but also a stimulating tutor of a Whiggish British history.<sup>48</sup>

If it was another ‘broken pathway’ for Thelwall, then he launched himself into the new role with his customary brio. After all, people do sometimes change careers abruptly and flourish in a new role. It is relatively rare, however to do so with great success in mid-life. The French painter Paul Gauguin is perhaps the most remarkable example. Having worked for many years as an accountant at the Paris *Bourse*, he abandoned his wife and five children to take up painting full-time at the age of 37; and subsequently achieved artistic fulfilment, if not financial success.<sup>49</sup> John Thelwall was also 37 years of age in 1801. In his case he was trying to move from obscurity to respectability, in the reverse of the shift later made by Gauguin. Writing to an old friend, Joseph Strutt of Derby, Thelwall was once more boldly confident in his aims:<sup>50</sup>

You would smile to see me in my metamorphose – for I am really quite transformed. Nothing of the plain out-of-fashion singularity of the old republican remains, but in my heart – and there it is smothered in silence, except when, with a chosen few, I can indulge my native energies. . . . In short, as persecution would not suffer me to crawl upon the earth, I am trying what can be done by soaring into the clouds. . . . To aspire

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is my natural motion; & I will indulge it. I will live in the world alike a man who has energies & intellect, or I will not live at all. It is cheering to see how the world has mended upon me ever since I took this resolution.

Gradually, his time in Wales became a non-period in Thelwall's life. And, from the point of view of the inhabitants of Llyswen and nearby Brecon, the episode of the restless English settler also faded from communal memory. The fact that Thelwall had chosen to live in Wales, the wild mythologies notwithstanding, was not enough to endear him to his neighbours. He did not join the local scene during his three years' stay; nor did he seek to do so. The double challenge of living in a new environment *and* taking up a new line of specialist business for which he had no training left Thelwall as doubly an outsider. One of his early plans had been to invite pupils to board at Llyswen to educate them 'on a liberal and enlarged plan'. Both he and his wife would be tutors, with assistants for classics and mathematics.<sup>51</sup> Nothing ever came of that idea. Yet, in retrospect, Thelwall might have done better to live in a distinctive urban centre – Brecon in Wales, or Norwich in East Anglia, for example, where he had active contacts. In such a context, he might have run his own academy (as he did later as an elocutionist) and revived his literary output, within an ambience that was closer and more stimulating to his personal interests. But in 1797 he was seeking lifestyle renewal, not safety.

Small-scale rural alternatives, meanwhile, did not have much prospect of challenging the advancement of urban, commercial and industrial development. At Llyswen, Thelwall was torn between his self-declared role as a psychological and intellectual loner and his personal conversability and conviviality. There was always a certain grandeur or even grandiosity in his aims. His opponents called it vanity. A later reminiscence by John Britton, the topographer, confirmed the characteristic Thelwall style. In 1798, the two men met by chance in a Hereford book-shop (a natural venue for them both); and talked for an hour. Thelwall, whose rustic appearance startled Britton, told his new acquaintance that he was 'studying for future proceedings and a new course of life'.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, Crabb Robinson was regaled with optimistic hopes. At Llyswen in 1799, he was informed by Thelwall that he intended to establish his name among the epic poets of England.<sup>53</sup> If the world could not be changed by politics, then cultural renewal would have an impact instead. But, in Thelwall's case, not so.

Of course, it was and is no crime to fall outside the top flight of poetic achievement. It could well be that, as Coleridge shrewdly noted, Thelwall was too intellectually hasty to burnish his heart-felt material into gold.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, all of his output is interesting to the historian; and some of his poems had their admirers – and have so today among some literary scholars. For Thelwall, however, the galling truth was that he failed – and in a very public manner. In 1803, his Welsh output, published as *Poems Written Chiefly in Retirement*, was

savaged in the *Edinburgh Review* for its 'presumptuous vanity and precarious principle'.<sup>55</sup> He was chided for venturing beyond his proper place as a 'good tradesman' to offer thoughts upon the British constitution and his personal sentiments. This harsh rejection, moreover, came from a liberal Whig publication from which Thelwall might have hoped for greater sympathy. And he was not compensated, either, by a flood of sales. Meanwhile, the reputations of the younger Wordsworth and Coleridge were beginning to soar on the strength of their innovatory *Lyrical Ballads*, gradually overcoming their early critics. The intense moment of cultural interchange that the three men had shared in 1797, just before Thelwall settled in Wales, had yielded original fruit in their case, but not in his.

Sadly for him, he fell between all worlds. He had no local identification, unlike Wordsworth and 'the Lakes'. Social conservatives, whether of liberal or die-hard persuasion, first feared and then ignored him. Radicals also in time moved on from the 1790s, which remained a difficult era to assimilate. When Thelwall announced that he was returning to activism in 1818, he was not welcomed.<sup>56</sup> Nor were his polymathic interests admired. When Thelwall later proposed to write the history of the London Corresponding Society, Francis Place, his fellow reformer, sniffed privately: 'He [Thelwall] would make himself the hero of the tale and would stuff it with his nonsensical poetry'.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, subsequent reform movements such as Chartism did not look back nostalgically to the 1790s. Thelwall was no martyr to be revered. Nor was he a theorist to be studied. His political tract *The Rights of Nature* (1796) did not outlive its own day, here unlike the continuing fame of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* (1792) or, less notably, of William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793) – both being enduring works of men who were, like Thelwall, political loners.

And even many of the liberal intelligentsia turned against the self-styled 'Recluse'. Thelwall was lampooned as ranter, a crackpot, and a failed firebrand. Even former friends like Coleridge added his mite of rejection, condescending to the good intentions of 'honest John' but denouncing his ignorance that fuelled 'the restless bubble and squeak of his Vanity and Discontent'.<sup>58</sup>

Two poets in the following generation did achieve a supplementary fame in gossip history on the strength of their unconventional sex lives. Thelwall, however, was no Shelley or Lord Byron. Their sexual eclecticism was not for him. There was some comment in 1819, when, as a widower of 55, Thelwall took as his second wife a young girl of 20.<sup>59</sup> But the couple lived blamelessly, with John Thelwall engaging her attention in compiling materials for his life-story. She duly published a memoir in 1837, after his death. From internal evidence, the volume, which covers his life to December 1795, bears all the hall-marks of Thelwall's own hand.<sup>60</sup> Certainly, the projected second volume never appeared. Worse still, for the historian, Thelwall's letters and papers were scattered, leaving

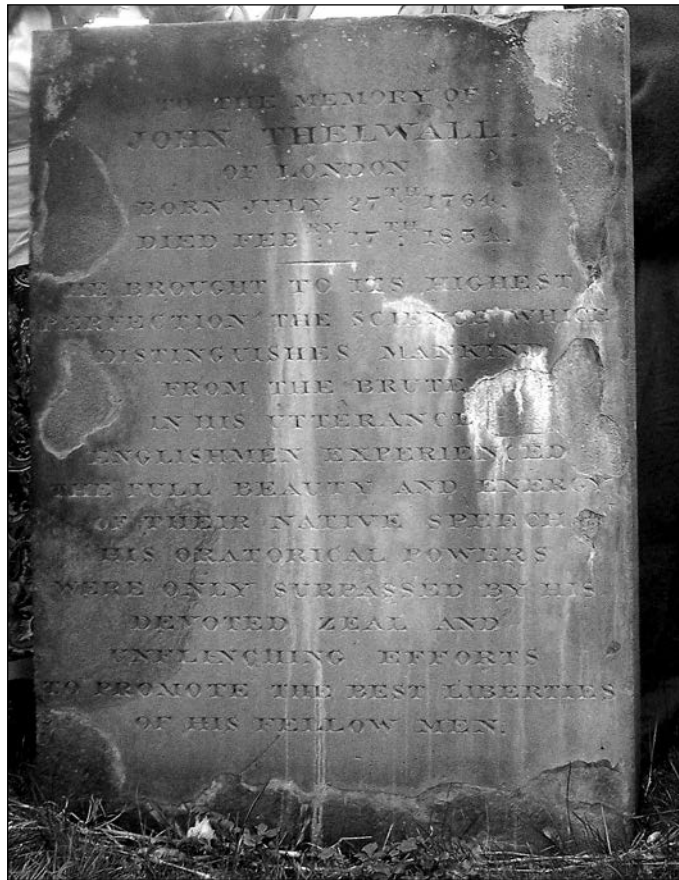
him not only without a completed autobiography but also without an archive of memorabilia from his remarkable life.<sup>61</sup>

Wordsworth, finally, was another former acquaintance – never a close friend – who added to the subsequent deep chill of forgetting. He was stately and off-putting when Thelwall's widow wrote to him requesting information in 1837 and offered nothing but moderate praise for Thelwall's verse.<sup>62</sup> And in public print Wordsworth was scornful. He added a later explanatory rubric to his poem about Llyswen, the *Anecdote for Fathers*, to explain that: 'he [Thelwall] really was a man of extraordinary talent, an affectionate husband, and a good father'. But his abilities had not been well used. Hence, Wordsworth summarised Thelwall's farm in Wales as being 'as unfortunate a speculation as that he had fled from [politics]'.<sup>63</sup> So much for any past sympathy of poetic and life-style hopes between the poets of the Lakes and the Wye Valley.

#### THE CASE FOR A MEMORY-MARKER

No assessment of John Thelwall at Llyswen can turn him into an honorary Welshman. It did not happen then, and cannot happen, retrospectively, more than two hundred years later. While Iolo Morganwg was dreaming of bardic renewal and Druidic ritual, Thelwall's temperament and intellect were alike unsympathetic to such a project of regenerated Welshness. Nor was he fired creatively by returning to 'nature' and the land. Thelwall's own verse epic 'The Hope of Albion', which he began at Llyswen and worked on for many years, took as its hero a seventh-century king, Edwin of Northumbria, who remained faithful, despite persecution and exile, to his dream of uniting the fragmented and warring British tribes.<sup>64</sup> Such a saga had personal meaning for Thelwall, the perpetual 'outsider' who faced trials with undaunted optimism. Yet he could not turn 'Edwin' into a myth of universal resonance for English readers, let alone for those in Wales. Thelwall's poetry was most moving when his strong emotions were engaged, as at the death of his daughter. So 'The Hope of Albion' remained unfinished. Its surviving sections make esoteric reading. And among them, there was no Thelwallian equivalent of William Blake's 'Jerusalem', which shines as the prelude to Blake's own ultra-esoteric *Milton* (1804–8) – also written as visionaries were seeking alternative visions of hope.

Nonetheless, John Thelwall deserves to be remembered and studied – just as he was. He was genuinely 'a man of extraordinary talent', in the words of the unbending Wordsworth. Moreover, Thelwall applied his efforts throughout his lifetime, trying to link political reform with alternative lifestyles and cultural renewal. It was symptomatic of the man that, just before his death, he was lecturing to a mechanics' institute. Today, he would be a cultural guru, working in many media while seeking to link left-wing causes with expressions of popular culture.



John Thelwall's dilapidated gravestone in Bath is to date his only public monument.

Photo: Steve Poole

Accordingly, there should be a memorial in Llyswen to its extraordinary visitor in the years between 1797 and 1800: the man who, in Coleridge's words 'believes and disbelieves with impassioned confidence'.<sup>65</sup> It is true that Thelwall's stay changed him far more than it could ever have changed Wales. But his Llyswen experiment is part of history. It has diachronic meanings for radicalism, for romanticism, and for Wales, as one of many complex moments in the long processes of Anglo-Welsh cultural encounters. John Thelwall knew at first hand what it was to work in the Llyswen fields in the driving rain. More than many a visitor, he literally dug himself in. So his dream of green renewal should be acknowledged with a memory-marker in the right place – in Llyswen.

PENELOPE J. CORFIELD

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This essay began as a public lecture, given from notes, as the 11<sup>th</sup> Sir John Lloyd Memorial Lecture at Brecon Guildhall on 14 March 2008. Warmest thanks are due to Ken Jones, for the initial invitation to lecture, as well as for sharing his hospitality and deep knowledge of Brecon history; to Sheila Leitch for invaluable information about Llyswen; to Tony Belton for fieldwork and a critical reading of the text; to Steve Poole, Judith Thompson, John Barrell and all participants in the Thelwall research network; and to the sizeable audience in Brecon for their stimulating questions.

<sup>2</sup> G.H. Borrow (1803–81), *Wild Wales: Its People, Language and Scenery* (1862; in Everyman, 1906 edn). He admired ‘scenery of the wildest and most picturesque description’ (p. 421) but also had plenty of more prosaic encounters with the local inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> See D. Nokes, *Jane Austen: A Life* (Fourth Estate, 1998), p. 232, summarising Eliza Austen’s letter to her husband, who was Jane Austen’s brother; and J. Austen (1775–1817), *Emma* (1816; in Penguin, Harmondsworth 1969 edn), p. 310.

<sup>4</sup> For outlines of his life, see variously *ODNB* and the *locus classicus* C. Cestre, *John Thelwall: A Pioneer of Democracy and Social Reform in England during the French Revolution* (1906).

<sup>5</sup> It is possible that Thelwall had an indirect family link to the seventeenth-century Thelwall family of Plas-y-Ward in Denbighshire, on which see R. Bidgood, ‘Families of Llanddewi Hall, Radnorshire’, *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, 44 (1974), pp. 11–12. But if there was a connection, it was entirely unknown or at least unmentioned by the London-born John Thelwall in the 1790s.

<sup>6</sup> T.S. Ashton, *Economic Fluctuations in England, 1700–1800* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1959), pp. 47–8, 172–3, and R.A.E. Wells, *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England, 1793–1801* (Sutton, Gloucester, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> J. Thelwall to T. Hardy, Llyswen 20 Sept. 1799, as transcribed in E. Rickword, *Literature and Society: Essays and Opinions II, 1931–78* (Carcenet New Press, Manchester, 1978), p. 219 [original now lost].

<sup>8</sup> On historians and long-term perspectives, see P. J. Corfield, *Time and the Shape of History* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> The house, sited next to the village church, was rebuilt and enlarged in 1895, incorporating some of the old stone walls in new red brick facing, and becoming the impressive ‘Great House’, later renamed in Welsh as Tŷ Mawr, as it remains today. For the landowner, Charles Lawrence, gentleman and later Esq. (d. 1840), a farmer and local industrialist, who had inherited the Llyswen property and other local estates from his father in 1794, see R. Bidgood, ‘Lawrence Families of the Builth and Llanellwedd Area in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries’, *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, 61 (1991), pp. 46–50, esp. p. 49; and idem, ‘Lawrence Families: Conclusion’, in *ibid.*, 62 (1992), pp. 46–7. See also short notice in S. Williams, *Llyswen and Boughrood* (1993), p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> For a sympathetic reassessment of this work, see G. Claeys, *The French Revolution Debate in England: The Origin of Modern Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Recounted with suitably dramatic effect in E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966 edn), pp. 20–1 (Thelwall constituting one of the heroes of Thompson’s account). For context, see also A.P. Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (Hutchison, 1979); J. Barrell, *Imagining the King’s Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide, 1793–6* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000); and J. Barrell and J. Mee (eds), *Trials for Treason and Sedition, 1792–4* (Pickering & Chatto, 2006/7).

<sup>12</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, sub ‘radical’ 5<sup>th</sup> meaning. ‘Radicalism’ followed in 1820.

<sup>13</sup> J. Thelwall to T. Hardy, Derby, 25 Oct. 1797, Rickword, *Literature and Society*, p. 217 [original now lost].

<sup>14</sup> Reed Rare Books Library, in Dunedin Public Library, New Zealand: J. Thelwall to T. Hardy, Llyswen, 16 Jan. 1798; and see commentary by P.J. Corfield with C. Evans, ‘John Thelwall in Wales: New Documentary Evidence’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 59 (1986), pp. 231–9.

<sup>15</sup> This was a reference to the sugar boycott undertaken by radicals in support of anti-slavery.

<sup>16</sup> See D. Dorfman, *William Blake in the Nineteenth Century: His Reputation as a Poet from Gilchrist to*

*Yeats* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1969); and J.B. Beer, *William Blake: A Literary Life* (Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Among a huge literature, see D. MacGregor, *Hegel and Marx after the Fall of Communism* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> The exploits of Dick Turpin (1706–39) were commemorated in Anon., *Life of Richard Turpin* (1739) and brilliantly mythologised in H. Ainsworth, *Rookwood* (1834). For the permutations of myth-making, see J.A. Sharpe, *Dick Turpin: The Myth of the English Highwayman* (Profile, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> G. Crabbe. ‘The Dumb Orators’ (1812), in his *Tales, 1812: And Other Selected Poems*, ed. H. Mills (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 131–2.

<sup>20</sup> A.S. Thelwall, *The Reading Desk and the Pulpit: On the Importance of Elocution in Connexion with Ministerial Usefulness* (1861), p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> A.H. Johnson, *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1909; reprinted 1963).

<sup>22</sup> See variously E.P. Thompson, ‘Hunting the Jacobin Fox’, *Past and Present*, 142 (1994), pp. 94–140; reprinted in idem, *The Romantics: England in a Revolutionary Age* (New York, 1997), pp. 156–217; N. Roe, ‘Coleridge and John Thelwall: The Road to Nether Stowey’, in R. Gravil and M. Lefebure (eds), *The Coleridge Connection* (Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 60–80; N. Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge, The Radical Years* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1990); and J. Thompson, ‘An Autumnal Blast, a Killing Frost: Coleridge’s Poetic Conversation with John Thelwall’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 36 (1997), pp. 427–56.

<sup>23</sup> For a brisk summary of this decision, see *ODNB* sub S.T. Coleridge.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas ‘Jack’ Vellum (b. c.1775/6) was the younger brother of Susan Vellum (1774–1816), who had married John Thelwall in 1791. Information from family tree, lodged in author’s possession, from the estate of Kenneth Thelwall, who had corresponded about the Thelwalls with the Rev. W. Vellum Pitts, a descendant of the Vellum family via Susan Vellum’s sister Elizabeth (at some stage the family changed its surname from Vellum to Vellam). Kenneth Thelwall’s own relationship to John Thelwall is unknown but he kept items from the Vellum Pitts correspondence until his death in 1986.

<sup>25</sup> ‘My wife’s brother, who has been a Farmer all his lifetime, & has been driven from his native home by persecution, will embark in this undertaking with me. He will conduct; and I shall be an apprentice upon my own farm’: J. Thelwall to T. Hardy, Derby, 25 Oct. 1797, in Rickword, *Literature and Society*, p. 217 [original now lost]. See also comments in Thompson, ‘Hunting the Jacobin Fox’, p. 75.

<sup>26</sup> An enthusiastic account of the farming benefits of this technique was published long ago by E. Kerridge, *The Agricultural Revolution* (Allen & Unwin, 1967), pp. 251–67.

<sup>27</sup> The gardens of Tŷ Mawr today are exquisite. Obviously there has been considerable upkeep and upgrading since Thelwall’s day; but the many mature trees must also have been known to him. With thanks to the Blackledge family for permission to view the property.

<sup>28</sup> On this, see esp. K.R. Johnston *Wordsworth and ‘The Recluse’* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984); idem, ‘Wordsworth and *The Recluse*’ in S. Gill (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Wordsworth* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003), pp. 70–89; and Thompson, ‘Hunting the Jacobin Fox’, pp. 129–38.

<sup>29</sup> J. Thelwall, *The Fairy of the Lake: A Dramatic Romance*, in his *Poems, Chiefly Written in Retirement . . . With as Memoir of the Life of the Author* (1801; Hereford, 1805 edn), pp. 40–1.

<sup>30</sup> The National Archive: PRO, HO424/43, Roderick Gwynne to D. of Portland, 25 Apr. 1798. Another letter in TNA: PRO, HO 42/43, from Edward Edwards of Hay, 30 Apr. 1798, also claimed that Thelwall ‘writes and receives . . . a vast Number of Letters by every Post’.

<sup>31</sup> Wordsworth explained in a letter dated 3 October 1798: ‘Our going into Wales was quite an unpremeditated scheme. Mr Coleridge proposed it to us one evening [c.4 August] and we departed the next morning at six o’clock’: see E. de Selincourt (ed.), *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, 1787–1805* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1935), p. 201. For context, see also M. Moorman, *William Wordsworth, A Biography: The Early Years, 1770–1803* (Oxford University Press, 1957), Vol. 1, p. 408.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, J.L. Mahoney, *William Wordsworth: A Poetic Life* (Fordham University Press, New York, 1997), pp. 78–9.

<sup>33</sup> For Brecon’s elite social life in this period, as well as informative detail about the composition



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of urban elites in various Welsh regional centres, see K. Jones, 'Captain John Lloyd and Breconshire, 1796–1818', *Brycheiniog*, 39 (2007), esp. pp. 66–70, 105.

<sup>34</sup> For an example, see The National Archives: PRO, HO42/46, Duke of Portland to John Ruft (?), 14 Jan. 1799: 'These are in his Majesty's name to authorise and require you to make strict and diligent search for a Packet of Treasonable Papers transmitted on Sunday last the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. by the Hereford wagon and directed to Mr Thelwall at Llyswen; and when you have found the same you are to bring them before me.' No documents appear to have been found in this exercise; or at least none are deposited in this Home Office collection.

<sup>35</sup> *Monthly Magazine*, (Nov. 1798), pp. 323–4; and commentary in Thompson, 'Hunting the Jacobin Fox', pp. 118–19.

<sup>36</sup> For Iolo Morganwg [Edward Williams] (1747–1826), see *ODNB*; C.W. Lewis, *Iolo Morganwg* (Gwasg Pantycelyn, Caermarfon, 1995); and C. Charnell-White, *Bardic Circles: National, Regional and Personal Identity in the Bardic Vision of Iolo Morganwg* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2007). See also National Library of Wales, Ms 21283E, no. 471: John Thelwall to Iolo Morganwg (addressed as 'Dear Bard'), from Llyswen, 10 May 1798.

<sup>37</sup> For details, see Jones, 'Captain John Lloyd', pp. 82–3.

<sup>38</sup> The National Archive: PRO, HO 42/43, Edward Edwards of Hay, 30 April 1798.

<sup>39</sup> The National Archive: PRO, HO42/51, S. Homfray, Brecon, 6 o'clock Tuesday [23 Sept. 1800]. See also HO42/52, fos 76–7, S. Homfray to Duke of Portland, 1 Oct. 1800, with news that the prospective riot had been quelled but still with the warning comment: 'Mr Thelwall has of late been in these parts and on Saturday when the cryer proclaimed in the public Market a meeting of the Workmen of the four Works near Merthyr for taking into consideration the high price of Provision, Mr Thelwall was at no very great distance but People are afraid to speak out'.

<sup>40</sup> J. Thelwall to T. Hardy, Llyswen 20 Sept. 1799, as transcribed in Rickword, *Literature and Society*, p. 219 [original now lost].

<sup>41</sup> Dr Williams Library, H. Crabb Robinson Letters, 1725–99, no. 138: HRC to Thomas Robinson, from Llyswen, 21 Oct. 1799. See also no. 140: HCR to J.T. Rutt, letter dated Monmouth 28 Oct. 1799, for another very similar account of the visit.

<sup>42</sup> As later recalled by Wordsworth in a letter to B.R. Haydon, January 1817: see E. de Selincourt (ed.), *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1937), Vol. 3, p. 1368. See also Thompson, 'Hunting the Jacobin Fox', p. 113, citing a letter from Thelwall exulting in his daughter, dressed 'in her trowsers with all the romping vivacity of independence'.

<sup>43</sup> Thelwall was glad to be free of the lease, even though indignant at the conduct of his landlord, whom he dubbed a 'petty tyrant' and 'oppressor': Thelwall, 'Prefatory Memoir', in his *Poems, Chiefly Written in Retirement*, pp. xlii–iii, xlv–vi.

<sup>44</sup> J. Thelwall to T. Hardy, from Llyswen, 24 May 1798, as cited in J.H. Rose, *Life of William Pitt* (1923), Vol. 2, p. 352, fn. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Thelwall, 'Prefatory Memoir', in his *Poems, Chiefly Written in Retirement*, p. xviii.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xlvii.

<sup>47</sup> See variously F.W. Habermann, 'John Thelwall: His Life, his School and his Theory of Elocution', *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 33 (1947), pp. 292–8; also repr. in R.F. Hawes (ed.), *Historical Studies of Rhetoric and Rhetoricians* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1961), pp. 189–9; D. Rockey, 'John Thelwall and the Origins of British Speech Therapy', *Medical History*, 23 (1979), pp. 156–75; and idem, *Speech Disorder in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The History of Stuttering* (Croom Helm, 1980), esp. pp. 46–7, 86–9, 174, 240.

<sup>48</sup> For the politician Dudley Ryder (1798–1882), see *ODNB*; and his *Reminiscences* (privately printed, 1891), pp. 6–8, esp. quotation p. 7. I am grateful to Anthony Howe for drawing the Ryder/Thelwall connection to my attention.

<sup>49</sup> D. Sweetman, *Paul Gauguin: A Complete Life* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1995), pp. 62–4, stressed that Gauguin was a humbler accountant rather than a stock-broker, contrary to common report.

<sup>50</sup> Birmingham Reference Library, Galton Ms 507/1: letter from J. Thelwall to J. Strutt, from Leeds, 20 Dec. 1801.

<sup>51</sup> J. Thelwall to T. Hardy, Derby, 25 Oct. 1797, Rickword, *Literature and Society*, p. 217 [original now lost].

<sup>52</sup> J. Britton, *Autobiography* (1850), Vol. 1, p. 185.

<sup>53</sup> T. Sadler (ed.), *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson* (1869), Vol. 1, pp. 65–7.

<sup>54</sup> S.T. Coleridge to Joseph Cottle, Nether Stowey, 1797 [no further date], in J. Cottle, *Early Recollections, Chiefly Relating to the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge . . .* (1837), Vol. 1, pp. 254–5.

<sup>55</sup> *Edinburgh Review*, 2 (April 1803), pp. 197–202. Thelwall responded with a hurt letter and then a further expostulation: see J. Thelwall, *Mr Thelwall's Reply to the Calumnies, Misrepresentations, and Literary Forgeries. Contained in the Anonymous Observations on his Letter to the Editor of the Edinburgh Review* (Glasgow, 1804). Interestingly, Wordsworth, who had himself been satirised by the *Review*, encouraged Thelwall to complain: see S. Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990), p. 224; and W. Wordsworth to J. Thelwall, Grasmere, mid-Jan. 1804, in E. De Selincourt (ed.), *Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Vol. 1: The Early Years, 1787–1805* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1967), pp. 431–5.

<sup>56</sup> Thelwall burst into print with a new political journal, *The Champion* (1818) and attended various reform gatherings. However, his re-emergence prompted his old friend Thomas Hardy, after congratulating the self-aware Thelwall on his youthful appearance, to warn him that his oratorical style was too frenzied and ‘unseemly’: BL Add. Mss 27818, Place Papers Vol. 30, f. 313, Thomas Hardy to John Thelwall, 10 Nov. 1818 (possibly a draft).

<sup>57</sup> J.A. Jaffe (ed.), ‘*The Affairs of Others: The Diaries of Francis Place, 1825–36*, Camden 5<sup>th</sup> ser. 30 (2007), p. 261.

<sup>58</sup> S.T. Coleridge to Hugh Rose, 19 Nov. 1819, in E.L. Griggs (ed.), *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1956–71), Vol. 4, p. 879.

<sup>59</sup> She was Henrietta Cecil Boyle, and in 1831 she bore Thelwall his fifth child, a son Weymouth Birkbeck Thelwall. The birth may have increased the financial pressures upon the older Thelwall, who added to his lecturing commitments at this time. Nonetheless, the marriage seems to have been happy, triggering him to further poetry and the reordering of his unpublished poetic backlog: see Thelwall Mss Poems c. 1827 (3 vol) in Derby Local Studies Library. *Ex inf.* Judith Thompson, who is studying this significant material.

<sup>60</sup> C.B. Thelwall, *The Life of John Thelwall, by his Widow, in Two Volumes* (1837), Vol. 1. The text cites some documents written in the first person and signalled by quotation marks, but generally expounds the narrative referring to Thelwall in the third person – a format which he had already adopted in his ‘Prefatory Memoir’ in his *Poems, Written Chiefly in Retirement*. The style throughout is one of great assurance and close immediacy – making it unlikely to be the unassisted work of the much younger and inexperienced second Mrs Thelwall (b. c.1799), who had no direct knowledge of the stirring events which had taken place before she was born.

<sup>61</sup> A surprising number of Thelwall Mss letters survive, some now known only as transcribed by later scholars. Thelwall himself was an assiduous self-documenter; but unfortunately the bound Mss Volumes of his lectures and correspondence in the 1790s, purchased by his biographer Charles Cestre in the early twentieth century, have disappeared. For the search for these documents, see Thompson, ‘Hunting the Jacobin Fox’, pp. 139–40. It is hoped that the Thelwall research network will coordinate a complete listing of all known items.

<sup>62</sup> W. Wordsworth to C.B. Thelwall, 16 Nov. 1838, in E. de Selincourt (ed.), *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Later Years, 1821–50* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1939), p. 959.

<sup>63</sup> W. Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth: Centenary Edition in Six Volumes* (1870), Vol. 1, p. 190.

<sup>64</sup> I am grateful to Judith Thompson for a preview of her analysis of the surviving fragments of Thelwall’s epic.

<sup>65</sup> Coleridge to Cottle, as cited above n. 54.

<sup>66</sup> Kilve is a village on the Bristol Channel, about a mile from Alfoxden, Wordsworth’s then residence, with a short name that is more amenable to verse than Alfoxden or Nether Stowey, the home of Coleridge in 1797.

## APPENDIX

William Wordsworth, *Anecdote for Fathers: Shewing How the Art of Lying may be Taught* [sub-title later eliminated by Wordsworth], first published in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) – reprinted without sub-title, from J. Morley (ed.), *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (1888), pp. 75–6:

I have a boy of five years old;  
His face is fair and fresh to see;  
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,  
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,  
Our quiet home all full in view,  
And held such intermitted talk  
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;  
I thought of Kilve's<sup>66</sup> delightful shore,  
Our pleasant home when spring began,  
A long, long year before.

A day it was that I could bear  
Some fond regrets to entertain;  
With so much happiness to spare,  
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet  
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,  
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet  
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me – and each trace  
Of inward sadness had its charm;  
Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,  
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim  
And graceful in his rustic dress!  
And, as we talked, I questioned him,  
In very idleness.

'Now tell me, had you rather be,'  
I said, and took him by the arm,  
'On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,  
Or here at Liswyn farm?'

*Brycheiniog*

In careless mood he looked at me,  
While still I held him by the arm,  
And said, 'At Kilve I'd rather be  
Than here at Liswyn farm'.

'Now, little Edward, say why so:  
My little Edward, tell me why.' –  
'I cannot tell, I do not know.' –  
'Why, this is strange', said I;

'For, here are woods, hills smooth and warm:  
There surely must some reason be  
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm  
For Kilve by the green sea.'

At this, my boy hung down his head,  
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;  
And three times to the child I said,  
'Why, Edward, tell me why?'

His head he raised – there was in sight,  
It caught his sight, he saw it plain –  
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,  
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,  
And eased his mind with this reply:  
'At Kilve there was no weather-cock;  
And that's the reason why.'

O dearest, dearest boy! My heart  
For better lore would seldom yearn,  
Could I but teach the hundredth part  
Of what from thee I learn.

## CRICKHOWELL 1851–1901: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE SMALL WELSH MARKET TOWN

### INTRODUCTION

Professor Harold Carter's meticulous reconstructions of the settlement hierarchy in Wales have highlighted the role of market towns as pivots for commercial exchange and service provision in the Welsh countryside.<sup>1</sup> In some parts of the Principality this status has been transformed and strengthened in time by industrialisation and the 'shrinking of distance' effected by improved transport infrastructure and the reciprocal movement of goods and people.<sup>2</sup> Case studies of market centres based on census enumerators' books in Victorian times have already identified the impact of these processes on local population change and social structures.<sup>3</sup> Although such cross-sectional studies provide invaluable 'snapshots' of local situations, given their restricted time-span and focus they say little about continuity and change in the role of the Welsh market town.

This study returns to that important research question. It draws on an extended range of census enumerators' books covering the period 1851–1901 for Crickhowell, a small market town in the mid-Usk valley, and explores three themes: firstly, the robustness of available historical evidence for interpreting the changing fortunes of a small market town; secondly, the identification of elements of continuity and change in the social and economic profile of the town; and, thirdly, the role of 'domestic service' as a social indicator to differentiate parts of the town and capture interactions between the local labour market and built environment.

### REVIEW OF SOURCE MATERIALS

The challenges of re-working nineteenth century administrative and commercial source materials as surrogates for the interpretation of urban status are well known.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, as a background to this study, five primary sources are reviewed to establish their information content and potential role: census enumerators' books for the period 1851–1901; trade directories; topographical accounts, especially for the earlier years; photographic images; and large-scale Ordnance Survey maps.

#### *Census enumerators' books*

Although the key objective of the Victorian census authorities was to produce reports for parliament about key features of the demographic, occupational and social conditions of the country's population, the significance of the census enumerators' books for micro-level community studies is widely recognized.<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding changes in definition for certain key variables and the latitude

exercised in the field interpretation of rigidly-prescribed instructions, these materials provide a rich harvest of spatially-located social and economic information. Listed for each household are the fully-named residents, their relationship to the head of household, age last birthday, sex, marital condition, profession or occupation, parish and county of birth and specified disabilities. Later censuses in Wales add further detail on employment status, language spoken and features of the housing stock. Each habitable building is located by street or name, and recorded as 'inhabited', 'uninhabited' (in occupation or not in occupation) or 'building'.<sup>6</sup> Notwithstanding the cautions advised in authoritative census studies on issues of incompleteness and the mis-recording of personal detail<sup>7</sup>, the census records compiled for Crickhowell provide an acceptable basis for capturing key aspects of community structure and its social geography.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Trade directories*

Trade directories vary in scope, content and coverage. Fortunately, many still exist for the market towns in Wales, listing the names of occupiers and type of business performed in each building.<sup>9</sup> Some directories, however, are imperfect: inconsistencies in content compared with enumerators' books have been detected; double entries have been noted for persons engaged in multiple trades/crafts; different categories are sometimes used to advertise and label occupations and trades; and there is bias in favour of recording the names of relatively wealthy residents, many of whom subscribed to the directory.<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding these cautions, trade directories provide a unique resource for locating trades, crafts and services within the built environment.<sup>11</sup> They have been used, too, for evaluating the central place settlement hierarchy of a region and levels of interdependence between different grades of settlement.<sup>12</sup> Following a careful search and evaluation of available directories, *Slater's Royal National and Commercial Directory 1852–1853*, *Worrall's Directory of South Wales 1875* and *Kelly's Directory of South Wales and Monmouthshire 1895* were selected to demonstrate, comparatively, the status, range and continuity of market town services provided by Crickhowell during the nineteenth century.

#### *Topographical writings*

Travel in mainland Europe had become increasingly difficult and unsafe in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In consequence, a stream of educated (and wealthy) persons journeyed by coach or on foot along turnpike routes into the Principality.<sup>13</sup> Visitors recorded travel experiences in various ways: some refurbished personal diaries and travel notes for publication as (pocket) companion guides; poets wrote anthologies of verse; whilst others printed collections of letters (allegedly) written to friends. Naturally, the scope and quality of these topographies

varies according to the authors' focus, endurance and travel mode; plagiarism was not uncommon. Nevertheless, accounts provided by the more diligent authors provide the critical researcher with a rich vein of first-hand observations on the town, its economy and society, including the quality of accommodation and hospitality afforded by distinguished families and local hostelries.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Photographic images*

Photographs and postcards from published works and private collections show distinctive features of the Crickhowell street-scene that can be linked with evidence from trade directories to confirm patterns of commercial activity and reveal changes in the townscape.<sup>15</sup> In addition, these images capture the crowd scenes at markets, fairs, agricultural shows, the opening ceremonies for public buildings or at festivities to celebrate landmark events in the life or marriage of the royal family. Furthermore, they effectively populate the public spaces and streets shown on historical maps and yield insights into the built environment, transport modes, dress style and fashions and other aspects of community life.

#### *Ordnance Survey maps*

Stringent requirements set for map coverage to support this study led to the adoption of the 1:2,500 Ordnance Survey map produced in 1887.<sup>16</sup> This sheet was important in two regards: firstly, it depicts important detail of the townscape at a point towards the middle of the study period, including the shape and relative sizes of building plots, and land use patterns; secondly, it demarcates individual premises and buildings which facilitates an exercise in 'house repopulation'.<sup>17</sup> Although the large-scale parish Tithe Map 1842 can be read in conjunction with an apportionment to highlight aspects of ownership and occupiers of particular properties, it was situated outside the study period and lacked local detail on townscape captured by the Ordnance Survey edition.<sup>18</sup>

### CRICKHOWELL: SITE, SITUATION AND MORPHOLOGY

Crickhowell, a Norman castle town, straddles a glacial moraine across the middle Usk valley (Fig. 1). To the west lies the north eastern rim of the South Wales coalfield; to the north and east lies the Old Red Sandstone mass of the Black Mountains. The county town of Brecon is situated 15 miles to the north west; Abergavenny, a significant market town in the neighbouring County of Monmouthshire, lies 6 miles to the south east. The Brecon and Abergavenny canal (with an onward link to Newport), completed in 1801, passes upslope of the village of Llangattock on the opposite side of the valley. Early topographers had presented conflicting images of Crickhowell.<sup>19</sup> Reference made to the '*old and mean village*'<sup>20</sup> and descriptions of the main street as '*being both steep and rough, and*

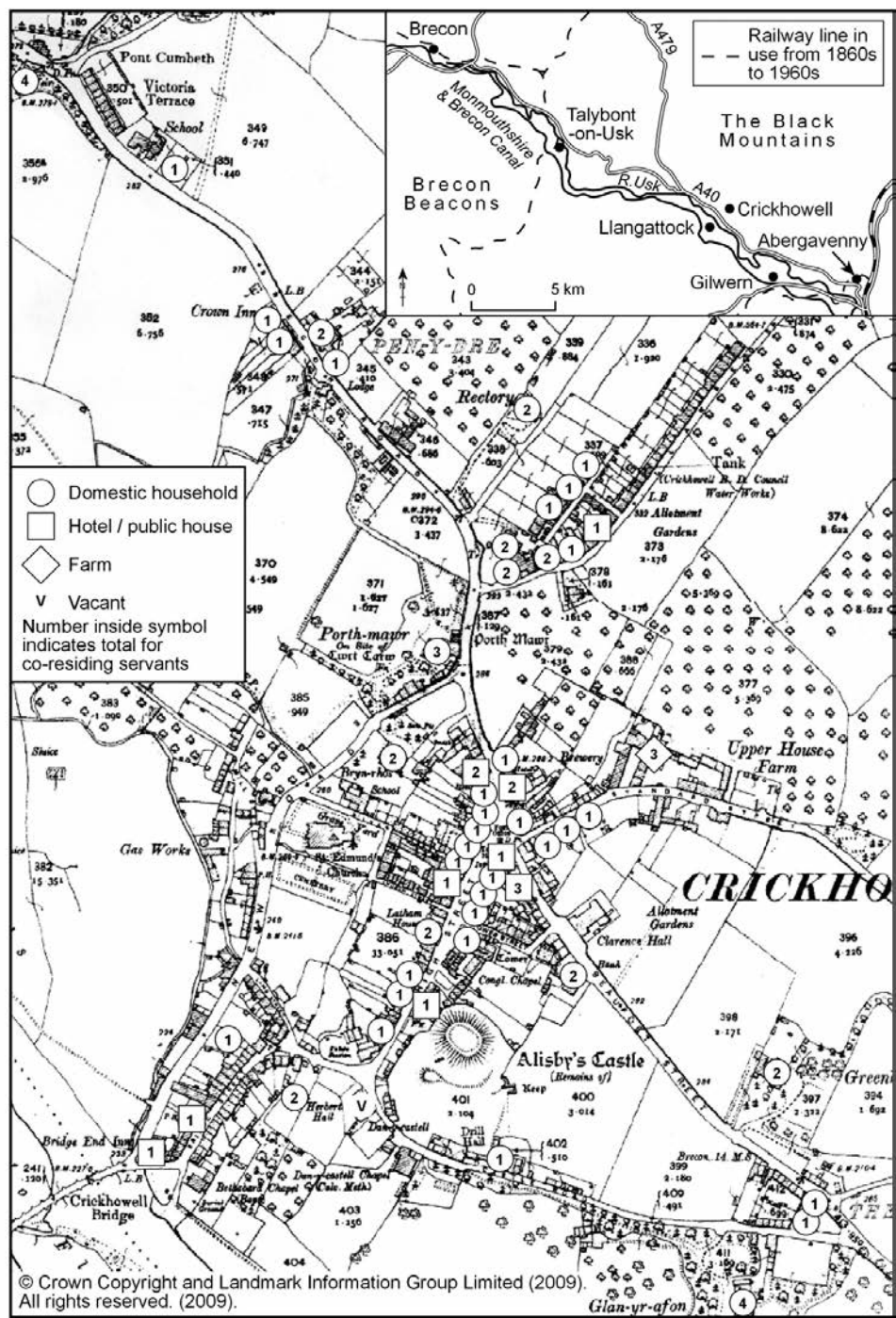


Fig. 1 Crickhowell 1901: localities and the distribution of co-residing servants.



the long bridge to which it descends dangerously narrow'<sup>21</sup> typify the observations made by one set of visitors. In contrast, Archdeacon William Payne Davies (1785) avowed that '*within these last few years it has been considerably improved in point of view of buildings and several genteel English families have taken up residence in it,*'<sup>22</sup> a theme developed by later travellers and the compilers of trade directories. For instance, in 1852 Slater's *Royal National and Commercial Directory* describes the town as being '*neat and clean, and of late years . . . much improved by the erection of several handsome houses, and a new town hall, – the latter, which is of stone, was erected at the expense of the Duke of Beaufort; the lower part of it is appropriated to the purpose of the corn market; the upper to the magistrates at their weekly meeting,*'<sup>23</sup> this observation is reiterated in 1875 in Worrall's *Directory of South Wales* which confirms that '*The town presents a clean and respectable appearance and contains numerous excellent places of business, a banking establishment, and a handsome Town Hall . . . The surrounding district is highly picturesque and salubrious and has in consequence been selected as a place of residence by numerous gentry, whose elegant mansions and parks adorn the landscape.*'<sup>24</sup>

The 1:2500 1887 Ordnance Survey map shows the main features of town plan and land-use arrangements (Fig. 1). One of the main turnpike routes linking London with the Irish ferry terminal at Fishguard, used extensively by topographers in the nineteenth century, skirts the ruins of the castle and passes through the centre of town. Narrow and twisting Bridge Street, aligned steeply upslope from the historic bridging point (and ford), meets the High Street and links with the turnpike at the site of the early town hall. New Road, built in 1830, also diverges from the bridge and follows a more gentle gradient along the flank of the moraine, passing between the recently-restored St Edmund's Church and the local gas works to meet the turnpike near Porthmawr House. Intermittent and low density ribbons of housing line Llanbedr Road and Standard Street which lead north east from the turnpike towards small hamlets and scattered farmsteads in the Black Mountain valleys. The principal trade establishments, retail and professional services were strung out along the Bridge Street/ High Street axis, with extensions along Beaufort Street.

Parcels of open land were enclosed by the street network. Minor streets and alley-ways connected the principal streets. Furthermore, in the nineteenth century, burgage plots dating from the Norman period survived in the shape and alignment of property boundaries. From the mid-nineteenth century the town's built environment had been improved and public utilities including a town gas works and new water supply introduced. Several prestigious country houses set in spacious ornamental gardens, parcels of accommodation land and orchards formed a distinctive girdle or *fringe-belt* around the small market town.<sup>25</sup> Such prominent houses with open views across the Usk valley included Glannant, Porthmawr, Herbert Hall, Dan-y-castell, Glanyrafon and Greenhill. Characteristically, these country seats of important families had walled vegetable

gardens, whilst Glannant, Porthmawr and Glanyrafon benefited from larger acreages of agricultural land managed to support the household economy with fresh dairy produce, poultry and meat. Porthmawr, like Maescelyn House further to the north west, had an imposing driveway and lodge. Smaller, but distinctive, properties set along the main streets like Latham House, Brynrhos, Ivy Tower and the outlying Rectory also had sizeable gardens, some with provision for stables.

## MARKET TOWN ECONOMY

### *Location and service provision*

Consistent with the principles of central place theory, the complement of services and functions provided at Crickhowell met the basic (day-to-day) needs of the combined threshold populations living in the town, neighbouring villages and hamlets in the tributary valleys of the Black Mountains.<sup>26</sup> For higher-order (more specialist) goods and services the population depended on higher grade market towns in the Usk valley, Abergavenny, across the county boundary and Brecon, the county town.<sup>27</sup> Crickhowell provided retail outlets for food and clothing, financial services available from the bank and post office, and administrative and legal services discharged in connection with the manor and its status as head of a hundred, petty sessional division, and county court district in the county of Brecknock (Fig. 2). It also supported a range of crafts, and the gamut of trades allied to the building industry. Reports confirm that the weekly Thursday market (chiefly for provisions and cattle) and fairs held on 12<sup>th</sup> May (principal) and

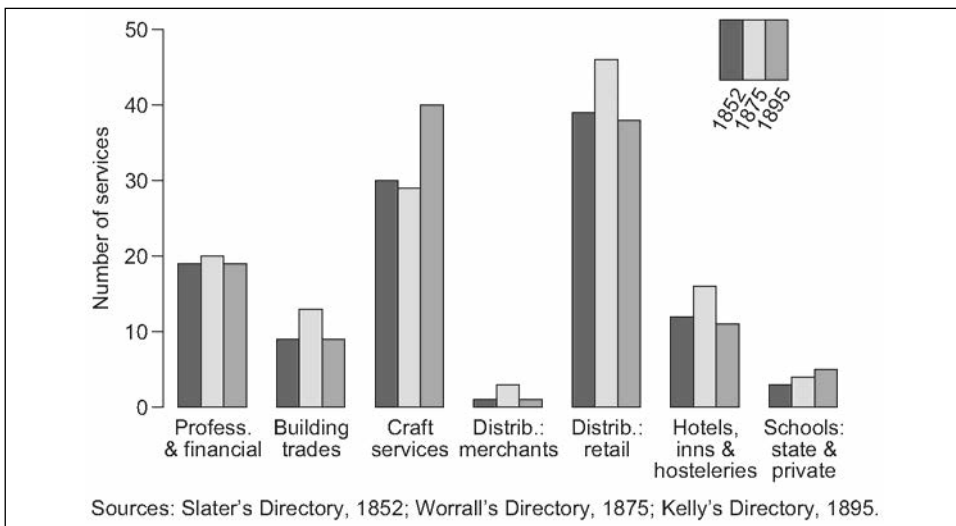


Fig. 2 Services provided at Crickhowell: 1852, 1875 and 1895.

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22<sup>nd</sup> September were well attended and boosted the regular complement of retail outlets with more specialist and competitive provision.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, these periodic fairs held in the High Street facilitated the hiring of agricultural labour and attracted both prospective employees and farmers.

A private and church school, six places of worship and basic health care facilities represented as a voluntary dispensary and active branch of the St John's Ambulance Association completed this inventory. There was some additional employment in the small-scale manufacture of flannel; tourism based principally on 'excellent trout and salmon fishing in the neighbourhood'<sup>29</sup> and other countryside pursuits and valetudinarian interests; and the domestic labour demands of large country seats in neighbouring parishes. Crickhowell, however, had been by-passed by the railways constructed elsewhere in the Usk valley during the 1860s, a disadvantage offset by the provision of regular carrier services for goods and coach services for the more affluent passengers (Fig. 1). Trade directories refer consistently to week-day carrier services connecting with nearby stations at Abergavenny (6 miles) on the Hereford/Newport line; Govilon and Gilwern (4 miles) on the Merthyr/Tredegar Abergavenny line; and Talybont, (8 miles) on the Brecon and Merthyr line.<sup>30</sup> Significantly, and perhaps as the consequence of such connections, the twice-weekly goods service from Llangattock Wharf along the Brecon to Abergavenny canal advertised in 1875 with links to Bristol, Newport and Brecon had been reduced to a weekly service by 1895.<sup>31</sup>

*Occupations and employment*

Whilst entries in trade directories provide a crude measure of the relative importance of different sectors in the local economy, further illumination on the status and changes in the economic base of the market town can be derived from census enumerators' records of occupations and employment. For this purpose, the classification of occupations developed by Tillott is well suited to the time-series interpretation of census-based evidence in rural areas.<sup>32</sup> This scheme combines elements of an industry-based classification with aspects of social status to derive 13 groups, all but one based on gainful occupation, with appropriate sub-divisions of critical sets (Fig. 3). This scheme, however, is not without flaws and certain of the broad categories have been criticized. For example, the combination in group 10 of economically-inactive persons such as gentlemen, fundholders, proprietors and annuitants has raised conceptual issues; furthermore, the sub-category 'annuitant' is known to have included people from widely differing financial circumstances. In other regards, however, this categorization is sufficiently robust and flexible to serve the purpose at hand, namely a comparison of the rate and profile of economic activity in Crickhowell during the period 1851–1901. Categories 1, 2 and 6 relate to the primary sector

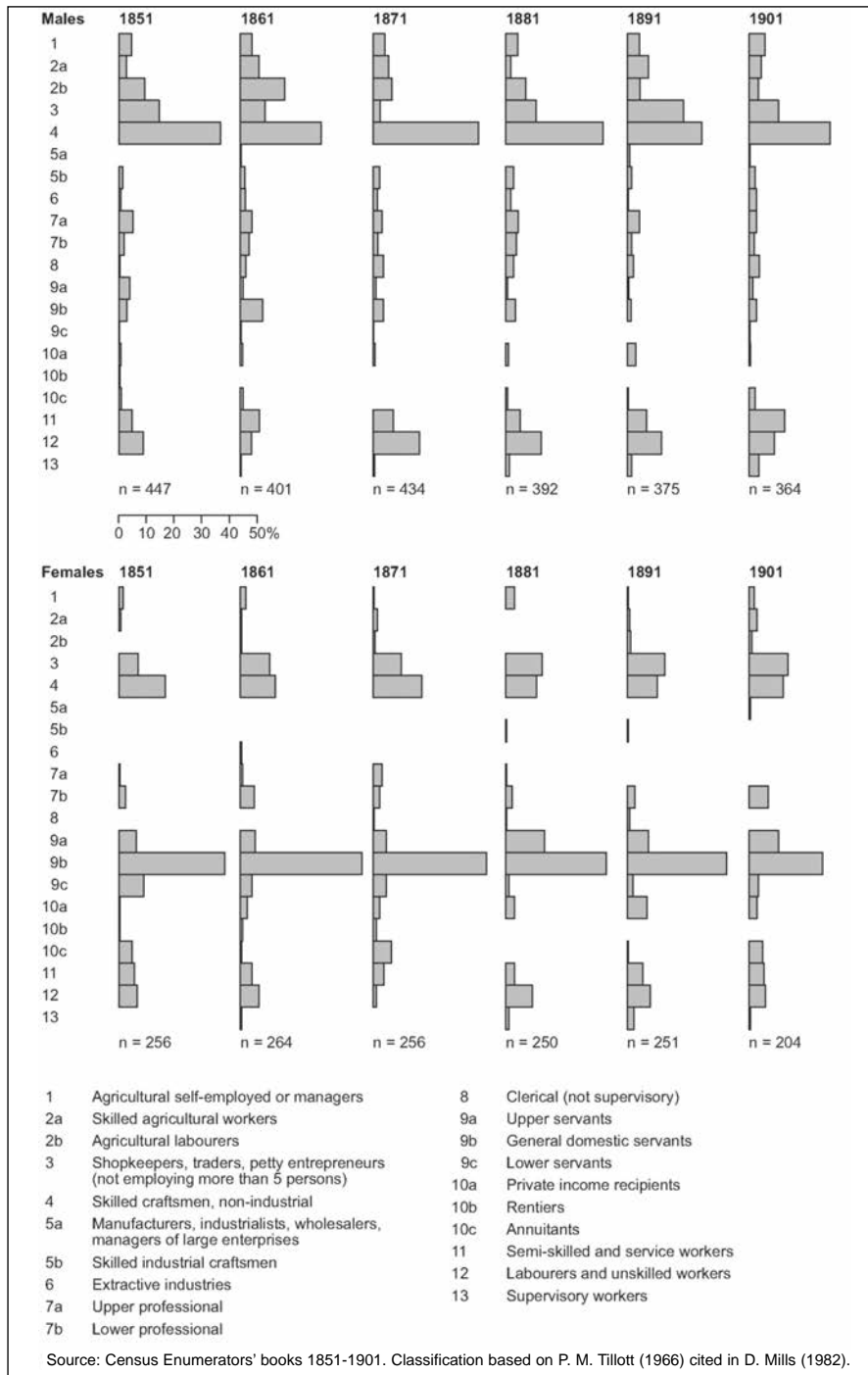


Fig. 3 Crickhowell 1851–1901: occupation groups.

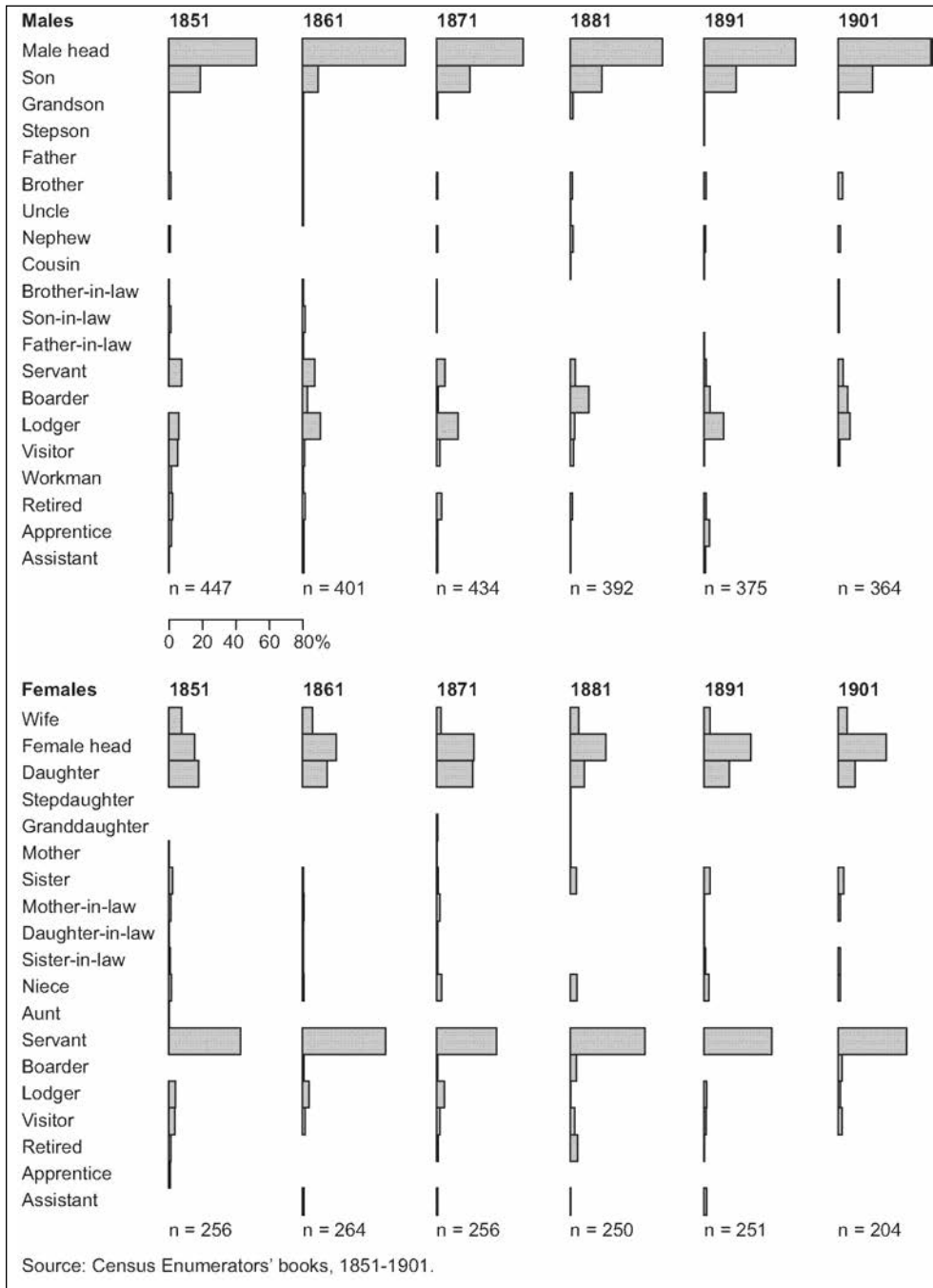


Fig. 4 Crickhowell 1851–1901: identity of economically active residents.

covering agriculture and extractive industry; categories 4 and 5 to manufacturing and the secondary sector; whilst the remaining categories embrace various service activities in the tertiary sector. Furthermore, this scheme has the potential for transformation into a social class distribution.

Figure 3 shows the gender-differentiated distribution of occupation groups. The occupation profiles for *males* are broadly consistent across the period. The economic base of the town was firmly rooted in trade and commerce, and underpinned by skilled craft activity. The significance of associated semi-skilled and unskilled workers is also evident from the distributions. For *females*, domestic service in various grades reflecting skill and experience dominated the occupation profiles. In addition, trade and commerce appear as distinctive and persistent elements in the occupation profile. These findings confirm the continuing importance of the service economy and trading functions of the market town, with a lesser contribution from agriculture and other primary activities. Given the small size of the town, the statistical representation of professional services is less pronounced, but nonetheless important to local life.

Further analysis of components in the workforce is presented in Figure 4. This indicates that the total number of *males in the local workforce* declined from 447 in 1851 to 364 in 1901. At each census, however, male heads of household accounted for 50%–60% of the economically males in the labour market. With the exception of 1861, co-resident, unmarried sons constituted around a further 20%; whilst the undifferentiated group of boarders and lodgers made up a further 12–14% of the total. Meanwhile, the proportion of listed men servants dwindled from 7% in 1851 to 3% in 1901. Until 1891, the number of *females recorded as being economically active* hovered at around 250; however, this total declined sharply to 204 in 1901. The proportion of female heads of households registered in employment increased consistently from 16% in 1851 to 29% in 1901. Female servants, in various grades of domestic employment, dominated the female workforce, the proportion varying from 50% of the total in 1861 to 36% a decade later. However, this marked fluctuation does not necessarily imply a reduction in the demand for domestic labour; rather, it can be explained by the compensating involvement of teenage daughters (and other relatives, lodgers and boarders) in domestic chores, especially in those households connected with retail trades and commerce.

## LOCALITY AND SOCIETY

### *Age structure and origins*

Recorded birthplaces provide a crude, but relatively consistent, indicator of one key feature of the social composition of the market town community: personal migration. For this purpose and to set the scene, Table 1 shows the proportions of the population born in Crickhowell, in the neighbouring parishes of Llanbedr

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Ystradwy, Llangattock, Llangenny and Llanfihangel Cwmdu, and elsewhere in England and Wales. Overall, the proportion of locally-born people ranged from 38% in 1851 to 45% in 1901. The proportion born in neighbouring parishes constituted a further 10%–12% of the total. The balance, people migrating into the parish at some stage in family life-cycle, ranged inconsistently in time from 44% to 51%. Throughout the period, for both sexes, the relative balance between the birthplace distributions is similar. However, a greater and almost consistent proportion of females in the age groups 10–19 years and 20–29 years had originated in neighbouring parishes or from more distant places. This characteristic is associated with the employment of younger females in the retail trades, craft activities and, especially, domestic service.

Though important, the interpretation of birthplace distributions at each census says little about the degree of stability or ‘turbulence’ in the local community. More important from the perspective of community cohesion is the

		<b>1851</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1871</b>	<b>1881</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1901</b>
<b>Males</b>							
Crickhowell	N=	294	250	273	278	241	229
	%	44.8	39.8	41.7	45.4	43.4	45.9
Neighbouring parishes*	N=	67	66	69	59	62	55
	%	10.2	10.5	10.5	9.6	11.2	11.0
Elsewhere	N=	295	312	313	276	252	215
	%	45.0	49.7	47.8	45.0	45.4	43.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>499</b>
<b>Females</b>							
Crickhowell	N=	236	272	341	256	276	288
	%	32.5	38.6	42.6	36.8	41.3	44.2
Neighbouring parishes*	N=	102	71	80	82	75	70
	%	14.1	10.1	10.0	11.8	11.2	10.8
Elsewhere	N=	388	361	379	358	317	293
	%	53.4	51.3	47.4	51.4	47.5	45.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>N=</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>651</b>
* Llanfihangel Cwmdu, Llanbedr, Llangenny and Llangattock							
Source: Census Enumerators' Books, 1851-1901							

Table 1 Birthplace distribution 1851–1901: males and females.

proportion of the population that 'persisted' in residence from census to census. Males classified as 'persisters' were identified for the period 1851–1901 using *nominal record linkage*, a diagnostic technique based mainly on the inter-censal comparison of full name, age (with tolerance) and birthplace, supported by occupation and recorded address. This analytical approach, however, is less effective in identifying 'persister' females on account of change in maiden name at marriage. Unfortunately, for some males personal case histories could not be fully reconstituted given common Welsh first- and surname combinations, wild inaccuracies in recording age and incomplete details of address. Notwithstanding these constraints, an exploratory investigation for the period identified a minimum total of 935 records for 417 males who 'persisted' for at least two (not necessarily consecutive) censuses. This analysis captures the degree of 'turbulence' that characterized the local community as a consequence of the out-migration of males – some independent and single, others as younger members of larger families – and the demise of older men. There are two notable features of this demographic scene: firstly, turnover rates for males were relatively high, only 30% of all those enumerated had 'persisted' to a subsequent census count; secondly, inter-censal variation occurred in the numbers of 'persisters'. Although there are insufficient cases to support a more detailed examination of male 'persistence' by birthplace or occupation group, analysis suggests that tradesmen, building workers and shopkeepers born outside the parish constituted an important core of the 'persisters', whilst the tenants of smaller farms displayed relatively higher rates of turnover.

#### *Household formation*

Table 2 depicts the pattern of household formation in Crickhowell based on the framework of co-resident kinship advised by Laslett.<sup>33</sup> At each census, households are assigned to one of five broad, but sub-divided, categories, together with a sixth category described as 'indeterminate'. This presentation for Crickhowell retains these broad principles but, in practice, merges 'extended' and multiple' families into one composite category. Since its inception, and notwithstanding the fact that non-family members are excluded from the rationale for classification, Laslett's scheme has been widely adopted as a standard for the comparative study of household types in both time and space. Table 2 responds to this omission and identifies household types sheltering additional members, for instance lodgers/boarders, domestic servants, or workers of either sex associated with a business, trade or profession.

Overall, 'solitary' households comprising only a widow/widower or unmarried person only exceed 5% the census total in 1901. However, from 1871 such households taken together with those that shelter other persons, including lodgers and visitors, constitute between 20% and 25% of all households. There are few



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	<b>(Number)</b>					
	<b>1851</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1871</b>	<b>1881</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1901</b>
<b>Solitary</b>						
widow alone	6	4	7	6	14	15
widow plus others	8	9	39	16	20	8
widower alone	0	0	3	2	5	5
widower plus others	2	1	0	5	1	7
unmarried female alone	2	3	3	6	4	8
unmarried female plus others	5	8	4	12	11	17
unmarried male alone	1	1	5	2	6	8
unmarried male plus others	3	4	5	6	4	3
<b>Non conjugal family</b>						
co-resident siblings	0	0	0	1	0	2
co-resident siblings plus others	0	0	0	1	0	0
co-resident servant group/other group	0	0	0	0	1	3
<b>Simple family households</b>						
married couple alone	17	12	20	25	30	16
married couple plus others	39	27	37	22	12	20
married couple with never-married child(ren)	81	90	92	90	83	76
married couple with never-married child(ren) plus others	64	71	61	67	56	42
widower with never-married children	3	1	4	6	7	8
widower with never-married children plus others	2	2	3	8	6	2
widow with never-married children	22	10	16	17	13	14
widow with never-married children plus others	14	17	14	15	9	13
married female (without husband)	1	0	1	0	1	1
married female (without husband) plus others	9	2	7	0	9	11
married male (without wife)	0	0	0	0	1	0
married male (without wife) plus others	4	4	9	3	5	5
<b>Multiple family households</b>						
multiple family units of various kinds	1	10	8	2	1	1
multiple family units of various kinds plus others	2	4	3	2	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>287</b>

Source: Census Enumerators' Books, 1851-1901. Classification based on P.Laslett as cited in D.Mills and K Schurer (1996), pp.28-34

Table 2 Crickhowell 1851–1901: structure of households.

'non-conjugal households'. Throughout the period, single family households, comprising both parents and child(ren), predominate. Two sub-divisions, married couples either at an early stage in the family cycle or 'empty nesters' where the children have left the parental home, account for 30%–35% of households at each census. Almost equal proportions of these households have additional members, mainly lodgers, servants and visitors, but some include younger kin. There are few 'denuded households' lacking either a male or female head. Likewise, multiple family units are uncommon at any time.

### DOMESTIC SERVICE IN THE MARKET TOWN

Domestic servants formed an important occupational group in British society in the nineteenth century. "*In 1851 almost four-fifths of professional households kept at least one domestic servant, and about one fifth more than two. Three-fifths of small employers and the self employed, and over a quarter of lower non-manual workers had at least one living-in servant. The other large group to have servants was farmers*".<sup>34</sup> In this context, even small market towns provided a range of employment opportunities for domestic servants. At each census in Crickhowell, household heads gave information that described the work and status of co-residing persons whom they identified as servants: 36 different job titles were recorded for male servants, and 48 for female servants. Such 'labelling' was no doubt influenced by local custom and practice, and the statutory guidance provided to enumerators.<sup>35</sup> However, care is needed in the interpretation of near-equivalent occupations assigned to servants. For instance, 'farm servant' and 'farm labourer' seem close, but the census enumerator sought to distinguish both categories in several censuses. Likewise, and perhaps more significantly, it is now difficult to differentiate as between well represented groups of 'domestic servants', 'general servants' and 'servants' on the basis of household context, domestic routine and responsibilities. Fortunately, however, in the census the more wealthy families usually listed the grade and role of domestic staff in a status hierarchy based on duties performed.

Table 3 summarises the gender, employment and household situations of individuals classed either explicitly as domestic servants or as an 'assistant' or 'apprentice' in relation to the head of household.<sup>36</sup> This total fluctuated at around 140 until 1891, thence decreased sharply to 104 in 1901. Whilst the number of male servants fell progressively throughout the period, the total for females remained more consistent until 1891, falling sharply in 1901. The proportion of households retaining at least one servant declined from around one third of the total in 1851 and 1861, to less than a quarter in 1901. The decline was particularly marked for households retaining both male and female servant(s), and a male servant alone. In contrast, the proportion of households retaining only female servant(s) increased steadily between 1851 and 1881, before declining to the base level of 1851. A few households (peaking at 12% in 1891) had living-in kin

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	<b>1851</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1871</b>	<b>1881</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1901</b>
<b>Census population</b>						
No. of Males	662	634	676	632	557	500
No. of females	754	718	787	701	676	652
<b>Total</b>	<b>1416</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>1463</b>	<b>1333</b>	<b>1233</b>	<b>1152</b>
<b>No. of census households</b>	286	280	341	314	303	287
<b>Number of servants enumerated</b>						
No. of males	31	41	26	23	24	16
No. of females	118	116	116	112	120	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Household situations</b>						
No. of households with servants	87	93	90	95	89	62
% of households with servants	30.4	33.2	26.4	30.3	29.4	21.6
<b>Gender and occupation</b>						
No. of male servants employed						
on farm	16	11	11	11	11	11
in town/country house	7	5	6	1	6	0
trade/commerce	8	25	9	11	7	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>
No. of female servants employed						
on farm	10	8	5	10	7	5
in town/country house	29	33	38	28	49	39
trade/commerce	79	75	73	74	64	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>88</b>
Source: Census Enumerators' Books, 1851-1901						

Table 3 Characteristics of co-resident domestic servants 1851–1901.

servants, including nurses, 'assistants' and housekeepers. Anderson<sup>37</sup> suggests that, in certain circumstances, this was the consequence of substituting, as domestic servants, siblings, grand-daughters, cousins and nieces, especially where parents had fallen on hard times due to unemployment or bereavement, or where an elderly relative needed companionship and assistance with (menial) domestic chores.

From the perspective of age and birthplace, servants formed a distinctive and youthful component in the town's population. Overall, 70% of servants of both sexes were aged 10–24 years. Characteristically, for those servants aged over 45, the males worked mainly in the agricultural sector, whilst the majority of females were designated as 'housekeepers'. Important gender variations were evident in the migration histories of servants: Table 4 shows that whilst one quarter of the *male servants* were locally-born, almost two-thirds had their origins beyond the adjoining parishes. Birthplaces recorded for the more numerous *females* displayed

	<b>(Number)</b>					
	<b>1851</b>	<b>1861</b>	<b>1871</b>	<b>1881</b>	<b>1891</b>	<b>1901</b>
<b>Males</b>						
Crickhowell	12	7	4	7	6	4
Neighbouring parishes*	0	7	3	1	3	4
Elsewhere	18	24	19	14	17	8
No. info./don't know	1	3	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Females</b>						
Crickhowell	7	13	22	26	33	18
Neighbouring parishes*	26	22	25	19	18	21
Elsewhere	85	80	69	66	69	48
No. info./don't know	0	1	0	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>88</b>
* Llanfihangel Cwmdru, Llanbedr, Llangenny and Llangattock.						
Source: Census Enumerators' Books, 1851-1901						

Table 4 Birthplace origins of domestic servants 1851–1901.

<b>Porthmawr (Principal country seat)</b>							
<b>Name and surname</b>		<b>Relation to head of family</b>	<b>Marital condition</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Profession or occupation</b>	<b>Where born</b>
				<b>male</b>	<b>female</b>		
Percy	Davies	head	m	79		merchant, South America	London, St. Mary le Strand
Caroline	Davies	wife	m		71		Kent, Bromley
Thomas	Powell	grandson	s	21		student	London
Jessy	Powell	grand daughter	s		16		Hereford, Dorstone
Ellen	Timbrell	neice	s		14		West Indies
Eliza	Griffiths	visitor	s		40	professional nurse	Worcester, Upton on Severn
Charles	Spencer	servant	m	72		coachman/domestic	Oxford, Bicester
Frederick	Swales	servant	s	35		butler	Bedford, Bolthurst
Elizabeth	Jones	servant	s		28	cook	Brecon, Crickhowell
Anne	Davies	servant	s		31	maid	Hereford, Stretton
Martha	Price	servant	s		25	maid	Brecon, Brecon
Margaret	Jennings	servant	s		20	maid	Hereford, Dorstone
<b>Latham House (Town house)</b>							
<b>Name and surname</b>		<b>Relation to head of family</b>	<b>Marital condition</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Profession or occupation</b>	<b>Where born</b>
				<b>male</b>	<b>female</b>		
Philip	Hill	head	m	59		medical practitioner	Bassaleg
Gertrude	Hill	wife	m		55		Crickhowell
Gertrude	Hill	daughter	s		30		Newport (Mon)
Helen	Davies	visitor	s		50		Dorset
Mary	Lea	servant	s		22	housemaid - domestic	Dilwyn (Hereford)
Elizabeth	Davies	servant	s		22	cook - domestic	Hereford
<b>Cambrian Hotel (Hotel)</b>							
<b>Name and surname</b>		<b>Relation to head of family</b>	<b>Marital condition</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Profession or occupation</b>	<b>Where born</b>
				<b>male</b>	<b>female</b>		
James	Abernethy	head	m	41		innkeeper	Edinburgh
Alice	Abernethy	wife	m		33		Cardiff
Matilda	Godsell	servant	s		27	barmaid	Hereford
Emily	Jones	servant	s		20	general servant - domestic	Knighton
<b>Upper House Farm (Edge-of- town farm)</b>							
<b>Name and surname</b>		<b>Relation to head of family</b>	<b>Marital condition</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Profession or occupation</b>	<b>Where born</b>
				<b>male</b>	<b>female</b>		
John	Rumsey	head	m	39		farmer	Partrishow
Hannah	Rumsey	wife	m		29		Grwyne Fechan
John	Davies	brother-in-law	s	25		ordinary agricultural labourer	Cwmdu
Sarah	Jones	servant	s		15	servant	Cwmdu
Walter	Rumsey	son	s	6			Criickhowell
Elizabeth	Rumsey	daughter	s		5		Criickhowell
Sarah	Rumsey	daughter	s		1		Criickhowell
<b>(No. 2) High Street (Craftsman/retailer)</b>							
<b>Name and surname</b>		<b>Relation to head of family</b>	<b>Marital condition</b>	<b>Age</b>		<b>Profession or occupation</b>	<b>Where born</b>
				<b>male</b>	<b>female</b>		
Ebenezer	Davies	head	m	31		draper	Llangattock
Bronwen	Davies	wife	m		24		Pontypridd
Muriel	Davies	daughter	s		1		Crickhowell
Alice	Watkins	assistant	s		19	milliner	Dulas (Hereford)
May	Lynn	servant	s		13	domestic servant	Crickhowell

Table 5 Representative households with co-resident servants (1901).

a similar geographical pattern with two interesting variations: a relatively lower proportion of women born in Crickhowell, and a compensating and stronger flow of servants from adjoining parishes. It is important to note, consistent with the findings of Drake,<sup>38</sup> that the domestic staff listed for the principal country seats included 'career' and more highly-skilled (older) servants drawn from a far wider catchment area.

Even in the small Victorian market town there were important variations in the pattern of households supporting servants. Figure 1 illustrates this situation from the census of 1901. Differentiated in the town are the important seats of wealthy families like Glanyrafon, Greenhill and Porthmawr, prestigious town houses like Brynrhos and Latham House, the principal hotels such as The Beaufort Hotel, Bear Hotel and Cambrian Hotel, more modest public houses like The Corn Exchange and Britannia Arms, the scatter of premises of tradesmen and retailers in Bridge Street, High Street and along Beaufort Street, domestic households in localities like Pen-y-dre and Rectory Road, and Upper House Farm. Table 5 presents typical household formations extracted from the 1901 census to confirm the pattern of servants' relationship to the heads of household, regional origins and ages discussed in the text. These include Porthmawr, a principal country seat headed by Percy Davies, a London-born merchant, accommodating several younger relatives and employing servants of both sexes, some born in England; Latham House, the High Street home of Philip Hill, one of the local medical practitioners, sheltering a single daughter, visitor and two housemaids born outside the parish; the Cambrian Hotel kept by a Scottish-born landlord supported by his wife and two female servants, a barmaid and general domestic, born in neighbouring counties; Upper House Farm managed by John Rumsey and his wife, his locally-born brother-in-law designated as an agricultural labourer, and single female servant; and the household of Ebenezer Davies, a draper born in neighbouring Llangattock, employing an unmarried female milliner from Herefordshire and a young locally-born domestic servant.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century Crickhowell consistently performed the distinctive role of a small market town. Situated in the mid-Usk valley, historical evidence confirms that the town sustained a set of key services used by the agricultural populations of outlying villages and discharged important administrative functions. Weekly markets and seasonal fairs provided a focus for social engagement and business transactions. Carrier services compensated for the absence of a railway connection and provided links to more comprehensive sets of services available at the larger market towns of Abergavenny and Brecon. The high levels of population migration that characterized the town

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were reflected in the social balance of the community. Furthermore, the number of notable town houses and imposing country seats of wealthy and titled families generated a demand for domestic servants and skilled tradesmen, groups that persisted in the occupation structure of the town. Minor, and sometimes erratic, changes in the migration patterns, occupation characteristics and composition of households revealed by the census are insufficiently great to detract from the broad sense of 'business as usual' in the role of the town. Release of the householders' schedules for the 1911 census will allow further examination of continuity and change in the market town and its economic role in the mid-Usk valley.<sup>39</sup>

ROBERT GANT

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Carter, H. 'The urban hierarchy and historical geography', *Geographical Studies*, Vol. 3, (1956), pp. 85–101; Carter, H. *The towns of Wales. A study in urban geography*. Cowbridge, Brown (1966), pp.105–140.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Lewis, C. R. 'The analysis of change in urban status: a case study from Mid-Wales and the middle Welsh borderland', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 64, (1975), pp. 49–65; Pryce, W. T. R. 'Town and country relationships', *Historical sources and the social scientist*, Course D301, Unit 16, Milton Keynes, Open University (1983), pp.6–71; Freeman, M. 'Transport', in Langton, J. and . Morris, R.J. (eds) *Atlas of industrializing Britain 1780–1914*, London, Methuen (1986), pp. 80–93.

<sup>3</sup> Micro-level community studies in Wales include: Pryce, W. T. R. and Edwards, J. A. 'The social structure of the embryonic town in rural Wales: Llanfair Caereinion in the mid nineteenth century', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 67, (1979), pp. 45–90; Carter, H. and Wheatley, S.E. 'Fixation lines and fringe-belts, land uses and social areas: nineteenth century change in the small town', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, (New Series) 4, (1979), pp. 214–238; Carter, H. 'Transformation in the spatial structure of Welsh towns in the nineteenth century', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, (1980), pp. 173–200.

<sup>4</sup> These issues are re-visited in: Carter, H. and Lewis, C.R. *An urban geography of England and Wales in the nineteenth century*. London, Edward Arnold (1990), pp. 28–41; Baker, A. R. H., Hamshere, J. D. and Langton, J. *Geographical interpretation of historical sources*. Newton Abbott, David and Charles (1970), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> The content of the enumerators books and the census enumeration process are discussed in: Mills, D. 'A guide to census enumerators' books', Supplement to *Historical sources and the social sciences*. Milton Keynes, Open University (1982), pp. 8–17; Mills, D. and Schurer, K. 'The enumeration process', in Mills, D. and Schurer, K. (eds) *Local communities in the late Victorian census enumerators' books*. Oxford, Leopard's Head Press (1996), pp. 16–26.

<sup>6</sup> Higgs, E., *Making sense of the census. The manuscript returns for England and Wales 1801–1901*. London, HMSO (1989), pp. 79–114, discusses the content of each census and reviews, systematically, changes in the definitions of key variables.

<sup>7</sup> Issues connected with the accuracy of census entries are explored in: Perkyns, A. 'Birthplace accuracy in the censuses of six Kentish parishes, 1851–1881', in Mills, D. and Schurer, K. (eds) *Local communities in the late Victorian census enumerators' books*. Oxford, Leopard's Head Press (1996), pp. 229–245; Thompson, D. 'Age reporting by the elderly and the nineteenth-century census', in Mills, D. and Schurer, K. (eds) *Local communities in the late Victorian census enumerators' books*, Oxford, Leopard's Head Press (1996), pp. 86–99.

<sup>8</sup> The following census schedules were accessed: 1851 (H.O.107/2490); 1861 (R.G.9/4222); 1871 (R.G.10/5590); 1881 (R.G.11/5467); 1891 (R.G.12/4577); 1901 (R.G.13/5175). There are pages missing from the census enumerators' books consulted for this project: in 1851, pages 48 and 49 are absent; more significantly, in 1861, the enumeration starts at household number 36 in Bridge Street. These omissions were confirmed by accessing the website *ancestors.com*

<sup>9</sup> The inventory provided by Norton, J. E. *Guide to national and provincial directories of England and Wales excluding London published before 1856*. London (1950) was searched for directories covering the early years. The website ([www.historical-directories.org](http://www.historical-directories.org)) provides a well-constructed and searchable listing of directories for Wales.

<sup>10</sup> Sources of error in the compilation of trade directories are overviewed in: Shaw, G. and Tipper, A. *British directories. A bibliography and guide to directories published in England and Wales (1850–1950) and Scotland (1773–1950)*. Leicester, Leicester University Press (1989); and Mills, D. *Rural community history from trade directories. Local Population Studies Supplement*. Aldenham, Local Population Studies (2001).



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<sup>11</sup> Davies, W.K.D., Giggs, J.A. and Herbert, D.T. 'Directories, rates books and the commercial structure of towns', *Geography*, Vol. 53, (1968), pp. 41–54.

<sup>12</sup> The central place theory interpretation of settlement patterns based on trade directories is exemplified in: Lewis, C.R. 'Trade directories – a data source for urban analysis'. *The National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol.19, (1975), pp.181–193; and Mills, D. and Schurer, K. (eds), *Local communities in the late Victorian census enumerators' books*. Oxford, Leopard's Head Press (1996), pp. 138–139.

<sup>13</sup> Brinkley, R. 'Welsh topographical literature c.1770–1870', *The Local Historian*, Vol. 11, (1974), pp. 7–13.

<sup>14</sup> Gant, R. 'The topography as a resource for Welsh urban studies', *National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol.19, (1976), pp. 217–226.

<sup>15</sup> Addis, J. *Crickhowell yesterday. 100 years of photographs. Vols. 1 and 2*. Cowbridge, Brown and Sons (1992, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> Oliver, R. *Ordnance Survey maps. A concise guide for historians*. London, Charles Close Society for the study of Ordnance Survey Maps, (1993); Beech, C. and Mitchell, R. *Maps for family and local history. Readers' Guide 26*. London, The National Archives (2004).

<sup>17</sup> This practice is described in: Henstock, A. 'House repopulation from the CEBs of 1841 and 1851', in Mills, D. and Schurer, K. (eds) (1996), *op.cit.*, pp. 363–382; and Higgs, E. *op. cit.*, (1989), pp. 143–152.

<sup>18</sup> Kain, R.J. and Prince, H.C. *Tithe surveys for historians*. Chichester, Phillimore Press (2000), pp. 123–126.

<sup>19</sup> Gant, R., *op.cit.*, (1976).

<sup>20</sup> Malkin, B. H. *The scenery, antiquities and biography of South Wales, Vol. 1*. London (1804).

<sup>21</sup> Skrine, H. *Two successive tours throughout the whole of Wales with several adjacent counties*. London (1812).

<sup>22</sup> Payne Davies, W. *A parochial visitation of the deanery of the third part of Brecon* (1785). National Library of Wales.

<sup>23</sup> *Slater's Royal National and Commercial Directory 1852–1853*. London and Manchester, p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> *Worrall's Directory of South Wales 1875*. Oldham: John Worrall, p. 143.

<sup>25</sup> Whitehand, J.W.R., 'Fringe-belts: a neglected aspect of urban geography', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 41, (1978), pp. 223–233; Slater, T.R. 'Family, society and the ornamental villa on the fringes of English country towns'. *Journal of Historical Geography*, Vol.4, (1978), pp. 129–144.

<sup>26</sup> The interpretation of settlement patterns using trade directories and central place theory is exemplified in Mills, D.R., *op.cit.*, (2001).

<sup>27</sup> See Carter, H., *op.cit.* (1966), pp.108–109, for a graphical reconstruction of grades for market towns in the Usk valley in the nineteenth century.

<sup>28</sup> *Worrall's Directory of South Wales 1875*, p. 143.

<sup>29</sup> *Kelly's Directory of South Wales and Monmouthshire 1895*. London, p. 294.

<sup>30</sup> See Rattenbury, G. and Cook, R. *The Hay and Kington Railways*, The Railway and Canal Historical Society, Mold (1996); and Barrie, D.S.M. *The Brecon and Merthyr Railway*. The Oakwood Press (1964). An interesting account of a person negotiating such transport linkages is contained in Jones, F. 'Journal of a young lady of fashion 1867–1872 (Agnes Hermione Jennings of Gellideg), Part II', *The Carmarthenshire Historian*, Vol. 12 (1975), pp. 22–54.

<sup>31</sup> The principal tramroad connections and canal-side industrial sites are located by Norris, J. *The Brecon and Abergavenny Canal*. Hurstpierpoint (1991), p. 9.

<sup>32</sup> A full exposition of Tillott's classification is presented in: Mills, D.R., *op.cit.*, (1982), pp. 36–37; and Mills, D.R. and Schurer, K., *op.cit.* (1996), pp. 142–145.

<sup>33</sup> Laslett, P. *Household and family in past time*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1972).

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, M. 'The social implications of demographic change', in Thompson, F.M.L. (ed),

*The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1730–1850 Volume 2.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1990), pp. 56–65.

<sup>35</sup> This issue of classification is more fully discussed in: Higgs, E. 'The tabulation of occupations in the nineteenth century census, with special reference to domestic servants', in Mills, D. and Schurer, K. (eds), *op. cit.* (1996), pp. 27–35; and Drake, M., 'Aspects of domestic service in Great Britain and Ireland, 1841–1911', *Family and Community History*, Vol. 2, (1999), pp. 119–128.

<sup>36</sup> Schwarz, L. 'English servants and their employers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 52, (1999), pp. 236–256.

<sup>37</sup> Anderson, M., *op.cit.* (1990), pp. 60–61.

<sup>38</sup> Drake, M., *op.cit.* (1999), p. 22.

<sup>39</sup> Higgs, E., *op.cit.* (1989), p. x.

### THE WIDOWS OF TALYLLYN

They lived as needed, hid their strength,  
survived the male, modestly,

block the aisle on the market bus,  
still see husbands in summer fields,

still wear rings on mortal fingers,  
grasp cupfuls of chipped memories,

wake at sober dawns and leave  
their precious days unsquandered.

PAUL HENRY ©

Paul Henry was born in Aberystwyth but spent his late teens living in Llangynidr and Llangors. Written in the late 1970's, *Widows of Talylyn* was the first poem in his first collection, *Time Pieces* (Seren). Henry, now one of Wales's major poetic voices, has since published a further four books with Seren, the most recent of which, *Ingrid's Husband*, will appear in French translation from L'Harmattan, in 2009.

### LLYN Y FAN FACH

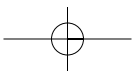
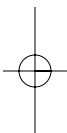
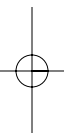
Yn nwf n dawelwch bannau'r Mynydd Du,  
Yng nghysgod creithiog graig a llammerch ir,  
'Rwyf yno'n loyw berl o wlithyn cu  
Yng nghwpan blodyn teg y gwylltaf dir.  
Mi glywais grawc y gigfran uwch y Fan  
A brefiad oen o ysfa las y llyn,  
A gwelais feibion Sawdde'n dod i'th lan  
I gadw'r oed ym more'u bywyd gwyn.  
Ni cheisiaf ddringo mwy dy greigiau serth  
Na gweld y 'Ladi Wen' yn dod o'th ddŵr.  
Ond mynnaf gael dy wynion, yn eu nerth,  
Eto'n ddiddanwch im' heb ddim o'u stŵr.  
Mynnwn i'r hedd a brofais ger dy li'  
Ffrydio drachefn drwy ddwfn fy enaid i.

WILLIAM DAVIES / WIL DYFAN (1903–76)

Ganwyd William Davies (1903–1976) ar fferm Pen-cae, Myddfai, yn seithfed o 13 o blant. Fe'i haddysgwyd yn yr Ysgol Ramadeg, Llanymddyfri, a Choleg y Normal, Bangor. Bu'n rhaid iddo roi'r gorau i fod yn athro yn Garmant, Sir Gaerfyrddin, yn y 1930au pan fethodd ei iechyd oherwydd y diciâu. Dysgodd y gynghanedd, a chyhoeddwyd ei waith mewn amryw o gylchgronau. Tarddiad ei enw barddol, Wil Dyfan, oedd Allt-y-fan, Cwm-Wysg, sef cartref olaf ei rieni.

*An English translation of the above is available on the Society's website:*

<http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk>



## ATGOFION BACHGEN O'R WLAD

Cefais fy magu ar fferm yng Nghwm-Wysg, ger Trecastell, cwm o ffermdai gwasgarog, pentrefan bychan, capel ac ysgol. Ac yno, yn Ysgol Gynradd Sirol Aberpedwar y cefais f'addysg gynnar.

Nid oedd byth mwy na rhwng pymtheg ac ugain o ddisgyblion yn yr ysgol ag un ystafell ddosbarth, lle roedd y brifathrawes, Miss M.M. Parry, yn cyfuno'i sgiliau addysgu â chadw'r stôf lo ynghyn a gweithredu fel nyrs a gweinyddes awr ginio.

Câi'r bwyd ei gludo o Bontsenni – ysgol fawr mewn cymhariaeth ag Aberpedwar. Roedd f'ymweliad cyntaf ag ysgol Pontsenni ym mis Mawrth 1954, ychydig cyn fy mhen blwydd yn ddeg oed, i sefyll yr arholiad i fynd i'r Ysgol Ramadeg. Roedd yn brofiad brawychus i mi. Doeddwn i erioed o'r blaen wedi bod yng nghwmni cynifer o blant – pob un yn ddieithryn – mewn un ystafell.

Roedd symud o Aberpedwar i Ysgol Ramadeg y Bechgyn yn Aberhonddu ym mis Medi'r flwyddyn honno yn fwy brawychus byth. Yn y dyddiau hynny nid oedd modd teithio bob dydd o lefydd anghysbell fel Cwm-Wysg. Felly, roedd yn rhaid i ni, fechgyn y wlad, letya yn Aberhonddu o ddydd Llun tan ddydd Gwener.

Ychydig cyn dechrau'r flwyddyn ysgol newydd, gwahoddwyd fy rhieni a minnau i gyfarfod â'r prifathro a oedd newydd ymddeol, sef Mr Jacob Morgan. Bu'n ddigon caredig i gynnig ychydig eiriau o gyngor ac awgrymodd y dylwn letya gyda Mr a Mrs Smith yn Lion Street.

Roedden nhw'n bâr cyfeillgar – gyda phlant tua'r un oed â mi. Yn sicr, roedd fy mam yn fodlon y cawn y gofal gorau yno. Ond ar fore cyntaf y tymor ysgol, cyrhaeddais Aberhonddu i dderbyn y newyddion fod Mrs Smith yn sâl ac y byddai'n rhaid i mi letya gydag un o'i ffrindiau, Miss Evelyn Williams. Roedd hi'n byw ym Mhorth-y-dŵr gyda'i mam a oedd yn tynnu at ei chant oed ac yn gwbl ddall. Roedd Miss Williams yn garedig ond yn llym. Roedd yn aelod ffyddlon o'r Eglwys yng Nghymru ac yn ymfalchïo fod neb llai nag Esgob Havard wedi lletya yn y tŷ pan oedd yn ddisgybl yn yr Ysgol Ramadeg.

Pan gyrhaeddais i, roedd fy nghyd-letywyr yn cynnwys Ken Jones o Lanfihangel Nant Brân, a fu'n llyfrgellydd yn Aberhonddu yn ddiweddarach. Yna, ymunwyd â ni gan frawd Ken, Vincent, a fy nghefnder, Glanville Davies .

Er fy mod yn sôn am 1954, doedd dim trydan gennym ar y fferm yng Nghwm-Wysg. Roedd gallu astudio ym Mhorth-y-dŵr yng ngolau trydan – yn hytrach na gorfod dibynnu ar fflam anwadal lamp olew – yn foethusrwydd pur.

Ychydig yn ddiweddarach, trawsnewidiwyd ein bywydau ym Mhorth-y-dŵr pan gyrhaeddodd coedwigwr o'r enw Jack Preece. Roedd ganddo set deledu, a osodwyd yn yr ystafell eistedd. Roedd gan bawb yr hawl i'w gwyllo, ond roeddem ni'r plant yn cael ein cyfyngu i raglenni penodol, sef rhaglenni newyddion, Panorama Richard Dimbleby a Sportsview Peter Dimock.

Erbyn i mi gyrraedd yr Ysgol Ramadeg, roedd ganddi brifathro newydd, sef

Mr Aneurin Rees. Rhaid i mi gyfaddef fy mod yn ofnus iawn o Mr Rees, ond roedd yr ofn hwnnw'n deillio'n bennaf o barch tuag at y dyn. Roedd yn wyddonydd a fu'n gweithio yn Farnborough, a bu'n chwarae rygbi dros Lanelli. Ac yn bwysicaf oll, gan gofio fy magwraeth dan ddylanwad y capel, roedd yn Annibynnwr Cymraeg.

Roedd cael fanfon i'w stydi yn gosb ofnadwy. Gallaf hyd heddiw deimlo'r cywilydd o orfod treulio prynhawniau hir y tu allan i ddrws y stydi am anghofio fy nillad rygbi. Ac ni fedraf anghofio'i gynddaredd â'r gansen ar ôl i mi fod yn yfed seidr yn ystod ymweliad â Maesydderwen i weld drama ysgol yno. Ond nid poen corfforol oedd y gwir boen a deimlais. Roedd rhaid i fy rhieni gael gwybod fy mod yn cael f'atal o'r ysgol am gyfnod. Roedden nhw'n llwrymwrthodwyr. Yr unig alcohol a ganiateid ar y fferm oedd potelaid fach o gin, a gâi ei defnyddio at ddibenion meddyginiaethol, sef dadebru wŷyn a oedd yn dioddef o'r oerfel.

Pan ddechreuais yn yr Ysgol Ramadeg, roedd disgwyl i mi fyw ar arian poced o hanner coron yr wythnos. Roedd lwfans ychwanegol i brynu pysgod a sglodion – a gostiai 1/3 y gyfran – i swper ddwywaith yr wythnos. Rhaid i mi gyfaddef fod peth o'r arian hwnnw'n cael ei ddargyfeirio. Ni wnaeth y siop sglodion cystal ag un neu ddwy o'r siopau melysion a'r siop symudol a alwai heibio i'r ysgol.

Er i mi dderbyn f'addysg gynradd drwy gyfrwng y Saesneg, Cymraeg oedd iaith yr aelwyd, iard chwarae'r ysgol gynradd a'r capel. Roedd Saesneg yn dal i fod yn ail iaith. Roeddwn yn ymwybodol iawn fy mod, o ran iaith, yn wahanol i'r rhan fwyaf o ddisgyblion eraill yr Ysgol Ramadeg. Roedden nhw'n sgwrsio'n rhwydd yn Saesneg, ond roedd hynny'n golygu cryn ymdrech i mi.

Diolch byth, roedd yr athro Saesneg yn deall fanhawster. Ni wnaeth Mr Ewart Davies erioed fy nwrddio. Yn hytrach, chwiliai am unrhyw rinweddau a chynnig canmoliaeth ac anogaeth. Rhoddodd gymorth i mi ennill human hyder a dysgodd fi – ac eraill – sut i werthfawrogi a mwynhau iaith a llenyddiaeth. Gallwn droi at Mr Davies i drafod unrhyw broblem drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, fel y gallwn ag amryw o'r athrawon eraill yn ystod fy nyddiau cynnar yn yr Ysgol Ramadeg.

Doeddwn i ddim yn hoffi'r daith – drwy'r glaw yn aml – i'r gwersi gwaith coed yn Mount Street. Roeddwn i'n anobeithiol yn y pwnc, ond nid bai'r athro hynaws Mr Len Moses oedd hynny. Roedd Mr Caerwyn Roderick yn fwy na goddefgar pan fethais dro ar ôl tro i arddangos unrhyw fflach fathemategol. Anobeithiodd Mr Huw Thomas, yr athro Hanes, ymhen fawr o dro. Daeth yr athro Cymraeg, Mr Harvey Williams, hyd yn oed i'r casgliad nad oedd gobaith i'r iaith Gymraeg pe bai ei dyfodol yn dibynnu ar ddisgyblion fel fi.

Er gwaethaf caredigrwydd a goddefgarwch y prifathro a'r staff, rwy'n gorfod cyfaddef fy mod am y flwyddyn neu ddwy gyntaf, yr un fath â bachgen Shakespeare, wedi cropian fel malwen yn anfodlon i'r ysgol. Ond cyn gynted ag y llwyddais i ymgynefino, gwawriodd un o gyfnodau hapusaf fy mywyd.

*Atgofion Bachgen o'r Wlad*

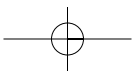
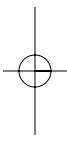
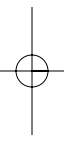
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Darganfŷm nad oedd yr ysgol mor fawr â hynny, wedi'r cyfan. Roeddem yn deulu, mewn gwirionedd, a oedd, heblaw eithriad neu ddau, yn fintai o fechgyn disgybledig a chwrtais. Ar ôl symud i'r safle newydd ym Mhenlan, ni allem chwennych gwell cyfleusterau nac amgylchedd mwy dymunol.

HANDEL JONES

*An English translation is available on the Society's website:*

<http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk>





MAPPING A LANDSCAPE IN THE THROES OF CHANGE:  
THE IMPACT OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ON THE LANDSCAPE  
OF FFOREST FAWR GEOPARK OVER THE LAST 180 YEARS AS  
WITNESSED BY THE ORDNANCE SURVEY ONE-INCH MAP\*

This article examines a period of significant change in the landscape of an area which since 2005 has been designated as Wales' first European Geopark. The changes considered are some of those brought about during the industrialisation of south Wales which have been recorded by the Ordnance Survey on a succession of published maps from the 1830s to the present day.

It will be helpful first to define the area in question – that of Fforest Fawr Geopark – and to consider its own recent origins.

GEOPARKS – A NEW APPROACH TO CELEBRATING LANDSCAPE

Fforest Fawr Geopark is one of a family of such areas which have been designated throughout the United Kingdom, throughout Europe and indeed across the globe. There are presently 6 Geoparks in the UK and a further 26 in the rest of Europe, each of which is a member of the European Geoparks Network (EGN). The 32 in Europe, together with a couple of dozen in China, the Far East and a scattering from Brazil and Australia to Iran constitute the UNESCO Global Network of National Geoparks. The Geopark movement is a recent one and these numbers are increasing year on year. Fforest Fawr Geopark became a member of the EGN and the UNESCO Global Network in October 2005. This status is not bestowed on an area for all time: Fforest Fawr Geopark celebrated its third birthday in 2008 after a successful revalidation, an exercise which should be repeated in 2012.

What then is a Geopark? The EGN defines a Geopark as a territory with a unique geological heritage. Moreover for successful election to the EGN any prospective Geopark must be able to demonstrate that satisfactory structures are in place to manage its development whilst affording protection to its landscapes and individual heritage features. The applicants for Geopark status must be able to show the support of a large part of the wider community for the designation and indeed have developed a strategic approach to realising the economic benefits of promoting the special aspects of the natural and cultural heritage of the area.

Thus one of the key ways in which a Geopark differs from a national park is that it is primarily an economic designation and not a planning designation. The duties of a national park authority are to protect the valued landscapes for which

\* In places, spellings vary from the accepted modern spelling by virtue of reference being made to earlier versions of place names used on particular Ordnance Survey maps. These will often be annotated (*sic*).

the park was designated and to promote their quiet enjoyment. Each national park authority has also been given the purpose of fostering the economic and social well-being of its constituent communities. This last role is common to both national park and Geopark, the development of a broad sustainable tourism base having perhaps the greatest potential to bring about that well-being.

## GEOGRAPHY OF FFOREST FAWR GEOPARK

The Geopark covers an area of 300 square miles, constituting the western 62% of the Brecon Beacons National Park. Its boundaries are coincident with those of the National Park in the north and south and also to the west. Its eastern boundary approximates the line of the 'Gap Road' running south from Groesffordd via Cantref as far as the northern terminus of the Brecon Mountain Railway at Torpantau which it then follows southwards to Pontsticill. At the core of the area enclosed by this boundary are the uplands of the Black Mountain and Fforest Fawr (in its traditional sense) along with the western part of the central Brecon Beacons massif. The boundary brings in wide tracts of lower ground in the valleys of the Usk, Taf, Tawe and Towy. *\*Unless stated otherwise, all references to Fforest Fawr below relate to the extent of the modern-day Geopark and not to the geographically more restricted royal hunting forest.*

The largest part of the Geopark is within the modern administrative county of Powys, former Brecknockshire, with a substantial area to the west of the Afon Twrch and upper Usk in Carmarthenshire. Smaller areas along its southern margins fall within the modern county boroughs of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. It can therefore be seen that the designated area comprises a mix of urban, rural and 'semi-wilderness' areas, each of which contributes something to the overall character of the area. It should be added that, much as Brecon Beacons National Park does, its reach extends beyond the constraints of a line drawn on a map and seeks to include communities just beyond its firm boundaries such as those of Llandovery, Llandeilo, Brynaman, Abercraf and Merthyr Tydfil.

## ROCKY FOUNDATIONS

Underlying and giving rise to the shape of the Geopark is a geology which is at one and the same time both simple and complex. The bedrock of the Geopark is composed almost entirely of sedimentary rocks which were laid down over a period of 180 million years between the late Ordovician period around 480 million years ago (mya) and the late Carboniferous period around 300 million years ago. Its gross structure can be readily understood as a layer-cake of different rock types, the whole of which has been tilted to the south but which also features a high degree of crumpling in the northwest.

The oldest strata are the suite of sandstones, mudstones and siltstones which constitute the Ordovician system which is to be found at outcrop along the north-western margin of the area, roughly between Llandovery and Llandeilo. Overlying these are a similar set of rocks assigned to the following Silurian period (443 mya to 417 mya) and which outcrop in a band to the south and east of those of the Ordovician. These intensely folded and faulted rocks are often concealed beneath recent deposits but can be most readily viewed in the gorge section of the Afon Sawdde and at (Y) Garn Goch, both of which are in the Carmarthenshire section of the Geopark

Above these in a stratigraphic sense, and hence to their south and east, given the regional tilt of the strata, is the thick pile of sediment which constitutes the Old Red Sandstone; sandstones and mudstones of latest Silurian and Devonian age which form arguably the most dramatic elements in the landscape – the imposing north-facing scarps of the three upland blocks culminating in Bannau Sir Gaer and Bannau Brycheiniog in the west and Pen y Fan and Corn Du in the east.

To the south of the Old Red Sandstone are the lowermost beds of the succeeding period, ie the various units of the Carboniferous Limestone, the outcrop of which forms a narrow band stretching across the southern dip-slopes of the major massifs. It gives rise to a particular set of landforms known collectively as ‘karst’; a landscape which includes sinkholes, cave systems and resurgence, limestone pavements and crags, the calcareous soils associated with which give rise to a diverse flora. It is perhaps best exemplified in the Cribarth and Penwyllt areas around the upper Swansea Valley.

Immediately above the limestone and hence to the south again are the mudstones and coarse sandstones which comprise the Millstone Grit and which give rise alternately to great stretches of bleak moorland and to deeply incised, thickly wooded valleys such as those which form the ‘Waterfall Country’ between Ystradfellte and Pontneddfechan.

Last in the sequence are the youngest solid rocks of the Geopark; the lowermost Coal Measures – a band of mudstones and sandstones containing numerous coal seams which put in an appearance along the southern margins of the area but whose principal contribution to the landscape of the region is within the South Wales Coalfield beyond the boundaries of Fforest Fawr. This formation has of course also been the principal contributor to the industrial growth of South Wales over the last two centuries, a legacy of which is the dramatic transformation in the character of the Coalfield valleys.

Other than the steep folds and faults associated with the Ordovician and Silurian age rocks, the principal geological structures within the Geopark area are the three major ‘disturbances’ which can be traced across country from southwest to northeast or north-northeast. The Carreg Cennen Disturbance (CCD), Cribarth Disturbance and Neath Disturbance are ancient weaknesses in

the Earth's crust which have arisen in response to stresses caused in large part by plate tectonic activity. The CCD forms a part of the Welsh Borderland Fault System stretching from Pembrokeshire to Shropshire and marking the edge of a Palaeozoic sea covering central Wales. The faults and tight folds which characterise the other two disturbances are the southernmost expressions of a Caledonian structural trend of which the Bala Fault, the Menai Strait Fault, Southern Uplands Fault, Highland Boundary Fault and Great Glen Fault are some of the major elements. The formation of each of these relates to the collision in Silurian and Devonian times of the micro-continent of Eastern Avalonia (containing modern day Wales and England) with the continent of Laurentia (containing Scotland) on a southwest –northeast alignment. The mountain-building process which resulted is known as the 'Caledonian Orogeny'.

A further set of faults swarms across the rocks of the southern part of the Geopark and relates to the development of the South Wales Coalfield basin and the succeeding 'Variscan Orogeny' which took place to the south of our area. It is these faults which are intimately associated with the local development of drainage patterns in the Abercraf – Pontneddfechan – Ystradfellte area and are seen to be responsible for such features as Sgwd Henrhyd, Sgwd Clun-gwyn, Sgwd Gwladus and other falls in the celebrated 'Waterfall Country'. It should be noted that the Disturbances referred to above were active once again during the Variscan Orogeny.

## SUPERFICIAL DEPOSITS

Spread across the bedrock surface are the variety of geological deposits laid down by ice and water during the Quaternary period of the last two million years. A series of ice ages, in particular the most recent glaciation known as the Devensian, has left a mantle of boulder clay or till across the area which serves in the main to soften its contours. Individual glacial moraines dating from the Devensian can be discerned both within the high cwms of the uplands and also across the floors of the major valleys as major glaciers retreated when the climate began to warm. More recently riverine alluvium has filled the valley bottoms and peat has accumulated in the uplands. Nevertheless extensive areas remain more or less free of superficial deposits, not least the southerly dip slopes of the Millstone Grit where soil development over this particularly hard rock has been minimal.

Some of the most spectacular landscape features within the entire Geopark are the late glacial cirque moraines whose arcuate form can be discerned from the cliff-tops encircling the cwms in which they lie. That at Cwm Llŵch beneath Corn Du acts as a barrier behind which Llyn Cwm Llŵch sits whilst a similar situation prevails at Llyn y Fan Fach though in both cases the lakes also occupy rock basins gouged out by the cirque glaciers which once occupied them. Other

moraines decorate the slopes beneath the north and north-east facing Old Red Sandstone scarps of the Black Mountain, Fforest Fawr (*sensu stricto*) and the central Brecon Beacons. The most enigmatic of these is perhaps that of Fan Fechan beneath the long eastern face of Fan Hir. Its linear form and great height continues to perplex geologists, some of whom argue for its origin as a pro-nival rampart, formed at the foot of a snow-slope, rather than being a true moraine.

Debate still continues over the origins of the complex landforms beneath Craig-y-fro and Craig Cerrig-gleisiad in Glyn Tarell: the relative contributions of glacial action and slope-failure being uncertain in both cases. Post-glacial mass movement of either bedrock and/or superficial material is documented at numerous other sites throughout the Geopark including the western slopes of Fan Dringarth, above Ystradfellte Reservoir and in the upper reaches of the Swansea Valley and the Taf Fechan.

The last 11,000 years is often referred to as the 'post-glacial' though it may be more correctly referred to as an interglacial as, human influenced climatic change apart, a further glacial period is likely to ensue. Either way this period, the 'Holocene' has, with climatic amelioration, seen the re-vegetation of a landscape left bare after the most recent retreat of the ice. The influences of man's activities have been increasingly felt over the last 7000 years and more particularly the last 250 years.

## LANDSCAPE CHANGE THROUGH MAPS

It is the role of a Geopark to celebrate not only its geological heritage but also other natural and cultural aspects of the area's character which are underpinned by its geology. People moved back into this area at least 7000 years ago and through their activities, began almost immediately to make changes to the landscape. Some were no doubt short-lived, others were longer-lasting, not least those which involved the extraction, transport and use of rocks for a variety of purposes. The use of stone in the Neolithic period and in the subsequent Bronze and Iron Ages is well documented and indeed numerous instances of, for example standing stones, stone circles and hill-forts occur on the face of the Ordnance Survey map. A scatter too of remains from the period of Roman occupation are recorded on the OS map: the impressive walls of Brecon Gaer and the more subtle banks of the forts on Mynydd Myddfai. Assemblages of pillow mounds raised up in connection with rabbit-farming also adorn the map in various localities.

It was inevitable that agriculture and animal husbandry were and indeed continue to be major influences on the character of the landscape though these are not considered in any detail in this article. Conifer afforestation also made a major contribution to landscape change during the twentieth century, often in conjunction with water catchment. The spread of coniferous

plantations is evident on the face of the map but again is not considered in detail here.

Perhaps the period of most rapid change has been that which began around 1760, the date widely accepted as heralding the start of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain. The appearance in close conjunction of three economically important rock types in the southern part of Fforest Fawr resulted in the development at an early stage of an infrastructure aimed at extracting these rocks, transporting and processing them.

The rocks in question were of course limestone, ironstone and coal. All three were to be found in abundance along the Carboniferous outcrop running east-west from Merthyr Tydfil to Brynaman. Each would be worked over the next couple of centuries and, at least from the turn of the nineteenth century, progress on this front would be recorded more or less faithfully by the surveyors of the Ordnance Survey.

#### THE ORDNANCE SURVEY ONE-INCH MAP

The Survey was established in the closing years of the eighteenth century in response to the needs of the military for high quality mapping of Britain at a time when invasion by French forces was deemed to be a threat. It would not be long before agriculture and business also realised the value of having an up to date national survey.

The first series to cover Wales and England is referred to now as 'the Old Series', though in truth consisted of several different series drawn along different sheet lines, often most confusingly. The 'Revised New Series' of England and Wales made an appearance at the start of the twentieth century, the 359 coloured sheets of which reflected a landscape in the throes of change as the Victorian era drew to a close.

The 'Third Edition' appeared both in a small sheet format and a large sheet (LSS) format. Three sheets of the latter provide coverage of the Geopark. Sheet lines were redrawn for the arrival of the 'Popular Edition'. Again three sheets of this 146 sheet series give coverage of our area. Many revisions and reprints incorporating elements of landscape change were produced during the lifetime of this series before the advent of the New Popular Map immediately after the Second World War. The sheetlines of the latter were continued into the final 'one-inch' product published by the Ordnance Survey covering the whole of Great Britain, the 'Seventh Series'. Numerous revisions were made to reflect new development until the first 1:50,000 scale maps were published in the 1970's. The first and second series of the 1:50,000 scale map perform much the same role as their imperial scale predecessors, continuing to illustrate the often rapid pace of change affecting the country.

*Mapping a Landscape in the throes of change*

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Map Series	Sheet number/ name	Date of first publication (based on revision date)	1km grid square in which sheet corners are located			
			NW	NE	SW	SE
Old Series	41 Caermarthen	1831 (?1827)	SN 2544	SN 8044	SN 2507	SN 8007
	42 NW quarter	1832 (?)	SN 8044	SO 0944	SN 8025	SO 0925
	42 SW quarter	1832 (?)	SN 8025	SO 0925	SN 8007	SO 0806
Revised New Series	212 Llandovery	1901 (?)	*SN 5040	SN 7940	*SN 5021	SN 7921
	213 Brecon	1901 (?)	SN 7940	SO 0840	SN 7921	SO 0820
	230	1901 (?)	*SN 5021	SN 7921	*SN 5001	SN 7901
Third Edition (Large sheet series)	231Merthyr Tydfil	1900 (?)	SN 7921	SO 0820	SN 7901	*SO 0801
	91 Valley of Towy	1912 (1907-09)	SN 5040	SN 9440	SN 5011	SN 9411
	92 Brecon & Abergavenny	1912 (1904-09)	SN 9440	*SO 3840	SN 9411	*SO 3811
Popular Edition	102 Swansea & Merthyr Tydfil	1911 (1904-08)	?	?	?	?
	89 Carmarthen	1923 (1919-20)	SN 2512	SN 6540	SN 2121	SN 6511
	90 Brecon & Llandovery	1923 (1919-20)	SN 6540	SO 0840	SN 6511	SO 0811
New Popular Edition	101 Swansea & Aberdare	1923 (1919-20)	SN 6511	SO 0811	SS 6582	ST 0882
	140 Llandovery	1947 (1919)	SN 4863	SN 8863	SN 4818	SN 8818
	141 Brecon	1947 (1913)	SN 8855	SO 2855	SN 8810	SO 2810
	153 Swansea	1947 (1920)	SN 4818	SN 8818	SS 5873	SS 8873
Seventh Series	154 Cardiff	1947(1920)	SN 8810	SO 2810	SS 8865	ST 2865
	140 Llandovery	1952 (1948)	SN 4863	SN 8863	SN 4818	SN 8818
	141 Brecon	1952 (1948)	SN 8855	SO 2855	SN 8810	SO 2810
	153 Swansea	1952 (1947)	SN 4818	SN 8818	SS 5873	SS 8873
1:50,000 First Series	154 Cardiff	1952 (1947-8)	SN 8810	SO 2810	SS 8865	ST 2865
	146 Lampeter & Llandovery	1974 (1964-65)	SN 4065	SN 8065	SN 4025	SN 8025
	159 Swansea	1974 (1964-71)	SN 2925	SN 6925	SS 2985	SS 6985
1:50,000 Second Series 'Land- ranger'	160 Brecon Beacons	1974 (1964-71)	SN 6945	SO 0945	SN 6905	SO 0905
	146 Lampeter & Llandovery/ Llanbedr Pont Steffan a Llanymddyfri	1985 (1983)	SN 4065	SN 8065	SN 4025	SN 8025
	159 Swansea/ Abertawe	1980 (1977)	SN 2925	SN 6925	SS 2985	SS 6985
	160 Brecon Beacons/ Bannau Brycheiniog	1984 (1983)	SN 6945	SO 0945	SN 6905	SO 0905

\* Indicates estimated reference (sheet not accessible at time of writing)

Table. Simplified guide to Ordnance Survey map editions at 1:63,360 and 1:50,000 scale offering coverage of Fforest Fawr Geopark area.

The detail visible on the large scale maps (1:2,500 and 1:10,560) published by the Ordnance Survey from its earliest years will always remain of most value to the historian but the Survey's small scale maps, particularly at the one inch (1:63,360) and half inch (1:126,720) scales, also have a role to play. They are arguably more accessible to the general public and provide readily understandable 'snapshots' of the wider landscape at points in time. Particular reference is made in this article to the 'one inch map', both in its original form and in the various facsimile and reconstructed versions that are widely available today.

### ELEMENTS OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE

This article examines a number of developments which can be seen to have contributed to landscape change. Their selection is influenced by the extent to which their histories can be discerned from inspection of the one-inch map. Railways, roads and tramways are all clearly depicted at this scale of mapping, a scale which moreover lends itself to appreciating the development of networks of these forms of transport at a landscape scale.

The construction of a series of dams across valleys in the Geopark necessitating the construction of temporary railways and tramways is also evidenced in the one-inch map as are the emergence and disappearance of the refractory brick industry and industrial explosives works. Each is pertinent to the story of industrial South Wales and the modern landscape of Fforest Fawr Geopark.

### RAILWAYS

There were four main-line railways which once operated across or close to the area of the modern Geopark. Only one of these survives to the present day – the Central Wales Line – the others having closed in the 1960's as a part of the cull of unprofitable lines which followed the publication of the Beeching Report in 1963. (*The Reshaping of British Railways* by Dr. R Beeching) A short section of the former Brecon and Merthyr line was re-opened in 1980 as a 'heritage railway'.

#### *Central Wales Line*

The London and North Western Railway Company opened the line between Swansea and Craven Arms in 1868. Running for part of its length along the Towy Valley close to the north-western margins of the Geopark, the line is labelled on Revised New Series sheet 212 as *L & N.W.R. (Central Wales extension)*. Stations are shown at Llandovery, Llanwrda, Llangadock (sic), Llandilo (sic), Ffair-fach (sic), Llandybie and Ammanford.

The line is shown unannotated on sheet 91 of the Third Edition (Large Sheet Series) revised between 1907 and 1909. Sheet 90 of the succeeding Popular



Edition published in 1938 bears the annotation 'G.W. and L.M. & S.R.' beside the line. It was depicted in similar fashion on the sheets of the New Popular edition which followed it in the immediate post-war period. The railway continued to be shown on the Seventh Series sheets published in 1952 (sheet 140) and 1956 (sheet 153) though this time without any labelling reflecting the fact of the nationalisation of the remaining 'big four' railway companies in 1948. The route survives today as the 'Heart of Wales Line', a route whose future survival is likely to depend in part on its being promoted as a tourist destination in its own right.

#### *Brecon and Merthyr Railway*

Sheet 231 of the Revised New Series includes a section of the '*Brecon and Merthyr Railway*' which had been in existence since 1863. Stations are named at Torpantau, Dol-y-gaer, Pontsticill Junction and Pant. The branch to Cefn Coed-y-Cymmer is annotated as *B. & M. & L. & N.W. Joint Railway* with stations named at Ponsarn and Cefn Coed-y-Cymmer. These sections appear on sheet 90 of the Popular Edition as the *G.W.R. (Brecon & Newport)* and on sheet 101 as *G.W. & L.M. & S.R.* respectively. The lines appear in similar fashion on sheets 141 and 154 of the New Popular edition though by the Seventh Series they formed a part of the nationalised rail system and lost their individual names.

The route had been abandoned prior to the first sheets of the 1:50,000 series being published where they are labelled as '*dismtd rly*'. The section north from Pant station to Dol-y-Gaer and eventually to Torpantau is shown with the symbol for a narrow gauge railway and labelled as *Brecon Mountain Rly.*

The south-eastern boundary of Fforest Fawr Geopark between Pontsticill and Torpantau is defined in part by this 'heritage line' and in part by the temporary tramway which continued from the latter location to Lower Neuadd Reservoir during the construction of the dam. Both railway and tramway bed now form a part of the infrastructure serving visitors to the National Park and Geopark.

#### *Neath and Brecon Railway*

The Dulais Valley Mineral railway was extended to Brecon in 1867 and appears on sheets 213, 230 and 231 of the Revised New Series as the '*Neath and Brecon Railway*'. Stations are shown at Coelbren Junction, Penwyllt, Cray, Devynock (*sic*), Aberbran, Cradoc and Brecon. It appears on the Popular and the New Popular Editions as the '*L.M. & S. and G.W.R.*' with the re-naming of one station as Devynock and Senny Bridge. The station at Penwyllt was part-funded by the opera singer Adelina Patti who lived at Craig-y-nos Castle in the Tawe Valley below Penwyllt.

In the post-Beeching era it ceases to appear on the Seventh Series but a dashed line is labelled as '*track of old railway*'. Certain sections which have been

taken back into agricultural use appear as gaps along its course. The 2km section south of Bwlch Bryn-rhudd now serves as vehicular access to the conifer plantation on the south-west flanks of Fan Gyhirych. The modern OS Explorer sheet OL12 depicts this section as a permissive footpath. Indeed there are plans to convert southern sections of the line into a cycleway as part of the expanding National Cycle Network and it might be expected that in due course this new status would be reflected on the face of the OS map.

### *Swansea Valley Railway*

During the 1860s the Swansea Valley Railway was gradually extended northwards to Ystalyfera and reached Brynaman by 1868. Ten years later it was purchased by the Midland Railway Company. Its ownership was reflected in the annotation of the line running along the southern margin of the Geopark between the Swansea Valley and Ammanford on Sheet 230 of the Revised New Series as '*M.R. (Swansea Vale section)*' via Brynaman. The line appears on the modern Landranger map as an intermittent dashed line with the usual 'dismtd rly' label.

## ROADS

The road system has evolved considerably during the last two centuries. Other than changes to the surfaces and widths of routes and indeed the type and quantity of traffic along the roads of the area, the most significant changes are the scatter of new roads and realignments that have taken place. Old Series sheets show the main road between Brecon and Merthyr Tydfil on its early alignment down the east side of Glyn Tarell but the carefully engineered modern route had been put in place by the advent of the Revised New Series sheet. The old route is now a public bridleway which carries one arm of the Taff Trail recreational route.

The Swansea-Brecon turnpike is given prominence on Old Series sheets as it runs north from Pont-nedd-fychan (sic) through Ystradfellte, under 'Y Fan frynach' (sic) and into Glyn Tarell. The section running from near Maen Llia through to Forest Lodge is nowadays a rough-surfaced restricted byway and its role has been usurped by the improved link between the Upper Swansea Valley and Sennybridge – the modern A4067.

On the southern margins of our area are the modern A4109 'Inter Valleys Road' between Glyn-neath and Aberdulais/Seven Sisters, which appears as a new road on the 1937 revision of Popular Edition sheet 101, and a further connection between this road and the village of Abercraf, the modern A4221 which was established after 1965.

Also on the southern fringe is the A465 'Heads of the Valleys Road' which has been established over several decades as a key east-west link taking large volumes of traffic between the Vale of Neath, Merthyr Tydfil and points east.

Realignments of the original route linking the various settlements at the heads of each of the coalfield valleys are recorded on successive editions of the one inch map from the 1960s onwards.

## TRAMWAYS

### *General*

Innumerable tramroads were constructed within the Geopark area over the course of 150 years to serve the needs of industry. The earlier examples were horse-drawn whilst later ones tended to be mechanised. Of particular importance were those between Sennybridge and the upper Swansea Valley including the network on and around Cribarth.

### *Brecon Forest Tramroad*

Nothing can be added to the authoritative account by the Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Wales on the rise and fall of the enterprises embarked upon by John Christie and others in the early part of the nineteenth century. The tramroad or rather the tramroad network grew in somewhat chaotic fashion, during the early part of the Ordnance Survey's existence.

The larger part of the line is depicted on the Old Series sheets between the wharf at 'Castell-du Farm' at modern day Sennybridge and the upper reaches of the Swansea Canal below Abercraf. It is labelled as 'Tram Road'. No features are depicted on the map though several cuttings, embankments, bridges and inclines were put in place during its construction.

On the 1832 printing of the Old Series quarter sheet the alignment which climbed the lower slopes of Fan Gyhirych after diverging from the earlier line near Pont Gyhirych is not depicted. This arm would eventually extend to the limestone quarries near Pwll Byfre.

Virtually all trace of it has been removed from the face of the sheets of the Revised New Series which appeared at the turn of the twentieth century. Much of the route was followed, albeit with more flowing curves by the later Neath and Brecon Railway and it is this latter route alone which is shown with all of its cuttings and embankments. Neither do the Popular or New Popular Editions recognise the former tramroad remaining as a feature in the landscape. The modern Landranger map does however indicate the route in parts, using the bold dashed line symbol for a 'path'. This would appear to be a rather generous act on the part of the Ordnance Survey as much of the section in question is well on the way to being re-absorbed into the wet and tussocky moorland through which it runs. The modern map also indicates the zig-zags which were constructed to permit the horse-drawn trams to ascend the 100m slopes from north of Penwyllt to the vicinity of Pwll Byfre.

*Cribarth Tramroads*

The traveller from the north sees the limestone mass of Cribarth appearing to block the valley of the Afon Tawe. Indeed its presence causes the river to divert around its steep north-eastern end. The Carboniferous Limestone here is tightly folded and is greatly fractured as a result. The main anticline coincides with the south-west to north-east aligned ridge and lies along the Cribarth Disturbance referred to earlier. The fractured nature of the rock made it relatively easy to work hence its appeal to early industrialists seeking limestone for use both in agriculture but also more importantly as a flux in the iron and copper smelting industries.

A single tramline is shown on the Old Series sheet covering this area. The Revised New Series sheet shows a second line additional to the original incline. Virtually nothing is shown on the Third Edition nor on the Popular or New Popular Editions. The Seventh Series sheet depicts a track following part of the original incline. The lower half of the incline is indicated as a public footpath on the modern Landranger.

A tramway leads off to the north from Cribarth itself to the once extensive deposits of rottenstone which were worked in an opencast fashion and rapidly exhausted. The uncompleted line of this tramway is evident only on large scale maps; it is partially shown on the modern 1:25,000 scale map.

It is the case that the full extent of the tramroad network on Cribarth is not adequately shown on any small scale map and in fact modern large scale maps still fail to show much of the intricate detail which is apparent to the visitor on the ground.

*Henllys Vale – Cefn Carn Fadog Tramway*

A tramway was constructed beside the Afon Twrch switching between Brecknockshire and Carmarthenshire from Cwm-twrch-isaf to Henllys Vale Colliery and across the southern slopes of the Black Mountain to the quarries north and south of the summit plateau of Cefn Carn Fadog. The tramway is evident on the Revised New Series, the Third Edition (LSS) and the Popular Edition. The northern section above Henllys Vale Colliery has been removed from the New Popular Edition. A further section has been deleted from the Seventh Series with only the lowermost section serving a colliery on the Breconshire side of the river remaining.

Much of its length however makes a re-appearance as a 'path' on the 1:50,000 map and indeed the entire length between Brynhenllys Bridge and the former Henllys Vale Colliery has recently been established as a heritage trail through a partnership between a variety of local government bodies, community organisations and funding bodies.

## WATER CATCHMENT

### *General*

Up to a dozen reservoirs decorate the valleys of the area. Most were established in the period from the 1880's through to the 1920's on the south flowing rivers which drain the dip-slopes of the Brecon Beacons and Fforest Fawr (in its traditional sense). The exceptions include the major impounding of the headwaters of the Usk in the 1950's and the artificial raising of the otherwise natural Llyn y Fan Fach in the 1930's.

At a simple level and as earlier stated, the geology of the area can be summed up as consisting of a layer cake of rock types which has been cracked and crumpled in places and then been gently tilted to the south. It is this dip of the beds of Old Red Sandstone and the overlying strata of Carboniferous age into the South Wales Coalfield which results in the more extensive catchments of those south-bound streams such as the Taf Fawr and Taf Fechan. The shapes of their valleys lend themselves more to the impounding of water than many of those which drain rather more steeply northwards into the Usk.

In many cases temporary tramways and railways were constructed to permit the movement of materials to the dam sites. The remains of these lines are generally still evident in the landscape and continue in part to find uses.

### *Ystradfellte Reservoir*

The construction of the dam which holds back the upper reaches of the Afon Dringarth took place between 1907 and 1914 in order that Neath Rural District Council could meet increasing demands on its water supply. A light railway was pushed up the valley from Penderyn to the site to bring in limestone from Penderyn, sandstone from Gwaun Hepste and puddling clay from Cilhepste Coed. This railway first appears on the Third Edition (LSS) which was published in 1912 and incorporates revision from the period 1907-09.

Some sections are still visible as forest tracks and indeed can be traced on foot through Coed y Rhaiadr. Shallow cuttings and embankments are readily seen from the A4059 road in the vicinity of its junction with the minor road to Ystradfellte.

### *Cwm Taf Reservoirs and railway*

A temporary railway was constructed up the western side of Cwm Taf in order to move construction materials to the sites of the dams which now hold back Cantref and Beacons Reservoirs. The former was completed in 1892 and the latter in 1897. Puddle-clay for each was had from Cyfarthfa Works' property near Six Bells PH at Pen-yr-heolgraig (though some was to come later from Neath and Pengam). Stone was quarried from Sychpant Quarry near the Taf at

Cefn-coed-y-cymmer (SO 0208) although Cornish granite was used to face the weir and overflow channel steps.

Sheet 26 of the 'Half-inch' series published in 1913 from 1904–09 revision for the one-inch map shows the line but annotates it as 'disused railway'. Popular Edition sheet 101 published in 1938 shows the railway below the dam of Llwyn-onn running north from Cefn-coed-y-cymmer along the valley floor. This situation reflects the repeated use and abandonment of this line as successive reservoirs were constructed, the last being Llwyn-onn itself which was completed in 1926. Sections of the route are now used variously for access to forests and farmland whilst the recreational route between Brecon and Cardiff – the Taff Trail – makes use of other sections.

#### *Neuadd Reservoirs*

Two relatively small reservoirs were constructed by Merthyr Tydfil Corporation at the head of the Taf Fechan. The first of these, Lower Neuadd Reservoir, was planned in response to problems experienced with the Pentwyn Reservoir lower down the valley which was at one stage losing some 11 million gallons of water per day due to the presence of a major geological fault beneath its dam. The construction of the reservoir between 1876 and 1884 was enabled by the running of a 1½ mile track from the summit of the nearby Brecon and Merthyr Railway. This route is now a bridleway forming a part of the eastern boundary of the Geopark and carrying a section of the Taff Trail.

The larger Upper Neuadd Reservoir was constructed between 1896 and 1902 and involved a further extension of this temporary railway line. The construction of the two reservoirs seems to have necessitated the diversion of the old road descending southwards from Bwlch ar y Fan from its steep earlier course beside Nant yr Hen Heol to its present well-graded route to the east. The original line can be traced on the First Edition OS sheet.

## MANUFACTURE OF REFRACTORY BRICKS

### *General*

The Millstone Grit comprises a series of hard-wearing coarse sandstones interbedded with softer mudstones. The lowermost band of sandstone which directly overlies the Carboniferous Limestone is known as the Basal Grit. A particular feature of the Basal Grit is its purity, consisting as it does of almost 100% silica. It was William Weston Young who in 1820 developed a technique for converting this material into heat-resistant firebricks suitable for lining the iron and copper-smelting furnaces being established in the growing industrial area to the south. Bricks made from sandstone with more impurities were found to be more liable to fracture in the intense heat to which they were exposed.

The Basal Grit has been quarried and mined at the head of the Vale of Neath in the area around Dinas Rock and in the gorge of the Nedd Fechan. The solid rock has been quarried elsewhere in the Geopark but it is a very hard material which requires crushing before it can mixed with other ingredients and reshaped as bricks. Numerous pockets of more readily winnable 'silica sand' were identified in the hills of Fforest Fawr and the Black Mountain and many became important sources of material for the brick-making industry. Silica sands result from the natural mechanical breakdown of the gritstone in areas where the strata is said to have 'foundered'. The process is one whereby the underlying Carboniferous Limestone has been dissolved by groundwater over long periods of time. The collapse of the voids (caves) thus generated has resulted in the overlying beds 'foundering'. Geologists believe that in places, up to 200m thickness of rock may have been lost in this fashion. Important deposits of silica sand generated in this way are to be found in the vicinity of Pwll Byfre, south of Fan Gyhirych and these were to become the basis of an important local industry from over a century.

#### *Dinas Rock and the gorge of the Nedd Fechan*

W. W. Young established the first 'Dinas Firebrick' works at a site at the head of the Vale of Neath where the 'silica rock' could be mined and quarried and from which place the bricks could be exported by tramway and canal.

Tramways were established between the various silica rock mines around Dinas Rock and along the gorge of the Nedd Fechan and the former refractory brickworks at Pontneddfechan and later at Pont Walby near Glyn-neath. That from the Nedd Fechan gorge can be seen on the Revised New Series sheet to link via Pont-nedd-Fychan (sic) to the head of the Neath Canal at Glyn-neath. The line from the Dinas Rock mines runs down the southern side of the valley to Pont Whalby (sic).

Both lines are shown again on the Popular Edition though the former has been extended up valley to cross the river to the Cwm Gored mine. The New Popular Edition does not show the Dinas Rock tramway at all and, so far as the Nedd Fechan mines are concerned, shows only the section between Cwm Gored and The Angel at Pontneddfechan. The mining of silica rock at Dinas Rock ceased in 1964.

#### *Pwll Byfre/Penwyllt Tramroad*

A tramway was constructed between the refractory brickworks at Penwyllt and the source of silica sand at Pwll Byfre. Though the route was in existence at the time, the Revised New Series sheet 213 of 1901 fails to depict it. It is however shown on the Third Edition (Large Sheet Series) sheet 91 and the Popular

Edition and continues to be shown on the New Popular sheet 153 published in 1947. Early editions of the Seventh Series sheet show it as a tramroad but the Landranger map depicts a path along this line.

### *Moel Penderyn*

Moel Penderyn is formed on the line of an ancient weakness in the Earth's crust known as the Neath Disturbance – a linear zone of geological faults and folds extending from Swansea Bay up the Vale of Neath via Dinas Rock to Penderyn and then on east-north-eastwards to the southern edge of Hereford. It is perhaps the southernmost example of the series of similarly aligned 'Caledonoid' structures which result from the collision of Wales/England with Scotland around 400 million years ago.

At Moel Penderyn it is expressed as two moderately tight anticlines either side of the Dinas Fault which locally exhibits a north-westerly downthrow. At the core of this structure are up-arched beds of Carboniferous Limestone whilst on its northern and southern flanks are the lowermost beds of the Millstone Grit known as the Basal Grit.

Moel Penderyn appears as Penderyn-foel and Foel Penderyn on earlier maps.

The gritstone beds on the northern flanks of Moel Penderyn were quarried on a small scale for the production of refractory bricks by the Hirwain Silica Brickworks Company (sic). A small network of tramways was constructed from Penderyn village around the eastern end of the hill to serve these quarries and connecting with the line to Hirwaun originally constructed as a horse tramroad at the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The tramways appear on the Revised New Series (LSS) and, with a further extension to the gritstone quarries on the hill's northern flanks, on the Popular and New Popular Editions. The tramroads to the gritstone quarries closed in 1939 but they remain visible on the ground today, the main line being followed by a public footpath and the majority of the branches lying within an area of access land.

## OTHER INDUSTRIES

### *Glyn-neath Mills*

A tramway served the former gunpowder works upstream of Pontneddfechan. Established in 1857 by the Vale of Neath Powder Company, the works continued in operation until, whilst in the ownership of Imperial Chemical Industries in 1931, black powder was taken off the government's permitted list of explosives.

The siting of the works owed as much to safety considerations as anything; a relatively remote location with individual buildings separated one from another



to guard against the spread of fire. The entire site was thus spread along two miles of the valley and a tramway was established to link its various parts. The line is shown on the Revised New Series and Popular Edition but only the upper half remains on the New Popular sheet following the dismantling and deliberate destruction by fire of the works in 1932. In both cases the works are referred to on the map as 'Glyn Neath Mills'. An unusual feature of this tramway was that the horses were required to wear copper shoes so as to reduce any risk of sparks igniting the explosives. The route today carries a permissive footpath equipped with wind-up audio booths at intervals which serve to interpret life at the old works to visitors.

#### *Rabbit fur production*

At a number of sites throughout Fforest Fawr evidence remains of former large-scale rabbit farming. Though the practice was known in mediaeval times, it was revived in this area during the nineteenth century and its legacy is one of clusters of long low earth banks known as 'pillow mounds'. Several dozen can be seen to advantage from the A4067 road on the slopes of Cefn Cul between the upper Swansea Valley and Crai. Further examples are known from Pant Mawr (SN 9015), Twyn y gaer (SN 9928) and Beddau'r Derwyddon (SN 6718). Rabbits were bred both for their fur and for meat though ultimately these ventures proved uneconomic as most of these sites were on marginal land.

#### *More recent activity*

A handful of major quarries remain within the Geopark. That to the east of Penderyn continues to be actively worked. Its gradual expansion over several decades is recorded on successive editions of the one-inch map. Earlier editions show a tramroad or mineral line serving the site. The limestone quarry at Penwyllt was last exploited for aggregate to be used as trench fill in connection with the controversial gas pipeline which was routed through the Geopark in 2007 as part of a strategic link between Milford Haven and Gloucestershire. Again, successive stages in the development of these quarries are recorded by the Ordnance Survey though the pipeline will not have been captured in this way.

The establishment of new recreational routes – key elements of infrastructure serving the modern tourist industry – represents the latest phase of development. The Beacons Way which runs the length of the National Park and the Taff Trail feature on recent Landranger map sheets. Increasing lengths of the National Cycle Network (NCN) are also depicted, often following the lines of former railways and tramways. Much of the line of NCN Route 8 for example follows the track of the former Brecon and Merthyr Railway.

ALAN BOWRING

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## MAPS

As per table in article plus

Cassini Publishing Ltd

Old Series sheets 159, 160

Revised New Series sheets 159, 160

Popular Edition sheets 159, 160

(reproductions of contemporary O.S. mapping at an enlarged scale on modern sheet lines)

## WEBSITES

[www.wataonlv.addr.com/os-maps.htm](http://www.wataonlv.addr.com/os-maps.htm)

[www.fforestfawrgeopark.org.uk](http://www.fforestfawrgeopark.org.uk)

## CAMDEN ROAD, BRECON – 1868–1937

### INTRODUCTION

Commercial Directories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century geared their texts to the advantage of the tourist or merchant traveller. In describing Brecon in 1835, Pigot therefore stated that it consisted ‘chiefly of three handsome streets in the most spacious of which stand the county hall and market place. Its compact form and neatness gives it an advantage over most towns in Wales, whilst its interior beauty renders it not less striking’.<sup>1</sup> There were further commentaries on the churches and Christ College, but no detail on the growth of the town beyond its ancient walled areas. Hunt (1849), Slater (1859), and Worrell (1875) echo this view. Pressure of space in their *Directories* obviously precluded such an analysis, and it was left to R L Gant in his essay ‘*The Townscape and Economy of Brecon 1800–1860*’<sup>2</sup> to fill this much needed gap. He noted that ‘since the early 17C Brecon had apparently grown very slowly in territorial extent’, and using the maps of John Speed (1610), Meredith Jones (1744), John Wood (1834), and census returns, demonstrated where expansion had taken place. This was in his view in the ‘continuance of residential development to the west of the Honddu . . . the infilling of Llanfaes, and building developments along the Watton’.

Such developments within the Watton were as the result of infilling along the main road, but also the building of off shoots such as Charles St in the 1850s, John St in the 1860s and Camden Road in the 1870s. The Ordnance Survey map of 1885 shows these properties, along with Gasworks Lane. This paper is concerned with the development of Camden Road from its recognition as a road in the 1860s, until the commencement of house building on the south side of the road in 1937.

### CAMDEN ROAD

Camden Road is one of the main thoroughfares in Brecon, running parallel to the Watton (the old A40 and now B4601), on the east side of the town. At present it is the longest inhabited road in the town, extending approximately 1200 yards from Cerrigochion Hill to Lon Slwch. The Electoral Register of 2005 counted some 77 properties within the Road, together with twelve apartments at Camden Court, and a further ten apartments at Abbeyfield. The Brecon Tourist Map at Figure 1<sup>3</sup> shows the present day position. As a distinct and recognized geographical entity, the Road however did not come into being until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the advent of two principal buildings, the Congregational Memorial College, and Free Street Railway Station. On earlier maps, John Speed’s plan of the town of Brecon in 1610 had only shown a spur in Rewredd Ward, 130 ‘pases’ north of East Gate, to the east of Heol Rhydd

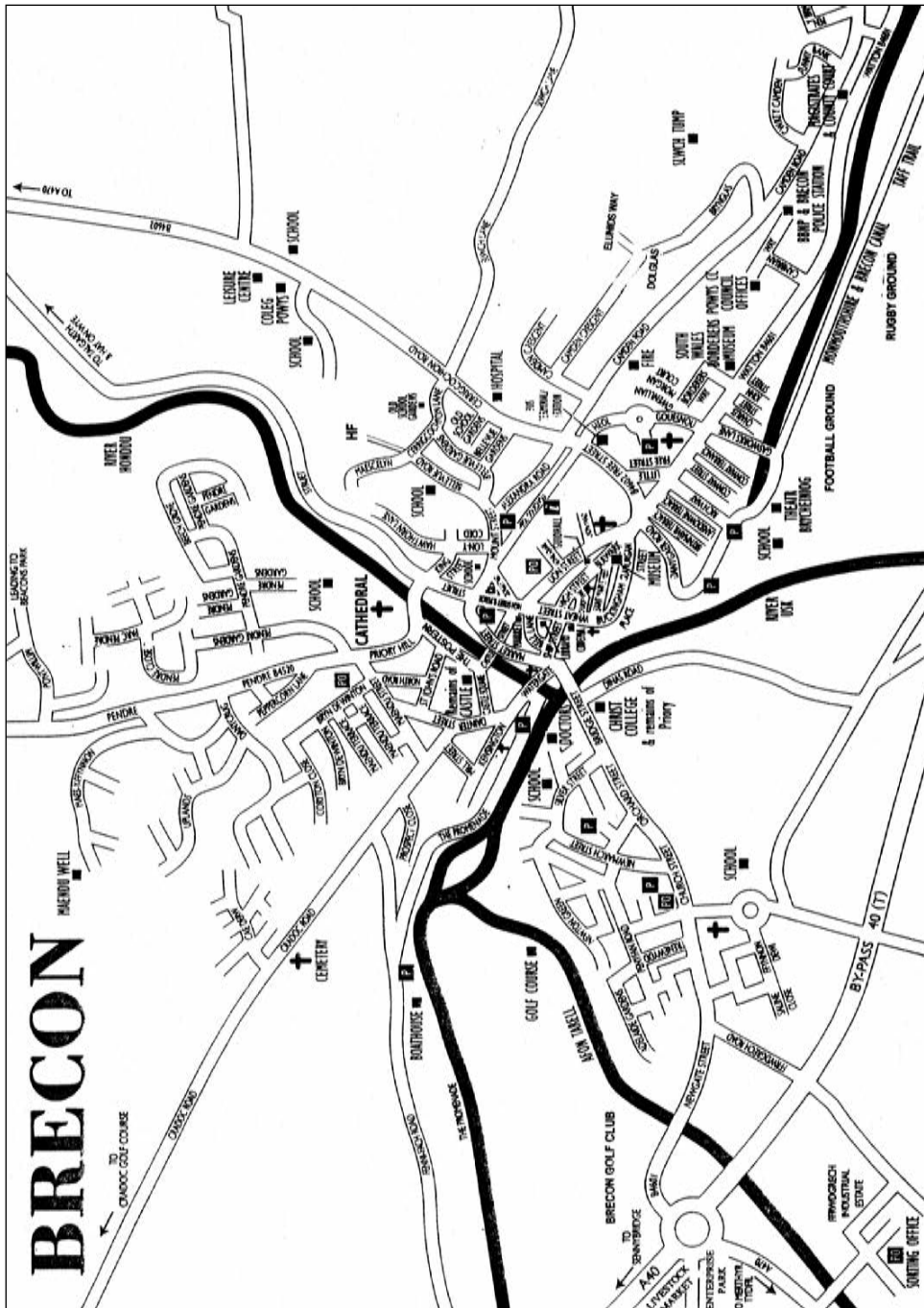


Figure 1

(Free St). Meredith Jones' plan of 1714 shows the same spur at the junction of Lovers Lane (Alexandra Road) and Heol Rhydd, above Clawdd y Gaer. The spur itself ran to what we now know as Cae Prior farm only.

More details emerge in 1780 with the Camden and Tredegar Estate maps, drawn up by Edward Thomas of Margam between 1778 and 1780.<sup>4</sup> These are illustrated as Figures 2 and 3. The Camden lands are shown as between the Watton and Slwch Lane extending to 87 acres and tenanted by Thomas Longfellow, Walter Jeffreys, Jeffrey Wilkins, John Jones, Samuel Price, and Thomas Meredith. These are meadow and pasture lands and again access from the west is only to Cae Prior. A hay track is also shown from the Watton following present day Cambrian Way, up to and beyond 51/53 Camden Road to the fields above. The far end of Camden Road which is Tredegar Estate territory, includes 'Lands near Ginger Wall' tenanted by a Mrs Phillips amounting to 22 acres.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE TITHE MAP OF 1840

Clarification of the land at present containing Camden Road, Camden Crescent, Brynglas, Dolglas, Eluned's Way, Sunnybank, and Cwrt y Camden is set out in the standardised Tithe maps of 1839–40 (see Figure 4). The Plan of the Chapelry of St Mary within the Parish of St John the Evangelist in the County of Brecon was confirmed by William Blannire and W. Buller. They stated 'We the Undersigned Tithe Commissioners for England and Wales do hereby Certify this to be a Copy of the Map or Plan referred to in the Apportionment of the Rent Charge in lieu of Tithes in the Upper Division of the Parish of St John the Evangelist in the County of Brecon.'<sup>6</sup> Gant makes the point that 'The plan, form, and structure of Brecon in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> is clearly revealed in Wood's map of 1834, which is vastly superior to the contemporary Tithe map.'<sup>7</sup> The only problem being that Wood's map does not extend to the outlying parts of the town. The Plan sets out the following information for all the land owned and tenanted Landowners, Occupier, Name and Description of Land and Premises, State of Cultivation, Quantities in Statute Measure, Amount of Rent Charge apportioned upon the several lands and payable. For the first time a clear indication is given of who owned and occupied the area. The principal owners were the Marquess Camden and Sir Charles Morgan. The Map and Schedule are set out below as:

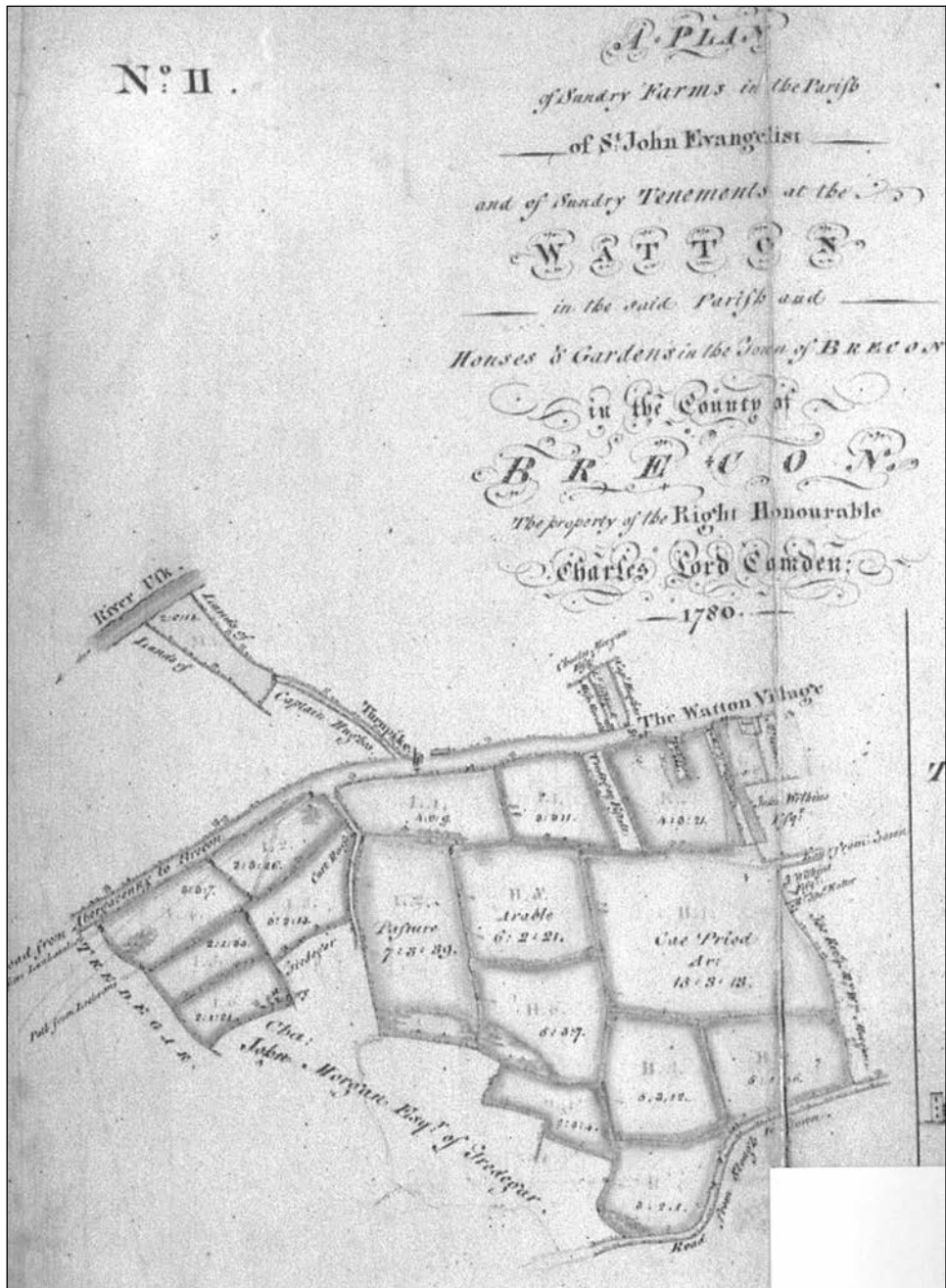


Figure 2

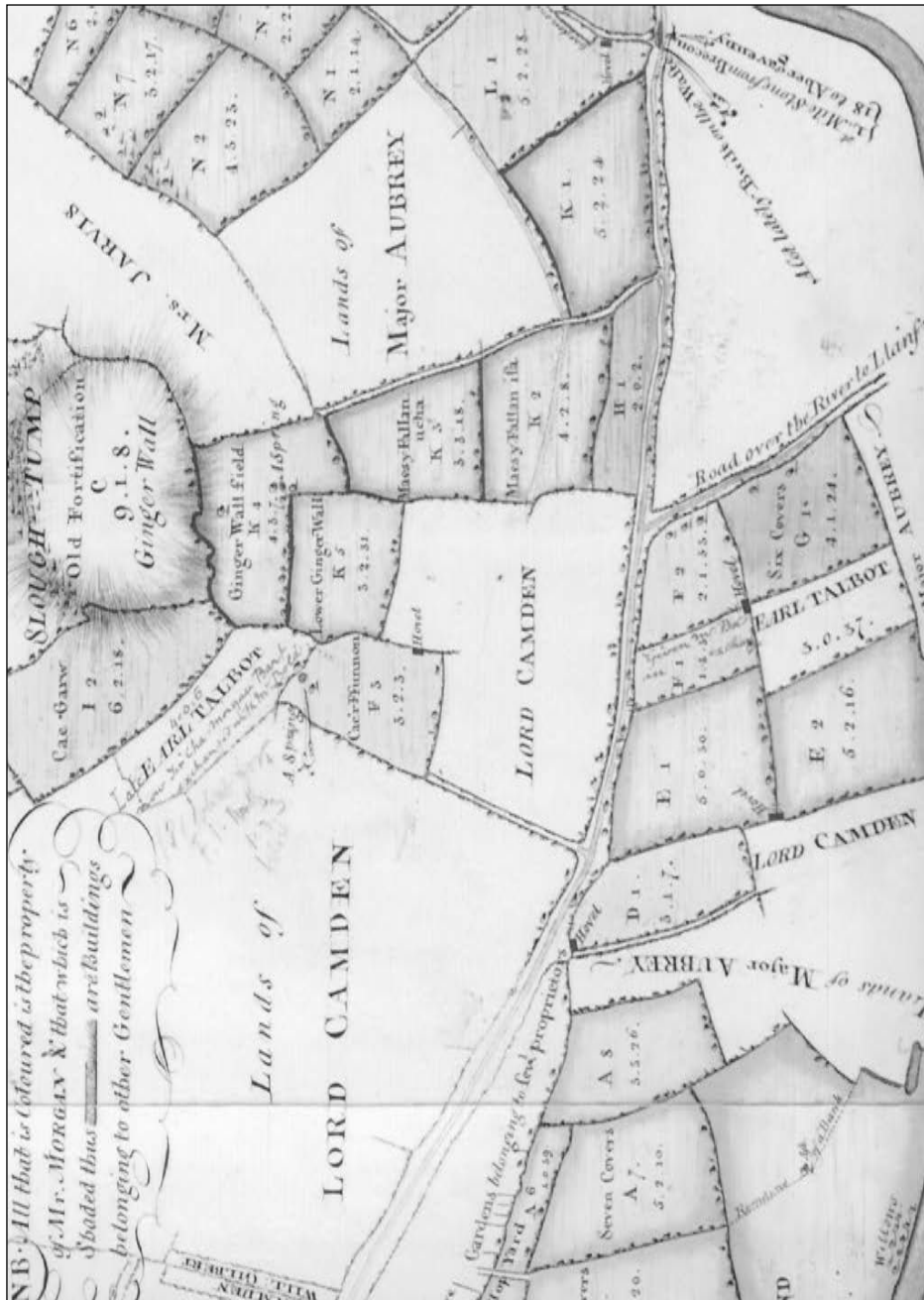
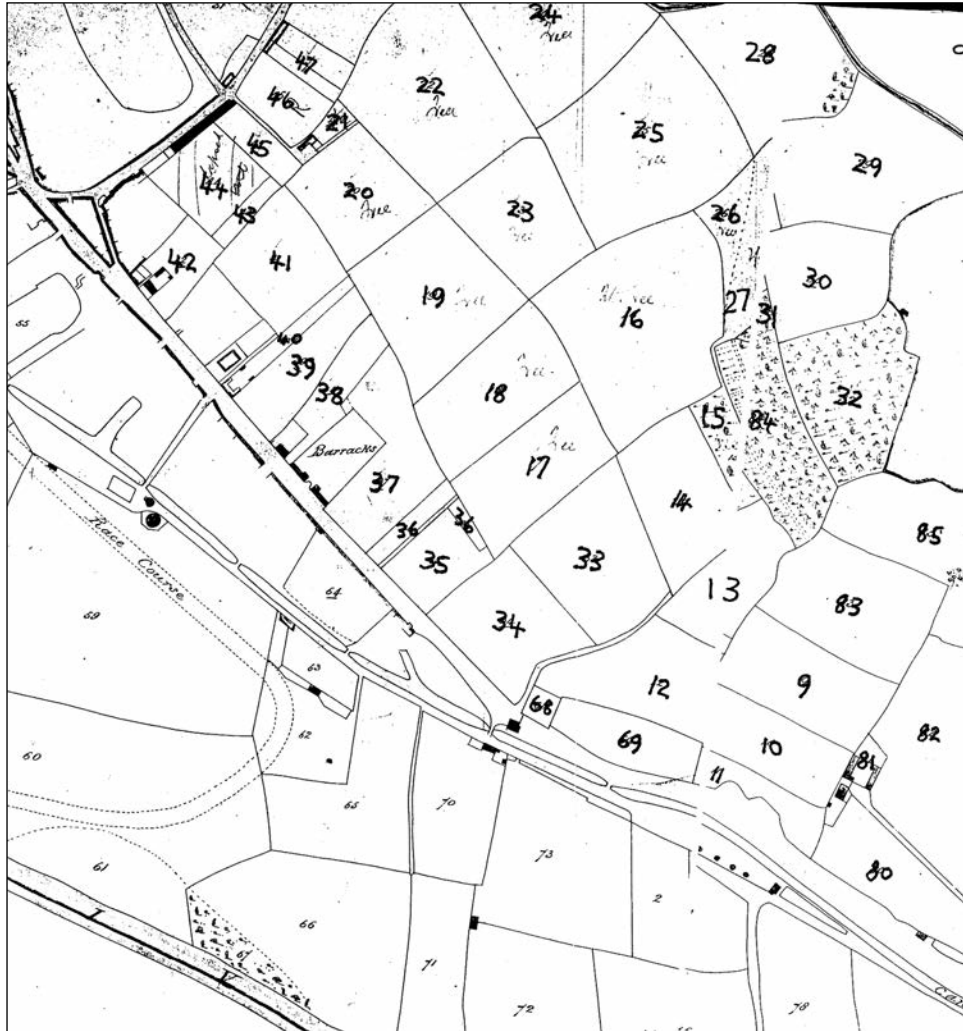


Figure 3

Figure 4 Camden Road's fields in 1840 from the Schedule of the Tithe Map



<i>Field No.</i>	<i>Name of Tenant</i>	<i>Name of Owner</i>	<i>Cultivation</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Roods</i>	<i>Perches</i>
9	William Powell	Marquess Camden	Meadow	2	2	30
10	"	"	Meadow	2	1	10
11	"	"	Meadow	1	1	20
12	"	"	Meadow	3	2	15
13	Walter James and	"	Meadow	3	2	5
14	William Thomas	"	Meadow	3	0	12
15	John Jenkins	"	Wood	1	1	0
16	"	"	Arable	6	1	28



*Camden Road, Brecon – 1868–1937*

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17	Thomas Edwards	"	Meadow	3	0	27
18	"	"	Meadow	3	1	22
19	John Jones	"	Meadow	4	0	16
20	"	"	Meadow	2	2	5
21	William Jones	"	Building and Garden	0	1	20
22	"	"	Meadow	5	2	35
23	"	"	Meadow	3	0	10
24	"	"	Meadow	5	0	12
25	"	"	Arable	6	0	30
26	William Evans	"	Pasture	1	0	0
27	"	"	Pasture	1	2	20
28	"	"	Pasture	4	0	25
29	"	"	Meadow	4	3	35
30	"	"	Pasture	3	0	5
31	Marquess Camden	"	Plantation	0	1	0
32	"	"	Plantation	4	0	0
33	William Sanderson	"	Meadow	3	2	25
34	Not on Schedule					
35	Benjamin Thomas	"	Meadow	1	1	16
36	Thomas Price	"	Garden	0	2	12
37	Thomas Bevan	"	Meadow	3	0	10
38	"	"	Meadow	1	0	10
39	Thomas Griffiths	"	Meadow	1	0	0
40	"	"	Garden	1	1	35
41	William Sanderson	"	Meadow	2	1	21
42	George Rees Bevan	"	Meadow	0	3	15
43	"	"	Garden	0	1	5
44	Walter Maybery	Walter Wilkins	Meadow	1	2	24
45	several	"	Garden	0	2	1
46	Lancelot Morgan	"	Meadow	1	0	0
47	several	Lancelot Morgan	Meadow	0	3	5
48	Joseph Owen	"	Meadow	4	2	0
68	James Bryant	Marion Williams	Garden	0	0	37
69	Thomas Griffiths	"	Meadow	1	2	25
80	Elijah Trew	Sir Charles Morgan	Meadow	2	2	0
81	"	"	Homestead	0	2	15
82	"	"	Pasture	5	0	24
83	"	"	Arable	3	2	31
84	Sir Charles Morgan	"	Plantation	4	1	0
85	Elijah Trew	"	Arable	4	3	7

The only access by road on the Tithe map is shown as to Cae Prior at the west end, and Sunnybank at the east. Hunt's *Directory* of 1849 incidentally confirms the residences of Sir Charles Morgan, Church St., and Marquess Camden as the Priory.<sup>8</sup> The exact date of Camden Road being built is not recorded anywhere, but can be approximated as 1865, the reasoning being:

- there is no record of a Camden Road in the 1861 Census
- there is no mention of the road being constructed, a probable major event in the *Brecon County Times* of 1866, its first year of publication, or in any subsequent publication.
- the Memorial College is noted as being in Camden Road at the time of the foundation stone being laid in June 1867
- more importantly the Brecon and Merthyr Railway Act 1863, when reporting in Section 2983 on future plans states 'The said Street or Road called Heol Rhyd as widened and improved under this Act and also the other Road intended to be made by the Company under their present powers from their Brecon Station into the Mail Road from Brecon to Abergavenny at or near Heol Lladron.'<sup>9</sup> The other road being Camden Road and named after its principal landowner the Marquess Camden.

#### CAE PRIOR AND SUNNYBANK

These two original farm buildings belonged to the Camdens and the Tredegars respectively (now as 13 and 72 Camden Road). Both buildings are said to be around 400 years old, but there is no documentary evidence to confirm this, merely the impressions of their current owners. The only record that may support the longevity of Cae Prior is in the Rent Roll of the Borough of Brecon for the Year 1664. Heol Rudd ward is described as 'contains all the lands on the North East side of the Town to the parishes of Llanthew and Llanhamlach . . . in which about a half mile from the Town stands another Chapel of Ease called St Eilwedd'. Within this ward John Jeffrey held five burgages which would have formed part of the later Camden Estate including Cae Prior, so an assumption rightly or wrongly is made.<sup>10</sup> The Estate maps of 1780 would suggest however, that although there were farms at Cae Prior and Sunnybank, there were no specific farm buildings; by contrast the Tredegar map shows farm buildings at Brynich and Cefn Brynich, the conclusion therefore being that Cae Prior and Sunnybank farm buildings came into being in the early part of the 19th century. A further Tredegar map of 1820 includes the building of Sunnybank Farm, 'to the east land owned by the Rev Hugh Bold and to the west the Marquess Camden.' Brynich and Cefnbrynich farm buildings are again shown.<sup>11</sup> A present day photograph of Sunnybank is set out below.



Sunnybank.

The 1840 Tithe records then show tenants in the buildings as: Cae Prior – Area 21 William Jones Building and Garden 1R 20P; Sunnybank – Area 81 Elijah Trew Homestead 2R 15P.<sup>12</sup>

The census returns for 1841 and 1861<sup>13</sup> record for Cae Priod Thomas Powell and Thomas Evans respectively, both agricultural labourers, although the Camden Estate finance returns show for 1858 Evan Williams paying £20 p.a. as rental.<sup>14</sup> The returns at Sunnybank for 1841 and 1851 record Elijah Trew as a farmer of 81 acres, and in 1861 Howell Davies as a farm labourer.<sup>14</sup> The High Sheriff register for 1838 also records a James Thompson of Sunnybank, whether this is our Sunnybank or not is unknown.<sup>15</sup>

More substantial leasehold owners appeared in the 1871 census. James Hall had now come into occupation of Cae Prior in 1865 and remained there until his death in August 1890. In the 1861 census he had been listed as HALL, James h innkeeper/auctioneer George Inn, Mount St with a birthplace of BRE St. Marys.<sup>16</sup> His wife Margaret lived with him until her death in 1878, and there were no children. He was a prominent auctioneer in the town, carrying out his business from his house, and assisting many of his neighbours in their dealings. He was the brother of Richard Hall the Breconshire poet. He worked closely with John Prothero who had moved into Sunnybank at about the same time, the *Brecon County Times* noting in 1866 their business arrangements ‘Sunnybank annual sale. Mr James Hall has been instructed by Mr John Prothero to sell by

auktion on the above premises – 200 ewes and lambs – Refreshments on the table at 1.00 p.m.’<sup>17</sup>

Alderman John Prothero JP was a substantial business and political figure in the life of Brecon during the latter half of the 19th century, representing the Watton ward. He was Mayor in 1866 and for many years Chairman of the Brecon School Board, owning premises opposite the Brecon Barracks (now B E Jenkins). He was held in high esteem by his peers and in 1872 was ‘presented with a testimonial consisting of 400 guineas and a silver salver as a token of our respect for the position and character which you have earned and maintained as a large and liberal employer of labour for upwards of a quarter of a century. Mordecai Jones David Thomas’ The presentation was as a result of a calamitous fire which had destroyed most of his commercial premises on the 26 July of that year.<sup>18</sup>

Sunnybank was just one of his residences in Brecon. The 1861 census shows him living in the Watton, and the 1871 census and Worralls *Directory* of 1875 as at Sunnybank. In 1881 however he is at 2 Bowen Terrace, and in 1884 in Kelly’s *Directory* at Woodlands-Hafod, selling the lease in 1887 to Thomas Games a painter and decorator who died in 1905. In March 1895 at the age of 76 he was still contesting the Watton Electoral Division. His address reads ‘Ladies and Gentlemen The term for which you elected me as your representative on the Breconshire Council will expire in March next and I again solicit a renewal of your confidence. I have lived within your Ward for the last 53 years. I believe I have contributed as much as any person now living towards the welfare and prosperity of the town of Brecon in the employment of labour and the promotion of its trade generally more especially within the Watton Ward. I shall consider it a favour if you will once more support me and return me as your representative.’<sup>19</sup>

They did and he was: Prothero (Liberal) 112; Powell Price (Conservative) 98. Regrettably he was not able to see out his period of office, dying at his home in Alexandra Road in December of that year, his place on the Town Council being taken by Benjamin Jenkins. He built Charles St and John St in the 1850s and 1860s, and bequeathed much property to his daughters one of whom married Professor Rowlands as his second wife, and another married Rev J E Harries, a minister for some years at the Watton Presbyterian Chapel. The Inland Revenue Survey of 1910–12<sup>20</sup> picks up these inheritances by recording that Catherine Harries and Alice Rowlands of Alexandra Road owned Charles St 23 houses, John St 33 houses, the Watton 8 houses, and the Bakehouse in Charles St.

#### 1860s – THE RAILWAY

The seminal event of the 1860s and probably that of the whole history of Camden Road was the coming of the railway. D S Barrie<sup>21</sup> et alia have written

detailed accounts of the developments and lives of the railways over their century of existence, and they do not need repeating here. The basic facts are that a number of railway lines Brecon and Merthyr, Brecon and Neath, Hereford Hay and Brecon, and the Mid-Wales Railway were established in Brecon between 1864 and 1871. The B&M was opened for traffic in May, 1863, the Mid-Wales followed in September 1864, the H. H. & B opened in the same month, and the fourth service the Neath and Brecon in June, 1867.

Discussions on such a railway entry had been in progress since the 1840s but gathered pace in the late 1850s with Acts of Parliament to obtain the approval for such ventures, and to obtain the necessary permission for the route of the railway into the town and through it. Camden Road being on the east side of Brecon was primarily concerned with the B&M. The route from Heol Lladron to Heol Rhydd led principally through the lands of Sir Charles Morgan and the Marquess Camden whose agreement had to be obtained and compensation paid.

When the companies arrived in Brecon, a station was erected by the B&M just above the canal basin, Watton Station. The Neath and Brecon in turn provided a temporary station at Mount St. None of these arrangements were satisfactory to the companies nor the travelling public. The *Brecon County Times* in October 1868 noted ‘We understand that very shortly the B&M station will be used by the Mid Wales Railway Company for all their trains. When this removal takes place a refreshment room will be opened by Mr Gibson.’<sup>22</sup> as the following advertisement shows.

CHARLES GIBSON,  
*Importer and Family Wine Merchant,*  
 BRECON.  


---

*Proprietor of the*  
 BUILTH ROAD,  
 THREE COCKS,  
 TALYLLYN, and  
 BRECON STATION  
*REFRESHMENT ROOMS.*  


---

 BONDED VAULTS—KING STREET HALL, BRISTOL.

In March 1870 they further reported ‘we are pleased to hear that there is every probability of the long talked of joint station being soon erected. The site fixed upon we believe on Camden Road almost opposite Cae Prior’<sup>23</sup> Eventually in March 1871 a joint station was opened called Free St Station on the present day site of the Fire Station.<sup>24</sup> Besides its economic impact the railway would also have great social and personnel repercussions for the town, particularly felt in the

Watton ward. The 1861 census for St Mary's ward showed one person with employment listed as relating to the railway. By 1871 the ward revealed a total of 120 men resident in this area whose occupations were related to that industry. They lived mainly in the Watton or in streets off it. John St for example could boast of 20 such residents. The other relevant statistic is that of the 120 men, only 34 showed Brecon as their place of birth, and these were men and boys who filled the less exacting posts. Of the 18 senior posts only one was a Brecon man, the 7 most senior occupations being filled by:

RR manager/civil eng	CAULFIELD, Hans 33	IRL	Postern Rd
Railway manager	GRUNDY, Frank 36	LAN Bury	Watton
Railway superintendent	WILSON, John 43	STS Rugeley	Watton
Railway accountant	SHEPHERD, Francis 30	SCT	Watton
Railway accountant	WOTTON, John 26	SRY Lambeth	Castle St
RR traffic manager	HENSHAW, Alfred 32	SAL Oswestry	Mount Pleasant <sup>25</sup>

What is relevant in these statistics is the pressure brought to bear on housing accommodation in the vicinity of the railway in Watton ward, and the inducements for property developers to construct not just additional housing, but housing of a higher standard in for example Camden Road. Worrall's *Directory* of 1875 illustrates the continuing division between the railway companies as to where their offices are located:

Mid Wales Railway Company	Head Office	Postern
Brecon and Merthyr Tydfil Junction Railway Company	Office	Camden Road
Neath and Brecon Railway Company	Office	Postern
Midland Railway Company	Office	Camden Road <sup>26</sup>

#### 1860s – THE COLLEGE

The second event at the other end of Camden Road and next to Sunnybank, was the opening of the Brecon Memorial College in September 1869 with Professor John Morris as Principal. Four tenders were received for the construction of the College in March 1867 Messrs Williams Bros Brecon £8,900; Messrs Thomas and Watkins Swansea £8,250; Mr John Griffiths Brecon £8,400; and Messrs Jones and Son Gloucester £8,900.<sup>27</sup> The contract went to Thomas and Watkins, and the final cost including furniture, equipment and grounds amounted to £12,000. The land for the College of approximately four and a half acres was formally purchased from the Camden Estates only on the 12 August, 1868, the trustees on behalf of the College being Thomas John Davies and Thomas Williams.

The building of Gothic design was quite a significant landmark at the eastern end of Camden Road, with a tower of about a hundred feet high. Theophilus

Jones commented that ‘In front of the building there is a broad terrace, also a roadway leading to the back of it; the grounds too have been laid out and planted after a very neat design; and the roadway from the entrance gates to the College is broad and substantially laid down. The appearance of the building is handsome and commanding and forms a conspicuous part of the landscape as viewed from various parts of the surrounding country.’<sup>28</sup> An artist’s impression of the College included in the Annual Report of 1868–9 is at Figure 5 below. The College’s revenues were not munificent in its early years. From Midsummer 1868 to Midsummer 1869 its first year of operation total income was £1,184 which included a grant of £450 from the Congregational Fund Board and £672 raised in collections around the country. In that first year £63 5 11 was donated from Breconshire. Brecon itself although it had no students at the College donated:

Individual gentlemen and ladies	£6 19 0
Glamorgan Street Chapel	£7 10 6
Plough Chapel	£5 9 6 <sup>29</sup>

To offset some of the capital costs, James Hall sells by auction a Commodious house and premises known as the Independent College on the Bulwark<sup>30</sup> the previous College residence.

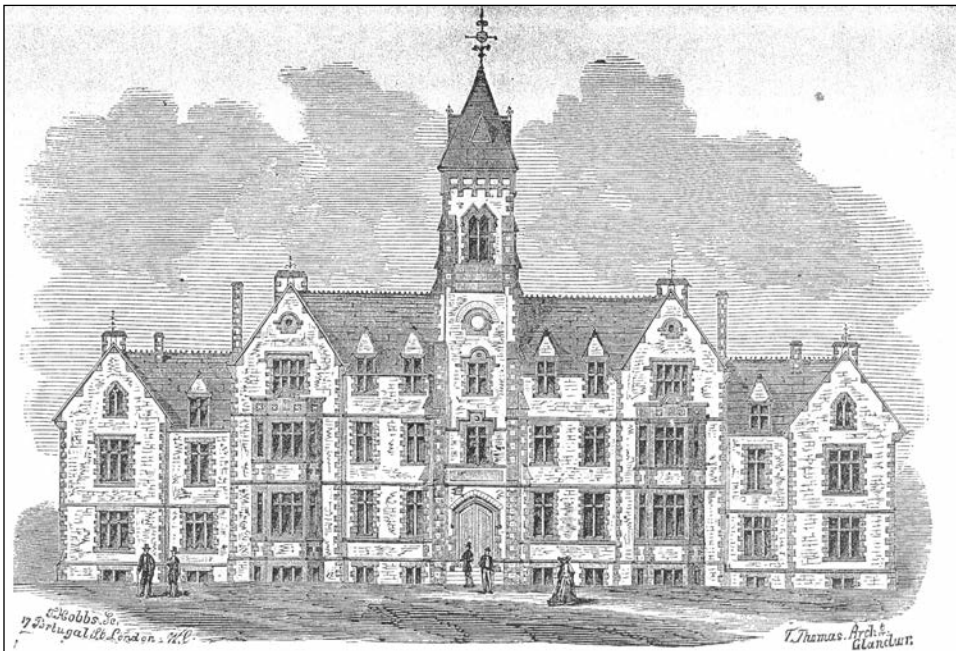


Figure 5.

## THE 1871 CENSUS

In August 1868 the *Brecon County Times* in an editorial under the heading 'LANDOWNERS versus HOUSE BUILDING' railed against 'the impossibility of procuring a plot of freehold land to build upon. The majority of such land is held by Lord Tredegar and the Marquess Camden who are unwilling and perhaps to some extent unable to part with it. We have reason to know that if the ground rent asked for building plots in Camden Road were lowered, several villas would ere this have been commenced there . . . We do not know whether any representation has been made to that nobleman but we cannot help thinking that if the matter were properly put before him he would be willing to do what is just and right and consider the point'.<sup>31</sup>

The editorial seems to have had some effect as in February 1869 an advertisement appeared in the *Brecon County Times*:

## 'TO BUILDERS

Tenders are invited for the erection of 2 semi detached villas on the Camden Road Brecon. Plans and specifications may be seen on application to HADDON Bros, Architects, Hereford'.<sup>32</sup>

In an editorial the following week the *Brecon County Times* noted with satisfaction 'we stated last week that we had been shown the drawings of a couple of semi detached villas which it was the intention of one of our enterprising tradesmen to erect in Camden Road'.<sup>33</sup> Although not stated the tradesman was most probably Charles Gibson of whom more later. The houses in question were to be Camden Villas (22/23 Camden Road). A lease was signed for 99 years from the 25.3.1870 at a rent of £4.4 per house, making these premises the first properties specifically as private houses in Camden Road.<sup>34</sup> The size of the houses were 1 rood 16 perches each.<sup>35</sup> A present day photograph of Camden Villas is set out below. The 1871 census now revealed a take off for the Road and a resident population of 49 people with Heads of Household as:

270	HALL, James 2 family and 1 servant	45 Auctioneer and Land Agent	BRE	Cae Prior 13 Camden Road
271	GARDNER, Mary Ann 2 family and 1 servant	53 widow annuitant	HEF	Camden Villas 22 Camden Road
272	DAVIES, David W 4 family and 2 servants	30 Calvinistic Minister	CMN	Camden Villas 23 Camden Road
273	MORRIS, John 6 family and 1 servant	58 Professor of Theology	CMN	Memorial College



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- |     |   |                    |     |                  |
|-----|---|--------------------|-----|------------------|
| 274 | JONES, Mary   | 50 matron          | MON | Memorial College |
|     | 11 boarders, 1 with a birthplace in BRE<br>at Merthyr Cynog and gardener, servant, cook |                    |     |                  |
| 275 | ROBERTS, William  | 42 Professor of    | GLA | Memorial College |
|     | 1 servant<br>Classics and Maths   |                    |     |                  |
| 276 | PROTHERO, John  | 52 timber merchant | BRE | Sunnybank        |
|     | 5 family 1 servant 2 visitors<br>72 Camden Road   |                    |     |                  |



Camden Villas.

Whilst the first residents were not involved in the railway, they at least brought an air of professionalism to the area. With two teachers in the family it is not surprising that the Davies' at Camden Villa opened the first school in Camden Road. In October 1871 an advertisement appeared in the *Brecon County Times* 'Mrs and Miss Davies receive YOUNG LADIES TO EDUCATE in English, German, French, Latin, Music and Drawing. Quarter commences on Monday next'.<sup>36</sup> By January 1872 when the Quarter commenced it was advertised as 'Boarding and Day School'.<sup>37</sup> Mrs Gardner contented herself in supplementing her annuity by 'Furnished apartments in Camden Road, Sitting Room and Bedroom to be let'.<sup>38</sup>

In that year the most enterprising developer in Camden Road, Charles Gibson had turned his thoughts to Camden Terrace, obtaining a lease on for

example No 1 from 25/3/1872 at £15.10 annual rent.<sup>39</sup> He had obtained financial support for this venture from England's Glory Match Co of Gloucester. The *Brecon County Times* saw it as 'Our enterprising businessman Mr Gibson has commenced to erect several houses on the Camden Road opposite the new station. As these cottages will vary in rent from £15 to £35 p.a. and as this is a class of house much required in Brecon especially the former, it will provide a boon to those fortunate enough to become the occupiers inasmuch as they will be healthily situated and every attention paid to gas, and effective drainage and ventilation'.<sup>40</sup> Gibson acted quickly to complete their construction and by June 1873 'James Hall has received instructions from Mr Moreland to sell by auction near the new buildings on the Camden Road the following surplus plant and materials'.<sup>41</sup> The houses later that year were described as for example 'to be let ready furnished No 5 Camden Terrace, Camden Road a modern and genteel family residence, containing entrance hall, dining room, breakfast room, drawing room, kitchen, back ditto etc w.c. Pantry, china closet, four bedrooms and one dressing room, together with good garden, poultry house, and croquet ground. James Hall Auctioneers'.<sup>42</sup>

A more substantial property the Laurels, was also leased by Gibson from the Camden Estates in 1872, and came to be the family home for many years to come. Although the land was leased in that year, building did not commence until later in the decade when Gibson using the same architects advertised in July 1878

#### 'TO BUILDERS

Persons desiring of tendering for the erection of a Villa-Residence near the Railway Station at Brecon for Mr Charles Gibson and also for a pair of semi-detached residences on a site adjoining therefore apply to: Haddon Brothers Architects, Hereford, Great Malvern and 40 Great Marlborough St London by June 25'.<sup>43</sup>

By November 1880 the house was being advertised as 'to be let or sold', to whom it is unclear as the 1881 census still records Gibson, his wife, two children, and a servant being in residence. A present day photograph of Camden Terrace is set out below.

Gibson came from the Midlands to Wales. The 1861 census shows him living as a wine merchant in High St. GIBSON, Charles 28 WAR B'ham; Gibson, Clara 26 Brecon, with two daughters. In 1871 he had moved to the Old Cognac with an additional son, and Sophia Jones as a boarder from Essex who was the manageress of the Brecon Railway Refreshment Rooms. As an indication of his business the *Brecon County Times* reported in 1869 'Trade of Brecon per rail for month ending 30 January consigned to Charles Gibson, Wine Importer Brecon – 3 Pipes 5 Hogsheads Port; 1 Butt 4 Hogsheads and 2 Quarter Casks Sherry; 8 Hogsheads Claret; 1 Hogshead 1 Quarter Cask and 35 Cases Brandy; 2 Hogsheads Whisky; 2 Puncheons Rum; 2 Hogsheads Gin – 2,366, 12 tons'.<sup>44</sup>

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Camden Terrace.

The 1881 census now included some railway employees taking up residence in Camden Terrace as:

No 1	John Lloyd 23	Lieutenant HM 24 <sup>th</sup>	Pentre, Cardigan
2	Frederick Robinson 38	Railway Inspector	Norwich
3	Uninhabited		
4	John A Whittle 36	Railway Accountant	Lambeth Surrey
5	Emma Menhiniok 48	Wesleyan Minister's widow	Southsea
6	John A Jebb 44	Coal and Lime Merchant	Hordley Shropshire

A larger development, and not one inspired by Gibson, came at the beginning of Camden Road with the erection of twelve terraced houses at Bowen Terrace in 1873–4. The land had been owned initially by Camden, but by the Tithe map of 1840 had passed into the possession of Walter Wilkins. The Trustees of the late Walter de Winton (i.e Wilkins), had sold the property to Walter Maybery who in turn sold it in 1853 to Stephen Bowen Evans. There has been some discussion as to who the Bowen in Bowen Terrace was named after, but it is fairly clear that it was this property developer. Evans was Town Clerk of Brecon from 1858 to 1873, and was shown in the Domesday Book of 1874–5 as owning 4.2 acres of land in Breconshire, one assumes the twelve houses were part of this.<sup>45</sup>

In March 1875 Margaret Exans was in possession of numbers 3, 4, and 12 which she had presumably inherited from her brother. (She showed her

appreciation of this largesse by the erection of a massive monument to his memory in Brecon cemetery). On taking possession her deeds show 'on which said piece or parcel of land 12 residences had then lately been erected by the said Mr Evans and called Bowen Terrace'.<sup>46</sup> The Heads of Household for Bowen Terrace in the 1881 census were:

1. Kidwelly Villa	Henry Wm.Manning 60	Army Major, Pay Dept	Southwark
2. Cwmtillery House	John Prothero 61	Timber Merchant	Defynnock
3. Tram House	Edwin Evans 51	Midland Railway Inspector	Brecon
4. Beacons View House	Thomas Jones 54	Supervisor Inland Revenue	Merthyr
5. Highfield House	David Fisher 29	Headteacher Elementary	Stockport
6. Cefnhendre House	Margaret Hort 51	Annuitant	Dublin
7. Upland House	Margaret Morgan 41	Annuitant	Brecon
8. Sychurual House	Rebecca Davies 46	Annuitant	Brecknock
9. Llandarrog House	Edward Lloyd 42	Major R E	Newfoundland
10. Clydach F	Lancelot Powell 75	Iron Master ret'd	Brecon
11. Blodwen	Charles Price 35	Station Master	Brecknock
12. Hawthorn Villa	John I Jones 49	Presbyterian Minister	Llanidloes

What is surprising about Bowen Terrace is the absence of any reportage in the *Brecon County Times*, particularly with the newspaper coverage of Stephen Bowen's sudden death at the age of 54 in July 1873.<sup>47</sup> To anticipate, the properties themselves had been bought as an investment by 'The Pelican and British Empire Life office' and went for auction in 1904. This was a more exciting time for the newspaper as they carried an advertisement in March 1904 'Messrs W S Miller and Co Forest Lodge Valuable Freehold and Copyhold Property for Sale Auction at Castle Hotel 15 April – Lot 12 Freehold Messuages and Gardens called Bowen Terrace situated near Brecon Railway Station in the respective occupations of Miss Williams and others producing a rent of £303 p.a. 18 Lots altogether'.<sup>48</sup> The public duly turned up and the 'attendance largest seen at a sale for some years. The principal lot offered was Bowen Tce comprising twelve valuable freehold houses with which were coupled Caedryssu Villa and building land at the rear thereof, Caedryssu cottages and Caedryssu meadow, the entire

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annual rent of which is £415. Bidding started at £7,000 and advanced slowly to £10,000 when the property was withdrawn'.<sup>49</sup> It re-emerged in November, with the following advertisement:

Messrs S.Walker's & Sons Sales Fixtures  
By order of Mortgagees BRECON Valuable Freehold Properties  
situate in capital positions in the town

LOT	DESCRIPTION	RENT
		£ s
1	Shop and Dwelling House Warwick House High St	90 0
2	Clarence Inn, Nos 26 and 27 The Watton and garden ground in rear, area 2117 sq yds	63 0
3	44, 45, and 46 the Watton and garden ground in rear forming excellent Building Site, area 5000 sq yds	45 0
4 to 15	12 Villa Residences Nos 1 to 12 Bowen Terrace, Road, well situate close to the Railway Station	303 0
16	A valuable site of Building Land in Cerig Cochion Road area 5a 0r 16p now let as meadow and garden ground	50 0
17	Nos 1 and 2 Caedryssu Cottages, Cerig Cochion Road	28 0
18	Caedryssu Villa, Cerig Cochion Road	35 0
		614 0 <sup>50</sup>

This time almost all of the properties were sold to the tenants for an average price of £450. Only No.6 was bought by an outsider, a position which was confirmed in the 1910–12 Inland Revenue Report. A copy of the Bowen Terrace plan as advertised by the auctioneers is set out below, as Figure 6, together with a photograph of the Road from 1913.<sup>51</sup> An actual description of a Bowen Terrace house is available in 1922 with the following sale:

'Sale of Freehold Blodwen House, Bowen Terrace The House which is substantially built contains on ground floor dining and drawing rooms, kitchen, scullery and pantry. 4 bedrooms on first floor, large one roomed attic and two small box rooms. Together with the usual offices and a good garden.'<sup>52</sup> The property was withdrawn at £700, but later sold privately to Mr.F.O.Collier

The final property to be built in this decade and therefore included in the 1881 census were confusingly Camden Villa and Brecknock Villa, later to be known collectively as Woodside, 43 and 45 Camden Road. These were the semi detached built by Gibson in 1879 and occupied in the 1881 census by:

Camden Villa	Thomas Frater	Retired Bank Manager	73	Banff <sup>53</sup>
	8 family and 1 servant			
Brecknock Villa	William Symons	Captain 24 <sup>th</sup> Foot	37	Botus Fleming, Cornwall
	1 family and 1 servant			

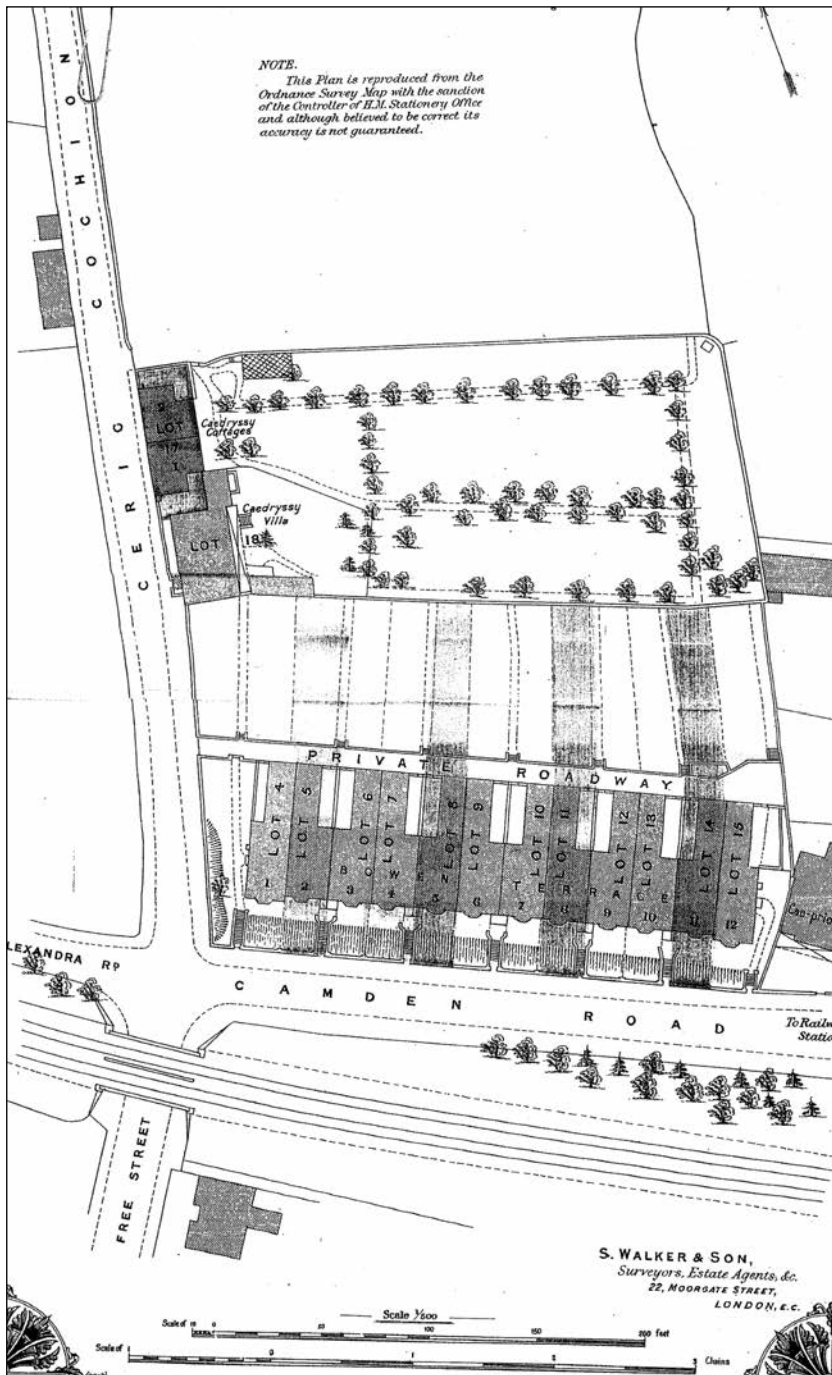


Figure 6.



Bowen Terrace.

The total population of Camden Road had therefore increased from a 1871 figure of 49 (including 25 College), to 155 (including 35 College), a substantial development. The rate of housing was to diminish with only four properties in the 1880s and one in the 1890s. The road itself was being commented on as an interesting and enjoyable walking area for the townspeople, with some adverse thoughts in 1881 on the state of the road. More substantial recognition came in 1882 with the planting of trees. In January, 'This question has often been discussed by the Corporation but a delicacy in voting the funds for this purpose has hitherto prevented the matter being brought to an issue. It is now however taking a tangible shape for the Mayor (Councillor Lewis Jones), Aldermen Games and Prothero and Mr Rhys Davies the Borough Surveyor are now canvassing the town for subscriptions for the object of planting trees along the above-mentioned road and have so far met with considerable success. We understand that nearly £40 has been collected, the Borough Member (Mr Cyril Flower), heading the list with five guineas. It is also proposed if funds will allow to plant lime trees along the Watton. We shall hear more of this project again no doubt for it is well worth the support of the town. Anything that will make the town attractive to visitors must not be neglected'<sup>54</sup> The trees were indeed planted by the end of the year those in the Watton being the gift of Mrs Cobb, whilst Camden Road by public subscriptions. (Lewis Jones incidentally was a wine merchant in High St). The trees were never going to make their half century, as the Council ordered their cutting down in 1930, much to the residents' despair.<sup>55</sup>

The properties built in the 1880s were at the two ends of the road Llochesfa and Easthill (24 and 25 Camden Road), and Woodlands (57 and 59 Camden Road). The Camden Schedule of Counterpart Leases and Agreements of 1914, show for Llochesfa and Easthill an agreement of 99 years from 25.12.1880 at £5.10 p.a. and a lease from 7.5.1883 with John Lewis who owned both houses.<sup>56</sup> Kelly's *Directory* of 1883 records John Lewis living at Llochesfa and a Mrs Strachan at Easthill.<sup>57</sup> The latter's stay was not long as Easthill was advertised to let in November of that year. The same 1914 document gives an agreement of 99 years from 25.3.1880 at £5.5 p.a. and a lease from 20.10.1881 with John Prothero for Woodlands. Again, Kelly's *Directory* has a Charles Brettingham at Woodlands and Prothero at the same address. Brettingham has moved on by 1885, when 'James Hall to auction at the Wellington Hotel on 7.1.1886 Lot 8 Two semi-detached villas called Woodlands situate on the Camden Road which is the most picturesque and eligible position in the Town of Brecon, and are now in the respective occupations of Miss Hornsby at the annual rent of £40 and the other of Mr John Prothero and is of the yearly value of £40. This Lot is held under a lease from the Marquess Camden for 99 years, 4 only of which have expired. The Ground Rent of both villas is £5 10 p.a. Apply to Auctioneers or John Prothero at the Sawmills Brecon'.<sup>58</sup> There are no details of the auction result. The Ordnance Survey map of 1885 illustrates the road position as Figure 7.

A pleasant road and excellent properties, could not help but attract a more undesirable visitor and in 1884 – John MacCarthy and John Carmody privates in the South Wales Borderers stole ten fowls the property of Dr Charles Brettingham; a pair of drawers and two towels from Dr Morris Memorial College; and seven handkerchiefs property of Mrs Gibson. Great interest was taken in the cases, the court being crowded during the whole of the hearing.<sup>59</sup> The remainder of the decade passed without any more excitement or indeed building. The 1891 census however revealed two new developments. Whether the Station had been lived in before that date is unclear, but in 1891 the stationmaster Evan Jones is in situ 31 Brecon, with his wife and four children, together with Annie Bell 24 Radnorshire, as a barmaid and living in the Refreshment Rooms.<sup>60</sup>

The major development in that year was that of Glyngarth, one of the most prominent buildings in Camden Road. This was occupied by John Morgan Thomas 60 Carmarthen Llanllechyd, who came to Brecon in 1878, as Manager of the National Provincial Bank in succession to Mr Thomas Frater, and retired in 1892. A JP and member of Brecon Town Council, he had petitioned the Camden Estates in 1890-1 for permission to purchase two plots of land in the road. A long and detailed correspondence ensued between 1890-4, and indeed the house was built before its conclusion.<sup>61</sup> Thomas had employed Charles W



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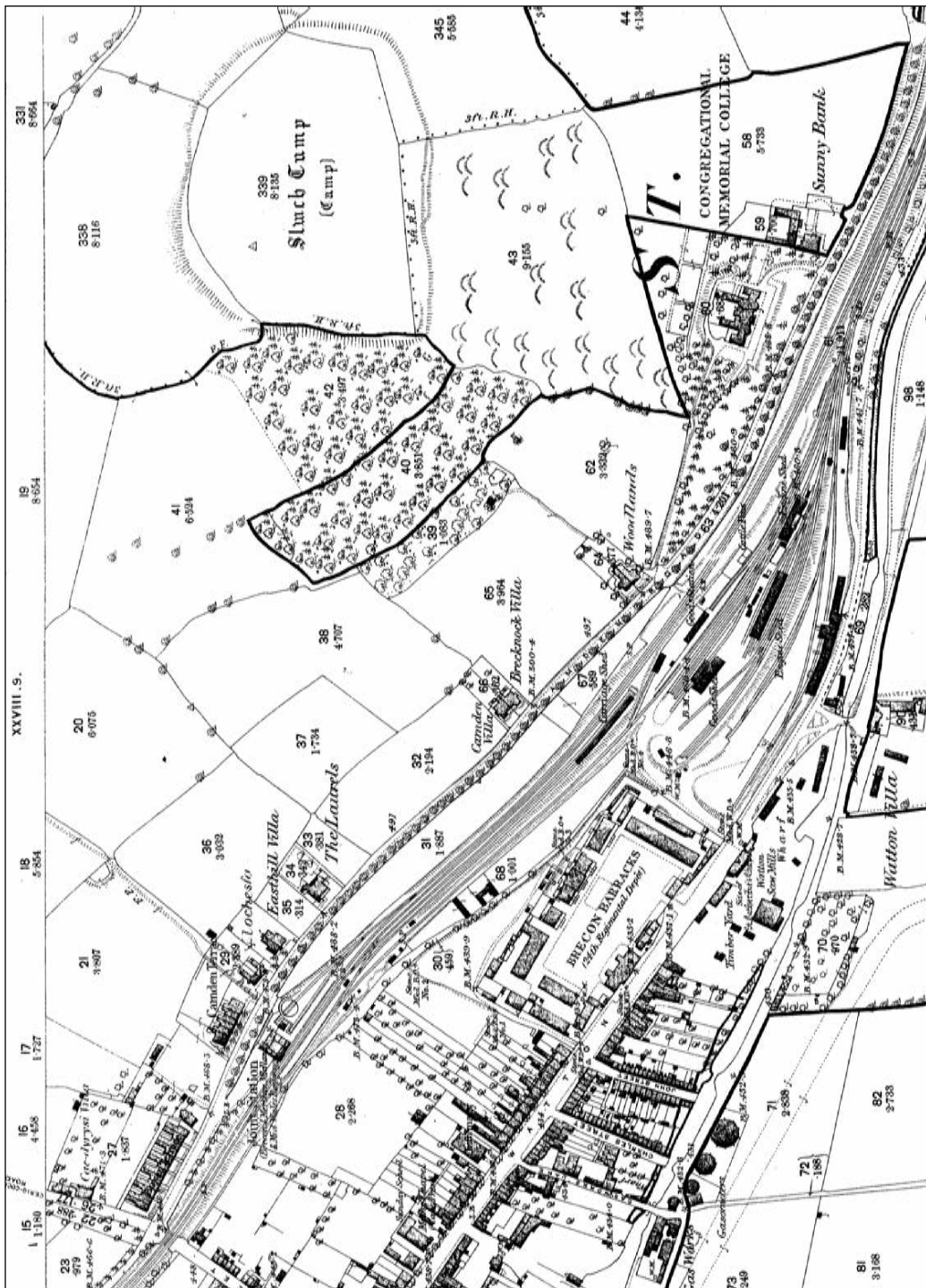


Figure 7.

Best (offices at London, Oxford, Brecon, and Cannes), as his architect and a 28 page specification had been agreed with Benjamin Jenkins his builder. Lewis Williams the Camden Estate agent living in Priory Cottage, and writing to his employer in July 1891 commented 'I cannot agree that no buildings should be put on the Garden ground opposite. Mr Thomas should take his chance of this. We should not of course allow buildings thereof of a lesser value of those in Camden Road, but it is in my opinion extremely improbable that there will ever be building there. We have been nearly thirty years letting land in Camden Road. If Mr Thomas takes these two plots (10 and 11), we shall have let just half of the plots and it would seem to me that we shall be a great deal longer letting the remainder'.<sup>62</sup> Williams was prescient as the next house on Camden Road did not appear until 1912. A photograph of present day Glyngarth is below.

Perhaps Williams should have paid some attention to the after effects of such building, as a letter from 'Ratepayer' in February 1891 complained that 'Some time ago the authorities in Council gave instruction to have notice boards put up on Camden Road, notifying that every person throwing rubbish etc on side of the road will be prosecuted'.<sup>63</sup> Williams, Prothero, and Thomas as members of the Town Council would no doubt have due regard to this message, Williams in particular as he was elected Mayor of Brecon in the following year, and took up office in 1893. He was however highly respected by the Camden Road tenants as in October of that year, 'a large number of the Camden tenancy and friends of



Glyngarth.

*Camden Road, Brecon – 1868–1937*

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the Mayor were present in the Guildhall, and the presentation was made by J Morgan Thomas of Glyngarth who referred to the excellent qualities of the Mayor, and to the good feeling which had always existed between him and those he was connected by business. He thought that the land courts would not be needed if all landlords were like the Marquess Camden, Lord Tredegar, Sir Josiah Bailey, Lord Penrhyn, and Mr Gwynne Holford. The Mayor who was deeply affected responded.<sup>64</sup> Williams was also serving as agent to Captain D. Hughes Morgan J.P.

The 1893 Camden Estate Register appropriately at this time, gives an insight into land apportionment in the road, including which plots had been let, and where else ground rent was being received:

John Prothero	2 houses	£5.5.0	
	Extra land behind	£0.5.0	
	Field adjoining	£6.10.0	
Rev D W Davies		£4.4.0	
J M Thomas	Glyngarth	£10.0.0	Plots 10 and 11
	Extra land adjoining	£1.0.0	
	Field behind and plot at side	£22.0.0	
Executors Charles Gibson	Terraces	£15.10.0	Plots 17 and 18
	Villas		Plot 6
	Land	£5.10.0	Plot 13
Clara Gibson	Extra land behind building plots and plots at side of late Prothero	£1.6.0	
John Lewis	Land	£5.10.0	Plot 15
William James	Cae Prior House and Land	£120.10.0	
John Hando	Garden between Camden Road and Railway	£16.0.0	
Brecon and Methyr Railway	Land	£87.10.0 <sup>65</sup>	

Why there was a twenty one year gap in Camden Road building is difficult to explain. There was certainly a willingness on the part of the estate to offer properties for lease, but perhaps attention had been moved to other adjacent sites on the east side of Brecon for development. For example, building commenced in Alexandra Road, when in April 1889 tenders from builders were invited for the erection of two houses there.<sup>66</sup> Time again meant money, and in April of the following year E M Meredith of the Coffee Tavern was able to offer two houses to let as Beacon View and Tarrall View.<sup>67</sup> These were quickly followed in 1891 with Haringay House and Beacon View again, advertised by F Phillips, Watton and in 1892 Alexander House and Bronwydd House again by Meredith.<sup>68</sup> By 1910 Alexandra Road was partially complete with 16 houses whose Inland Revenue property value ranged from £21–29. The other

consideration could be the end of population growth within the town. The census from 1801 to 1851 showed a remarkable increase from 2,576 to 5,837. By 1891 this had declined to 5,794, become stagnant in 1901 5,875, and 1911 5,908, and then dropped to 5,646 in 1921.<sup>69</sup>

The period between 1891 and 1911 was not however a sterile one for the east side of Brecon, and witnessed a series of developments within and without the area. Non-building land was still being let, by the Tredegar estate in 1894 when David Price auctioned at the Castle Hotel:

‘Lot 1 – Four Pieces of Meadow or Pastureland containing together by estimation 17 1 36, bounded on all sides by lands the property of Lord Tredegar and on the south side by the occupation road leading to the Camp and Rifle Range.’<sup>70</sup>

Camden also let some land in the vicinity of Cae Prior in 1895:

‘Important Letting of Meadow and Pasture Land

Mr David Price has been favoured with instructions from Mr William James (who is leaving), TO LET BY AUCTION on Friday April 25<sup>th</sup> the following lots –

Upper Caedryssu	6 0 0;	Lower Caedryssu	2 0 0;
Camden Road meadow	1 2 0;	Field Adjoining Plantation	6 2 4;
Top Field	9 2 0.		

The lots will be let free of Tithes and Taxes and may be Mown or Grazed and the Hay taken off. Six months credit for all sums or discount for cash at the rate of £6 per cent p.a. Sale to commence at Bulwark House Brecon.<sup>71</sup>

More importantly, building land was made available with:

David Price in 1909 auctioned – Lot 1 Freehold Villa Residence on Cerrigochion Road known as TWYNHAM, frontage of 34' to road and a uniform depth of 135'. Lot 2 Freehold building land adjoining frontage 35' and a depth of 135'.<sup>72</sup>

In 1903 C E Large of the Laurels, the son in law of the Gibson's advertised as ‘To Builders and Others To be let on freehold ground rents BUILDING LAND suitable for the erection of villa residences for which a considerable demand exists. The situation is exceptionally good and in close proximity to the Railway Station. Apply C J E Large, Architect and Surveyor, 8 Lion St.’<sup>73</sup> Are we talking here about 1–4 Dorlangoch which is recorded in 1910 as belonging to Large.

Finally, more land became available in 1908 with ‘Freehold Building Sites for sale can be secured on Caedryssu Field at reasonable prices. Apply Mr David Powell, Caedryssu.’<sup>74</sup>

In 1902 a second teaching establishment came to Camden Road, albeit for a short period with the White Sisters at Woodlands. Josephine Egan's book ‘*A Century of Service in Wales*’ records – On 7 July 1903 three sisters arrived from Carmarthen. Father Griffiths met them at the station and accompanied them to

their rented property called the Woodlands. The Annals for the year 1904 record their early experiences. A few families had ventured to send their children for lessons in needle work and art; several ladies also had asked for lessons. The sisters moved in October of that year to a larger house in Glamorgan St. the property of Councillor Jones Williams which would serve as a convent and sub-let the Woodlands which had been leased to them for three years.<sup>75</sup>

At the same time as the re-commencement of house building, an extremely useful document of property analysis emerged between 1910 and 1912. This was as a result of Lloyd George speaking in the House of Commons in April 1909 on the Finance Bill, and the Inland Revenue carrying out 'Duties on Land Values Record of Valuations made by the Commission of Inland Revenue in accordance with the provision of Part 1 of the Finance Act (1910/100 Act 1910).'<sup>76</sup> We were now able to see with a level of accuracy who owned what and where, and is applied to Camden Road below. The policy was also berated by the *Brecon County Times* in an editorial as 'But one thing seems certain – the placing of further burdens upon the land can have no beneficial effect upon agriculture – and the probability is that before long those who in the agricultural districts of Breconshire a year ago, pinned their faith so confidentially to the Socialist claptrap of the Radicals will have reason to resent of their stupidity'.<sup>77</sup> The newspaper was not enamoured of Lloyd George!

## INLAND REVENUE PROPERTY ASSESSMENT 1910–12

	<i>Occupier</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Property Value</i>
1 Bowen Terrace	Mary Williams	J W Hedger <sup>78</sup>	30
2 Bowen Terrace	J W Hedger	self	25
3 Bowen Terrace	–	W Thomas	25
4 Bowen Terrace	W J Jones	W Thomas	25
5 Bowen Terrace	E Adney	self	25
6 Bowen Terrace	R Manusk	G Pugh	25
7 Bowen Terrace	M Cadwalladr	self	25
8 Bowen Terrace	S Rayson	self	25
9 Bowen Terrace	R Williams	self	25
10 Bowen Terrace	M Davies	self	25
11 Bowen Terrace	M Jones	self	25
12 Bowen Terrace	W Thomas	self	28
Cae Prior	M Kettle	Marquess Camden	22
1 Camden Terrace	M C Bowen	Clara Gibson	31.10
2 Camden Terrace	A E Brace	Clara Gibson	19.10
3 Camden Terrace	E Hobday	Clara Gibson	18
4 Camden Terrace	A H Lapland	Clara Gibson	18

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5 Camden Terrace	E L Rea	Clara Gibson	19.10
6 Camden Terrace	T Ryder	Clara Gibson	33
1 Camden Villas	M John	self	25
2 Camden Villas	F Robinson	M John	25
Llochesfa	J Lewis	self	25
Easthill	W J Thomas	J Lewis	25
Laurels	Clara Gibson	Clara Gibson	45
Trisilian and Stables	C E Kitchin	J A Jebb	60
Woodside	H F W Harries	Clara Gibson	35
Neigwl	A Phillips	Clara Gibson	35
Troedybryn	A C Ross	C J and J Jones	37.10
Hafod	R Newsome	C J and J Jones	36
Memorial College		Trustees	120
House	T Lewis	College	30
House	J Jones	College	30
Garden and Grounds	Wm Dowdeswell	Marquis Camden	5
Sunnybank	G E Thomas	Viscount Tredegar	26.10

Allotment Gardens and Grounds were called: Aneddfa, Briery, Caerwent, Cilsanws, Drosdre, Greenacres, Haulfryn, Heriots, Highfield, Highwood, Panteg, The Chase, Tuffley.

The list revealed:

1. The preponderance of tenant ownership at Bowen Terrace.
2. Ownership by the Gibsons of nine properties within the road.
3. Trisilian and stables is the revised name for Glyngarth, as adopted by J A Jebb who had bought the property from the trustees of J M Thomas
4. The curious naming of the allotments by persons unknown. The names carried on post 1937 when the houses from 68 to 44 inclusive in Camden Road were called by these names.
5. The IR returns show at the end of Bowen Terrace, Clara Gibson as a tenant of the Marquess and owning 'The Beeches at 1 acre 13 roods for £1 15 p.a.'
6. The yield from such a review was expected to net the IR nationally £50.000!

Building resumed in 1912 with four houses being erected in that decade, at Delfryn and Summerfield (14 and 15 Camden Road), and Iscoed and Maesycoed (37 and 39). Delfryn and Summerfield were leased to a David Morgan from 9.12.1913 together with an extra garden to the side to Mrs Margaret Morgan. Slightly earlier on 25.3.1912, Iscoed and Maesycoed were leased to the same David Morgan at £5.10 and £6.10 respectively.<sup>79</sup> This is the

David Morgan, a retired draper who lived at Delfryn, Alexandra Road. When he died in 1921 he left to his daughter Ann – houses at 3 Camden Terrace, Summerfield, Camden Road, The Olives, Alexandra Road, and 19 High St., Brecon.<sup>80</sup> The initial tenants of Iscoed and Clifton Cottage (Maesycoed) were Walter Williams and Dr Lionel Singleton Smith, and were used as separate semi detached properties. This changed in 1919–20, when Morgan sold Iscoed to Mary Gladys Lance of Watton Mount in 1919, and Clifton Cottage to Mary Jebb her sister again of Watton Mount. In 1920 the houses were consolidated as one when Jebb sold to Lance. These were the daughters of J.A. Jebb, whom we have already recorded as living at 6 Camden Terrace in 1881, and in 1910 owning but not tenanting Trisilian (Glyngarth). Initially a Coal and Lime merchant Jebb was a prominent businessman and local politician. He was the General Manager of the Mid Wales Railway, purchased Tylebont Limeworks, Crynant Colliery, Limeworks at Penywyllt, and Gurnos Anthracite Colliery. He lived at Watton Mount with his wife and three daughters and died in 1915.<sup>81</sup> The freehold was bought from the Camdens in 1922 for £200, and Lance who was now living at Glyngarth eventually disposed of the houses to Williams Bros Builders in 1932 for £1,575.

Further along the Road, the Woodlands attracted another educational presence in 1916, when a longer lasting establishment came into being with Miss Park-Brown and Miss Wright ARCM as the Principals who offered ‘Thorough Modern Education Preparation for Exams (Oxford and Cambridge). Boarders received. Moderate fees. Prospectus and References on application. Outside students may attend for special subjects (French, Music, Singing, Book-keeping).<sup>82</sup> Woodland School later became Boughrood House, Brecon High School for Girls in 1925 at the same premises.<sup>83</sup> This period was also the centrepiece of the great estate sales in Breconshire from 1910–25, which affected Camden Road in the Tredegar sale of 1915 and realised over £100,000. The bulk of the properties were sold to sitting tenants, including C.E.F.Walker who purchased Lot 55 Sunnybank for £1,100, an acreage of 6a 1r 29p. The Marquess Camden also purchased Lot 57 Sunnybank Wood 3a 3r 16p, no price is shown and the timber had already been sold separately.<sup>84</sup>

This was also a time for the departure of the Gibson family who had played a major part in the development of the Road for over 50 years. Charles had died in 1882, and his wife Clara survived until 1917. In 1919 2–6 Camden Terrace and 1–4 Dorlangoch were put up for sale the latter being C E Large’s contribution.<sup>85</sup> The *Brecon County Times* saw it as:

Next Mr Price put up 5 houses in Camden Terrace held for a term of years of which about 52 years are unexpired. Four of the houses being subject to an apportioned ground rent of £2 each per annum, and the fifth (a larger house to an apportioned ground rent of £2 5s per annum). The larger house no 6 Camden Terrace let to Mr

H S Bond at £35 p.a. was sold to Mr Gilbert Thomas of Brecon for £810. No 2 let to Mr Wilkinson for £19.10 was sold to Mr Jones Gwarllan, Llanfihangel Nant Bran for £375; No 3 let to Mr Gwillim for £18, and sold to David Morgan of Brecon for £350; No 4 let to Mr King for £18 and sold to Mr W J Jones of Brecon for £350;<sup>86</sup> and No 5 let to Rev D H Henry for £19 10 and sold to Stanley Hughes of Brecon for £430. Numbers 1 to 4 Dorlangoch went for £310, 300, 310, and 360 respectively. Further income was derived when in 1922 Mary Adelaide Gibson, the unmarried daughter living at the Laurels died in the July and in September Mr W J Price advertised it as:

The attractive and FREEHOLD built residence known as the 'LAURELS' – The whole comprises – 4 reception rooms, billiard room, kitchen and usual offices. 6 bedrooms, bathroom 2 wcs and lavatory. Water and gas laid on. Situated in a delightful residential part of the town and within a few minutes walk of the station.<sup>87</sup>

There is no record of the price which it fetched. A present day photograph of the Laurels is below. Again, Camden Road was not the only source of activity in east Brecon. In 1921 B.L.Pritchard sold a development area nearby as 'Lot 6 – About 5 acres of excellent Meadow, pasture and other land at Cerrigochion and Belle Vue, Brecon in the respective occupation of Mr E.L. Millett, the representatives of the late Dr G.P. Francis, Mr D. Fisher, and Mr D. Healy. The land is exceptionally well suited for building sites. Lot 5 – 1 Belle Vue, Lot 1 – Glasfryn, Alexandra Road.'<sup>88</sup> But by far the major sale was in 1921 when the Camden Estates sold to its long serving tenant Mrs Kettle of Cae Prior, who bought



The Laurels.



## Camden Road, Brecon – 1868–1937

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41 acres for £4,500. This is a considerable portion of what is now Camden Crescent and Dolglas and is set out in a Schedule below and a Map as Figure 8:

No on OS map	Description	Acreage		
		A	R	P
1104	Cae Prior House Garden and Buildings		1	18
1105	Field adjoining		2	4
1103	Field behind	1	2	36
1102	Field and Hay Barn etc	3	3	9
1095	Far Field	6	0	12
1112	Field adjoining Camden Road		3	10
1094	Top Field	8	2	25
1096a	Field adjoining Plantation	6	2	4
1096b	Plantation	3	2	0
1096c	Wood			28
1093	Pasture	5	3	17
1101	Pasture (Late Kirk)	3	—	5
Total		41	—	8 <sup>89</sup>

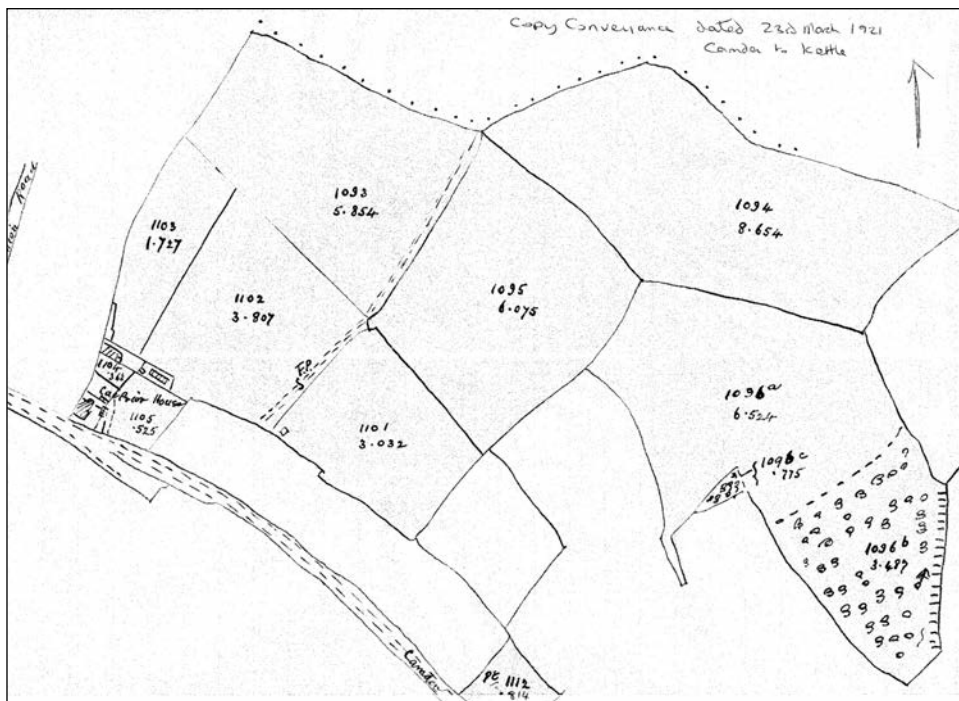


Figure 8.

The majority of building on the north side of Camden Road had now been completed, and Camden influence was declining with the leasehold on nine houses being sold in 1929. There were a further six properties to be infilled between 1922 and 1937. At the western end, The Beeches (number 27) was sold in 1929 to William Probyn Evans a draughtsman from Llanspyddid. The plot, number 35, had an area of .314 acres, realised £135, and was built between 1930 and 1933. The building was erected by B.E. Jenkins in conjunction with the owner who possessed professional skills, and it appeared in the 1933 Electoral Roll. In the agreement there was no restriction as to building on the opposite side of the road, although this was not taken up.<sup>90</sup> The remaining five properties, two houses and three bungalows were built between Neigwl (number 45), and Troedybryn (number 57). The impetus for this was in 1920 when Mrs E. Jenkins (the widow of B.E. Jenkins), bought 5.07 acres from Camden Estates, made up of 3.964 Pasture and 1.083 Plantation. She later in 1922 sold 0.4 acres to A.H. Tyler, plumber and contractor who built Oakfield (number 49) in 1924/5. He later sold it in 1926 to Watkin Edgar Edwards of 35 The Watton, Grocer and Confectioner as:

‘For Sale Oakfield, Camden Road, Brecon. With good garden, greenhouse, pitlight, garage, poultry and woodsheds. Specially built for labour saving and comfort. Any reasonable offer accepted. Possession within a few weeks. Apply A.H. Tyler, Canal Wharf, Brecon.’ Tyler’s work area is now the builders yard of Robert Price Ltd. The details of the property stated that ‘the land to the north east was owned by Elizabeth Jane Jenkins and to the north west by the late Henry Frederick William Harries.’<sup>91</sup>

Harries had died of a heart attack in his office, aged 66 in April 1926. His home was at Woodside. He had been the clerk to the Breconshire County Council, solicitor to the Tredegar Estates (succeeding his brother in law H Edgar Thomas) and an eminent figure in Breconshire society for many years. In an editorial the *Brecon County Times* declared ‘The central pillar of Breconshire local government has fallen and many of us who have been connected with the structure in one way or another are standing about aghast, fearful that the whole edifice will totter down to ruin on our heads.’<sup>92</sup> It did not of course, and Harries was succeeded by his deputy and friend Albert Jolly of the Laurels, Camden Road.

Jolly acted quickly in putting the property on the market, later that month as ‘Sale of Woodside, The House will be offered firstly in one lot and if not sold as such will be offered as two Houses as originally built.’<sup>93</sup> Jolly was appointed as Clerk of the Council in May at a salary of £750,<sup>94</sup> and with pressure of work, left the sale in June to W.J. Price, Auctioneer who ‘For sale leasehold houses of Woodside and Brynlllys and two building plots of 1,966 and 1,475 yards.’ All property was withdrawn at £2,150, Woodside at £875, Brynlllys at £925.<sup>95</sup>

Mr. Price afterwards disposed of all the property on one lot by private treaty, but to whom and for how much is not recorded.

Mrs. Jenkins had sold the land next to number 43/45 to Harries in 1922, and a house Brynceri was built in 1932 and occupied by Davies, Emlyn Oswald, Jenni. In the Electoral Roll of 1937 the house is called by its present name, that of The Friars (number 47) within which resided the Clerk to the Breconshire Education Committee. The remaining house and two bungalows were Danybryn (number 51) Rees, John Elvet, Dorothy; Windyridge (number 53) Parry, Thomas John, Lilian Mary, Victor Richards; and Southcote (number 55) Williams, Mary, Jones, Elizabeth Mary; Brynceri and Danybryn were built in the same year by Jenkins Builders,<sup>96</sup> and appear in the Electoral Roll of 1933 with Southcote built in 1931. Windyridge was the last construction in 1936, and appears in the 1937 Electoral Roll.<sup>97</sup>

In 1935, under instructions from the trustee of the wills of the late Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Jebb, the Leasehold Residence of 'Stanwardine', formerly known as Glyngarth came up for sale. The property 'comprising an exceedingly well built house containing Hall, 3 Reception Rooms, 5 Principal Bedrooms, and the usual domestic offices – Garage for 2 cars, Stabling etc, and well laid out Tennis lawn and kitchen garden.'<sup>98</sup> This marked the end of property sales on the north side, until the beginning of the War, and attention in estate circles, moved for the first time to the south side of the Road.

Views of the Beacons for some of the existing houses on the north side of Camden Road were permanently impaired after 1935, when the first houses on the south side were built, inevitably, by B.E. Jenkins. Up until that date the area had been rented from the Camden Estates as the Allotment Gardens, which stretched from opposite Camden Terrace to the Woodlands. The 1868–9 rent audit confirms William Miles as 'holding the garden between Camden Road and the Railway at £8 p.a.'<sup>99</sup> This had increased to £16 with William John Hando in 1893,<sup>100</sup> and remained the same for William Dowdeswell in 1910;<sup>101</sup> Mrs Dowdeswell (Lewis) in 1923; and Mr. Perry in 1928. Correspondence between Camden and his agent J.H. Forrester Addie in April of that year states that 'Jenkins the Builder asks if you will sell him about 2,700 sq.yds. of land for building from a strip of ground which lies between the G.W.R. and Camden Road. You have already sold most of your land adjoining Camden Road and I see no reason why the rest should not be sold as soon as there is a demand for it for building sites. The price I shall want from Jenkins is £600 per acre and I believe he will be prepared to pay that amount.'<sup>102</sup>

By this date the Camden revenues from Breconshire were declining, and amongst other problems, they were faced with a bill from Brecon Council for the demolition of numbers 6, 7 and 8 Priory Hill. They only had a value of £159 and to put in a reasonable state of repair would cost £316. A demolition order

was issued by the court in June<sup>103</sup> and later that same month the 4th Marquess sold to Stanley Ewart Jenkins of Coryton, Brecon the 2,700 sq.yds. for £337.10.<sup>104</sup> Jenkins was also Chairman of the Housing Committee of Brecon Borough Council at this time. The *Brecon and Radnor Express* has no record of an advertisement for the future properties, which came as four sets of semi-detached houses. (numbers 68 to 54). A source of who bought what, records the following apportionment in 1935–6, the going rate being £600 for a semi and £1,100 for a pair. Three of the names on the list appear in the Electoral Roll of 1937 Ellis, Miles, and Jones. What is incomplete is an understanding of the naming of the houses, which follow the allotment titles as detailed on the I.R. Survey of 1910–12, with a mixture of English and Welsh derivations. The Electoral Rolls of the 1950s and 1960s record that as the houses were built on the allotment sites, they continued to take up the names given to that piece of ground. Whether this was in the Camden contract it is not possible to say:

Robert, Mabel, and Elizabeth Ellis	257 sq.yds
Enoch Miles	288 "
Reginald Albert Ernest Wilkinson	320 "
Edith Margaret Graves Smith	345 "
Isabel Deery	358 "
Florence May Jones	780 "
	2,348 "

The 1937 Electoral Roll as Appendix 1 completes almost seventy years of house building in Camden Road, and records the existence of some 125 adults in residence, not including the College. The area was rightly considered to be one of the pre-eminent sites within Brecon, and the home of many members of the professional and mercantile classes, as well as the railway servants in the initial phases. They are noted in the *Directories* as participating fully in public life as officers and members, not least as Clerk to the County Council! Accepting the marketing terms used by estate agents, it is apposite to finish on an extract from an advertisement for the auction of Windyridge in 1944 describing the area – ‘Situated in a delightful position in an exclusively residential quarter with full southern aspect commanding fine views of the surrounding hills and vales with the noted Slwch Tump as a rural background.’<sup>105</sup>

ANTHONY J. BELL

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Pigot and Co's *National Commercial Directory* p. 453
- <sup>2</sup> *Brycheiniog XVI* 'The Townscape and Economy of Brecon 1800-1860' p. 103–24.
- <sup>3</sup> Tourist map of Brecon, courtesy of the *Brecon and Radnor Express*.
- <sup>4</sup> The Camden map can be found within the Pratt Papers, Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone. U 840 C9/1. Powys Archives has a CD ROM setting out the maps of the properties held within the county B/X/138/1. Permission to use these for copying purposes is required from the Centre. The Tredegar map and schedule are at the National Library of Wales, and the schedule only at Powys Archives B/D/BM/A112. For comparison the Tredegar estate papers at NLW from 1324-20th occupy 16.5 cubic metres of space with 887 volumes et alia NLW GB 0210 TREDEGAR!
- <sup>5</sup> At this date of 1780, John Jeffreys, a relative by marriage is the agent for the Camden Estates.
- <sup>6</sup> A copy of the Tithe map and schedule is at Brecon Library P/X/9/5/7.
- <sup>7</sup> *Brycheiniog XVI* p. 107.
- <sup>8</sup> Hunt's *Commercial Directory* p. 87–95.
- <sup>9</sup> Powys Archives Railway Acts B/X/036/9.
- <sup>10</sup> Hugh Thomas, *Essay Towards the History of Brecknockshire 1698* p. 24.
- <sup>11</sup> Tredegar map 1820 National Library of Wales 258.
- <sup>12</sup> 40 perches = 1 rood; 4 roods = 1 acre.
- <sup>13</sup> Electoral Registers incidentally for 1840 and 1852–3 respectively, are held at Powys Archives with references B/BR/148/30 and B/QS/RE e.
- <sup>14</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 EW15.
- <sup>15</sup> *Annals and Antiquities of the counties and county families of Wales*. T.Nicholas Thomas 1875.
- <sup>16</sup> All names listed, follow the format of the census returns.
- <sup>17</sup> *Brecon County Times* 11.5.1866.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.12.1872.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.3.1895.
- <sup>20</sup> An extremely useful source of information, the *Inland Revenue Survey 1910-12*, is held at Powys Archives B/LVR/1/14,15.
- <sup>21</sup> Barrie, D.S.M. *'The Brecon and Merthyr Railway'* 1991.
- <sup>22</sup> *Brecon County Times* 17.10.1868. After Gibson's death in 1882, the Proprietess of the Refreshment Rooms was Miss M.A. Griffiths who added 'Refreshments of all kinds. Reasonable Charges. Good Beds. Hot Dinners on Market Days. Chops and Steaks on the shortest notice. Also Tea, Coffee, Cocoa and all Non-Alcoholic Drinks. Open from 5.30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday 7 to 10 p.m.' *Brecon County Times* 11.8.1883 .
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.3.1870.
- <sup>24</sup> Accounts of the opening of the Railway are detailed in the *Brecon County Times* of the 19.3; 13.8; and 27.8; 1870.
- <sup>25</sup> *Census Returns* Brecon St. Mary 1871.
- <sup>26</sup> Worrall's *Commercial Directory* p. 40–44.
- <sup>27</sup> *Brecon County Times* 23.3.1867.
- <sup>28</sup> Jones, Theophilus, *A History of Brecknockshire*, Glanusk, Vol. IV.
- <sup>29</sup> Powys Archives B/X/101.
- <sup>30</sup> Accounts of the opening of the College are detailed in the *Brecon County Times* of the 11.8; and 25.9; 1869, and of the foundation ceremony in 15.6.1867. The College as an institution started to disintegrate in 1953, when part of their lands were sold to K.Whitehead for building purposes. The first house was number 67 Camden Road, which is recorded in the Brecon Borough Council minutes as being granted planning approval on 28.4.1955. The College building itself was sold to J.Walters in 1962/3.

<sup>31</sup> *Brecon County Times* 22.8.1868.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.2.1869.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.2.1869.

<sup>34</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 EW 25.

<sup>35</sup> *Brecon County Times* 11.9.1896.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.10.1871.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*; 13.1.1872.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*; 16.11.1872.

<sup>39</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 EW 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Brecon County Times* 9.3.1872. Compare for example police constable wages in Brecon of 18s per week in 1872, rising to £1 3s in 1876.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 14.6.1873.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.9.1873 .

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.7.1878.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.2.1869 One of the problems faced by residents of Camden Terrace in succeeding years was the lack of a separate back entrance, as in, for example Bowen Terrace. With the closure of the railway in the 1960s, an attempt was made by Miss E.J.Powell, 5 Camden Terrace on behalf of herself and the other 3 occupiers of houses in this terrace for garage sites on the railway land near the old station. Brecon Borough Council suggested that they acquire land on the Camden Crescent development but to no avail. Brecon Borough Council minutes 29.10.1968 .

<sup>45</sup> The Return of Owners of Land 1872–3 (England and Wales) Parly Papers 1874. Powys Archives P/X/9/M/7.

<sup>46</sup> Information kindly received from Marianne Davies.

<sup>47</sup> *Brecon County Times* 5.7.1873.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.3.1904.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.4.1904.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.11.1904.

<sup>51</sup> I am indebted to Mr.P.Randall for this document and other information.

<sup>52</sup> *Brecon County Times* 9.2.1922.

<sup>53</sup> A long and detailed obituary on his death is recorded in the *Brecon County Times* of 3.10.1890.

<sup>54</sup> *Brecon County Times* 29.1.1882.

<sup>55</sup> *Brecon County Times* 27.2.1930 C.E.F.Walker of Walkers Fruit Trees, Sunnybank mourned this loss, 'With regard to the cutting down on the Camden Road, I should like to remind those responsible that the trees there break the face of the gales, give us shelter from sun and rain, absorb the deposit from the smoke of the trains which spoil our flowers and soils the paint on our houses, blots out the railway and are a source of beauty.'

<sup>56</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 EW 25.

<sup>57</sup> Kelly's *Directory* 1883 p. 228–234.

<sup>58</sup> *Brecon County Times* 11.12.1885.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 18.1.1884.

<sup>60</sup> Residential occupation lasted until well into the 20C, with the Electoral Roll of 1952/3 showing 6 adults in the Railway Station House and 5 in the Station Bungalow, and the 1961/2 Roll showing 6 and 4 respectively. Earlier Kelly's *Directory* of 1914 recorded a David Williams as occupying the Refreshment Rooms, and the opening up of a Bookshop by Frank Mason and Co. Ltd. *Census Returns* Brecon St. Mary 1891.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.11.1892 notes on his retirement, and 'B.Jenkins has just completed for him a very handsome residence in the Camden Road.' and 19.12.1902 his obituary.

<sup>62</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 EWO 11.

<sup>63</sup> *Brecon County Times* 13.2.1891.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.11.1893 Williams died aged 59 in 1912 whilst undertaking the Camden rent audit. His obituary saw it as 'A pillar has fallen in our local Israel'. 28.11.1912. He left in his will £484.

<sup>65</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 AW1-63.

<sup>66</sup> *Brecon County Times* 5.4.1889.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.4.1890.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*; 4.3.1892.

<sup>69</sup> Breconshire censuses 1801–1921.

<sup>70</sup> *Brecon County Times* 27.4.1894.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*; 12.4.1895.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*; 6.8.1909.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*; 4.12.1903 Large and H.E.Thomas, Sunnybank were the only two possessors of telephones within the Road at numbers Brecon 31 and 47 respectively. *Post Office Telephone Directory 1907*.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; 6.3.1908.

<sup>75</sup> Josephine Egan *A Century of Service in Wales*, p.55–8. Information received from Sister Bonaventure and Dr.Forrester. The *Brecon County Times* also records the event in 14.8.1903.

<sup>76</sup> Powys Archives B/LVR/1/14,15.

<sup>77</sup> *Brecon County Times* 12.8.1910.

<sup>78</sup> J.W. Hedger was a wine merchant from Hereford, who had taken over Gibson's business. More importantly he was the only resident of Camden Road who was Mayor of Brecon (1905–6) whilst living in the Road.

<sup>79</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 EW25.

<sup>80</sup> *Brecon County Times* 31.1.1921.

<sup>81</sup> There is a lovely account that when the Jebbs lived at Watton Mount, Mary Jebb and her three pretty daughters, Elsie Marion, Gladys Mary, and Dorothy Atcherley would sit on the balcony of a Sunday afternoon, whilst the local swains patrolled the area, prior to meeting them in chapel. Jebb incidentally served also as Mayor and High Sheriff.

<sup>82</sup> *Brecon County Times* 11.5.1916.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*; 12.3.1925.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*; 1.7.1915 A very detailed auction list of part of the Tredegar Estates. A review of all large estate sales between 1910 and 1925 is available in the May 2008 issue of Hanes, available at Brecon Library.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*; 18.9.1919.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*; 10.12.1925 A good profit was made on this property when it was sold in 1925 for £520 to Mr.Evans, Bungalow, near Brecon.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*; 14.9.1922.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*; 29.9.1921.

<sup>89</sup> Information received from Hilary Williams. The 1891 census shows William James age 44 as Dairy Farmer at Cae Prior. The *Brecon County Times* printed his advertisement for 'milk, milk – Fresh milk may be had here daily at 8.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. 3d per quart. Skimmed milk daily. Fresh butter every evening.' 2.1.1891. Mrs Kettle is at Cae Prior in the 1901 census aged 54 – Farmer, Widow. Her father in law Albert Kettle had a shop in Ship St.,as the 'Sole Agent for the Celebrated Stroud Sausages' and died at Cae Prior in 1899. *Brecon County Times* 17.3.1899.

<sup>90</sup> Assistance with these details from Mr. M. Oxnard.

<sup>91</sup> *Brecon County Times* 3.6.1926. Also from the author's deeds.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*; 1.4.1926. Kelly's *Directory* of 1914 records Harries as a partner in the firm Thomas and Harries solicitor. Clerk of the Peace, Steward of the manor of Brecon, Commissioner of Oaths, 4 The Bulwark. A pen portrait of Harries by Edwin Davies the editor is in the *Brecon County Times* of 7.11.1912.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*; 29.4.1926.

<sup>94</sup> 20.5.1926.

<sup>95</sup> 24.6.1926.

<sup>96</sup> Jenkins had always had a presence in this area leasing a Field and Wood Nos 1097 and 1099 for £14 from the Camden Estates in 1912 U 840 AW1-63.

<sup>97</sup> *Brecon County Times* 23.6.1944 Windyridge was sold at auction for £1,975. Solicitor – Albert Jolly, Auctioneer – W.J. Price.

<sup>98</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 AW1 63. Glyngarth epitomises the problems of the researcher with the constant changing of it's name from Glyngarth to Trisilian to Stanwardine and then back to Glyngarth. The postman at least did not have a problem after 1971, as the Brecon Borough Council decided that all houses in the town from that date should be referred to by number only!

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid* U 840 AW1 63.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid* U 840 AW1 63.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid* U 840 AW1 63 The Dowdeswells were well known publicans at the turn of the century. Kelly's *Directory* 1891 has George at the King William Inn, 82 The Watton, who later died in 1897 aged 65. His son William Henry is in Kelly's *Directory* 1906 as at the Victoria Inn, High St and dying in 1916 aged 61.

<sup>102</sup> Pratt Papers U 840 EW12.

<sup>103</sup> *Brecon and Radnor Express* 13.6.1935 and 25.7.1935.

<sup>104</sup> Incidentally, J.E. Parkinson of Libanus applied to Brecon Borough Council to purchase 700 sq.yds of railway land adjoining a building plot to the east of Highfield (number 68). The Borough Surveyor thought that there was no benefit to sell the land and in any case when the regrading has taken place the land could only be developed as suggested by the applicant by the construction of a 25 foot retaining wall and fill behind it. The application was initially refused, but granted at the end of the year for two bungalows.

<sup>105</sup> *Brecon and Radnor Express* 23.6.1944.



## APPENDIX 1

## 1937 ELECTORAL ROLL CAMDEN ROAD

1.	1 Bowen Terrace	Williams, Mary Ann, Gladys
2	2 Bowen Terrace	Hedger, James Wallace, Janet Mary (wine and spirit merchant, formerly an Alderman on Brecon Town Council)
3	3 Bowen Terrace	Francis, David Stanley, May
4	4 Bowen Terrace	Meredith, Frank James, Margaret
5	5 Bowen Terrace	Vergette, Robert George, Mabel Catherine
6	6 Bowen Terrace	Lewis, Mary; Worthing, Camelia
7	7 Bowen Terrace	Cadwalladr, Mary, Bessie; Evans, John; Lloyd, David (Cadwalladr are recorded as living in this house from 1906–1988)
8	8 Bowen Terrace	Rayson, Grace Elizabeth; Cartwright, Phyllis Lona; Price, Dilys; Prosser, Roger; Morgan, Gilbert David. (Rayson's father employed by the Midland Railway lived in the house in 1891. This was a standard lodgings with Price a senior teacher at Brecon H.S. until the 1970s)
9	9 Bowen Terrace	Pryse-Jones, Humphrey, Mildred, Lizzie (presumably owned by the Trustees of Bethel Chapel who sought planning permission for a garage in 1966)
10	10 Bowen Terrace	Livesey, Kate; French, Irene (Livesey the grandmother of Lord Livesey, former Lib Dem M.P. for Brecon and Radnor)
11	11 Bowen Terrace	Collier, Fred Osmond, Alice Caroline (the Breconshire County Council Treasurer)
12	12 Bowen Terrace	Price, William Thomas, Elizabeth Blanche; Thomas, Annie
13	Cae Prior Railway Station House	Kettle, Margaret; Williams, Mary Price, Alice Ann; Lewis, Herbert Noel, Lucy; Jones, Frank, Dora; Stubbs, Amelia (Jones is the Station Master)
	Railway Station Bungalow	Jones, Daniel, Elizabeth, William Henry; Smith, Harry William, Mabel Robinson; White, Frederick
14	Delfryn	Jenkins, Gwladys Mary
15	Summerfield	Davies, Merfyn Thomas, Ida Gwenllian; Quinan, Margaret Frances (Davies later to become the first President of the N.F.U. of the U.K. in 1932)
16	1 Camden Terrace	Jarvis, Mary Eveline; Moore, Doris Gwendoline (occupied by a Margaret Bowen from 1883 to 1926 who died leaving £7,200)
17	2 Camden Terrace	Jones, Margaret
18	3 Camden Terrace	Ashcroft, Anne; Williams, Catherine
19	4 Camden Terrace	Evans, Pierce Hughes, Ellen Mary

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*Brycheiniog*

- 20 5 Camden Terrace Shapland, Albert Henry, Jessie, Joseph, Nellie  
 21 6 Camden Terrace Williams, Robert Vivian, Sarah Edith  
 22 1 Camden Villas Phillips, Mary Oliver; Williams, Mary Jane  
 23 2 Camden Villas Edwards, David Miall, Lilian Clutton, Elizabeth Jane  
 24 Llochesfa Johns, Edith (the Lewis family lived here from 1884 to 1933)  
 25 Easthill Williams, John Thomas, Margaret Elizabeth  
 27 The Beeches Evans, William Probyn, Mary Ann  
 29 The Laurels Jolly, Albert, Gertrude; Valentine, John, Margaret (Jolly Breconshire County Council Clerk. Sold to them by C.E. Large in 1922. Home of the Gibson family from 1881 to 1922)  
 35 Trisilian Coppage, Arden Henry, Annie; Lewis, Edith (Glyngarth, temporarily called Trisilian. Home at various times to the Jebbs and de Wintons. In 1929 the Electoral Roll showed a collection of Breconshire Society viz. Jebb, Mary; Jones, Ethel; Williams, Mary Elizabeth Garnons; Wilson, Mabel; Lance, Mary; Dixon, Annie; Hodgkiss, Hetty Stanwardine)  
 37 Iscoed Lewis, William Griffith, Edith Garden; Thomas, Margaret  
 39 Maesycoed Corbett, Alfred John, Emily  
 43 Woodside Morris, John, Ellen Mary  
 45 Hill-Side Morgan, Evan, Olive Mary (house also called Brynlllys)  
 47 The Friars Leonard, Albert, Violet Lilian (Clerk to the Breconshire Education Committee) the Leonard family have lived here from 1934 to the present  
 49 Oakfield Evans, Evan Ingram, Nora Eleanor  
 51 Danybryn Phillips, Rees, Margaret; Roberts, Ernest (Aitkens have resided here from 1958 to the present day)  
 53 Windyridge Parry, Thomas John, Lilian Mary, Victor Richards  
 55 Southcote Williams, Mary; Jones, Elizabeth Mary  
 57 1 Woodlands Lloyd, Catherine Mary; Wynter, Jessie (also known as Troedybryn)  
 59 2 Woodlands McCellan, Sarah Georgina Corbatta; Morgan, Dorothy (also known as Hafod; in 1914 the home of the Tredegar Estate agent Gilbert D.E. Thomas; Dr. Forester has lived here from 1952 to the present day)  
 Memorial College Davies, William Mansel and 37 staff and students  
 72 Sunnybank Powell, Elizabeth; Walker, Charles Edward Fitz-gerald, Florence Vera; Thomas, Megan  
 66 Highfield Ellis, Robert Edward, Mabel  
 64 Haulfryn Miles, Enoch, Margaretta  
 62 High-Wood James, Lewis Robert, Mabel Annie  
 60 Ardwyn Williams, Thomas Lloyd, Gladys

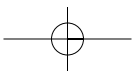
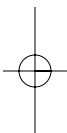
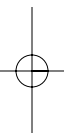
*Camden Road, Brecon – 1868–1937*

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58	Caerwent	Davies, Daniel Horton, Edith Anna
56	Pant Teg	Jones, Arthur, Florence May
54	Cilsanws	Vickery, John Sanders, Muriel
52	Green-Acres	Woozley, Clifford John, Ruby Victoria

The Electoral Roll also registered those with an Occupational Qualification – O  
– with property recorded under Camden Road:

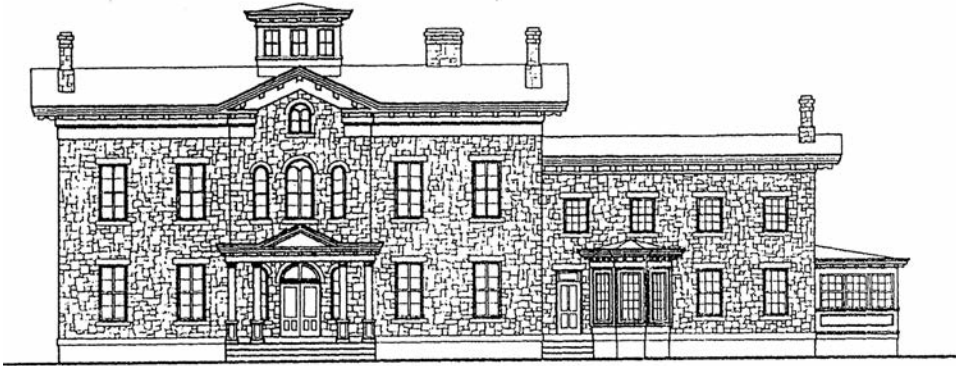
Allotment nr., Station	Harris, William	12 Postern
"	Partridge, Albert	30 Walnut Square
"	Palmer, George	10 Newmarsh Street
"	Carter, William Charles	4 St. David's Street
"	Edward, William Henry	19 Newmarsh Street
Land	Walters, Thomas	Pencerrig, Brecon
Land	Walters, Lewis	Upper Pontwillim, Brecon
Field	Davies, Roger David	Glandwr, Garthbrenghy
Garden	Lewis, Samuel	5 Lion Street
Field	Evans, William	Cwmgwydy, Brecon
Land, Slwch Tump	George, David	Brennan, New Cross, Aberystwyth
Land, Slwch Tump	George, John	Llwynbrain, Llanfihangel-y- Creuddyn, Aberystwyth
Land, Slwch Tump	George, Rhys Owen	Garth Farm, Llanilar, Aberystwyth
Land, Slwch Tump	George, Trevor Lloyd	Penwern Farm, New Cross, Aberystwyth
Fields	Jones, William Morgan	Brynmoer, Pwllgloyw
Field	Jones, David John	Cilmaenhaven, Garthbrenghy
Fields	Morgan, June Mary	Alltybrain
Field	Powell, Frederick	Pentwyn, Llanfrynach
Fields	Powell, William	Penrheol, Llanfrynach
Field	Pugh, William Henry	Llwynfedwen, nr. Brecon
Fields	Powell, Thomas	Modrydd, nr. Brecon
Field	Williams, Josiah	Slwch Farm, Brecon



## BRECKNOCK OVERSEAS

*This is intended as an occasional series, featuring Brecknock connections further afield. Readers' contributions or suggestions gratefully received. Ed.*

### BRECKNOCK HALL, LONG ISLAND



Brecknock Hall, Greenport, New York.

Almost at the north-eastern tip of Long Island, New York State, along the North Road outside the village of Greenport, stands an historic link with Brecknockshire – an imposing mansion called Brecknock Hall. The noble, if reticent, Brecknock Hall is set on a verdant knoll and has been described as being one of the best examples of 19<sup>th</sup> Century stone built Italianate architecture in the area.

Brecknock Hall had a long and distinguished history as a family home from its construction in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but it began to deteriorate from about the mid 1960s, when it left the original family ownership, remained unoccupied, and was even threatened with demolition. The property was purchased in 1997 for the development of a serviced retirement community, Peconic Landing, and the new owners signed a stewardship agreement to ensure the conservation of Brecknock Hall in perpetuity. Currently being restored to its former glory by the Brecknock Hall Foundation, a non-profit-making charitable trust established in 2004, it is now listed on both the U S National and the New York State Registers of Historic Places.

Brecknock Hall was built as the family residence of David Gelston Floyd, a distinguished businessman, whaling entrepreneur, and true American aristocrat, the grandson of General William Floyd of Revolutionary War fame and the only Long Islander to have signed the Declaration of Independence.

General William Floyd was born at Mastic, Long Island, on the 17th of December, 1734. His father was Nicoll Floyd, an opulent and respectable landholder, whose ancestors had come to America from Brecknockshire about

the year 1680, settling on Long Island. William's father died while his son was still young, and left him heir to a large estate.

William Floyd's grandson David was born on the Floyd estate at Mastic, Long Island on 1st May 1802, and first sought his fortune working for his maternal grandfather, David Gelston, the very wealthy and well-connected Collector of the Port of New York (Customs). David's business interests focussed on whaling, and he moved to Sag Harbor on Long Island, then an important shipping and whaling harbour. When the Long Island Railroad completed its eastern terminus at Greenport, David moved to the small town, and established a successful business in chandlery, shipping and whaling, and had other interests in warehousing, banking and property.

On July 31, 1845, the 43-year old David Gelston Floyd married the 38-year old Lydia Smith, a direct descendant of Tangier and William Smith (founders of Smithtown). He bought about 100 acres from Joshua P. Youngs, great, great grandson of Southold Town's founder, the Reverend John Youngs, and work soon began on his new project, mainly using stone quarried on the estate. For \$2.00 per day, Scots masons shaped and erected the fine, random ashlar walls. Other materials, notably stone lintels, were brought across the Sound by schooner from Connecticut. From ground-breaking to completion, Brecknock Hall took six years to construct, and was completed in 1857.

It contained many innovative features for the period, such as central heating, indoor bathrooms, gas lighting, and speaking tubes in every room. Since price was not a consideration, the finest workmen, materials, decoration, and effects (furniture, kitchen utilities, objets d'art, etc.) were used throughout. The mansion was said to have cost over \$30,000 (making it one of the most expensive buildings in the region at that time). None of the original furniture or furnishings is left, although a few pieces are on display at the Suffolk Historical Museum in Riverhead, NY.

Brecknock Hall was the centre of a very productive farm estate, and was largely self-sufficient, and managed to make a profit on its surplus produce. Cattle were kept, initially Jerseys, later Aberdeen Angus. The house also had acclaimed gardens, tended and supervised by Lydia Smith Floyd, and later by her daughter. Sadly, these gardens have long disappeared, except for a few dispirited boxwood bushes.

The name Brecknock was given to the hall in loving tribute to Brecknockshire, the ancestral home county of the Floyds. The tracing of the Brecknockshire Floyd family, forbears of yet another Welsh signatory of the Declaration of Independence, would seem to offer itself as an interesting and fruitful field of research.

*This article is compiled by the Editor from notes supplied by M Morse, Board Member of the Brecknock Hall Society, Inc., Wayland Jefferson, Southold Town Historian, and Lili Ann Motta, one time Secretary of the Society.*

## BRYCHEINIOG AND LETAVIA, LLYDAW AND BRITTANY

Our Celtic cousins across the Channel call their homeland Breizh. This, and the corresponding names in French and English – Bretagne, Brittany – bear witness to the British origin of the Breton people – their country is quite simply the Land of the Britons, Little Britain in contrast to Great Britain. Both linguistically and in terms of history, myth and legend,<sup>1</sup> we know that Brittany was settled from Britain mainly in the fifth and sixth centuries. This emigration established Brythonic, the Celtic tongue of the whole of southern Britain at the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasions, and the parent of Welsh, Cornish and Breton, as the language of western Brittany, (the modern départements of Pen-ar-Bed/Finistère, Côtes d'Armor and Morbihan). The Romans called the Breton Peninsula Armorica, and this name was taken into Breton as Arvor, *the District on the Sea*, as opposed to Argoed, the inland *District in the Forest*.

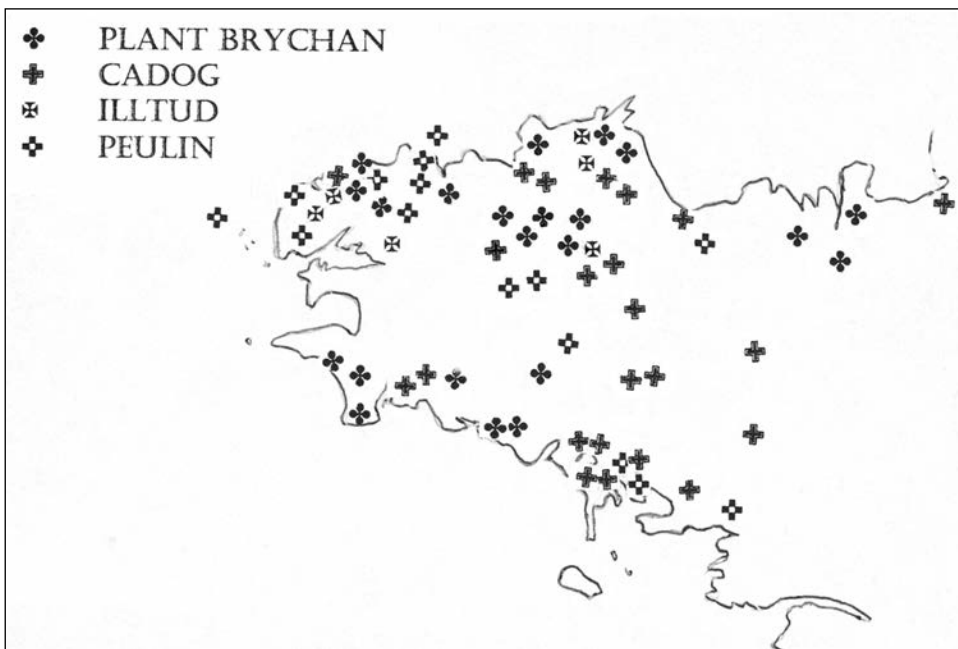
Both these latter terms are recognisable in Welsh: Arfor means exactly the same – *on the seacoast*, and Argoed, our equivalent of Argoat, is a not infrequent place-name in Wales, and was in use as early as Heledd's Lament on the Destruction of Pengwern in the seventh century,<sup>2</sup> where it refers to the area of the post-Roman kingdom of the Cornavii in modern Powys and Shropshire.

However, the Welsh name for Brittany, Llydaw, is quite different in origin, and is almost unique to Welsh: apart from three references in early Irish and Anglo-Saxon, no corresponding name is recorded in any other language. The early Irish name *Letha*<sup>3</sup> seems to have been used for both Brittany and Latium in Italy, and two mentions of '*Lidwicium*' and '*Lidwicum*'<sup>4</sup> in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle refer to the country and the people of Brittany. Llydaw, accorded a late Latinisation in Welsh documents as *Letavia*, does however also occur in Wales: it is the name of a lake, Llyn Llydaw, just below Snowdon, but it is also to be encountered in Welsh hagiographies, genealogies, myths and sagas, where it has a particular relationship to Brycheiniog.

Breton remained mutually intelligible with Cornish up until the demise of the latter in the nineteenth century, but Breton vocabulary contains a substantial correspondence with the dialects of southern and eastern Wales. Let one example suffice: standard modern Welsh for strawberries is *mefus*, but the normal term in South and East Wales is *syfi*, exactly the term used in Breton, for example '*Sivi*' – the strawberry liqueur of Plougastel-Daoulas to the east of Brest.<sup>5</sup>

The connection with south east Wales illustrated by language is reinforced by the presence in Brittany of a substantial number of dedications to saints originating from Wales, particularly from Brycheiniog or intimately connected with this area. Indeed, four of the Seven Founding Saints of Brittany<sup>6</sup> have a direct connection with Brycheiniog and its immediate vicinity. Chief amongst these is Peulin/*Paulinus*, patron of Kastell Pol/St Pol de Léon in N W Brittany.

Here, he is associated with the church of Llangors and the site of an ancient chapel nearby, now Llanbeulin, and also with the foundation of his two sons or brothers at Llanddeusant, Carmarthenshire. This reputed monastery is near a dedication to Brychan's son or grandson, Dingat, at Llandoverly. Two others of the Founding Saints are reputedly related to these Brycheiniog saints,<sup>7</sup> and many other Breton dedications to saints with Brycheiniog connections include Cadog, Brychan's supposed grandson, and Illtud, closely associated with Llanilltud, Mynydd Illtud and Llanhamlach. The cult of the numerous saintly Children of Brychan<sup>8</sup> is widespread in Brittany.

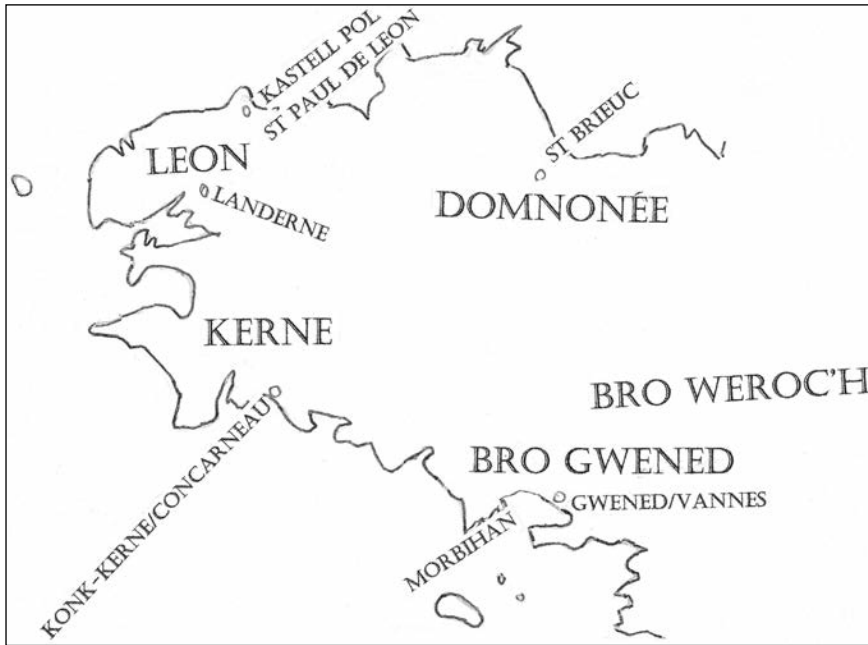


Breton dedications to the children of Brychan and other saints associated with Brycheiniog.

The settlers from Britain named various districts of Brittany after their homelands, just as did the English, French, Dutch, Spanish and Germans in their imperial ventures a thousand years later.<sup>9</sup> The north-central area of the Armorican peninsula was named Domnonée, (Dumnonia, alias Dyfnaint or Devon) and the southwest, centring on Konkerne, *Concarneau* became Kerne, (alias Cernyw, Cornouaille or Cornwall).

A third province of Brythonic Brittany is Léon, in the far north west, around Kastell-Pol/St Pol de Léon. This is another possible transfer from Britain, not from the south west, but from the Welsh Marches. The area of Leominster, an important Dewi foundation before the Anglo-Saxon conquest of that area,<sup>10</sup> bore





The historical provinces of W. Brittany.

the name Leon or Llion,<sup>11</sup> and it is in Léon that a number of dedications to Divi, the Breton name of our own Dewi Sant, are to be found. Whether Gwened, *Vannes*, is Gwynedd or even Gwent likewise transferred, or vice-versa, or merely a linguistic coincidence, remains a moot point.

However, apart from these Breton provinces, it is also suggested that Llydaw, the Welsh name for the whole of the peninsula, is itself also a transfer, not from the South West Peninsula, nor the Welsh Marches, but from Wales itself,<sup>12</sup> more specifically from Brycheiniog.

Llydaw appears in a Brycheiniog context in the Mabinogi, in the tale of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, the saga of the hunting of the boar, Twrch Trwyth.<sup>13</sup> This epic story ranges across the valleys of Tawe, Twrch and Aman in south-west Brycheiniog and eastern Carmarthenshire, and, following an incident near present-day Rhydaman/*Ammanford*, the group of wild pigs separates, and one of the boar's offspring, Llwydog Gofynniad *The Grey-hued Demander* heads north east for Ystrad Yw.

Ystrad Yw is the small flat side valley between Bwlch and Tre-tŵr in south east Brycheiniog, but the name at one time also covered a much wider area, the whole of the district of Crughywel. This is illustrated by the use of the epithet in Llanbedr Ystrad Yw, even though that village is more than five miles away from the Yw, the little stream rising at Llygad Yw just below the A40 between Pant-y-Beili and Bwlch and flowing into the Rhiangoll a mere mile or so away.

Interestingly, Ystrad Yw is also the location of the Roman fort or settlement at Pen-y-Gaer on the Roman Road between Gobannium (Abergavenny) and Bannium (Y Gaer at Aberysgir).

It is in Ystrad Yw in Brycheiniog that Gwŷr Llydaw, *the Men of Letavia*, assemble before the boar hunt. Later in the tale, Twrch Trwyth's offspring, the young boar Llwydog Gofynniad, having reached Ystrad Yw, kills Hir Peisiawg, described as Brenin Llydaw *King of Letavia*, as well as two of the maternal uncles of King Arthur, Llygadrudd Emys and Gwrbothu Hen.

Hir Peisiawg, however, is not a name, merely an epithet – ‘*of the long tunic*’, and Wade Evans<sup>14</sup> suggests that this King of Letavia was either Amlawdd Wledig or Emyr Llydaw, whom we shall encounter below, although Peter C Bartrum<sup>15</sup> states that, chronologically, the son of the latter, Hywel ab Emyr Llydaw, would be a better match.

King Arthur's uncles, Gwrbothu and Llygadrudd Emys, are closely associated with Erging, Brycheiniog's eastern neighbour, the Welsh kingdom south of the Wye and north and east of the Monnow, later swallowed up into Herefordshire. Gwrbothu, or Gwrfoddw in modern spelling, is recorded as a King of that district, and the same name re-occurs with that of a son Erfig in the Book of Llandaf, in charters referring to land at Bolros on the Wye, probably Madley. Wendy Davies dates these charters to c.619 and 615,<sup>16</sup> which implies that the name survived in use by later generations in Erging. Llygadrudd Emys – *Redeyed Emys* – is associated with Llygad Amr, now Gamber Head in Herefordshire, where it is claimed King Arthur buried the body of his son Amhar, after he himself had murdered him. Emys and Gwrfoddw were brothers of Arthur's mother, Eigr, children all three of Amlawdd Wledig. Arthur also has a direct link with Letavia – he goes there in person to seek Aned and Aethlem, the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig (the Letavian), who are instrumental in pursuing Twrch Trwyth.

Amlawdd Wledig, (the epithet Gwledig means king or chieftain), father of an acknowledged King of Ergyng, must himself have been the ruler of Ergyng. The chart below illustrates his family connections with Illtyd, Culhwch and Arthur himself, as well as with the two victims of the boar. He appears in the Life of Saint Illtud as Anblaud, *Britanniae Regis*, father of Rheinwylydd, Saint Illtud's mother. Amlawdd, grandfather of Illtud, was also grandfather of Culhwch through his daughter Goleuddydd.

Both Goreu ap Custennin and Culhwch, eponym of the Tale, are cousins of Arthur, whose mother, Eigr, was another daughter of Amlawdd. In the saga, Goreu is the great hero who beheads the giant Ysbaddaden (whose name occurs in Tonysbaddaden, a farm near Coelbren) and releases his cousin Arthur ‘from three imprisonments’. His father is commemorated at Llangystennin (Welsh Bicknor on the Wye near Ross).

Illtud, strongly associated with Brycheiniog, is described in his ‘Life’ as the son

of Bicanus, a prince of Letavia. At the time of the editing of this 'Life' in its present form c.1140, Letavia would have been taken to mean Brittany.

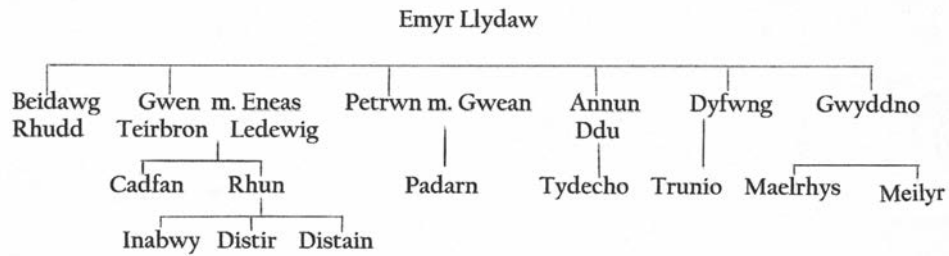
However, Illtud also appears in the oldest of all 'Lives' of British – Welsh, Cornish and Breton – Saints, dated at 610–615. This is the *Life of Samson*, written in Brittany by a Breton, who claimed direct knowledge of Samson through information from the saint's mother, Anna of Gwent, passed to her nephew, Henoc and, via his nephew, a deacon, to the author. Yet even this extremely early Breton document does not make Illtud anything other than Welsh-born. This tells us that he was from Letavia, a district in Wales, where he was later also buried.

Illtud's traditional burial place was Bedd Gŵyl Illtud in the parish of Defynnog, which included Mynydd Illtud and the now sadly demolished church of Llanilltud. As further endorsement of Illtud's Brycheiniog origins, we also have the site of the cromlech called Tŷ Illtud at Llanhamlach. Illtud also has strong links with Brittany, and indeed is the eponym of Aber Ildut in the north west corner of Leon.

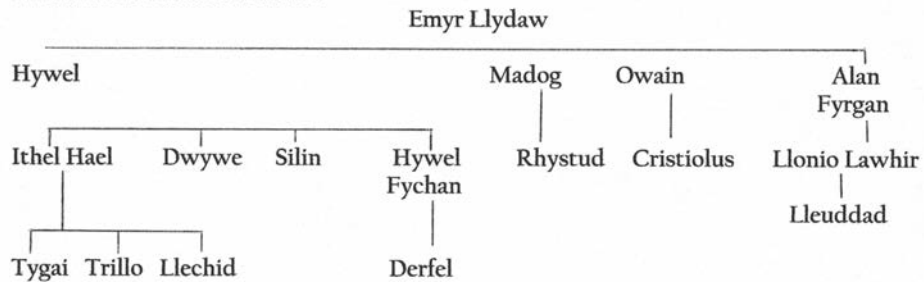
The movement from Britain to Brittany, in the face of attacks by the Anglo-Saxons from the east and the Irish from the west, must have been substantial, and is credited with having left behind a depopulated Devon. This is indicated by a surprisingly low count of placenames of Celtic origin in Devon, when compared with Somerset and Dorset to the east, and the almost exclusively Celtic Cornwall to the west.<sup>17</sup> This migration seems to have been almost without exception a one-way movement up until the time of the Norman conquest of England, when William was accompanied by many Bretons in what to them was the re-conquest of Britain.<sup>18</sup>

However, various Welsh hagiographies and legends have assumed a Breton origin for a dynasty of saints of a much earlier epoch, the offspring of the above mentioned Emyr Llydaw, King of Letavia. The regular personal name Emyr derives from 'imperator', *emperor*, and Rachel Bromwich interprets the name simply as 'King of Brittany'.<sup>19</sup>

However, Emyr's dynasty of saints (see panel) are firmly anchored in the region of the Welsh Marches, even those bearing the epithet Ledewig *Letavian*, or Llydaw *Letavia*. His son-in-law Eneas Ledewig was the father of Rhun, grandfather of Inabwy, (patron of Llandinabo, Ballingham and Llanlody/Llanllwydau in Ergyng), and, it is claimed, of Distir and Distain. The latter, Distain, is not a name, but a court title, (akin to steward), and Distir is a river-name, the modern Dishty at Llanfannar [SO431169], now Llanfaenor in Llangatwg Feibion Afel, Gwent, near St Maughan's [SO461 171] – whose patron seems to have been St Malo, later of Brittany. Ithel Hael, a grandson of Emyr, appears in Bonedd y Saint as the father of a further dynasty of saints which was added to in various subsequent manuscripts. William Hoby (b. c1370), Lord of Burwal in Old Radnor, traced his ancestry to Ithel Hael.



In addition in a later version :



(later also: Hywyn, Gredfyw, Gredifael, Fflewin, Caron, Doged, Tanwg, Twrog Baglan)

The descendants of Emyr Llydaw.

All these characters, some with dedications stretching from Preseli to Anglesey, others merely obscure names in scraps of legend and poetry, are anchored firmly in Wales. It is only the epithet Llydaw, *Letavia*, of the patriarch Emyr, that gives rise to an assumed association with Brittany. However, it is not the confusing list of names of semi-forgotten saints, kings and heroes which is of interest to us here, but the connection of the name of Llydaw, *Letavia*, with the area of Ystrad Yw in Brycheiniog, and adjoining parts of Eryng, Euas and northern Gwent. The conclusion that must be drawn is that the Letavia reference is not to Brittany, but to a different Letavia, in Wales, identified by an early Breton Life of Saint Samson as the place of birth and burial of Illtud, which we know to be Brycheiniog.

The map showing the distribution of dedications to this family also provides negative evidence: the area evangelised by these reputed Bretons covers most of Wales, with the exception of Brycheiniog and the immediate vicinity. This implies that Brycheiniog was the starting point for these saints, and there is no reason for assuming anything other than an origin for these shadowy figures of history in Letavia i.e. Brycheiniog, not Armorica/Brittany. The only truly Breton name amongst them, Alan Fyrgan, is the very late inclusion of a known Breton ruler into a list by then assumed to refer to Brittany, not Letavia. Alan Fyrgan was Duke of Brittany between 1084 and 1112, dying seven years later in 1119.<sup>20</sup>



Dedications to the family of Emyr Llydaw and Ithel Hael.

Syr John Rhŷs<sup>21</sup> draws our attention to Llyn Llydaw, the Snowdonian Lake, and his account gives an intriguing argument for the meaning of the name, as well as reasons for suggesting the existence of a place called Llydaw in the area of Llyn Safaddan, and the use of the name for Armorica.

Rhŷs states that the meaning of the name is disputed, and, indeed, some strange folk-etymological suggestions have been put forward. The most common is that the word stems from Lled Taw: *Half-Silent*, implying that the Bretons were half-understood, or half-mute, a common description of foreigners: the Greeks called non-Greeks Barbaroi, since 'bar-bar' is what the Greeks heard when other peoples spoke their own languages, and the Czech word for German, Němec, implies 'mute'. Letewicion: *semi-tacentes* is first recorded circa 1200 by Nennius.<sup>22</sup> An apocryphal tale claims that the Welsh men who married Breton wives cut out their tongues in order that their offspring would speak Welsh, rather than Gaulish, but similar tales are common throughout the ancient world.

Rhŷs quotes Pennant's description of Llyn Llydaw<sup>23</sup> which had then contained a rocky island, now attached to the shore due to a 16 feet drop in the level of the lake following mining operations. This lowering of the surface had in 1856 revealed a dug-out canoe,<sup>24</sup> which led E L Barnwell to the conclusion that it had been used for access to the island, either for harvesting birds' eggs or as a lake-dwelling, 'a natural crannog'. Rhŷs surmises that the name Llydaw implies a dwelling to be reached by boat, and that the dwelling had given its name to the lake. 'With great deference' he suggests that the place from whence the 'Men of Llydaw' in the Mabinogion tale came was another crannog, that in Llyn Syfaddan at Llangors, which bore the name Llydaw.

The striking coincidence of the discovery of a dug-out canoe at Llyn Llydaw and the exactly similar discovery at Llyn Safaddan *Llangors Lake* (one of the inspirations for the establishment of the Brecknock Museum) links the two lakes immediately. Since recent excavations have established the importance of this Llangors crannog as one of the royal residences of Brycheiniog, from which Æthelflæd, daughter of Alfred and wife of Æthelred of Mercia, abducted the queen and 34 retainers in 914<sup>25</sup> or 916,<sup>26</sup> it would not be surprising if the island's name, Llydaw, *Letavia*, would spread to the surrounding area: Ystrad Yw is merely 3½ miles away.

Further, Rhŷs uses indirect evidence to tie in the name with Llyn Syfaddan and Ystrad Yw. The connection between Peulin, *St Paulinus* and Llangors, as well as the proximity of the monastic settlement of his two brothers or sons (Potolius and Notolius) at Llanddeusant to a dedication to one of Brychan's numerous 'Children' at Llanddingad, is widely accepted. Peulin is the patron of the very important church of Llangors, and there is a nearby dedication to him in the farmhouse of Llanbeulin. As an old man, Peulin attended the synod held at Llanddewi Brefi by Dewi, who had been his pupil at the religious house

established by Peulin at Hendy Gwyn *Whitland*. Five miles away from there, at Llandysilio, an ancient inscription commemorates Peulin: CLVTORIGI FILI PAVLINI MARINILATIO, which Rhys interprets as Clutorix, son of Paulinus of Latium in the Marsh – not Latium in Italy, nor Armorica, but Letavia. Llangors, *the Church in the Marsh*, is frequently referred to as ‘Mara’ in the *Book of Llandav*.<sup>27</sup>

The next step is to link Llydaw, Brittany itself, with the name Letavia. It would seem an appropriate name, says Rhys, since Armorica too would only be attainable from Wales by boat, but that argument would equally well apply to a myriad of islands off the Welsh, Cornish and Breton coasts, and even to Galicia, where the Diocese of Santa Maria de los Bretoñes had its own separate British bishops until absorbed into the See of Oviedo in 830AD.

However, in the person of Peulin *St Paulinus*, we have a direct connection between Brycheiniog and Brittany: he is the saint of Kastel Pol/ *St Pol de Leon*, and Wrmonoch, who wrote a life of Paulinus in 884 AD, claims that Plou Fragan, near St Brieuc in the same area of northern Brittany, commemorates Brychan, as does Saint-Frégant near Lesneven in Léon. Brieuc, patron of as many as nineteen parishes in Brittany, is himself listed as one of the Plant Brychan – he is the Briog of Llandyfriog on the Teifi. Interestingly, Gwen Teirbron,<sup>28</sup> daughter of Emyr Llydaw and wife of Eneas Ledewig re-appears in Brittany as the mother of Winwalo, Wethnoc and Iacob, the sons of Fracan, reputedly the Breton version of Brychan, and a number of other Brycheiniog saints are associated with the area.

A different migration of saints is recorded as the ‘Letavian Mission’, a movement from ‘Letavia’ to evangelise northern and western areas of Wales. In the Life of St Padarn, Cynllo, Patron of Llanbister, Llangynllo, Nantmel and Rhaeadr Gwy in Radnorshire, appears as Ketinlau, one of the leaders of a group of monks<sup>29</sup> who migrated from Letavia including Cadfan, Tydecho and Padarn who appear amongst the offspring of Emyr Llydaw. Cynllo’s initial area of activity was a district including Maelienydd and Gwrtheyrnion in the north of modern Radnorshire. Cynllo is also patron of Llangoedmor and Llangynllo in Ceredigion, and Padarn, who likewise has a series of dedications in Radnorshire at Llanbadarn Fawr, Llanbadarn Fynydd and Llanbadarn-y-Garreg, is also patron of Llanbadarn Odwyn, Llanbadarn Trefeglwys and Llanbadarn Fawr in Ceredigion and Pencarreg in the Teifi Valley.

Tydecho is said to have dwelt together with Dogfael and Tegfan at Llandudoch/*St Dogmaels*, and then to have moved to Mawddwy, where he has foundations at Llanymawddwy and Mallwyd in Meirionydd, at Garthbeibio in Caereinion and Cemais in Cyfeiliog, part of modern Maldwyn/ Montgomeryshire. The Llandudoch/*St Dogmaels* association is probably spurious, since Llanymawddwy was also called Llandudech. There was also a now lost Capel Tydecho at Biwmares in Anglesey.

Cadfan ab Eneas Ledewig founded a monastery at Tywyn, and was first abbot



Dedications to saints of the 'Letavian Mission'.

of Ynys Enlli/Bardsey Island, famed for its 40,000 saintly burials. He is also patron of Llangadfan in Caereinion, Powys, and a Capel Cadfan in the church at Llangathen, Ystrad Tywi

The dedications of all these saints are scattered west and northward from Radnorshire, which would seem to be the starting point of this Letavian mission. Hywel ab Emyr Llydaw, father of Hywel Fychan, Cristiolus, Rhystud and Derfel, is claimed as a cousin of Arthur, which ties him in again with Eryng and the Welsh Marches. Derfel is the patron of Llandderfel, near Llyn Tegid/Bala, and seems to have had a chapel at Llantarnam in Gwent. Cristiolus is patron of Llangristiolus in Anglesey, Penrhydd near Newcastle Emlyn, and Eglwysrwr near Cardigan, and Rhystud has an unique dedication at Llanrhystud, south of Aberystwyth. These saints, too, put us in an area west and north of Radnorshire, and extending into Anglesey.



Another personage with the epithet ‘Letavian’ is Ronan Ledewig, given as the father of Gargunan and Silin, but the mentions are brief, late and often garbled, since Silin existed both as a native Welsh saint, and also as a Welsh translation of name of the popular mediaeval saint Giles. Silin was patron of Wrexham and is also mentioned as Sain Sili, or Tresilin, the Welsh name of Gileston at Tal-y-Bont in Brycheiniog, and Gargunan must be a garbled version of Garmon.

Caradog Freichfras, who has a clear association with Radnorshire, is stated to have expanded his boundaries to include Letavia, and to have recalled Padarn to his native area, possibly Llanbadarn Fawr in Maelienydd. In the Dream of Rhonabwy in the Mabinogi, he speaks very boldly to Arthur, since, as his cousin and his chief counsellor, he was entitled to be blunt.

This also ties Letavia in with the Brycheiniog–Erging area, where other members of Arthur’s family appear. Caradog is claimed as father of Cadfarch, Tangwn and Maethlu, the first and the last patrons of churches at Llangammarch and Llandefalle in modern Brecknockshire. He is claimed as ancestor of tribes in Brycheiniog through his grandson, Cawr ap Cawrdaf and also Maenyrch and Rhys Goch of Ystrad Yw, the latter said also to be the son of Hyfaidd Henllyn – Hyfaidd being the origin of the name Maeshyfaidd – Maesyfed *Radnor*.

A further curious reference linking Armorica with part of eastern of Wales occurs in the *Life of St Oswald*,<sup>30</sup> where the place where he is killed, Oswestry, (on the battlefield called Cogwy in Welsh and Maserfelth in English) is described as being adjacent to the boundaries of Armorice Wallie – ‘because anciently the greatest part of Wales was named Armorica’. This would seem to be a ‘back-confusion’, an allusion to a neighbouring area in the Marches of Wales called Llydaw by someone who knew that Llydaw was the Welsh name for Brittany, and that the proper Latin name for Brittany was Armorica.

To sum up, circumstantial evidence from the oldest Life of a Welsh Saint, written in Brittany, from subsequent genealogies and hagiographies, legends of missionary activity by saints of Brycheiniog in Brittany, and in other parts of Wales, as well as the references to Ystrad Yw in the Mabinogi, all point to the existence of an area bearing the name Llydaw in the southern marches of Wales. This is probably based on Llyn Safaddan, the lake at Llangors, which was also involved with the kingdom of Erging, and the family of Arthur and Illtud. During the course of the colonisation and Christianisation of Brittany, often originating in the Kingdom of Brycheiniog, the name Llydaw transferred from Brycheiniog to the Brest Peninsula, becoming the Welsh designation for Armorica/Brittany.

BRYNACH PARRI

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Loth, J *L'Emigration bretonne en Armorique*, Hampion, Paris 1883.
- <sup>2</sup> Williams, Ifor, ed. *Canu Llywarch Hen*, UWP Caerdydd 1935.
- <sup>3</sup> Bartrum Peter C, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary*. Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru /National Library of Wales Aberystwyth 1993.
- <sup>4</sup> Plummer *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, II page 404.
- <sup>5</sup> Hemon, Roparz: *Dictionnaire Français-Breton*, Al Liamm, Brest 1964.
- <sup>6</sup> Chardonnet, Joseph, *Histoire de Bretagne*, Nouvelles Éditions Latines, Paris 1964.
- <sup>7</sup> Chardonnet, J. op. cit: 7 Saints Fondateurs – Malo (Llanfeinor, N Gwent & Nant Carfan), Samson (Morgannwg), Briuc/Briog (grandson of Brychan), Paulinus/Pol Aurelian (Llangors, Llanddeusant, Llandysilio Pembs, Hendy Gwyn/Whitland), Padarn/Patern, Tugdual, Coentín.
- <sup>8</sup> Les Saints Bretons.
- <sup>9</sup> New England, New Hampshire, New Jersey; New France, later Québec; Nieuw Holland, later Australia, Nieuw Zeeland, and Batavia – now Djakarta; New Granada, later Colombia, Nuevo León, Mexico; Neupommern, now New Britain, Neumecklenburg, now New Ireland and Neuhannover in Papua New Guinea.
- <sup>10</sup> Malpas A et al. ed *The Early Church in Herefordshire* Leominster Historical Society Leominster 2000.
- <sup>11</sup> Ekwall, Eilert, *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place-names*, OUP Oxford 1960.
- <sup>12</sup> Bartrum Peter C, *op.cit.*
- <sup>13</sup> Jones, Gwyn & Jones, T., *The Mabinogion*, UWP 1948.
- <sup>14</sup> Wade-Evans A W *Welsh Christian Origins*, Oxford 1934.
- <sup>15</sup> Bartrum Peter C *op.cit.*
- <sup>16</sup> Davies, Wendy, *Llandaff Charters*, Aberystwyth 1979.
- <sup>17</sup> Jackson, Kenneth: *Language and History in Early Britain*, pg 206, Edinburgh 1953.
- <sup>18</sup> Le Mat, Jean-Pierre, *History of Brittany*, pub. Yoran Embanner, Fouesnant 2006.
- <sup>19</sup> Rachel Bromwich *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, Cardiff 1961 pp 407–8.
- <sup>20</sup> Bartrum, Peter C., *op. cit.*
- <sup>21</sup> Rhys, Syr John, *Celtic Folklore*, Vol II, pp 518 – 535 Wildwood House, London 1980.
- <sup>22</sup> Chédeville. A et Guillotel, H., *La Bretagne des saints et des rois: Ve-Xe siècle*, Ouest France, Rennes, 1984.
- <sup>23</sup> Pennant, Thomas: *Tours in Wales*, ed J Rhys Caernarfon 1883 ii, 339.
- <sup>24</sup> Barnwell E L in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1874 pp 150–151.
- <sup>25</sup> Anglo Saxon Chronicle.
- <sup>26</sup> Theophilus Jones *A History of the County of Brecknock*, Brecon 1809.
- <sup>27</sup> Evans, J Gwenogfryn, *The Text of the Book of Llandav*, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth 1979.
- <sup>28</sup> Teirbron – three breasted – does not refer to some physical abnormality, but is used in various contexts to describe a woman with children by different fathers.
- <sup>29</sup> Egerton Phillimore OP II.454.
- <sup>30</sup> Life of St Oswald, pub John Capgrave, Nova Legenda Anglie, ed C Horstman, II.204.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Pwy Oedd Rhys Gethin?* Cledwyn Fychan  
Cyhoeddwr: Cymdeithas Lyfrau Ceredigion

Er y buasai Brycheiniog yn falch o gyhoeddi'r llyfryn hwn fel cyfraniad yn ein cylchgrawn, nid oedd hynny'n bosibl oherwydd cwestiynau hawlfraint. Bu Cledwyn Fychan yn ddigon caredig i dywys grŵp o aelodau'r Gymdeithas hon o gwmpas ardal Rhys Gethin sef dyffryn, cwm ac uwchdir Irfon ym Muellt yn yr haf, lle y dangosodd ei wybodaeth drylwyr o'r ardal a'i hanes, fel ag y mae'r llyfr yn ei wneud mewn ffordd hynod o ddiddorol hefyd. A phwy oedd Rhys Gethin? Ie, dyna bwrpas y llyfr, a byddai'n talu ffordd i unrhyw un sydd am wybod mwy i brynu a darllen llyfr sydd yn ymwneud â chornel o'n Sir a chyfnod yn ein hanes a anwybyddir ond yn rhy aml, heb sôn am gymeriad hanesyddol oedd yn anhysbys i'r rhan fwyaf ohonom cyn cyhoeddiad y gyfrol. Agwedd o'r llyfr sydd hefyd yn ennyn diddordeb yw dulliau ymchwil yr awdur, yn dibynnu i raddau helaeth ar atgofion bugeiliaid a phreswylwyr eraill y cornel anghysbell o'r sir ar y ffordd droellog o Abergwesyn i Dregaron.

*A translation of the above is available on <http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk>*

*Kilvert's Diary and Landscape* – ISBN 978 0 7188 3095 3  
John Toman  
Publisher The Lutterworth Press

Although we often take Kilvert to be our own adopted Brecknock and Borderland diarist, and feel his presence so keenly in the area around Hay, and beyond our borders in Clyro and Bredwardine, this excellent book sets him in a much wider context throughout all parts of Wales, as well as further afield in Switzerland, Cornwall, and in very many parts of England. A thoroughly researched and annotated work, this book deals intensively with many aspects of Kilvert's life and writings that go unnoticed if we read him merely as a humble, pious and sentimental diarist in a small corner of Wales. We are led through many of the literary, intellectual and religious influences on his thought and writing, his love of landscape and his interpretation of both landscape and nature, and their role in Kilvert's conception of the past, as well as gaining an insight into attitudes and influences of the Victorian age. The author does not fight shy of topics that our age finds somewhat disturbing, such as the Victorian cult of the child, and the interpretation of some of Kilvert's descriptions of children as verging on paedophilia, as well as the sentimentality of a by-gone age which now seems cloying and even embarrassing to us. An excellent work, essential for all who seek further elucidation of the times, life and work of Francis Kilvert.

*Hanes Gudd – Darganfod Treftadaeth Cymru* ISBN 978-1-871184-36-5

Cyhoeddwy: Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru. Tud. 327

Er i bawb ddathlu canmlwyddiant yr Amgueddfa Genedlaethol a'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol llynedd, anwybyddwyd i raddau helaeth canmlwyddiant sefydliad cenedlaethol pwysig arall, sef Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru, er i'r BBC a'r Comisiwn ddathlu'r achlysur gyda chydweithrediad ar gyfres o raglenni a chyhoeddiad clodwiw, sef llyfr yn cwmpasu yr holl amrediad o adeiladau, gwrthrychau a safleoedd sydd yn rhan o orchwyl y Comisiwn. Ceir Cymru gyfan yn y lluniau a'r erthyglau hynod o ddiddorol, sydd yn amrywio o hanes y bod dynol cyntaf y gwyddwn amdano yng Nghymru – Menyw Goch Pen-y-Fai (bachgen, nid menyw, mae'n debyg) – hyd at adeiladau cyfoes megis Canolfan y Mileniwm, a hyd yn oed y bibell nwy a ddifwynwyd Brycheiniog mor drylwyr llynedd. O safbwynt ni'r Brycheinwyr, ceir adroddiadau neu luniau o nid llai na 22 o safleoedd yn y sir (er ein bod ar ein hennill trwy gamleoliad Bugeildy, Maesyfed, ym Mrycheiniog). I fod yn blwyfol, camleolwyd Tŷ Illtud hefyd – mae'n sefyll ger Llanhamlach, nid Llanfrynach, a rhywbeth sydd yn dân ar grwyn y darlennydd Cymraeg, mynnir mae 'Abergafenni' yw ffurf gywir enw'r Fenni! Ac rwyn dal i chwilio am yr 'igflaidd' y bu'r Fenyw Goch yn ei hela – mae'n debygol 'udflaidd' a olygir! Ond er gwaetha'r mân feirniadu, mae'r llyfr hwn yn haeddu ei le ar silffoedd llyfrau neu ar ford goffi unrhyw hanesydd gwerth ei halen yng Nghymru.

*A translation of the above is available on <http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk>*

*Hidden History – Discovering the Heritage of Wales*

Publisher: RCAHW pp: 327

2008 was the centenary of the National Museum and the National Library, but also of a lesser known, but no less important, national institution, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. To mark the occasion, the Commission has cooperated with BBC Wales in producing a series of broadcasts on aspects of Welsh history, and also a magnificent volume covering the very wide range of buildings, archaeological sites and artefacts that come within the scope and sphere of the Commission. The volume is extremely well written and lavishly illustrated, and should form part of every historian's library. The subjects included range from the earliest human remains in Wales, at Paviland, right up to the present day, with articles on modern architecture, including the Millenium Centre, and even the pipeline that scarred the face of Breconshire last year. To be more parochial, there are no fewer than 22 illustrations of sites in Brecknockshire, although one, Bugeildy, is actually in

Radnorshire, and Tŷ Illtud is wrongly placed near Llanfrynach, not Llanhamlach. Despite these slips, this excellent volume thoroughly deserves a place in the libraries of all who are interested in Welsh history.

*Wales's Best One Hundred Churches*

T J Hughes

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This excellent little volume should accompany any traveller in Wales who has an interest in the wealth of churches, chapels and ruins of mediaeval monasteries that dot our landscape. The choice of just one hundred is, of course, a personal one, and any selection will be challenged by discerning readers, who will have their own list of favourites. An extensive introduction burns with enthusiasm for the heritage so proudly displayed or hidden away in all corners of Wales, and provides an excellent introduction to the subject for the novice. The illustrations are wonderful, not always what you might have expected, but easily comparable with those in Peter Sager's *Wales*, and superior in extent and inspirational vision to those of the *Buildings of Wales* series. Brecknock is, of course, very well represented in this work, having played a vital role in Welsh ecclesiastical history from the earliest years of our Age of Saints. One or two minor irritations are some of the spellings: poor Saint Bilo of Llanfilo ends up as Beilo, which I suppose is preferable to her other incarnation as 'Milburgh', and Partrishow is preferable to Patrishow, but otherwise the book is meticulous and inspiring.

