BRYCHEINIOG

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

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GOLYGYDDOL

Fferwyd sylw'r gymdeithas yn ystod y flwyddyn a aeth heibio unwaith yn rhagor ar adeiladau. Mae'r cais ar ran Cyngor Sir Powys am arian gan Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri yn dal i lusgo ymlaen, a bydd yn hwyr eleni cyn y byddwn yn gwybod a oes unrhyw ragolygon o gael cymorthdal digonol i wireddu'r cynlluniau mawreddog am adnewyddu'r Amgueddfa, adeiladu Oriel Gelf haeddiannus a datblygu'r anheddau ar gyfer swyddfeydd, stordai ac adnoddau eraill ar Rodfa'r Capten yn Aberhonddu. Yn y dyddiau cyllidol tywyll hyn, ni allwn ond gobeithio y daw llwyddiant i'r cais. O leiaf cafwyd rhywfaint o gynnydd ar gyflwr truenus yr Amgueddfa, ac mae gwaith yn mynd yn ei flaen i sicrhau to di-ddos ac i ddiogelu'r creiriau a'r gwrthrychau, er i ddarganfod olion ystlumod arafu'r gwaith. Yn anffodus, bydd rhaid symud rhan helaeth o'r casgliad i stordai yn Llandrindod a chau'r Amgueddfa am gyfnod er mwyn cwblhau'r gwaith.

Llwyddwyd o'r diwedd i werthu adeilad yr Hen Amgueddfa yn Heol Morgannwg – dyna oedd cartref hanesyddol yr Amgueddfa a sefydlwyd gan Gymdeithas Brycheiniog yn ôl yn nauddegau'r ganrif o'r blaen ac a esgeuluswyd gan y lesddeiliaid am flynyddoedd, felly mae'n rhyddhad i'r Gymdeithas bod y lle wedi mynd, a hefyd gan y ffaith y bydd yn cael ei ddefnyddio yn y dyfodol at ddibenion elusennol. Bydd hanner yr arian sylweddol a gafwyd am yr adeilad yn cael ei ddefnyddio i gefnogi'r cais i Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri, a'r gweddill yn mynd at wahanol brosiectau yn unol â'n hamcanion fel Cymdeithas.

Nodwn hefyd â phleser bod Llys a Chastell Tre-tŵr ar agor i'r cyhoedd unwaith yn rhagor yn dilyn cyfnod o weithfeydd sylweddol i ddiogelu a gwella'r adeilad, a dehongli hanes y llys mewn ffordd ddymunol a diddorol. Unwaith yn rhagor, bu'r adeilad yn agos at galon y Gymdeithas, gan mai Cymdeithas Brycheiniog a achubodd yr anheddau'n wreiddiol mewn ffordd bellweledol yn ôl yn nyddiau cymharol cynnar y Gymdeithas, cyn roi'r adeilad ymlaen i ofal Gweinyddiaeth y Gweithfeydd, ac, yn ei dro, i *Cadw*. Mae'n hyfryd gweld y Llys ar ei newydd wedd, sydd yn gwneud ystyr a dirgelwch y lle'n fwy hygyrch i bawb. Ymddengys erthygl gan ein Llywydd, Ken Jones, ar gysylltiadau'r Gymdeithas â Thre-tŵr yn y Gyfrol hon.

Croesawn benodiad Stephanie Dempsey fel Swyddog Addysg yn yr Amgueddfa. Mae hi eisoes wedi dangos ei brwdfrydedd dros un o'n prosiectau, Gwobr yr Ysgolion, a bu o gymorth mawr wrth symud y cysylltiad gyda'r ysgolion yn ei flaen. Dymunwn bob llwyddiant iddi yn ei gwaith newydd.

Yn bersonol, fel awdur yr erthygl ar fywyd Illtud, hoffwn weld ymgyrch debyg i'r un a achubwyd Tre-tŵr yn cael ei hefelychu er mwyn achub neu sicrhau dyfodol Tŷ Illtud, yr heneb anhygoel o bwysig ychydig i'r gogledd o Lanhamlach, gan fod i'r adfeilion hanes driphlyg, yn cwmpasu Oes y Cerrig, Oes y Saint a'r Canoloesoedd. Byddai'n warth pe na fyddwn mewn modd i

weithredu er mwyn diogelu safle mor bwysig rhag effeithiau amser, y tywydd a'r defaid.

Bu gwerthiant *Brycheiniog* XLI yn llwyddiannus, a hoffwn ddiolch unwaith yn rhagor i'r Cyfrannwyr am eu herthyglau, i Wasg Gomer am y ffordd gwrtais ac effeithlon y maent yn cynhyrchu'r gyfrol, ac yn olaf ond nid yn lleiaf i'm Golygydd Cynorthwyol, Peter Jenkins, am ei ymdrechion gyda gwerthiant y gyfrol a'r llwyddiant cymharol yn nhermau arian, rhywbeth sydd yn bell o fod yn hawdd am gyfnodolyn parchus ond cymharol bach fel *Brycheiniog*. Mae ein diolch diffuant hefyd yn ddyledus i Swyddogion eraill y Gymdeithas, yn benodol i'n Trysorydd, Mr A. J. Bell ac, heb os nac oni bai, i'r Ysgrifennydd Anrhydeddus, Miss Helen Gichard am eu gwaith a chefnogaeth diwyd a hael.

BRYNACH PARRI

EDITORIAL

The Society's attention has been fixed to some extent once again this year on buildings. The application on the part of Powys County Council for funds from the Lottery Heritage Fund continues to progress at a snail's pace, and it will be late in the year before we learn if we have any prospects of obtaining sufficient assistance to turn into reality the ambitious plans for renewing the Museum, constructing a worthy Art Gallery and developing premises for offices, storage space and other facilities on Captain's Walk in Brecon. In these dire days in terms of finance, we can only hope for a successful outcome. At least there has been some progress regarding the woeful condition of the Museum, with work proceeding on securing a leak-proof roof and protecting the contents of the museum, although the discovery of traces of bats in the building has once again delayed matters. Unfortunately, the greater portion of the collection will have to be moved temporarily to Llandrindod for safekeeping whilst the Museum is closed for a period for the work to be completed.

At last we have been successful with the sale of the Old Museum premises in Glamorgan Street – this was the historical home of the Museum which was established by the Brecknock Society back in the nineteen twenties and which, regrettably, has been neglected for many years. It is therefore a relief to the Society to have disposed of the premises, and to know that in finding a buyer we have secured for the building a future devoted to charitable ends. Half of the substantial sum obtained will be used to support the application to the Lottery Heritage Fund, the remainder being used for various projects in line with our aims and objectives as a Society.

We note with pleasure the reopening of Tretower Court and Castle to the public, following substantial works to secure and improve the condition of the building, and to interpret the history of the Court in an interesting and enjoyable manner. Once again, this building has been close to the heart of the Society, since it was the Brecknock Society that saved the original premises in a far-sighted way in the early days of the Society, before the building was passed on, initially to the Ministry of Works, and then to *Cadw*. It is wonderful to see the Court in its reincarnation which makes its secrets and its history more accessible to all. An article by our President, Ken Jones, on the involvement of the Society with Tretower is included in this Volume.

We welcome the appointment of Stephanie Dempsey as Education Officer at the Museum, who has already shown herself to be enthusiastic for one of our projects, the Schools' Prize, with which she has been of great help. We wish her every success in her new post.

Personally, as author of the article on Illtud, I should like to see a campaign similar to the one that saved Tretower being imitated in order to save or to secure the future of Tŷ Illtud, that remarkably important monument a little to

the north of Llanhamlach with its triply significant history encompassing the Stone Age, the Age of Saints and the Middle Ages. It would be shameful if we could not act to protect such an important site from the ravages of time, the weather and the sheep.

Sales of *Brycheiniog* XLI were very successful, and I should once again like to thank the Contributors for their articles, the printers Gwasg Gomer for the courteous and efficient way they produce the volume and last but by no means least my Deputy Editor, Peter Jenkins for his exertions with the sale of the journal and our comparative financial success, something which is far from easy for a journal like *Brycheiniog*, which, although greatly respected, remains small. Thanks are also due in no small measure to the other Officers of the Society and Members of its Council, in particular the Treasurer, Mr A. J. Bell and of course the Secretary, Miss Helen Gichard, for their constant and unstinting support.

BRYNACH PARRI

CYFRANNWYR/CONTRIBUTORS

Ken Jones had a career in Industrial Relations and was Head of Personnel at Reuters. Since retirement, he has been a very active member of the Society, and is our current President.

Glyn Mathias had a career in journalism for more than 30 years before settling with his wife and family in Brecon. He was at various times Political Editor for ITN and for BBC Wales, and also for seven years Electoral Commissioner for Wales. He is the current Chair of the Roland Mathias Prize Committee.

E. D. Evans, a graduate of Aberystwyth University taught at Barry College of Education and then Cardiff. He was a tutor of the Open University for 20 years, and is author of a *History of Wales 1660–1815*, published by the University of Wales Press.

Robert Gant is a native of Crickhowell and Emeritus Professor of Urban Geography at the University of Kingston upon Thames. He has contributed a number of articles to *Brycheiniog*.

Gwenllian Meredith is American born of Welsh descent, educated in the USA and later in Australia. She was Professor of History at the American University in Cairo for 3 years before moving to the University of the United Arab Emirates as Assistant Professor of History and Archaeology. An enthusiastic Welsh learner, her article celebrates the centenary of Gwenllian Morgan's mayoralty.

John Lloyd (1797–1875) 'The Poet' was the grandfather of Sir John Lloyd, the founder of the Brecknock Society. He published several volumes of poetry, and won the poetry prize at the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff and served as Mayor of Brecon, County Sheriff and JP.

Frank Olding, Abertillery born, is an Archaeologist and Blaenau Gwent Heritage Officer, educated at Nantyglo and Cardiff, Leicester and Bristol Universities, and is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. A fluent Welsh-speaker, widely published poet and literary critic, he was the secretary of the Blaenau Gwent National Eisteddfod Literature Committee, and Poet in Residence at the *Lle Celf* Art Exhibition.

Norman Miles Griffiths was born in Nant y Glo, and now lives at Beaufort. He was a Councillor for 38 years with the Brynmawr UDC, and its successor, Brynmawr Town Council, and was elected Mayor. He has served as a Magistrate and Bench Chairman, secretary of Brynmawr Trades Council, member of Swalec Advisory Committee and President of Brynmawr Rotary. He was a Founder Member, Director and first Chairman of Brynmawr Museum.

Brynach Parri was educated at Brecon Boys' Grammar School, and Cardiff, Hamburg and Bangor Universities, taught in Jersey, Wales and Germany, and ran a translation agency until retirement. His special interest is early Welsh history. Editor of *Brycheiniog* since 2008.

ADRODDIADAU/REPORTS

BRECKNOCK MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery has enjoyed another successful year, with a number of significant projects taking place and others moving to the forefront.

The beginning of the year saw the Court room roof project completed. This work was funded by the County Council's capital works programme and supported by CADW. Our new roof, covered by brand new Ffestiniog slates, has made a real difference to the Court room, and we are no longer cursed with buckets collecting water each time it rains! This work did not pass without a few surprises, after it was discovered a number of the supporting roof timbers were seriously decayed. However, with the temporary installation of supporting scaffolding and the assistance of a local team of Conservators, we were able to remove a section of the ornate egg and dart plasterwork and replace the damaged timber. The internal finish to the re-inserted plasterwork is exceptional and the join almost impossible to notice.

During the year we worked very closely with County Councillors and Powys Officers to direct further capital works money to fund the replacement of the Museum's forward roof. Although the start date for works has been delayed, due to the discovery of bats, this project will make an enormous difference to the Museum and will, in the end, see the construction of a new forward roof, a new second floor space and a new circulation staircase. Once construction starts, in the autumn, we hope the project will be completed early in 2012. We are also hopeful this work will at long last see the removal of the green protective netting from the front of the building.

The new circulation staircase will eventually link the ground, first and second floors of the building and will be situated where the current Naturalist's Study exhibit is found. To mark the end of this popular display, we will expand its content into a temporary exhibition, with new views of the recreated study and a selection of other objects, from the Natural History collection, placed on display. This exhibition will be open during May and June, 2011.

The new staircase also forms an integral part of the larger Heritage Lottery Fund project, which we submitted towards the end of the year. A decision on the project will be made during the early summer, 2011, and we are very grateful for all the feedback and support we received during the public consultation period.

Redevelopment aside, museum business continues apace. During the last year, with financial support from the Brecknock Society & Museum Friends (BSMF), the Museum purchased three Archaeological Treasure objects, saving these artefacts for the people of Brecknock. The objects, an early medieval silver ingot, a medieval silver dagger chape and a Roman silver strap end, will go on display shortly in the Archaeology gallery with due reference given to the kindness of the

BSMF. The Museum is also very grateful for the generous support received from the BSMF for the purchase of a set of replica Roman Armour and a replica Roman Female costume, for our education service. Education is a key aim for the Museum and expanding the teaching collection to facilitate this is essential for our continued development.

During the past year Brecknock Museum has created a number of successful and broad ranging exhibitions. Early in the year we worked very closely with a group of local artists to produce 'the Drovers', an art and social history exhibition, and with the financial support of the Brecknock Art Trust; we were able to purchase for the collection the central 'Mynydd Illtud Triptych' print, by Lesley Lillywhite. Later in the year, in partnership with the Fforest Fawr Geopark, we constructed a small exhibition looking at modern and old maps of Brecknock. Other exhibitions celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Girlguiding and we drew from our own collections an interesting ensemble of portraits through the ages. A further significant exhibition developed and curated through partnership with the Powys Arts Engine, was the 'arts-engine ALIVE!' exhibition. Six artists were invited to exhibit at Brecknock Museum and, again with the gracious support of the Brecknock Art Trust, we have managed to acquire a sculpture from the show by the artist Meri Wells.

The Brecknock Museum collection expanded by 214 items during the year, and included archaeological items, artworks and a number of social history items. In particular, we were very grateful to (the late) Myra Jermin and her husband, who gifted a silver pen, which had been used at 3pm on 31st May 1935 by Gertrude E. Lewis, Mayoress of Brecon, to sign the first 'six penny wire', sent from Brecon Post Office to HRH the Prince of Wales. The gift included all associated ephemera, with the Prince's responding telegram indicating it was received at Brecon at 3.55pm the same day, in total, a remarkable collection recording a unique day in Brecon's history.

These are challenging times for museums across the UK and towards the end of the year, we had to say goodbye to our long serving Museum Administrator, Susan Jones. Fortunately, Sue hasn't moved too far and has joined Brecon Library to become the new Assistant Librarian. We wish her well in her new role and look forward to developing close links with Sue and her new colleagues as we move closer to the potential relocation of the Library next to the Museum.

The continued support of Brecknock Society and Museum Friends is fundamental to the survival and continuing growth of Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery, many thanks.

NIGEL BLACKAMORE MPhil
Senior Curator
Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery

ARCHIFAU POWYS ARCHIVES

The public service operated by Powys Archives continues to be very popular. Over 1,250 researchers visited in person this year, and have accessed in excess of 1,400 original items from our collections, as well as local studies sources and records on microfilm/fiche available in our searchroom. Those who are unable to come to Llandrindod Wells have made great use of our research service, and this year 258 hours of research have been undertaken for 221 searchers. Around 800 additional letters and emails have been answered by staff about the records we hold. Our webpages on the Powys County Council website have been accessed around 98,000 times.

Rhian James joined the service in December on a permanent contract as Assistant Archivist. Originally from Llanafan, Aberystwyth, Rhian qualified as an archivist in 2010, having graduated with a degree in history from the University of Aberystwyth, then a MA in history from the University of Cardiff, before undertaking the post-graduate Archive course in Aberystwyth. She has previously worked at the National Library of Wales. Earlier in the year John Haddon from Llandrindod Wells, a graduate in history and politics from the University of Reading, worked on a temporary contract for four months as Archives Assistant.

In December Powys Archives was awarded £4,000 from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust (NMCT) to conserve two volumes from the Montgomeryshire militia, dating from the Napoleonic period. The two volumes conserved include a regimental book of the Royal Montgomery Regiment of Militia and the Montgomery Yeomanry Cavalry, 1816–1845 (M/L/R/1); and a minute book of general meetings of HM lieutenancy, which includes details of ballots relating to service, 1813–1815 (M/L/M/1). A small grant application to CyMAL (Museums, Archives and Libraries in the Welsh Assembly Government) for £1,548 was also successful, and has allowed the conservation of another militia volume, namely a minute book relating to the militia for the Hundred of Montgomery containing enrolments, ballotings, and appeals, 1808–1831 (M/L/M/3). CyMAL have also awarded Powys Archives £2,000 to conserve an estate plan of Llangoed Hall from our Glanusk Estate collection. The plan dates from 1755 and is approximately 73cm x 133cm, consisting of water colour and ink, on two joined pieces of parchment. Llangoed Hall has gardens which are Grade II listed. The plan shows the main house and its immediate surroundings.

During the two week stocktake closure in February staff continued cataloguing parochial material which was transferred from the National Library of Wales in November and December 2008. There are around 200 parishes in the counties of Breconshire, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire and for each parish a separate catalogue has been created detailing those records that have survived. These include registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, vestry minutes, churchwardens' accounts, records relating to administration of the Poor Law, and charities and

schools. Where they survive series of records, such as settlement certificates, removal orders and bastardy bonds have been, in the main, retained in bundles, and in order to make them more accessible to searchers, Ann Roberts and Jennifer Lewis have provided some invaluable volunteer help by listing these items individually. Thanks also have to go to Dawn Gill, Archives Assistant who has taken on the mammoth task of sorting and numbering documents from the 200 parishes in advance of making them available for researchers to use.

Powys Archives is now the recognised place of deposit for parish registers and parochial records for the majority of parishes across the County. In November we were amazed to receive an early register for the parish of Llandeilo Graban. It contains baptisms, marriages and burials that would have taken place at the parish church from 1669–1812. The register was thought to be lost and it was last seen in 1935, but having turned up recently in the Midlands in private hands, it is now safely back in Powys. Parish registers which are 'lost' very rarely turn up out of the blue, and press coverage saw the Llandeilo Graban register being reported across Britain and even the United States. Two other important parish volumes have also found their way to Powys Archives this year; firstly a register of baptisms for Carno parish dating 1813–1901 – thanks go to Bryn Ellis of Welshpool for locating this volume; and secondly a vestry minute book from Aberhafesp, 1783–1821 has also found its way into our collections.

A small grant application to CyMAL for £1,323 now allows Powys Archives to participate in the Archives Wales Reader's Ticket scheme. The funding enabled the Archives to purchase stationary to issue tickets, and a software licence for the Reader Registration Module in CALM, which is essentially the database which helps administer the ticket scheme. To date around 80 researchers have been issued with tickets. As well as helping the Archives build a profile of its users, ticket-holders will also be able to receive information by email about archive services across Wales. At present the following services are also issuing Archives Wales Reader's Tickets: Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Swansea University, and West Glamorgan Archives. It is also recognised for use at Ceredigion Archives, and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Jessamy Sykes, Liaison Officer for Wales at the National Archives visited Powys Archives in March in order to meet staff and gain an insight into how the service is run. In particular information about our accommodation, collections, and facilities for the public were discussed, and which form the basis of TNA's *Standard for Archive Repositories*.Powys Archives subscribed to TNA's *Standard* in November 2007. A more formal inspection by TNA will be undertaken in due course.

Items from the Pryce Jones Collection at Powys Archives appeared in a BBC television programme, *Wales and the History of the World* in March, which was presented by Eddie Butler, journalist, commentator, and former Welsh Rugby Union player. The programme featured the Euklisia rug which was patented by Newtown entrepreneur Sir Pryce Pryce Jones in 1876 and went on to be exported

around the world in the late 19th Century. No examples of it survive, but researchers on the BBC's *Wales and the History of the World* programme recreated it using the original patent. Documents at the Archives show Pryce Jones sold 60,000 rugs to the Russian army.

Membership of our Friends group now exceeds 300 individuals, families, groups and societies. Our newsletter, *Almanac*, continues to go to all Friends, libraries, High Schools in Powys, Council Members, and other archive services across Wales. Beth Williams and Ann Roberts continue to come to the Archives on a weekly basis, and make an invaluable contribution to the amount of indexing and transcription work undertaken by the service. Jennifer Lewis, Research Assistant with the Archives has also undertaken volunteer work this year.

Ann in particular has helped to list a large number of Poor Law records from the parochial collections, including settlement certificates, removal orders and bastardy bonds for a variety of parishes across the three counties of Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire and Breconshire. Jennifer is now also assisting with parochial material; mainly eighteenth and nineteenth Poor Law records from Radnorshire. Beth has concentrated on indexing school admission registers from the nineteenth century, again from across the three counties, and has made significant inroads into our holdings of these early registers. As always the help we receive from volunteers continues to be essential to the service. The work they undertake means our collections are more accessible to researchers.

Powys Archives 2009–2010 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 2010 with particular reference to Breconshire are as follows:

Public and Official Records

Records from the 'Trinity' United Reformed Church, Ystradgynlais C20 [Acc 1949, 1956]

Trading Standards: Weights and Measures certificates for Breconshire, Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire. Mainly C20, earliest 1825 [Acc 1950]

Mid Wales Police Authority copy minutes and agendas 1940s–1960s [Acc 1961]

Builth County School Admission Register 1937–1944 [Acc 1962]

Records from Builth 'Memorial' Baptist Church; including minutes, account books, Sunday School Records, miscellaneous records 1836–2009 [Acc 1992]

Material additional: Talgarth Hospital C20, patient's records, photographs [Acc 2003]

Non Official Records

Memory Cards and postcards relating to Hay and Llanigon C20 (10 items) [Acc 1947]

Festival Programme for the Plough Congregational Church Brecon and Beulah

Congregational Church, 1957. Features John Price, musician 1857–1930 [Acc 1948]

Thomas Llewellyn Emlyn Jones: appointment as vicar of Talgarth and Llanelieu; canon of St John's Brecon 1972 [3 items] [Acc 1957]

Postcard of Hepste Falls, Brecon Beacons c1904 [Acc 1966]

Abstract of title of farm and lands called Belfont, p Devynock C19. This was part of the Great Forest of Brecknock. (125 pages) [Acc 1970]

Engraving of St John's church, Brecon, nd; engraving of Builth Bridge, nd [Acc 1971]

Brecon Hospital Millennium Appeal, record of names of contributors 2000, with photograph of Prince Charles at opening ceremony [Acc 1978]

Breconshire Girlguiding records additional: Talgarth Brownies scrapbook 1990s; History of the County Standard photo album 1910s–1990s [Acc 1981]

Records from Titley Estate, Kington, Herefordshire, relating to Breconshire/ Radnorshire C17–C19. [Acc 1995]

CATHERINE RICHARDS

TRETOWER COURT AND THE BRECKNOCK SOCIETY

At the first AGM of the newly formed Brecknock Society on May 23rd 1928 it was agreed that Colonel John Lloyd (he was knighted in 1938), the Secretary and principal founder of the Society, should arrange a visit at the end of July to Tretower Court.

The members who made the visit were distressed to see the condition of the property, part of which was used to store farm equipment, and realised that unless action was speedily taken there was a danger of much of it collapsing. John Lloyd was authorised to open discussions with the owner, Mr W. Davies of Pentwyn, Llantilio Crossenny/*Llandeilo Gresynni*, regarding the purchase of the property with the intention that once acquired it should be given to His Majesty's Office of Works to start restoration work. In May 1929 Lloyd believed that he had reached an informal agreement with Mr Davies to purchase the part of Tretower in the greatest danger of collapse for £750, the R.P.I. equivalent today of around £35,000. Two months later the Office of Works confirmed that they 'would take the early action necessary to save parts of the building from collapse'.

Now the challenge was to raise the £750 quickly. However, in September Mr Davies intimated that he wished to reopen negotiations and the result was a price increase to £900. Discussions continued and towards the end of the year the Brecknock Society was given 3 or 4 months to raise the £900 (c.£42,000 in current value).

This was possibly one of the worst times to launch an appeal for financial aid. In October 1929 the Wall Street Crash had plunged the world into the deepest and longest economic depression of the twentieth century. An 'Appeal by the Brecknock Society to purchase for the Nation the 14th Century Building known as Tretower Court' was launched in January 1930. The explanatory pamphlet describing the Court's historical importance was featured in national papers and the *Western Mail* published a well-illustrated article about the appeal. Money soon started coming in and by the end of February £1,056-4s had been subscribed. The conveyance was signed on April 12th and the property immediately transferred to the Office of Works. There was also an option to purchase the rest of the Court, which was used as a farmhouse, and the surrounding land, if a further £2,900 could be found by April 1933.

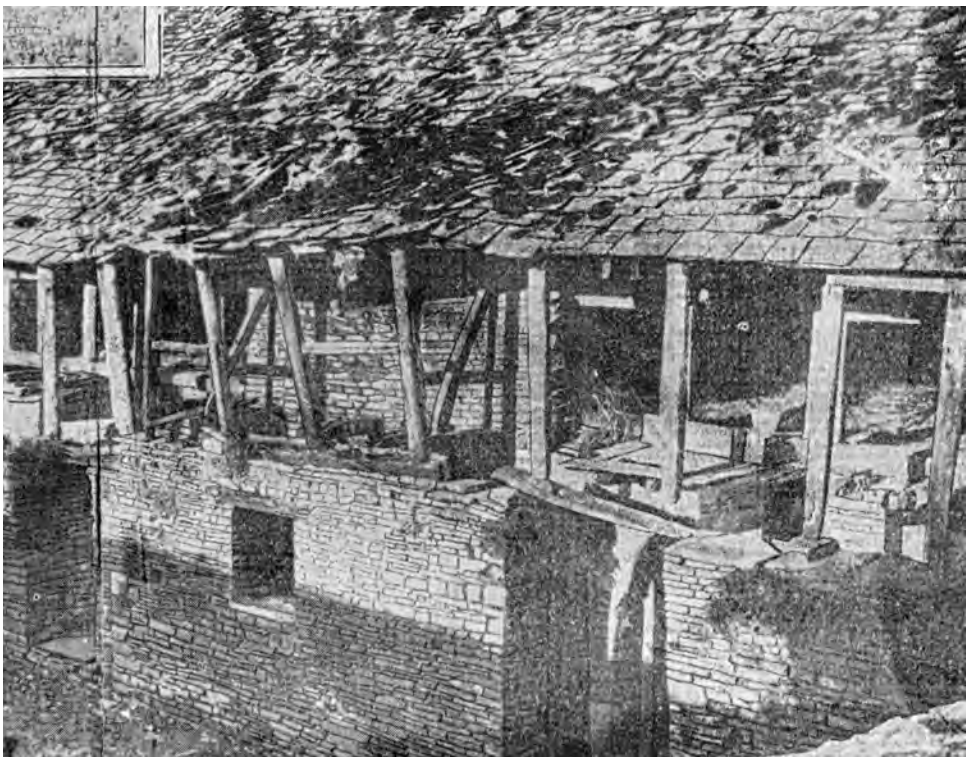
One of the unusual features of this transaction was that the Office of Works commenced preliminary work on the building three months before the conveyance was signed. This was possibly because Lord Glanusk had guaranteed to pay the owner £900 if the Brecknock Society was unable to raise the money.

The task of providing another £3000 in the prevailing economic climate was daunting as the Brecknock Society was already having problems in raising sufficient funds to maintain and develop the Brecknock Museum and pay the curator. The result was that little was done for two years and the option was due to expire in

1933. John Lloyd entered into further discussions with Mr Davies and the option was extended to November 1934. In April 1933 the Pilgrim Trust, founded by Edward Harkness, a very wealthy American, was approached. The Trust was particularly concerned with supporting worthy projects in theUK, the trustees including Stanley Baldwin, the former Prime Minister and John Buchan the author and politician, soon to be Baron Tweedsmuir and Governor General of Canada. The Secretary was Thomas Jones who many regarded as the most influential Welshman of the 20s and 30s. The Pilgrim Trust was approached but in May Thomas Jones replied that he was 'not hopeful of its (the application) being successful'.

In August 1933 John Buchan stayed at Ffrwdgrech House, Brecon and John Lloyd took the opportunity of meeting Buchan and telling him about Tretower Court. On September 28th the Treasurer of the Tretower Appeal received a letter from the Pilgrim Trust stating, 'Mr (Thomas) Jones asks me to tell you that he has received through Mr John Buchan an application in respect of the purchase of Tretower Court'. Three days later, Thomas Jones wrote a private, hand-written letter to: 'My Dear Friend, This is a little confidential note to say that I put the appeal on behalf of Tretower Court before my Trustees on Wednesday and . . . they voted a grant of £1,500 towards the purchase. I hope you will think this not an unsatisfactory result of your efforts'. The formal decision was sent to Lord Glanusk, copied to John Lloyd, and made it clear that: '. . . the grant of £1,500 towards the purchase of Tretower Court, (is) payable subject to the balance of the purchase money being raised'. On the same day John Lloyd received a letter from John Buchan, 'My dear Lloyd, If there is anything I can do to advise about your appeal for further funds in connection with Tretower, do command me'.

John Lloyd was advised that Mr Davies should now be offered £1,500 or £2,000 immediately and that there was a good chance that he would agree. It is not known if this happened but, if used, this tactic failed so in February 1934 the Society launched a new appeal for funds, which in ten months raised £1425. The final accounts show that between 1930–34 that in addition to the £1,500 from the Pilgrim Trust there were two hundred and sixty-six donations varying from £300 from Lord Glanusk to one shilling from a schoolboy in Ebbw Vale. The tenth largest donation of £61 came from Brecon Girls' Grammar School but there are no recorded contributions from either Christ College or the Boys' Grammar School. One hundred and eighteen donations came from Brecknockshire, seventy-two each from the rest of Wales and from England, two from the U.S.A. and one each from Scotland and Cairo! In present day value the total purchase cost was approximately £195,000 and the expense of producing the appeal publicity and legal expenses totalled around £200, the equivalent of about £10,500 today. The purchase was soon completed and the whole property then given by the Brecknock Society to the nation.The long process of conservation and restoration now began and was not completed until the 1960s. A major new scheme of conservation was



The Gallery of the North Range of Tretower Court, showing its ruinous condition at the time of purchase.

undertaken from 2008–10 including the renewal of the roofs. The kitchen and Great Hall were restored and furnished to what is believed the way they would have looked around 1470.

After being closed for over two years Tretower Court was opened to the public in the spring of 2010. In the CADW periodical 'Heritage in Wales' this was marked by a major article but no mention was made that it was the Brecknock Society, which had saved this building and presented it to the nation. Representations were made and the next issue contained the statement, 'Heritage in Wales is happy to acknowledge the vital role the Brecknock Society played in saving Tretower for the nation. . . . the house was purchased by the Brecknock Society, with the aid of the Pilgrim Trust, and generously presented it to the Commissioners of Works'. The role of the Society is also acknowledged in the new brochure about Tretower Court and Castle.

KEN JONES

ROLAND MATHIAS

The following article is the text of a lecture delivered by Glyn Mathias on June 13, 2009 on the occasion of the Academi tour of the areas of Brecknockshire associated with his father, Roland Mathias.

Roland Mathias with his parents, 1917.

Glyn Collwn, 'the Glyn', carries the River Caerfanell down from the Brecon Beacons until it flows into the River Usk. At the end of the 19th century, about 200 people lived here in a largely Welsh-speaking farming community. It was here that in 1894, my great grandfather, Joseph Morgan brought his family from Cardiff, renting a small farm called Tyle-Clydach, known as 'the Tyle'. The farm, which is still there, is a steep climb from the bottom of the valley, the Clydach being a tributary of the Caerfanell. Over seventy years later, the farm achieved brief fame as the base for a Tibetan farm school, training young émigrés in self-sufficiency farming. It closed down because the Dalai Lama declared the farming too primitive and refused to support it.

Joseph Morgan had been a stonemason and builder by trade, until his health gave way in his late thirties and he was advised to move to the mountains for the fresh air. He had been a man noted for his physical strength. Indeed, family legend has it that he once took up a 'Golden Guinea' challenge from the proprietor of a

boxing booth, fought the professional fighter to a standstill and went off with the guinea prize. But the breakdown of his health left him a more uncertain man, and he got off to a bad start at the Tyle.

It was the custom to conduct the sale of the outgoing tenant's stock and goods in such a way as to maximise the sum to the departing widow. The neighbours rallied round to do what they could for Widow Evans, and the bidding took many of the stock above their market value. Joseph, who had no stock at all, thought he was being forced to pay above the odds to get what he wanted. Instead of realising that he had no need to do this, and better prices could be had elsewhere, he went in over his head, spending more than he could afford.

Furious about this afterwards, he preferred not to recognise his own folly but convinced himself of a plot by Welsh-speakers against a monoglot from Cardiff. For the rest of his life, he harboured anti-Welsh feelings, which, to a certain extent, my grandmother imbibed. It was Joseph's wife, Rachel, who was friendly with the neighbours, offering the help and mutual support which was characteristic of such a rural community.

Life on tenant farms such as the Tyle was hard. Like many farming wives in the Glyn, Rachel would take butter, milk, eggs and hens over the mountain every week down to market at Dowlais on the other side. The journey might have been by pony or train – trains ran on the Brecon to Merthyr line up the east side of the valley and through a tunnel at the top, stopping at Torpantau, then the highest railway station in Wales.

In 1906, the family had moved to Ffynnon Fawr, a 280-acre farm on the east side of the valley. In fact, the farmhouse was newly built, and spacious by local standards. The old farmhouse, just below it, had been uninhabitable for some time, used only for plucking fowl and other messy jobs. The family had moved up a little in the economic structure of the Glyn.

My grandmother, Muriel, grew up a shy, if not timid, girl, but successful at her schoolwork. She was the first pupil from Talybont School to qualify for the new girls' school in Brecon, and subsequently worked for a brief time as a teacher at Talybont school where she had been a pupil. But, not helped by the fact that the headmaster was fond of slipping out of the school for a pint, she found it too much of a strain. She earned a black mark when a Governor of the church foundation school came to interrogate her class. She failed to address him as 'Sir'. She returned to help her mother on the farm, mainly with the dairy work.

It is not at all clear how Muriel met her future husband. My grandfather, from a working-class Welsh-speaking family in Llanelli, was a young Congregational minister who had qualified a few years previously at the Brecon Memorial College. He was now Minister at the Congregational chapel, New Inn, near Pontypool.

Whether they met at a chapel service or elsewhere, my grandfather, who was a sociable man and not short of female admirers in his congregation, chose to marry the shy girl from a distant farm. They were married at Benaiah Chapel, Talybont,

before Christmas 1914. But they were soon apart again. My grandfather had been granted release from his church to become an army chaplain for the duration of the war. His departure meant my grandmother was once more living at Ffynnon Fawr, where, on September 4, 1915, my father was born.

Ffynnon Fawr no longer exists. The valley was flooded in the 1930s to supply Newport with water. The dam, completed by 1938, created the largest reservoir in Wales at that time. Ffynnon Fawr was now at the water's edge, empty and inaccessible and was demolished in the early 1950s. As a child, I could still see the ruins, but now it is little more than a moss-covered heap of stones.

For my father, this gave him an overwhelming sense of loss. His poem, *The Flooded Valley*, begins:

> My house is empty but for a pair of boots:
> The reservoir slaps at the privet hedge and uncovers the roots
> And afterwards pats them up with a slack good will:
> The sheep that I market once are not again to sell.

My grandfather decided to continue with his career as an army chaplain after the war, reaching the rank of Colonel. But my grandmother was never comfortable with army life. The family moved to Cologne after the birth of her second child, Alun, at Aber Farm in the Glyn, where they had moved after her father's death in 1916. By all accounts, encumbered by two small boys, she took little part in army life. But there were trips on the Rhine, visits to Bonn and even Venice. Her daughter, Dilys, was born in Southsea on their return.

At Bulford camp in Salisbury, the family acquired the services of a maid, who caused my grandmother a great deal of anxiety. A pretty, good-natured girl from the village, she was frequently to be found chatting at the back door with would-be admirers. The difficulty was accentuated by the presence in the house of my grandfather's batman, who seemed to have little else to do than clean my grandfather's boots and perform one or two odd jobs. He would often be found in the kitchen chatting up the maid, which disturbed my grandmother's puritan nature. She disliked any kind of gossip, bawdiness or any hint of immorality.

By the early 1930s, she was developing a horror of the army and all it stood for. Her conscience was telling her more and more that man had no right to kill his fellow man under the banner of patriotism. She found it hard to accept that Christians condoned and sanctioned such killing. She was wedded, through her husband and his status as an army chaplain, to beliefs that she was growing to hate.

My father summarised her views at the time:

> By this time, there was in her a deep-seated conviction that the Christian church in all its denominations (I do not know how far she considered the Quakers) was the source of the greatest evil under which society suffered, in that it not merely condoned but actively supported war and the killing of fellow human beings.

Soon she ceased going to chapel, feeling called to oppose the church in all denominations as the prime deceiver of the innocent of the world. She instead relied on a steadfast faith in her own relationship with God. She told me she felt so strongly that, although shy, she forced herself to speak publicly on the evils of war.

She never sought to impose her views on her family or friends. But my grandfather was, naturally, upset and hurt. He had his Sunday services to take, his duties as a chaplain, his participation in army life. So there was tension and the occasional confrontation, of which the children were aware.

The advent of the Second World War dramatically increased the tension between the views of my grandparents. 'This generation has again rejected Christ', she wrote, 'these terrible Christian leaders who are saying that the devil's will is God's will. The Christian cannot compromise'. She believed that those who followed what she saw as God's will would be looked after by Him. So she refused to wear a gas mask and occasionally had to be reprimanded by policemen or ARP wardens for a failure to observe the blackout.

Ironically, my grandfather's retirement from the army and their return to Brecon in 1940 precipitated the crisis. Here, in a more close-knit community, it was more difficult to keep her issues of conscience a private matter. On one of their first Sundays in Brecon, my grandfather had been to chapel services in the morning, afternoon and evening. My grandmother wrote that the Plough had been full of soldiers, and, in a letter to her eldest son, she did not disguise her view that the two things were incompatible.

> It is a thoroughly pagan and hypocritical little town, full of churches and church worship full of soldiers. The atmosphere has been pretty tense, as you can imagine – however I have destroyed all hopes (your father) may have had of joining in the mockery of God by saying what I think of it all.

The worst crisis came over the wartime evacuation of children from London and other cities. She, like other householders with room to spare, was approached by billeting officers and asked to take one or more children. She agonised over this but felt compelled to refuse. For her, it would mean that she was helping the authorities who were prosecuting the war, and she gave her son a surprisingly full account.

> It was Wednesday of last week that the Billeting Officer called because I refused evacuees on the grounds that it was not God's will for me to have them, for I said my God was a loving father and Almighty and able to take care of his creatures wherever they were and whatever circumstances prevailed, provided they trusted in Him and committed themselves to His keeping. The Billeting officer said he feared it might mean prosecution. To my reason for not obeying, he said he didn't know about that. Certainly he didn't, because his God is certainly not my God, but the God of this world.

My grandfather, away at the time, learnt from a letter from the Billeting Officer of her refusal to take evacuees although they had sufficient room.

> A most painful struggle ensued. I've had lots of struggles in spiritual things, but this was the most terrible, for of course it involved so much . . . Seeing I'd give up my life rather than give in, he said he would go to the Billeting Officer and tell him that he disassociated himself from me altogether (this was what I had all along wanted him to do and begged of him to tell the man I'd pay the penalty of my disobedience, whatever it was).

Whatever transpired at my grandfather's meeting with the Billeting Officer, no prosecution ensued, even though a further approach from the Billeting Officer a few months later received a similar rebuff.

Whatever the theological disagreements, it was a calm and secure household for her grandchildren, my grandfather smoking his pipe contentedly in the kitchen after breakfast, my grandmother drinking her glass of warm water every morning – all the medicine she needed, she said. Despite the fact that by the end of her life she was almost bent double, she continued running the house herself and never went to a doctor. That, too, was against her belief: she was in God's care, not her fellow man's. For 40 years, she had no medical record.

In August 1941, a police inspector called at my father's lodgings in St Helens in Lancashire. But my father was away on holiday from his teaching job, and news reached him by letter that the police were looking for him. His landlady wrote to him at his parent's home in Brecon, but he was in fact staying at a relatives' farm just outside Cardiff. A few days' later, his mother wrote:

> One of the local police called this morning just after 10. Inquired if you were here. I told him you left on Saturday for Cardiff. We offered to wire you to get you back. However, he said to let you have your holiday for it was not till Sept 1st that you were needed up north.

My father faced a summons – Rex versus Roland Glyn Mathias – to appear at Liverpool Police Court in Dale Street, at 11.15 a.m. on September 1st for failing to submit himself to a medical examination, which under the Armed Forces Act, was to establish his fitness for military service. The court appearance was to lead him directly to a prison term.

It had been over a year since my father had applied to be registered as a conscientious objector. In the application he set out his reasons:

> I cannot engage in this or any other war, the aim of which is to take human life. In all circumstances I regard human life as sacred, and organised killing – even killing under extreme provocation – is murder. Nothing can eradicate that.

But then came the reasoning which was to lead him ultimately to prison:

> For the same reasons, I must decline to engage with the R.A.M.C. or any other form of non-combatant service. Superficially a refusal to help the wounded sounds inhumane; but willingness to assist suffering humanity in general and to engage under the military regis to do it are entirely different things . . . In other words, the Medical Corps alleviates suffering for a military end; man is to be healed not as man pure and simple, but as a military being. To this I cannot contribute.

There is no doubt that my father had imbibed much of his mother's religious outlook. She wrote to him frequently, often several times a week. Her pacifism and Puritanism inspired the judgements he made at this key time in his life. Two sentences stand out in his argument for being registered as a conscientious objector.

> Let me declare that humanity can only be raised by the maintenance at all costs of spiritual values by those who believe. Christ was never yet served by any man compromising with evil that good might result.

My father had left Jesus College, Oxford two years previously and, after a number of unsuccessful attempts, landed a teaching post at Cowley School, St Helens. He turned out to be a popular and successful teacher of history. The headmaster, Gerald Dowse, was soon to congratulate him on the results he was getting. 'History tops all the results in both forms (of the Sixth)', he wrote:

> It was a period of his life my father was to remember fondly. He acquired many friends who were to last a lifetime, many of whom subsequently called up to serve on different fronts in the war. And he played rugby, usually as a wing forward, becoming secretary of the St Helens rugby club. One match report described his performance in the forwards as outstanding, adding: 'One scarcely expects to find a pacifist in a rugby pack'.

My father certainly discussed his pacifist views with his friends, and whatever the disagreements, he rarely lost their friendship. After an 'intimate discussion', one young friend, Theo Barker, wrote to him to re-emphasise why he thought the pacifist attitude to the war was wrong.

> We must first prevent the evil forces arraigned against us from destroying the things which we hold most dear i.e. our liberty and freedom – our culture and our system of government, to say nothing of our homes and the lives of those we love.

But nothing could shake my father from his refusal even to undertake non-combatant duties. His younger brother, Alun, shared his views, also registering as a conscientious objector, although prepared to do agricultural work, thus exempting him from military service and finding a position on a farm at Great Wolford, 'deep in the Cotswolds'.

My father did differentiate his views from those of his mother's, in general regarding his position as not quite as fundamentalist as hers. Whilst my grandmother believed, as in the case of the evacuees, that God would protect all His

creatures who believed in him, my father accepted that others were entitled to think differently. He believed he did not need to take shelter from bombs personally as he felt he was under God's protection, but others would feel otherwise, expecting his help in seeking shelter – especially if they were his pupils.

> I felt it my duty, therefore, to co-operate as a teacher when warnings sounded and to carry out my responsibilities fully in leading children into shelter. This I believed to be logical and not a compromise of my own position. During bomb alerts in Ruskin Drive (his lodgings) in 1941 I never went down to the shelter, though everybody else did. I stayed up and made cups of tea for those who were down below.

Such fine distinctions carried little weight with the local tribunal hearing his application for registration as a conscientious objector and exemption from non-combatant duties. The findings of the tribunal on June 6, 1940 were caustic:

> The applicant has been guilty of much exaggeration. He has told the Tribunal that in an air-raid he would not take cover. He has shown us that he has a very elastic conscience which will not allow him to be associated with organised first-aid, but it will allow him to teach children in his school A.R.P. exercises.
>
> The tribunal think that the man who can teach his children in his school A.R.P. exercises is not prevented from doing first-aid work in his local organisation. They feel that the most sympathetic view they can take of his case is that conscience prevents his taking life.

The order of the tribunal was that his name should be removed from the Register of Conscientious Objectors and that he should be liable to be called up for service, but to be employed only in non-combatant duties.

My father felt that his conscientious objection to non-combatant service had been misunderstood and he decided to appeal. His mother applauded his stand:

> Yes, my dear, you've been left by your Saviour until now so that you may take part in the most hectic period of spiritual warfare between good and evil, and that for the simple reason that you have the spiritual wherewithal to withstand the fierce onslaught of the enemy.

A postcard from Southport on December 5, 1940, gave my father's account of the appeal hearing. It had taken the tribunal only two minutes to dismiss his appeal and upholding the decision of the local tribunal.

> I didn't have such a tough time of it because the chairman seemed to be deaf, and I feel much more at ease than I was before. Don't worry – I feel very calm about it.

Calm he might have been, but the issue of conscientious objectors, including my father's case, became something of a cause célèbre in St Helens. The Corporation came under pressure to sack all conscientious objectors on their staff. My father was

concerned that the public stand he had taken would embarrass Cowley school where he was employed. To avoid any such difficulties, he had already decided to leave the school at the end of the term, and in the meantime he would fulfil his duties without pay.

He had now been summoned to present himself for a medical examination to determine his fitness for non-combatant duties. Submission to such a medical examination was in effect accepting non-combatant service, which he remained determined not to do. Unless he changed his mind, he would face a prison sentence. And by this time, he was getting into financial straits. He was working unpaid as a teacher and had his lodgings to pay. Further, he stayed away from his parents' home in Brecon in order not to embarrass his father. In February, 1941, my grandfather wrote to him, saying he had not discussed the letter with his mother prior to sending it:

> Since I know you went back to face the music in St Helens (rather than here) mainly out of regard for my feelings, I feel that it is my duty to write to you to say that I think it would be wiser for you to come home than to dissipate your little stock of money to pay your lodgings up there . . . So I want you to understand that your return here will not be unwelcome, whatever betides. You are my son, and I cannot stand by and see you in difficulties.

My father did return to visit his parents later that year. The machinery of state moved so slowly that it wasn't until August that the police inspector called at his lodgings to ensure he turned up for the court hearing.

The court at Liverpool on September 1, 1941, sentenced him to 3 months' hard labour. On his twenty sixth birthday, he wrote to his parents from Walton prison in Liverpool, giving an account of what happened:

> I was caught in a very heavy shower: this soaked my mac through and wetted me a good deal. I think most of the proofing is gone! At Dale St, I was up with six other chaps, making three C.O.s, three Irishmen and one other. But I was the first case. Fined £3 and to be detained in custody till taken before a medical board.
>
> At the medical, only the odd man out submitted, and the rest of us were arrested and taken back to Dale St. The following day we were tried before the stipendiary and all pleaded guilty (to disobeying a court order). The prosecuting solicitor demanded the maximum penalty as a deterrent to others, but the judge gave us three months each. And then we were brought here.

My father said little, then or later, about his time in prison. All letters were read by the authorities and any 'of an objectionable tendency' were suppressed. He reported he was visited by a number of friends, but the menace and monotony of prison life was evident in some of his poems. In his poem, *Bars*, he writes of:

Seven-squared days that bleach and crack
Between the wells and balconies
And concrete exercise . . .

His poem, *Inter Tenebros (Even Here)*, demonstrates that, even in the depths of Walton gaol, his religious faith was unshaken:

Here in the pit, the nether lines
I feel thy penetration
Lord.

For reasons unknown, my father was moved to Stafford gaol the following month. He earned full remission and was out of prison on November 2, 1941.

Now encumbered with a prison record, finding a teaching job proved difficult. He felt it unfair to return to Cowley School, St Helens, but looked for other positions instead. The main obstacle was the risk of re-arrest. The Central Board of Conscientious Objectors said they did not believe that the Ministry of Labour intended to proceed with a 'cat and mouse' treatment of COs in his position, but they warned there was no guarantee.

Through the Society of Friends, he heard of a vacancy at a school in Reading, the Blue Coat School, which took both boarding and day pupils. The Headmaster, Mr King, offered him a post at £100 per annum, together with 'board, residency and laundry'. The headmaster did not agree with my father's views, but he said: 'I have a very great esteem for any man, who will adhere to his opinion if he considers it to be right. I am quite prepared to take any risk there may be in your having to go to prison again, though I think it would be damnable to be "punished" twice for the same offence.'

My father was responsible for teaching history throughout the school, as well as teaching French, English Literature and Scripture. Once again, he quickly gained the approbation of his headmaster for the School Certificate results his pupils were achieving.

Under the National Service Act of 1941, Parliament gave conscientious objectors a new procedure for appeal. To try and remove the threat of re-arrest and further imprisonment, my father decided to appeal against the original refusal of the tribunal in 1940 to exempt him from non-combatant duties.

In May 1942, the Appellate Tribunal dismissed his application out of hand, and, if anything, the failed appeal probably drew greater attention to his case. It wasn't long before he was being warned that the Ministry of Labour were after him again. Having failed at the Appellate Tribunal, my father was now liable to be directed to 'work of national importance' without any further notice or hearing. He was first directed to work as an agricultural labourer, which he refused. Then he was directed to work as a stores labourer with Great Western Railway at Didcot, which he also refused.

Some of his friends and acquaintances, while understanding his religious beliefs, failed to understand this unwillingness to take up the kind of work he was now being asked to do. They could not follow his reasoning for being prepared to do some kinds of work but not others. A number described him as 'cussed' and 'extreme' in his views, but others accepted the strength of his conviction. His brother Alun, who by now was enjoying farm work, wrote:

> Are you sure you are not just looking out for a cushy job? Manual work is of paramount importance – our education has been one-sided, we've not learnt how to use our hands and we've rather tended to despise those who do. The thing one must do in life is to follow God's will and it may be that manual work is not for you, but even so you should have the complete willingness to do it even if you feel that your qualities would not be fully utilized in such occupations.

It was the failure to comply with the direction to work as a railway stores labourer that led him to his second prison term. He was summoned to appear in court at Reading on December 14, 1942. His mother's exhortations became even more apocalyptic in tone, urging him to stand up against the adversaries of Christ:

> Christ's work is nearly finished now and He and His forces will soon have completely overcome the devil and his forces – we are on absolutely the last lap and the consummation of Christ's kingdom is at hand.

The evening before his court appearance, knowing what was in front of him, my father said goodbye to his fellow staff at the School. He tried to keep the news away from the boys, he said, asking the headmaster to make no reference to it at prayers.

> But there is not much that the big ears of the little pitchers do not catch, and I have no doubt that some of the frequent jokes at my expense at High Table were overheard – and interpreted. Anyway, when I was in my bedroom, packing my stuff, Miller (the senior prefect) crept up the stairs to wish me goodbye on behalf of all the boys.

At 11.30 the next morning, he was in front of the magistrates' bench. He was told that his conscientious views were not relevant, and fined £20 or three months in prison. He refused to pay the fine, took the three months instead, and was taken by a detective to Oxford prison.

My father had been accompanied in court by his headmaster, Mr King, who himself offered to pay the fine, except my father would not let him. But the headmaster was not willing to lose a good teacher so easily. He subsequently wrote: 'Within forty-eight hours, the boys of this school had subscribed the £20, asked me to go to Oxford and bring him back.'

On December 16, 1942, the following note was written on his prison papers: 'The fine was paid by the Scholars and Staff of Blue Coat School and he was discharged today.'

A close friend of his, Maurice Clifton, by this time serving in the Signal Corps in North Africa, wrote to him from the back of a three-ton Bedford truck somewhere in the desert, with the sound of guns blazing further up the line: 'Sorry about your predicament, though – believe me, Roland – I admire you for the way you stuck out for what you consider right.'

For the rest of the war, my father's career was not further 'disturbed' by the Ministry of Labour, and his life took off in other directions. He had showed enormous courage to take the stand he did for his religious convictions. But I am also struck by the tolerance and understanding of his friends, family and colleagues for the difficulties he caused for those around him.

One of Maurice Clifton's sons wrote to *The Times* on his death:

> Roland Mathias and my father were fellow members of the common room in the Lancashire grammar school where they taught before the war. He went on to be a brave pacifist; my father to be a brave soldier in North Africa and Italy. They exchanged many letters from their respective positions, prison and warfront, in which their mutual respect and admiration is self-evident. Roland was a fine and highly principled man.

GLYN MATHIAS

SIR ROWLAND GWYNNE (1659–1726)

The political history of Brecknockshire cannot be studied in isolation from that of its neighbouring counties of Radnorshire and Herefordshire. There was a settled and intimate connection established between Brecknockshire and Radnorshire long before they were joined into one parliamentary constituency. The subject of this paper, for instance, had served as Member of Parliament for both Radnorshire constituencies, county and boroughs, before he became Member for Brecknockshire. Likewise, John Jeffreys of the Priory, Brecon, served as Member for Radnorshire in 1692 and 1695, with support from the Harleys of Brampton Bryan, Herefordshire, which family also supplied Members for both the Radnorshire county and borough constituencies. After the upheaval of the Commonwealth and Protectorate period (1649–1660), county politics had settled down into a pattern that is familiar to us. It was dominated by the gentry class which came into its own after 1660, the period after the Restoration becoming known as 'the golden age of the gentry'. It is notable that as yet there was no aristocratic element in the politics of either Radnorshire or Brecknockshire, which is not to say that there was no aristocratic influence in support of certain candidates at elections. Family prestige dictated social status, and a seat in Parliament set a seal upon it. Though politics was a matter of contention between rival county families, another factor early intruded into the politics of Brecknockshire after the Restoration, namely, political party since, from the reign of Charles II, two parties emerged dubbed Whig and Tory, divided mainly by their attitude towards the Crown. Though Brecknockshire gentry were in the main Tory in sympathy, the Whigs became an important factor in the county's politics earlier than elsewhere in Wales due largely to the political acumen of Sir Rowland Gwynne. It was at county level that the political battle was fought in Brecknockshire since the borough constituency of Brecon town was under the domination of the wealthy Jeffreys family of The Priory.

Sir Rowland Gwynne was not a native of Brecknockshire, having been born at Llanelwedd, Radnorshire, in 1659. The Gwynnes were a multi-branched family, with seats in Carmarthenshire, Monmouthshire and Glamorganshire as well as Radnorshire. It was possession of the Tŷ Mawr estate which gave the Gwynne family a foothold in Brecknockshire, so that Rowland Gwynne was not at any time regarded as an intruder in a county which resolved to keep parliamentary representation within its own narrow gentry circle. He was the eldest in a family of two sons and four daughters, the latter marrying into local gentry families in Brecknockshire and Radnorshire, which extended the family's connections and enabled it to draw upon their political interests. The family itself had one of the most extensive political interests in Radnorshire, Rowland's father having sat as Member for the county in 1660, and had been appointed Deputy-Lieutenant for both Brecknock and Radnor at the Restoration in 1660.

Of Rowland Gwynne's early education we have no knowledge except that he matriculated at St John's College, Oxford on 16 July, 1674 aged fifteen, and presumably entered that College in the same year.[1] Fifteen was not an unusual age to enter University then, but why St John's College was chosen in preference to Jesus College founded by Sir John Price, a Brecknockshire man, and known as 'the Welsh college', cannot be explained. It was probably the fact that previous members of the family had attended St John's that determined the choice. There is no record of his having taken a degree, but five years was an unusually long time before, according to Foster, he entered Gray's Inn in 1679 when he was twenty years old, which was a usual age for entry into an Inn of Court. He may have spent some time at an Inn of Chancery, inferior to an Inn of Court, as a preparation to entry to Gray's Inn. We do not know how long he remained a student, he certainly did not take silk and never practised the law, but the time at Gray's Inn familiarised him with London and whetted his appetite for a life in politics.

Rowland Gwynne succeeded to his father's estate in 1673, reckoned to be worth £1,000 a year, which he dissipated, it was said, by high life spent in 'eating and rioting' and, according to one pamphleteer, 'whoring'. This can only be partially true at best, since Gwynne's mind was set on personal aggrandisement through following a political career, in pursuit of which he dissipated his family's finances. Electioneering in two counties took its toll, and he had to sell the manor of Builth which was part of the Llanelwedd estate, to a kinsman, Judge Marmaduke Gwynne, which ensured its continuance in the name of Gwynne.[2] Politics could then be a profitable game if one secured the right patrons, and for a while he enjoyed a run of good luck which he forfeited more than once by miscalculation, as we shall see. For a brief time he held the stewardship of Cantref Maelienydd which, in addition to financial benefits, gave him a valuable political interest. He lost it, however, to the Harleys whose rising star, Robert Harley, became a formidable rival in contention for local power. Gwynne entered Parliament in 1679 and was knighted in 1680 in quite inexplicable circumstances, certainly not for service to the Crown whose policy he opposed in the Exclusion crisis of 1679–81, as we shall see later. It has been suggested that his knighthood was conferred in the anticipation that he would oppose the growing power of the Harleys, a much more formidable contender, in the region, which was a reasonable inducement were it only for personal reasons. Equally inexplicable was his appointment as a Fellow of the newly-founded Royal Society in 1681 which could not have been for any scientific achievement but, as yet, the Society had not become solely devoted to the pursuit of science. Some sources state that he was appointed a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber which would have given him personal access to the king, again, somewhat implausible considering his conduct in the Exclusion crisis, and the suspicion that he was involved in the Rye House plot in 1683 to overthrow the king concocted by leading Whigs. Like many of them, Rowland Gwynne fled abroad to the Netherlands to avoid prosecution, and this put his political career on hold for five

years. During this time, his political enemies at home seized upon the opportunity to discredit him by moving King James's executive to issue a privy seal against him for dereliction of duty, since he had been pricked in 1688 as Sheriff of Brecknockshire and, in his absence, it had been impossible to hold any sessions in the county. Judges of the Court of Great Sessions fined him £300 for neglect of duty.[3] Sir Rowland chose his place of exile well in 1683 since, when Prince William of Orange was invited over by Whig lords in 1688 at the head of an army, Gwynne returned in his baggage train. He made straight for South Wales according to intelligence which reached James II's government in London, and the authorities there were warned that he might be up to mischief. The Duke of Beaufort, Lord Lieutenant of the whole of Wales, was instructed to keep Wales quiet, and to order his deputies to arrest Sir Rowland Gwynne as an agitator.[4]

To become an active participant in affairs, however, he needed to find a seat in Parliament and, in January 1689, when events were moving so fast, Gwynne was adopted as candidate for Radnorshire, Richard Williams of Caebalfa vacating the seat in his favour by turning to the borough constituency, evidently the outcome of a compact between them. Gwynne's election to the Convention which met in 1689 undoubtedly owed something to the fact that he was already a seasoned politician, having served in three Exclusion Parliaments elected in March and August 1679 and March 1681. His first entry into Parliament occurred even before he had reached his majority and must have owed somewhat to local circumstances as well as his own machinations. With his family's substantial political interest in the county, he was able to capitalise upon the hostility to the Harley family from Puritan days for seeking to dominate the electorate through acquiring local offices.

In 1679 the politics of Brecknockshire became intertwined with that of Monmouthshire through common opposition to the Marquis of Worcester, as he then was, the Lord President of the Council in the Marches. On the direction of King Charles II, he had sought to intervene in the Brecknock election of 1679 so as to have a royal nominee returned, a move which naturally stirred a great deal of local resentment. So, Rowland Gwynne made common cause with Worcester's enemies in Monmouthshire, Sir Trevor Williams and John Trevor, who accused the Marquis of abusing his power in infringing common rights by removing timber from the forest of Wentwood to supply his iron works at Tintern. The battle against Worcester was carried to the House of Commons where his enemies took the drastic step of trying to 'get Lord Worcester's Ludlow Court for Wales' abolished as 'too great a trust' for him. Worcester's family's past adherence to Roman Catholicism also led to accusations of partiality to Papists in south-east Wales. Rowland Gwynne was uncompromising in his attitude to Catholicism, and charged Worcester with harbouring a nest of Catholics at Chepstow Castle, which he used to overawe voters at elections. The Marquis's military power in south Wales was also deemed to be intimidating since 'he commands from St. David's to within sixty miles of this town' (i.e. London). He and John Arnold accused Worcester with

creating 'a new militia in Bristol (which came within his lieutenancy), and giving them oaths of fidelity to himself'. Lady Powis in Montgomeryshire was Worcester's sister, and her Catholic husband was suspected of being about to be put in command of the garrison at Chepstow Castle.[5]

Suspicion of Worcester's Catholic leanings were confirmed by his intimate relations with James, Duke of York, Charles II's Catholic brother and next in line of succession to the throne. Gwynne threw in his lot with the Earl of Shaftesbury, the leader of a group of Whigs who sought to exclude James from succeeding to the throne by moving an Exclusion Bill. The Bill was defeated when King Charles annulled Parliament, which occasioned another election in 1679. Gwynne was returned again for Radnorshire in the August election and became a very active member of the succeeding parliament, sitting on nineteen committees and again voting for an Exclusion Bill. King Charles again annulled Parliament, and when the third election came in March 1681, again returning Sir Rowland Gwynne, the venue was moved from Westminster to Oxford.[6] This Parliament was dominated by the High Church Tories who favoured the principle of hereditary succession and turned to wreak revenge on their Whig opponents. Shaftesbury fled abroad and died in 1681, but his followers, including Gwynne, made an abortive attempt in the Rye House plot in 1683 to overthrow the King. Gwynne escaped to the Netherlands to avoid Worcester's vengeance and so, at the next election in 1685 he could not stand, and the Radnorshire seat reverted to his kinsman, Richard Williams.

Having returned in 1688, Gwynne was at hand when the election to the Convention Parliament took place in January 1689. He naturally had supported the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and was returned as MP for Radnorshire at the election with his ally Richard Williams for the boroughs. From that time forward, Gwynne's star was in the ascendant and he soon came to public notice in Parliament. He was deputed by the House of Commons on 26 December 1688 to approach Prince William to ascertain when he could receive an address from the House, and was elected to the important House Committee of Privileges and Elections.[7] The most important issue of the day before Parliament was whether the throne was vacant in that King James had fled the country. Gwynne, unlike most MPs from the middle March, was emphatically in favour of ruling that it was, and that William of Orange and his wife Mary should be acknowledged as legitimate sovereigns. It took him no time to ingratiate himself at Court, and was rewarded with the post of Treasurer of the Chamber with an income of £2,600 a year.

The Convention was only an interim parliament so, in March 1690 another election was held, this time under a royal writ to the Sheriff. Gwynne had been in negotiation with Sir Edward Harley previously on 16 March 1690 about his candidature, but no agreement was reached between them. Rowland Gwynne and Richard Williams had evidently made an election pact, probably in 1689, that they would exchange seats at the next election. Gwynne was apprehensive, however,

about his success having failed to reach agreement with the Harleys about the borough election, and so stood as a candidate in Brecknockshire as well.

The election there was held on 5th March, and he was returned unopposed, the sitting Member, Edward Jones of Buckland, having compromised himself by opposing the Revolution, and having voted against making William of Orange and Mary King and Queen. He was not only a stout Tory, but suspected of being a Jacobite as well. So, in the mercurial circumstances of the time, the Brecknock electors determined to play safe by returning a Member who was known to be *persona grata* to the ministry. What is less explicable is why Gwynne decided to stand as a candidate in the New Radnor constituency on 17th March as well. It is true that he would then be honouring his side of the bargain with Richard Williams, but there must be more substantial reasons than that. We must look towards Brampton Bryan for an answer, where the Harley family was determined to reassert its influence in Radnorshire. They had as much claim upon the electorate as Gwynne and Williams, having supported the Revolution, and had taken more practical steps to support it in securing Hereford for the Prince of Orange. Thus it was not a matter of difference of opinion or attitude towards the Revolution between the two rivals. A letter from Robert Harley to his father, Sir Edward,[8] throws some light upon the subject. It seems that Rowland Gwynne's brother had persuaded Robert Harley to desist from contending the 1689 election so that Rowland Gwynne could be returned unopposed and, for that reason, expected that Gwynne would reciprocate in 1690. He was not so inclined, however, and it thus led to a contended election.

The New Radnor constituency was a very complicated arrangement since the county town of New Radnor had to share the election with four out-boroughs, Rhayader, Knighton, Knucklas and Cefnllys, though most of the voters were in New Radnor, a borough where the Harleys had been building up their influence. The recorder of the town was Robert Price of Foxley, Herefordshire, one of the Duke of Beaufort's henchmen in south Wales and the March who, notwithstanding his alleged kinship with Richard Williams, Caebalfa, was determined to carry on the election in a regular manner. Not so the Sheriff who was evidently very partial to the Gwynne party. Rowland Gwynne, fearing that his support in the out-boroughs was not sufficient to out-number the New Radnor voters, called in voters, and was allowed by the sheriff to poll them, from Presteigne and Painscastle, two places which had never been polled before and were ineligible. This gave Gwynne a majority of 251 against Robert Harley's 173. Harley presented a petition to the House of Commons against the return, and transported scores of old men to London to testify that Presteigne and Painscastle had never participated in elections. Harley's case was managed on the floor of the House by Robert Price who was Member for Weobley, and it was said, 'answered all questions and objections' raised by Gwynne, whose defence had been seconded by Richard Williams. Gwynne's case was laughed out of court and after excluding all ineligible voters, it was found

that Robert Harley had a majority of one, and so, Gwynne was unseated in his favour.[9] In practical terms it made no difference since Sir Rowland had already been returned for Brecknockshire. He had, however, cooked his goose in Radnorshire since, when a by-election was caused in November 1692 by the death of Richard Williams, Edward Lewis, the candidate supported by Gwynne, was defeated by John Jeffreys of The Priory, a Brecknockshire man. Henceforward, Sir Rowland's political activities were concentrated on Brecknock.

In 1689 King William took Britain into war with France to withstand the aggrandisement of Louis XIV, whose support of the exiled King James II threatened to impose Roman Catholicism upon this country. King William relied upon the Whigs in Parliament to support his war policy upon land in Europe, and to provide the necessary finance to prosecute it, and Sir Rowland Gwynne was recognised as 'one of the strongest Whigs in the House'. The famous historian Macaulay's judgement of him as 'an honest country gentleman' is, however, wide of the mark if we accept the interpretation of the country gentleman in politics by another famous historian, L. B. Namier, as a Member whose political conduct was characterised by independence from outside influences whether by government or otherwise, and who judged every issue upon its merits. Gwynne, on the contrary, fitted the character of a 'placeman' in that he sold his support to the ruling party in return for financial reward. He became the manager of Court business in the Commons, exercising the distribution of patronage to oil the wheels of government, and complaining that King William's parsimony was so crippling that there were not enough tables at Court 'to treat the Members who attended.[10] Nevertheless, Gwynne was very ardent in searching out corruption in high places, and it was this in 1692 which led to his downfall.

The intention, probably, was to curry favour with the Crown when he brought to the attention of Queen Mary what he alleged were irregularities in making appointments in Ireland which involved Lord Henry Sidney as Lord-Lieutenant. The allegations were investigated and declared to be 'groundless and scandalous'. This led to Gwynne's discomfiture since he lost his post as Treasurer of the Chamber with its salary of £2,600 a year which crippled him financially, since 'he only subsisted by His Majesty's bounty', it was alleged.

Gwynne , however, was not cast down since, in 1694, he pursued another avenue of corruption in high places. After the conquest of Ireland in 1689, many Irish estates belonging to rebels had fallen to the Crown which the king used to reward his Dutch cronies. Sir Rowland was nominated to a committee in January 1694 to consider proposals to be put to the King about their disposal, and it was he who reported upon it to the House. He sat on a committee to arrange how these forfeitures could be put to public use. The King proceeded to ignore its advice, and went ahead in 1695 to commit an act which brought the matter very close to Welsh interests when he presented the Duke of Portland, his Dutch favourite, with two Denbighshire lordships, Denbigh and Bromfield and Yale. This provoked a

concerted protest from all the Welsh MPs, and Robert Price made a resounding attack upon the King's policy that caused him to withdraw the grant.[11] In this instance Sir Rowland's loyalty to the House of Commons took precedence over his loyalty to the Crown.

Circumstances turned in Sir Rowland's favour again in 1696 when a plot to assassinate King William was uncovered. As King, he had never been popular, especially in Wales which he had never visited except in transit to Ireland in 1690. A wave of sympathy swept the country, however, when the alternative might be a Stuart restoration imposed by Louis XIV by force of arms, accompanied by a Jacobite rebellion. King William was hailed as a Protestant defender, and Sir Rowland Gwynne was quick to realise the potential of the situation. He proposed in Parliament an Association to protect the person of the King, similar to what had been done in the time of Queen Elizabeth I.[12] MPs were first called to take an oath of Association, voluntarily at first, which many Tories declined to do because it also incorporated a *de jure* recognition of William and Mary's sovereignty, i.e. as 'rightful and lawful King and Queen', they having accorded them no more than *de facto* recognition, i.e. as a matter of fact. Peers of the Realm were expected to take the oath as were also law practitioners. However, Sir Rowland carried the matter too far when he took the petition down to Radnorshire to collect signatures, since he was then MP for Bere Alston, having lost the 1695 election in Brecknock. Gwynne hoped to discredit the Harleys by returning the petition to Westminster before they had an opportunity to sign.[13] The two MPs for Radnorshire, John Jeffreys for the county and Robert Harley for the boroughs, signed independently but Edward Jones of Buckland, the Member for Brecknockshire, and Jeffrey Jeffreys for Brecon borough, declined to sign.[14] The only satisfaction that Gwynne derived from the affair was that he was nominated as manager of a conference with the House of Lords to arrange a loyal address to the King. He was also entrusted with the task on 28 March 1697 of bearing a bill to the House of Lords requiring lawyers to take the oath. The affair, however, throws much light on Sir Rowland Gwynne's character. He carried his enthusiasm to extremes by over-exploiting the situation in a completely unprincipled way by turning national crisis into grist for his own mill.

Peace was concluded with France in 1697 and, after a long war and heavy taxation, there was a public demand that the King dismiss the mercenary soldiers from abroad which he had hired. King William strongly opposed the demand to reduce the size of his army, but a vote in the House of Commons forced his hand. Fourteen Welsh MPs voted for disbandment, and four, including Sir Rowland Gwynne, voted against.

Under the Triennial Act, an election fell due in 1698, and Sir Rowland once again offered himself as candidate in Brecknockshire and was elected unopposed. He must have faced the election with some trepidation since he took the precaution of being elected for Bere Alston as well, but chose to sit for Brecknockshire. When

the House convened, Sir Rowland was elected chairman of the all-important Committee of Privileges and Elections. In 1698, he and Sir Robert Harley crossed swords over the ill-conceived Darien Scheme in which the Scottish Parliament became involved when it tried to establish a Scottish colony on the Isthmus of Panama. Harley advised against becoming involved in the affair, which strained relations between the two Parliaments but, hoping to score off his rival, Gwynne introduced a measure on 15 June 1698 to bring in an address against the Scottish Darien Company. Harley thought it needlessly provocative, but was satisfied that Gwynne's motion was defeated. When, however, the House considered the question of the succession to the Throne in the event of Queen Anne's death, Gwynne had the honour of being called to second a motion nominating the Electress of Hanover to succeed which was incorporated into the Act of Settlement of 1701.[15] Election expenses in 1698, and the cost of regular attendance at the House, had taken their toll of his finances, however, which caused him to appeal to Sir Thomas Pelham, First Commissioner of the Treasury, for compensation. He thought his claim sufficiently justified by his support of the King's government in the House, to solicit jobs for two persons as well 'who have been active in the late Revolution and are withal married to two of my sisters', but to no avail it seems.[16]

Sir Rowland was returned unopposed in the two elections of January and December 1701 as Member for Brecknock, and remained very active in parliamentary politics right up to his departure from the Commons in 1702. In 1701, he was even considered for the Speakership and, had he been successful, would have been the fourth Welshman to hold the office.[17] He was overlooked, however, but that did not prevent his re-election as Chairman of the Committee of Privileges and Elections. Having been prominent in securing the succession to the throne in the House of Hanover, it is not surprising that he was called upon in January 1702 to draft a Bill of Attainder against the Pretender in whom Stuart claims to the Throne rested after the death of James II.

From about 1700, Gwynne attempted a rapprochement with Sir Robert Harley, whether as a sign of his mellowing or from a sense of foreboding, one cannot say, when, on 28 April 1701, he rose to defend Sir Robert against an attack by a Tory Member. He also supported several measures which were popular with the Country party led by Sir Robert, such as bills to suppress gambling and duelling, and for moral reforms which the Harleys warmly supported. Bribery and corruption at elections were also practices which the Country party sought to suppress, and Gwynne was called upon to draft a bill in January 1702 for this purpose. When King William died in March 1702, Sir Rowland was asked by the House to draw up an address of condolence on the one hand and of congratulations to his successor, on the other. Queen Anne's succession prompted a general election in July 1702, and this time Sir Rowland was opposed and defeated in Brecknock by John Jeffreys of The Priory by a majority of seventy-seven. The electors of Brecknock were less impressed by Gwynne's parliamentary activities than by the

fact that he was a placeman in toil to the government. Thus ended a remarkable political career since the new reign had nothing to offer him.

As Treasurer of the Chamber Sir Rowland had failed to render true account of his ministration there, and the Treasury under Queen Anne now demanded explanations which he was unable to provide. Thus, he was outlawed, and his estate in Glamorganshire was put under a 'custodian lease', he having already disposed of others of his estates to pay his debts. In view of this, an undated document in the archives of Cardiff City Library is somewhat mysterious.[18] It is entitled 'A List of Sallaryes Payable at the Exchequer out of the Civill List of Queen Anne', with an insertion in the margin 'For Sir Rowland Gwynne c/o Mr Morgan'. The list details disbursements to a number of persons of various degrees amounting to £80,196/14/3, but Gwynne's name is not among the recipients. 'Mr Morgan' was evidently John Morgan of Tredegar, the foremost Whig leader in south east Wales. It might suggest a douceur to a Whig agent to ensure his support in the exercise of patronage as a possibility, but there is no evidence that Sir Rowland received any pension during Queen's Anne reign since he fled abroad to escape apprehension, first to Holland, and then to Hamburg.

A seat in Parliament might have given him immunity, so he hoped that the electors of Brecknock would relent. He attempted to hitch his wagon to the rising star of Sir Robert Harley who had entered the Queen's ministry in 1705. In a wheedling letter he reminded Sir Robert of the friendship which had once existed between their respective fathers. He stated that he had once more offered his services to the county of Brecknock and promised, if elected, to give his parliamentary support to the Queen's administration. Uncharacteristically, he urged a policy of moderation after the dissension fomented by the High Church Tories in the previous parliament in their foiled attempt to forbid the practice of occasional conformity, whereby Dissenters could qualify to hold public office.[19] He was evidently doubtful of success as he solicited Harley to find him some employment abroad, preferably at the court of Hanover.

Gwynne showed a gross error of judgement in 1705 in publishing a pamphlet in the form of a 'Letter from Sir Rowland Gwynne to the Rt. Hon, the Earl of Stamford', whose evident intention was to cultivate a more harmonious relationship between Queen Anne and the heir presumptive to the throne, the Electress of Hanover. The letter was subscribed to an essay written by the philosopher Leibnitz, proposing that an invitation be sent to the Electress to reside in England, which was translated into English by Gwynne and widely circulated. Gwynne evidently expected to be able to exploit the rôle he had played in furthering the succession, but the effect was the opposite of what he expected. Both Houses of Parliament voted it to be a malicious libel, more likely to create misunderstanding between the Queen and the Electress than otherwise. The author was known, but the publisher had to be sought out and fined £100.[20] Gwynne dared not show his face in Britain after that, and he was refused permission to return.[21]

Gwynne's self confidence was not in the least dented, however, since we find him in May 1707 writing to Sir Justinian Isham boasting how well he stood at the court of Hanover and in the opinion of the Duke of Marlborough whom he expected to succeed as envoy there. Though he claimed to have settled there at the invitation of the Electress, his hope of a diplomatic post did not materialise.

Still clinging to the hope that Sir Robert Harley would throw him a lifeline, he wrote to him in 1711 congratulating him on his success in the election of 1710 which put him at the head of the ministry, soliciting his favour to have him restored to the Queen's favour, but without favourable response it appears. The tide again turned in his favour in 1714. As he had once returned to England in the baggage train of the Prince of Orange, he was now able to return in that of the Elector of Hanover, proclaimed King George I. He was granted a pension to boot of £400 a year which, however, fell far short of his needs, and he died a debtor in the Fleet Prison on 24 January 1726.

Thus ended what can only be described as a most remarkable career, the like of which was not again to be seen in Brecknockshire, and not in Radnorshire till the day of the Cornwall Lewises of Harpton in the next century. In his day he stood abreast of notable politicians from north-east Wales like Lord Jeffreys, Sir John Trevor and William Williams. Though a hanger-on at Court, he was above all a parliamentarian and showed a complete mastery of the conventions of the House of Commons. He was, however, a tactician rather than a strategist as the several egregious errors of judgement he committed indicate. He was the first Whig in Brecknockshire, and can be credited with having introduced 'the rage of politics' into the county's politics. He died childless, and so failed to establish either a parliamentary dynasty or a personal connexion as the Harleys did. Attempts made by Gwynne kinsmen of Glanbran and Garth later to exploit the Gwynne political interest met with no success, and the name of Gwynne faded into oblivion with their territorial possessions.

E. D. EVANS

Notes

[1] Foster, Alumni Oxonienses, 1891, p. 624.

[2] A. H. Williams, 'The Gwynnes of Garth', *Brycheiniog* XIV, 1970, p. 79.

[3] National Library of Wales, Clenennau Papers no 868; B. D. Henning, The House of Commons, 11, s.n. Rowland Gwynne, p. 458.

[4] Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, June 1687–February 1689, p. 354, no.1947.

[5] National Library of Wales, Badminton Muniments, Fm E 3/3.

[6] *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, vol 23, 1950, p. 225.

[7] Commons Journal, X, p. 7.

[8] Old Wales, II, p 137; British Library, Additional Ms 70057.

[9] BL Addl. Ms 70014, f 354, 8 November 1690; P. D. G.Thomas, *Politics in Eighteenth Century Wales*, pp. 16, 42; Commons Journal, X, pp 355, 426, 462.

[10] H Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III*, 1977, p, 94.

[11] E. D. Evans, 'King William III's grant of the lordships of Bromfield and Yale and Denbigh to the Earl; of Portland, 1695–6, *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions*, Vol 52, 2003, p. 81.

[12] A. Browning, Thomas Osborne, Earlt of Danby, 1951, III, 194 ff.

[13] BL Addl. Ms70273 is the petition from Radnorshire, signed by the High Sheriff, Grand Jury and JPs, together with other gentlemen, 166 in all, but without the names of the MPs. One from New Radnor boroughs has 173 signatures, the constituency for which Robert Harley was MP.

[14] Browning, op.cit. III, p. 212

[15] Horwitz, op.cit. pp. 264, 269, 283.

[16] BL Addl. MS.33, 084, ff 92–3; one sister married James Price of Pilleth, one Daniel Williams, Penpont, one Charles Powell of Castell Madoc, and one Roiger Mainwaring. (Old Wales, II, 328–9).

[17] E. H. Robertson, George, Viscount Tonypandy, wrongly states that he was the second Welshmman to become Speaker of the House of Commons. He was, indeed, the fourth, having been preceded by William Williams (1680), Sir John Trevor (1685, 1690), Sir Thomas Hanmer (1714).

[18] Cardiff City Library, Ms. 4.421.

[19] Historical Commission Report, Portland, IV, p. 180, 15 May 1705.

[20] Journal, of the House of Lords, XVIII, p. 142.

[21] Northamptonshire Record Office, Isham Correspondence, Ms 2363.

BRECON IN 1901: A CENSUS PERSPECTIVE ON THE COUNTY TOWN

Throughout the nineteenth century Brecon had consolidated its administrative functions as county town and provided a wide range of commercial and business services for a large hinterland population centred on the middle-Usk valley.[1] In an examination of the role and status of similar towns in Wales, Professor Harold Carter captures the scene: '*The functions which the town performed, together with the centralisation of trade and administration, created in the town a characteristic middle class, and the stimulus this class gave to town life produced a distinctive atmosphere . . . the permanent theatre appeared, albeit anathema to the rising tide of non-conformity; horse races were held, county agricultural societies were formed (the first at Brecon) and met in these towns. A whole urban life was created, which aped in a limited, provincial and bourgeois way the Bath of Beau Nash . . . and Regency London*'.[2] In a similar vein, Kelly's Directory (1895) endorses the favourable comments of contemporary visitors regarding the thriving local economy, social life and distinctive townscape;[3] it also spotlights the town's administrative roles: '*Brecon is a municipal borough, market and union town, head of a county court district, petty sessional division and the chief town of its county. The town has several good streets, and contains a large proportion of well built houses . . .* '.[4]

This study in community history extends that perspective and focuses on Brecon at the turn of the twentieth century. It draws on evidence from the census enumerators' books prepared in 1901 and appropriate cartographic material to reconstruct a social profile of the county town.[5] This endeavour represents a further stage in a study of the changing role of market towns in the middle-Usk valley in the nineteenth century.[6] Furthermore, it contributes to the small collection of census-based snapshots of small Welsh towns based on Victorian census schedules.[7] It is presented in three sections: firstly, an overview of census administration and materials; secondly, a reconstruction of land use patterns and townscape features; and, thirdly, a census-based interpretation of local society connected to the town economy and built environment.

Census administration in 1901

Census enumerators in Brecon were charged with collecting specified information on residents at each address on the night of Sunday, 31st March 1901.[8] Within seven days these household records were transcribed into specially-printed census enumeration books. These list: fully-named individuals, give details of their relationship to the head of household, age last birthday, sex, marital condition, profession or occupation, employment status ('employer, worker or own account'), parish and county of birth, specified disabilities, and language spoken. In addition, these books hold information on the local housing stock. Each habitable building is located by street or name, and recorded as 'inhabited', 'uninhabited' (in

occupation or not in occupation) or 'building'. Houses (tenements) of less than five rooms are identified. Moreover, the 1901 census included major refinements (as against 1891) to the columns on employment status, the inclusion of a separate category of 'homeworking', and changes to the categories for infirmity.[9] Subsequently, the contents of each census book, including the introductory summaries of population and housing, were checked against original household schedules, amended where necessary, and duly signed by the enumerator. William Martin, for example, the appointed enumerator for Christ College and part of St. David's Without signed the abstract on the 8th April: '*I hereby declare that all the required particulars of the population and houses of this Enumeration District have been truly and faithfully enumerated by me, and have been correctly copied into this book; and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the Book is in all respects complete and in accordance with Instructions*'. Completed enumerators' books were countersigned by the Registrar, James Moss, and Superintendent Registrar, Molyneux Thomas, a solicitor resident in Glamorgan Street. Notwithstanding the potential for mis-recording personal information and at the stage of transcription, these records provide an unique and comprehensive summary of the social and economic characteristics of Brecon in 1901.[10]

Figure 1 shows the spatial arrangement of the eight enumeration districts (EDs) used for the census. These constitute small divisions of the Superintendent Registrar's District with boundaries framed by existing parishes in respect of the workload allocated to enumerators. Llanfaes was divided into two EDs: the first (labelled ED1 in this report), based on Christ College and the hostel opened in 1890 for 30 boys, covered parts of Bridge Street and Orchard Street; the second (ED2), extended outwards to Newgate Street and Ffrwdgrech Road and encompassed the gaol, Union Workhouse and residential development around Newmarch Street and Silver Street. The more densely built-up area set within the medieval walls formed ED7. A further three EDs spread outwards from this core. Centred on The Avenue, ED5 included Kensington, Mill Street and Maendu, together with the extra-parochial district around the Castle Inn and Ely Cottage. ED4 lay wholly west of the river Honddu; it enveloped ED5 and included the Priory and Postern, with several outliers of housing set in agricultural land. The Honddu formed the western boundary of ED3 which extended eastwards from Chapel Street and The Struet to Cerrigcochion Road; the line of the town wall formed its southern boundary. Finally, the main thoroughfare and associated side streets in The Watton and the area east of Cerrigcochion Road formed ED6; its western margin skirted the Captain's Walk. The Infantry Barracks located in The Watton was designated an institutional ED(ED8).

The urban environment

Throughout the nineteenth century, Brecon continued to grow in population and number of inhabited houses. The enumerated population increased from 2576 at the census in 1801 to 5875 in 1901. In concert, the stock of housing (occupied and

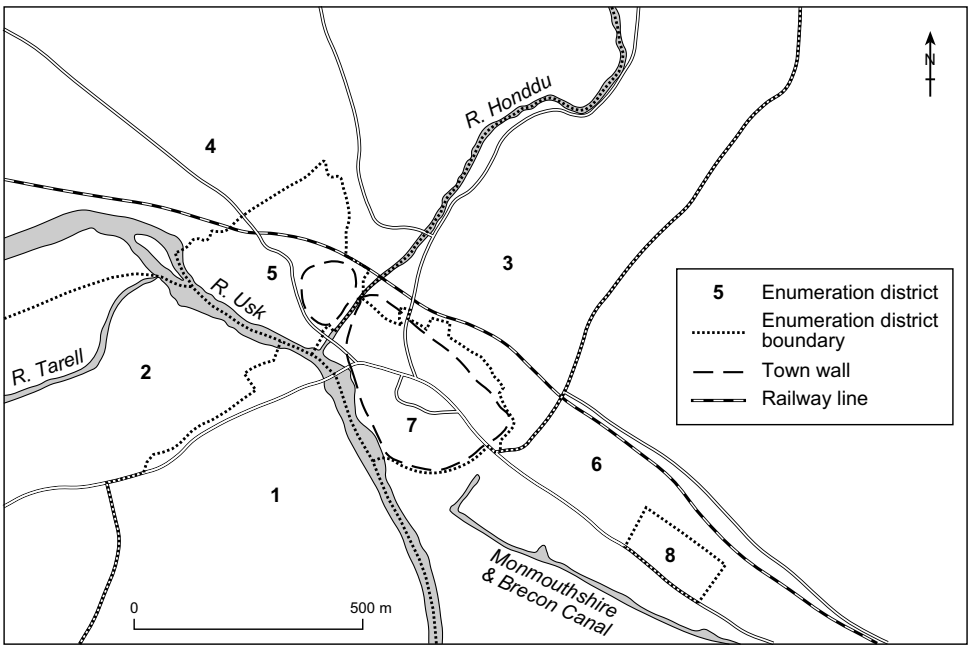


Fig. 1 Brecon 1901: census Enumeration Districts (EDs).

temporarily unoccupied) grew from 540 to 1287 units. Brecon had a distinctive town plan: the castle was separated from the walled town by the deeply-incised Honddu valley.[11] (Fig. 2) At the turn of the century the alignment of the town walls, protected in the west by the River Usk and reinforced elsewhere on the perimeter by marked breaks of slope, could still be traced in the townscape. Maps produced by John Speed (1610), Meredith Jones (1744), John Wood (1834) and the Ordnance Survey (1:2500 map, 1904) capture sequential changes in town plan since Norman times.[12] Inside the town wall, the original pattern of burgage plots remained visible in property boundaries, building alignments, street networks and land use.[13] There is evidence, too, of an increased density of building. Outside the wall, these maps show: progressive residential development along three principal access routes – The Struet, The Watton and Llanfaes – backed-up by new and more modest terraced housing; scattered and higher quality housing development along Alexandra Road, Bronwen Terrace and Camden Road; sporadic suburban extensions characterised by housing of mixed size and density in Kensingston, Pendre and Postern; and, in The Watton, the growth of an industrial zone focused on the canal and railway infrastructure.[14]

These processes of extramural suburbanisation and the consequent conversion of agricultural land to urban uses are conceptualised in Whitehand's fringe-belt model.[15] Set within the context of a growing regional economy, and in the absence

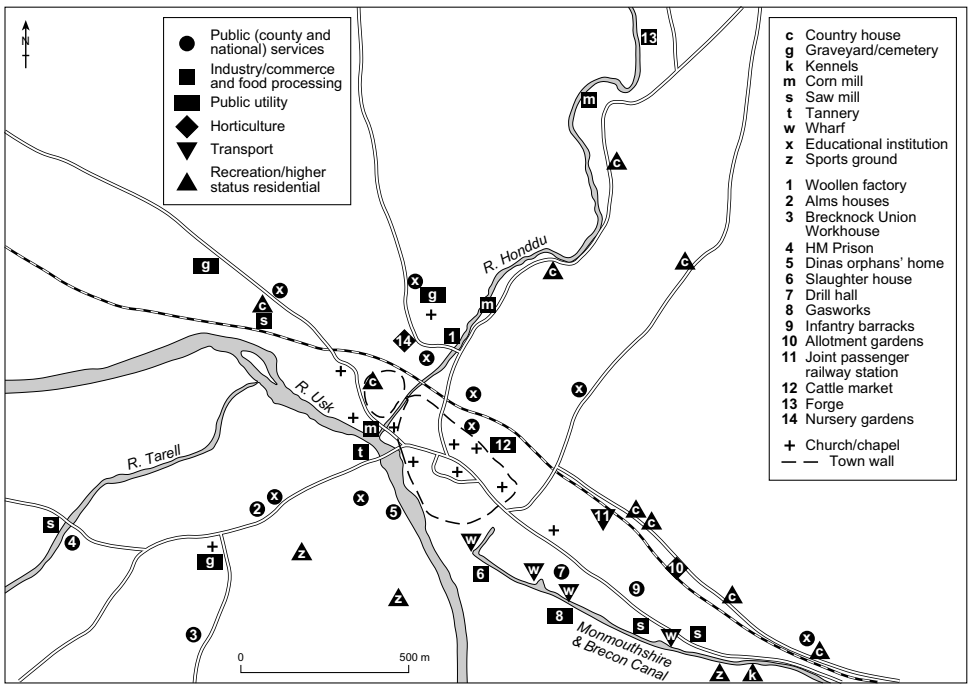


Fig. 2 Brecon 1901: fringe-belt land uses.

of restrictive planning controls, the formative stage of this model visualises a discontinuous accumulation of space-demanding activities outside the town wall, mixed with residential development of different styles. For instance, public health concerns would dictate that functions like leather tanning, slaughter houses and cattle markets, construed as polluting, 'noxious' and 'nuisances', would be displaced from densely populated areas within the walls to peripheral locations.[16] Likewise, public institutions such as gaols, Union Workhouses and (isolation) hospitals would be directed to more spacious rural sites. The same reasoning applies to allotment gardens, sports grounds, cemeteries and sewage treatment installations. Meanwhile, for reasons of amenity and prestige, imposing country houses (with gate-lodges and other trappings of social status) would be positioned on peripheral (elevated) sites with favourable aspect.[17] This heterogeneous collection of fringe-belt land uses in Brecon had one common element: the demand for space. Features of the physical site of Brecon, however, have distorted the annular representation of land use proposed by the model. For instance, the area liable to flooding at the confluence of the rivers Tarell and Usk and the steep-sided Honddu valley imposed severe restrictions on urban development. In contrast, the more elevated margins of the Usk floodplain along The Watton placed fewer constraints on housebuilding and the infrastructure associated with the canal and railway.

By 1901 marked improvements had also taken place in the built environment and social infrastructure. Photographic images of civic processions, military parades and various streetscapes show satisfactory road surfaces and pavements on the principal shopping streets and main roads leading into the town.[18] Considerable investment had been made in public utilities.[19] From 1870, town gas became available through renewed street mains; in 1894 gas was supplied to about 500 private households and 141 public street lamps.[20] In response to justifiable concerns over past cholera outbreaks, in 1877 a town drainage scheme was finally approved; this had cost £9250 and was based on downward filtration facilities and sewage outfall tanks sited away from the town at Brynich.[21] Uncontaminated domestic water supply was also secured: Brecon Corporation built a reservoir (with filter beds and capacity of 500,000 gallons) one mile south west of the town.[22] From a public health perspective, moreover, it is important to note: the consecration in December 1858 of the 5-acre cemetery in Cradoc Road; [23] and that in 1894 the 16-bed Brecknock Borough and County Infirmary had coped with 63 in-patients and 975 out-patients.[24]

In parallel, there had been investment in new public buildings. These included: the imposing Shire Hall, completed in 1842, which housed the Quarter Sessions, Petty sessions, bi-monthly meetings of the County Court and quarterly meetings of the county council; extensions in 1858 and 1871 to HM Prison (built in 1780); construction of a new county police station linked to the Shire Hall in 1895; founding Memorial College in September 1869 with accommodation for 24 students and supporting tutorial staff; the opening in 1882 of Dinas House, an orphanage committed to training young girls for domestic service;[25] and the refurbishment and extension of the Guildhall. Facilities for markets were also improved: the Market Hall, built on the site of the butter market and butchers' stalls, opened in Diamond Jubilee Year 1897; and improvements made to the Free Street Market 1895-1904 removed regular cattle and sheep sales from public streets.[26] Domestic house-building progressed in tandem This included several modest terraces lining, and adjoining, the principal access routes into the town, as indicated by census statistics for tenements of less than five rooms, and more prestigious properties on Alexandra Road and Camden Road (Fig. 3).[27]

Population and household characteristics

Age structure and life-time migration

At mid-night on Sunday, 31st March, 1901 5864 people (2810 males and 3054 females) were enumerated in Brecon. This total made no allowance for residents who were absent from home that night. Figure 4 shows the age-sex distribution and birthplaces of the town's population. Children aged under ten years accounted for 22% of the males and 20% of the females. Only 9% of the males and 10% of females exceeded 60 years of age. The census lists nine persons with disabilities; the majority were described as 'blind', but two were labelled 'imbeciles'.

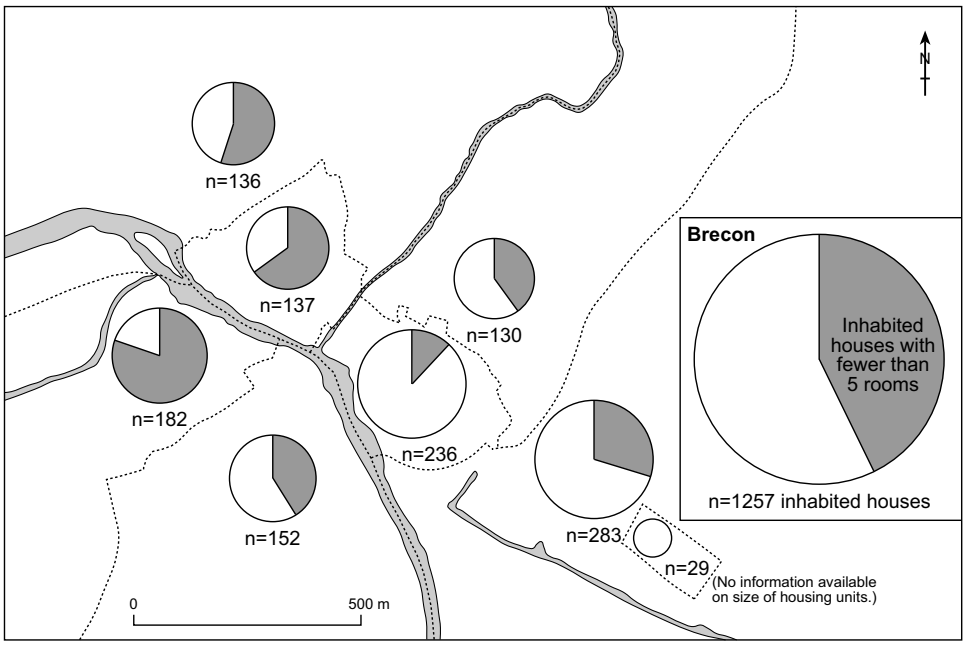


Fig. 3 Brecon 1901: housing stock.

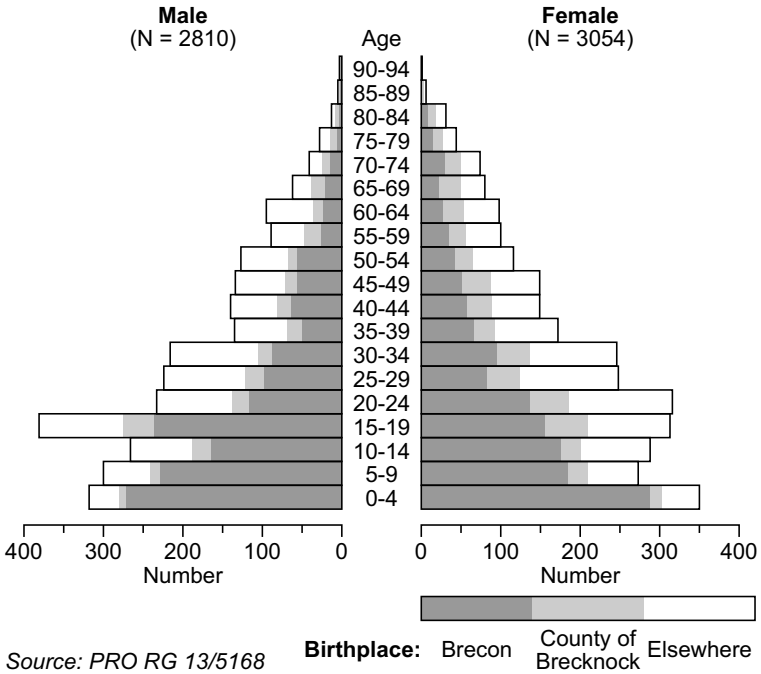


Fig. 4 Brecon 1901: age and sex distribution.

From the perspective of a county town, it is appropriate that Figure 4 includes 432 males and 166 females enumerated as pupils, patients, inmates, serving soldiers or as resident administrative and service staff (with co-resident families) in key public institutions. These included: the Barracks, Union Poor Law Workhouse, HM Prison, the Borough and County Infirmary and Girls' Orphanage; in addition, Christ College and the Memorial Congregational Theological College provided specialist educational services. Each institution had a distinctive demographic profile. Male pupils aged 10–19 years with marginally older female domestic staff characterised Christ College. In contrast, the majority of unmarried soldiers stationed at the Barracks were aged 15–19 years; these were balanced by the younger families of resident non-commissioned training staff and the households of regimental officers, some of whom retained domestic staff. The Poor Law Union Workhouse accommodated 58 males and 31 females. Although young children (especially girls) formed a distinctive core, from the age of 40 males formed an increasing proportion of the inmate population; several exceeded the age of 80. The age distributions of the small numbers of inmates in HM Prison and patients at the town's infirmary (founded for the treatment of the 'sick poor' in 1832 and supported by voluntary contributions)[28] were scattered. In contrast, the eight girls at Dinas House Girls' Orphanage were aged under thirteen. Significantly, and maybe for reasons of timing in the academic year and night in the week (Sunday), relatively few students were enumerated at the Congregational Theological College.

Birthplace information superimposed on Figure 4 summarises the net life-time migration experiences of males and females.[29] It identifies strong and almost equal contingents of Brecon-born males and females aged under 25 years. In contrast, there are gender and age differences in the distribution of migrants from other parts of Brecknockshire: females, characteristically, are more numerous than males and are over-represented in the age groups 20–34, 40–54 and over 60 years. Thereafter, the proportions born elsewhere in Wales, and in England, are similar: they rise for the age groups 20 to 34 years and decline gradually past the age of 60.

Social characteristics of Census Enumeration Districts (EDs)

The eight EDs devised for the 1901 census are different with regard to population size and composition, and socio-economic status. Figure 5 displays the distribution of population and gender balance. It confirms higher *population totals* in The Watton (ED 6; 1251 people) and town centre (ED7; 1097 people). The lowest total is recorded in The Struet (ED3; 566 people). Census enumeration captures significant differences in gender balance. There were 92 males for every 100 females resident in the town. The two EDs comprising Llanfaes, however, reversed this pattern: in ED1 males exceeded females in the ratio of 116:100; in ED2, the corresponding statistic was 111:100. The greatest imbalance, 67 males:100 females, is recorded in ED7, the commercial heart of the town.

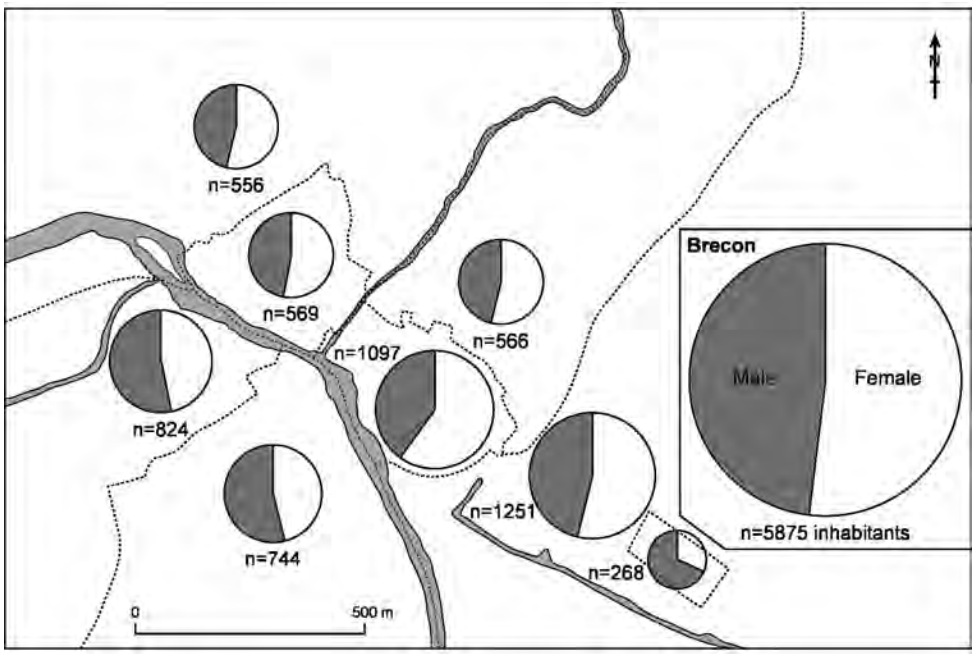


Fig. 5 Brecon 1901: population and gender.

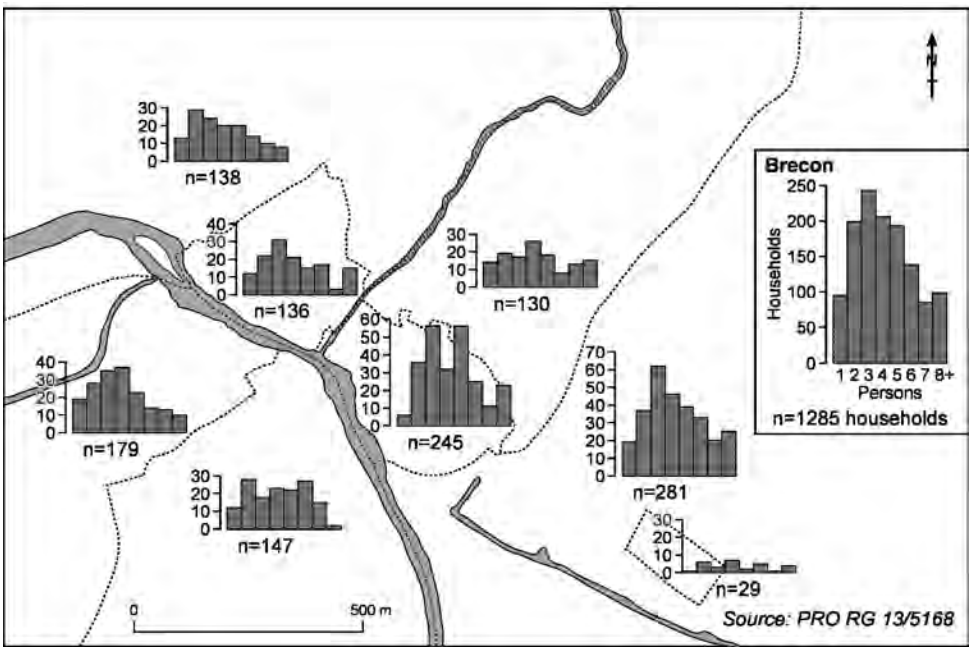


Fig. 6 Brecon 1901: household size.

With regard to *household size*, Figure 6 confirms that 8% of Brecon households were single-person, mainly represented by widows and widowers. A further 16% had two persons, the majority found at a later stage in the family cycle. The modal size class for households was three persons; thereafter, the proportion in each size class decreased sequentially to 8% for households with eight or more persons. Larger households with at least eight members were common in all EDs; normally, such households included non-family members. Financial benefits, health status and the need for companionship may explain the number of lodgers, visitors and domestic servants attached to single-person households (widowed and unmarried) and more elderly couples whose children had left the parental home.

Figure 7 extends this interpretation and focuses on the *composition of households*. It shows that married couples with co-residing children accounted for 52% of Brecon households. A further 14% comprised married couples, mainly at a later stage in family cycle, and without co-residing children. Single widowed and never-married persons accounted for 21% of Brecon households, and denuded families lacking one parent 10% of the total. Significantly, however, 503 of the 1257 (40%) households also accommodated non-family members. Figure 8 illuminates this situation: it reveals that 17% had at least one domestic servant, 8% included at least one lodger or boarder, 6% an unmarried sibling of the household head, 3% grandchild(ren) and 2% a parent or parent-in-law. Furthermore, it shows that domestic servants featured prominently in the social profiles of The Watton (ED6) and town centre (ED7).[30] Lodgers and boarders, however, were more evenly distributed throughout the town. In contrast, members of the extended family were, relatively, more important in The Watton (ED6) and town centre (ED7).

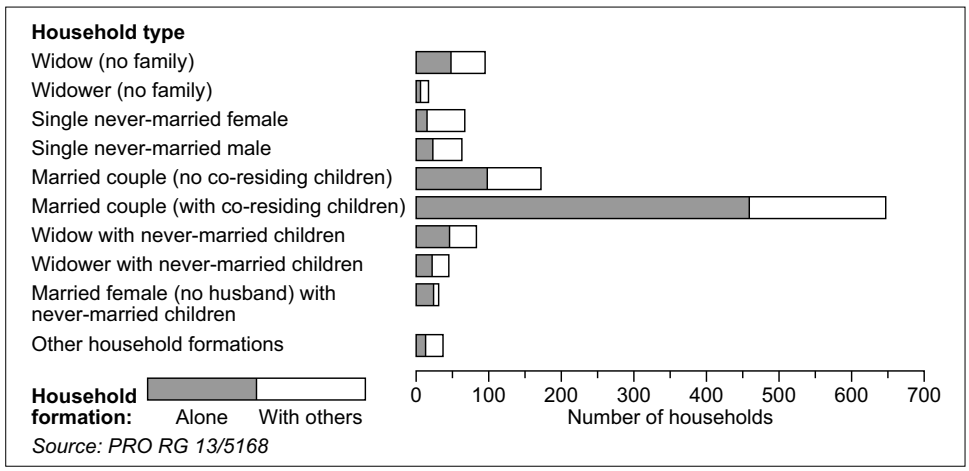


Fig. 7 Brecon 1901: household composition.

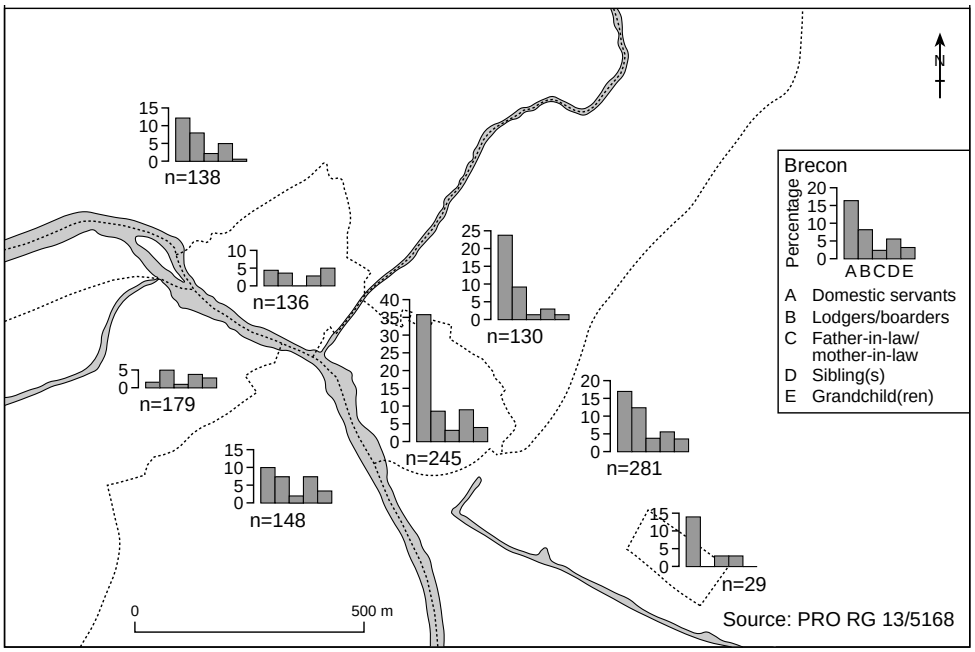


Fig. 8 Brecon 1901: composite households.

In 1901 residents would probably have had clear views on the social status of different localities in the town.[31] Such perceptions would have been shaped by quality of the local housing environment, occupation profiles of working people and images of residents' life-style. P.M.Tillott's 13-fold categorisation of socio-economic groups (SEGs) provides a helpful framework to explore these contrasts.[32] Table 1, based on the occupations recorded for 90% of the 1257 heads of household,[33] captures the dominance of four SEGs: skilled craftsmen 28% (SEG 4); shopkeepers, traders and petty entrepreneurs 15% (SEG3); semi-skilled and service workers 15% (SEG11); and labourers and unskilled workers 14% (SEG12).These four sets describe key sectors in the economic base of the county town. This situation invites more detailed examination: firstly, the *local* balance of households from different SEGs; and, secondly, the identification of *features that differentiated* the social profile of an ED.

Throughout the town there are contrasts in the *proportion of total households in different SEGs*. In brief: 40% of the households of shopkeepers and traders (SEG3) were clustered in the commercial heart of the town (ED7); 40% of semi-skilled and service workers (SEG11) lived in The Watton (ED6); 25% of labourers and unskilled workers (SEG12) were identified in Llanfaes (ED2), with a further 23% in Kensington /Penydre (ED5); whilst households of skilled craftsmen (SEG4) were more evenly spread, with stronger presence in The Watton (ED6) and Llanfaes

	Census enumeration district															
SEG*	**1**		**2**		**3**		**4**		**5**		**6**		**7**		**TOTAL**	
	No	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
1	3	2.1	4	2.7	2	1.7	7	5.7	2	1.6	5	2.0	1	0.5	**24**	**2.1**
2a	3	2.1	4	2.7	3	2.6	8	6.6	6	4.7	4	1.6	4	1.8	**32**	**2.8**
2b	0	0.0	2	0.0	1	0.9	0	0.0	3	2.4	1	0.4	1	0.5	**8**	**0.7**
3	26	18.4	4	2.7	23	19.7	6	4.9	5	3.9	35	13.8	66	29.9	**165**	**14.6**
4	49	34.8	46	31.3	30	25.6	31	25.4	40	31.5	68	26.9	52	23.5	**316**	**28.0**
5a	1	0.7	0	0.0	1	0.9	1	0.8	0	0	3	1.2	0	0.0	**6**	**0.5**
5b	3	2.1	2	1.4	1	0.9	3	2.5	2	1.6	0	0.0	1	0.5	**12**	**1.1**
6	0	0.0	2	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0	**2**	**0.2**
7a	1	0.7	2	1.4	5	4.3	3	2.5	4	3.2	1	0.4	15	6.8	**31**	**2.7**
7b	5	3.5	3	2.0	3	2.6	8	6.6	1	0.8	11	4.3	8	3.6	**39**	**3.5**
8	7	5.0	0	0.0	2	1.7	8	6.6	2	1.6	1	0.4	13	5.9	**33**	**2.9**
9	0	0.0	7	4.8	4	3.4	2	1.6	5	3.9	5	2.0	10	4.5	**33**	**2.9**
10	10	7.1	1	0.7	8	6.8	7	5.7	3	2.4	16	6.3	13	5.9	**58**	**5.1**
11	17	12.1	28	19.0	10	8.5	12	9.8	14	11.0	69	27.3	21	9.5	**171**	**15.2**
12	13	9.2	39	26.5	19	16.2	23	18.9	36	28.3	21	8.3	3	1.4	**154**	**13.7**
13	3	2.1	3	2.0	5	4.3	3	2.5	4	3.2	13	5.1	13	5.9	**44**	**3.9**
Total	**141**	100.0	**147**	100.0	**117**	100.0	**122**	100.0	**127**	**100.2**	**253**	100.0	**221**	100.0	**1128**	**100.0**
All h'hlds	**153**		**182**		**130**		**136**		**137**		**283**		**236**		**1257**	

* Includes males and females, active and retired. The totals for the Barracks (ED8) have been excluded from this table.

Key to socio-economic groups:

1	Agricultural,self-employed or managers	7a	Upper professional
2a	Skilled agricultural workers	7b	Lower professional
2b	Agricultural labourers	8	Clerical
3	Shopkeeepers, traders petty entrepreneurs	9	Servants (all grades)
4	Skilled craftsmen, non-industrial	10	Private income recipients/annuitants
5a	Manufacturers, industrialists, wholesalers etc	11	Semi-skilled and sevice workers
5b	Skilled industrial craftsmen	12	Labourers and unskilled workers
6	Extractive industries	13	Supervisory workers

Source: Based on PRO RG13/5168 and P.M. Tillott's classification of occupations and social groupings as cited in D.R. Mills (1982).

Table 1 Brecon 1901: socio-economic status of household heads.

(ED1 and ED2). Each of the remaining SEGs accounted for smaller numbers of households. Even then, over one third of the professional (SEG7) and clerical (SEG8) households were concentrated in the town centre (ED7).

Table 1 pinpoints contrasts in the *social profiles* of EDs. For instance ED7, the commercial core of the town, is characterised by traders, professional classes, those living on private incomes and personnel in clerical occupations. The balance and proportions of SEGs in ED3 are similar. In contrast, mixed housing areas away from Bridge Street and Orchard Street in Llanfaes (ED2) and in Kensington/ Penydre (ED5) are characterised by semi-skilled and service workers, and labourers and unskilled workers. In The Watton (ED6), semi-killed and service workers are mixed with shopkeepers and traders, and a scattering of households from the professional classes. ED4, covering Priory Hill and Postern, shares these basic features, but has a stronger representation of labourers and unskilled workers. Finally, Llanfaes (ED1) has the highest proportion of skilled craftsmen, an above average proportion of traders and shopkeepers and people of independent means, mixed with the second highest proportion of semi-skilled and service workers.

Domestic service in the market town

Domestic servants formed a distinctive and comparatively youthful component in the population of Welsh market towns.[34] Local historians, however, have identified a number of issues connected the definition and role of domestic service[35] Correct labelling of the term 'servant' in the census enumerators' books is susceptible to two sources of compounding error: the understanding of the householder completing the original schedule; and the belief of the enumerator collecting and transcribing these details into enumeration books.[36] Furthermore, it is recognised that confusion can arise between 'domestic' and 'business' activities situated in the homes of farmers, small businesses and retailers where the help of a wife, child(ren), lodger(s) or visitor(s) was often indispensable.[37] Similarly, the designation 'servant' as applied to males included apprentices and journeymen. In this case servants worked *with* their employers, rather than *for* them as in the larger country seats. These caveats provide an important backcloth against which to examine the role and importance of domestic service in Brecon at the turn of the twentieth century.

This study addresses three main issues: firstly, the identity of domestic servants and their origins; secondly, the work they performed; and, thirdly, the social status of their employers. A total of 37 male servants and 374 female servants are listed in the census records. However, just over half the male servants were themselves designated as heads of household, with specified occupations in domestic service. This situation is explained by those living in the gate-lodges of large houses; others probably lived in tied cottage accommodation. In contrast, 83% of the female servants co-resided with, but were unrelated to, their employers.[38] Kin servants were also important: daughters contributed 9% to the total; the remainder included close family members such as mother, aunt, cousin and niece together with those related through marriage.

Without personal life-history records for domestic servants, it is impossible to interpret the exact motivation for movement to Brecon and the processes involved in securing employment.[39] However, Table 2 provides a crude indication of residential movement as related to the age and birthplace distribution of domestic servants. The modal age group for *male servants* is 15–19 years. Almost half the servants were English; relatively few were native to Brecon, but more had their origins elsewhere in Brecknockshire. The age distribution of *females in domestic service* is different: those aged 15–24 accounted for 61% of the total. With increments in age, the proportion in each quinary group declines; only 26 (7%) were aged over 45. Proportionately more female servants (36%) than males (14%) were native to Brecon. A further 20% originated elsewhere in Brecknockshire and 21% came from other parts of Wales.[40] Consistent with the findings of Drake,[41] the 21% born in England included a core of 'career' and highly-skilled (older) servants attached to more geographically mobile households in the professions and military service.

Census entries of 'servant' covered 16 job titles for the 37 male domestic servants, and 51 roles for their 374 female counterparts. Whereas only 2% of all economically-active males were engaged in domestic service, the corresponding proportion for females is 44%. For *males,* the three most important occupations were: domestic gardener (11 cases), coachman (domestic) (5), and footman (3). Other labels included: indoors service as 'boots' in a hotel, 'butler domestic' in a country house, college servant (domestic)', and 'groom domestic'. In contrast, just over two-thirds of *female* domestic servants were categorised in six ill-defined groupings: 'general servants (domestic)' (95); 'domestic servant' (47); 'housemaid (domestic)' (42); 'cook domestic' (30); 'servant (domestic)' (24); and 'nurse (domestic)' (18). Enumerators sometimes used their own descriptions: for instance, the descriptor 'nurse' appears in six different labels (e.g. nurse domestic, nursemaid, nurse attending invalid daughter) for 24 females. Likewise, nine variants of the generic term 'housekeeper' are recorded to describe the roles of 34 domestic servants.

A total of 280 households in Brecon had co-resident domestic staff: these were widely distributed throughout the town. Of these households, 255 had female staff, 76% of whom were the sole employee. Businesses situated in the main commercial core of the town, including shops, inns and lodging houses were the principal employers. Likewise, the households of professional people living on the outskirts of the town, and in Lion Street and Glamorgan Street contained groups of domestic staff, in various capacities. Only 25 households employed male servants, most of whom lived in separate (tied) accommodation. Female and male servants co-resided in only three households. In addition, clusters of domestic staff worked in the principal institutions, including Christ College and the Congregational College, the Union Workhouse and County Infirmary, and in the superior hotels, including The Castle, The Wellington and The George.[42]

Male servants								Female servants							
Age group (years)	*Brecon town*	*County*	*Wales*	*England*	*Elsewhere*	*Total No.*	*%*	*Age group (years)*	*Brecon town*	*County*	*Wales*	*England*	*Elsewhere*	*Total No.*	*%*
10-14	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	10-14	11	1	1	2	1	**16**	4.3
15-19	2	1	1	3	1	**8**	**21.6**	15-19	47	25	25	16	3	**116**	31.0
20-24	0	0	1	1	0	**2**	**5.4**	20-24	43	26	23	19	2	**113**	30.2
25-29	2	1	0	2	0	**5**	**13.5**	25-29	12	6	11	16	3	**48**	12.8
30-34	1	2	0	2	0	**5**	**13.5**	30-34	5	3	5	7	0	**20**	5.3
35-39	0	0	1	2	0	**3**	**8.1**	35-39	7	4	3	6	0	**20**	5.3
40-44	0	0	0	1	0	**1**	**2.7**	40-44	4	2	4	5	0	**15**	4.0
45-49	0	1	0	1	0	**2**	**5.4**	45-49	1	4	3	1	0	**9**	2.4
50-54	0	0	1	1	1	**3**	**8.1**	50-54	4	0	0	1	1	**6**	1.6
55-59	0	1	0	1	0	**2**	**5.4**	55-59	0	1	0	1	0	**2**	0.5
60-64	0	0	0	2	0	**2**	**5.4**	60-64	0	1	0	2	0	**3**	0.8
65-69	0	2	0	1	0	**3**	**8.1**	65-69	0	2	1	1	0	**4**	1.1
70 and over	0	1	0	0	0	**1**	**2.7**	70 and over	1	0	1	0	0	**2**	0.5
N=	**5**	**9**	**4**	**17**	**2**	**37**	**100.0**	N=	**135**	**75**	**77**	**77**	**10**	**374**	100.0
%	**13.5**	**24.3**	**10.8**	**45.9**	**5.4**	**100.0**		%	**36.1**	**20.1**	**20.6**	**20.6**	**2.7**	**100.0**	

Source: PRO RG13/5168.

Table 2 Domestic servants: age and birthplace distribution.

Based on Tillott's categorisation, Table 3 re-distributes the 'living-in' female servant population to *employment sector* according to the occupation of the employer, the male (or in his absence) female of head of household. For 'living-in' servants, it demonstrates the importance, as employers, of: professional groups (24% of all co-resident servants); shopkeepers and traders (17%); skilled craftsmen (13%); relatively wealthy retired people (9%); and clerical (7%) and supervisory (5%) groups. A further 10% worked in key institutions and the main hotels. Domestic servants also worked in the households of semi-skilled, unskilled and service workers in circumstances which included: the presence of a non-family housekeeper supporting an elderly male; an elder daughter substituting as mother for younger siblings in a 'denuded' family; and complex households comprising a large family together with several lodgers/boarders supported by a member of kin nominated as 'servant'.

Bi-lingualism in Brecon

Brecon functioned as a Borderland market town. The ability to use the Welsh language, therefore, was important in the context of commerce and social exchange. In 1901 1179 residents (537 males; 642 females) representing 20% of

Tillott's Group	*Description*	*No*	*%*
1	Agricultural,self-employed or managers	12	3.2
2a	Skilled agricultural workers	4	1.1
2b	Agricultural labourers	0	0.0
3	Shopkeeepers, traders petty entrepreneurs	65	17.4
4	Skilled craftsmen, non-industrial	47	12.6
5a	Manufacturers, industrialists, wholesalers etc	6	1.6
5b	Skilled industrial craftsmen	5	1.3
6	Extractive industries	0	0.0
7a	Upper professional	64	17.1
7b	Lower professional	24	6.4
8	Clerical	27	7.2
10	Private income recipients/annuitants	35	9.4
11	Semi-skilled and sevice workers	25	6.7
12	Labourers and unskilled workers	3	0.8
13	Supervisory workers	20	5.3
	Institutions and hotels	37	9.9
Total		**374**	**100.0**

Source: Based on PRO RG13/5168 and P.M. Tillott's classification of occupations and social groupings as cited in D.R.Mills (1982).

Table 3 Household setting for co-resident female servants 1901.

Age (years)	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	No	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**
under 16	47	8.8	33	5.1	80	6.8
16-24	62	11.5	95	14.8	157	13.3
25-44	161	30.0	187	29.1	348	29.5
over 44	267	49.7	327	50.9	594	50.4
Total Number	**537**	**100.0**	**642**	**100.0**	**1179**	**100.0**

Source: PRO RG13/5168.

Table 4 Brecon 1901: Bilingual characteristics of population.

the population claimed to be bi-lingual. Speakers of the Welsh language were quite evenly distributed across the town, excluding the Barracks with only 4 bilingual soldiers. ED4 (31%), the area to the west of the river Honddu including the Priory and Penydre, had the highest proportion; ED6 (18%), The Watton, the lowest. The proportion of all residents able to speak Welsh increased with age from 7% aged under 16 years, to 50% for residents aged over 44 (Table 4). Figure 9 shows relatively small gender differences in bi-lingualism, other than in ED4 where 36% of males, in contrast to 26% of females, claimed to speak the Welsh language.

This linguistic analysis brings into focus the question of regional origins and the migration trajectories of bi-lingual residents (Fig. 10). In summary: 33% of Welsh speakers were born in Brecon; 38% originated from parishes elsewhere in Brecknockshire, with a marked concentration on near-neighbouring parishes, especially in the Epynt Mountains and valleys in the Brecon Beacons; and 26% came from South Wales counties, principally the coalfield areas in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, with weaker streams from rural Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire. Just over 2% originated in North Wales. Rather intriguing is the 1% of Welsh language speakers born in England.

Society at work

Town functions and regional connections

Notwithstanding the agricultural depression in the final quarter of the century, Brecon as county town and an established commercial centre continued to discharge a range of commercial, legal and administrative functions. Kelly's Directory (1895) reports: '*The general market is in High Street, the market day being Friday. The cattle market is in Free Street and is very well supplied, and a great market for cattle and sheep is held on the 1st Tuesday in every month. Fairs are held on the first Tuesday in March, May, July, September and November. The market place, formerly the property of the Brecon Markets Company now belongs to the corporation*'.[43] In parallel Brecon had developed a transport-related

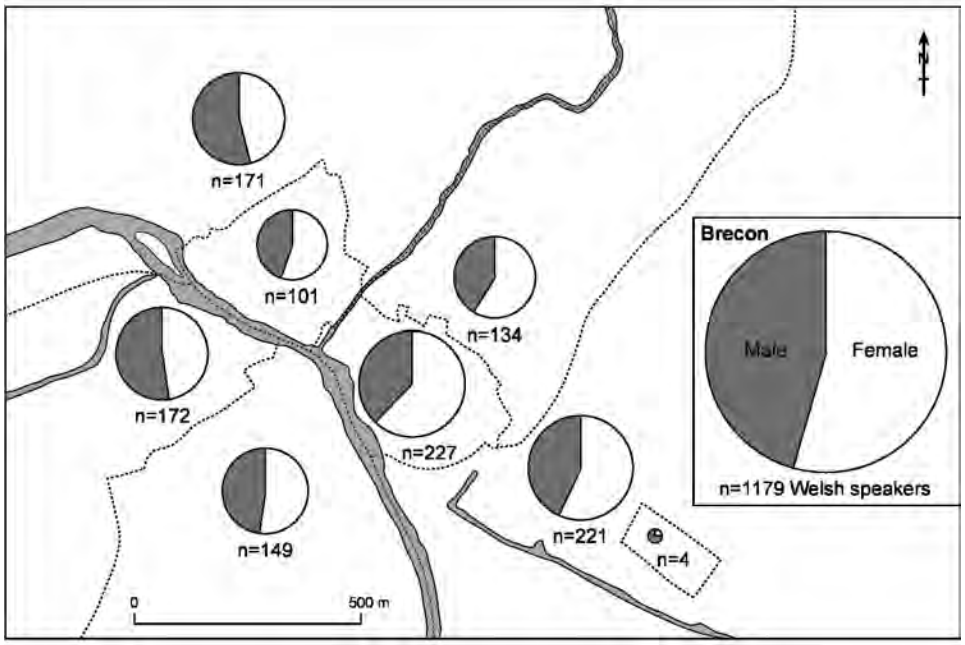


Fig. 9 Brecon 1901: ability to speak the Welsh language.

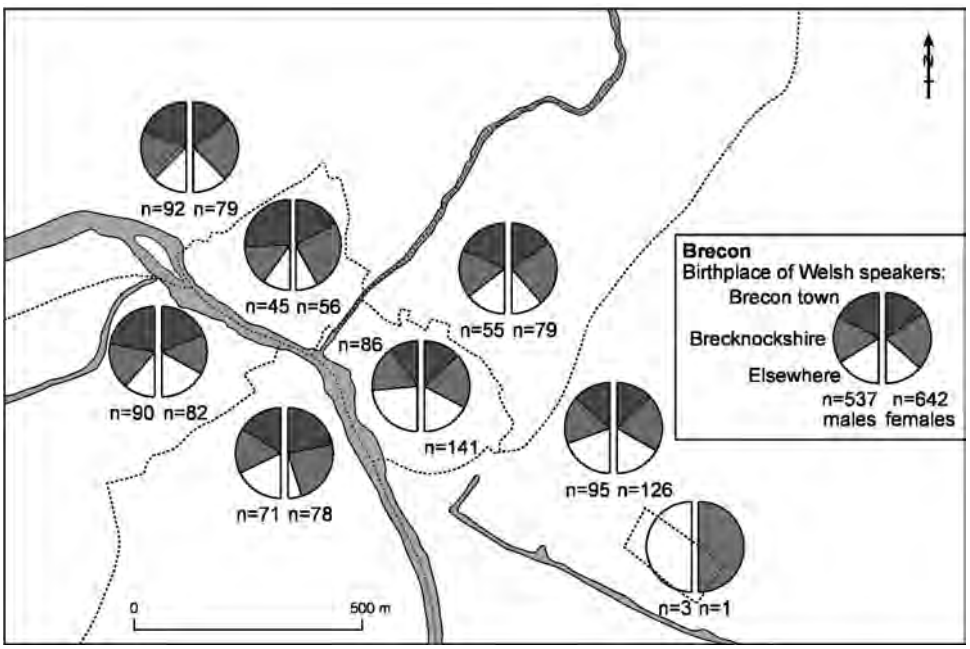


Fig. 10 Brecon 1901: birthplace of Welsh language speakers.

dimension to its economy. The commissioning of the Brecon-Abergavenny canal in 1801 (and associated network of tramroads) had reduced the transfer costs for agricultural products to towns on the north eastern rim of the South Wales coalfield and parts of rural Herefordshire.[44] Return flows of coal, limestone and other industrial products transported down inclined planes to canal-side wharfs further stimulated the economy. An extension of the canal to Newport in 1811 provided access (via ferry services) to Bristol. In addition, completion of the Neath and Brecon Railway, Brecon and Merthyr Railway and Hay and Kington Railway in the 1860s reinforced commercially-beneficial connections with industrial centres on the coalfield and extended communication to the spa towns of central Wales and resorts on the Welsh coastline.[45] However, the success of the railway had an adverse impact on barge traffic; by 1900 only one weekly market boat navigated the whole length of the canal to Newport.[46]

Trade directories provide an invaluable insight into the functions performed by towns in the nineteenth century.[47] Notwithstanding known imperfections,[48] they contain evidence to recreate spatial patterns of trades, crafts, services and professions in the built environment;[49] and to determine the competitive importance of a town according to the precepts of central place theory.[50] *Kelly's Directory of South Wales and Monmouthshire (1895)* provides a commercial snapshot of Brecon.[51] However, reconstruction of the commercial environment has to deal with: multiple occupations,[52] different postal addresses for enterprises under a single management,[53] multiple roles performed by professional persons,[54] a propensity to include distracting advertisements[55] and the management in common of different companies.[56] Notwithstanding, *Kelly's Directory* (1895) lists entries for 78 key functions, grouped into seven categories, located at 281 addresses: retail services (33% of the total); craft services (21%); accommodation/ catering/licensed premises (16%); professional and financial services (14%); building trades (6%); civil and social administration (5%); and distribution by merchants/dealers (5%). Table 5 shows a concentration of these activities in four locations (including scattered addresses in neighbouring streets and localities): High Street (including Market Street and St Mary Street) (22% of the total); The Watton (15%); The Struet (including George Street) (14%); and Llanfaes (incorporating Bridge Street and Orchard Street) (11%). There were, in addition, smaller clusters in Castle Street (9%), Ship Street (with Wheat Street) (9%) and Lion Street (6%). Whilst retail and craft activities were scattered throughout these commercial areas, professional services, including administrative functions performed for county and borough, were more fully represented in the High Street, Lion Street and The Watton. As the main thoroughfares, The Watton, Llanfaes and The Struet had larger numbers of hotels/inns/taverns, lodging houses, eating houses and coffee taverns. Publication of a newspaper set a county town apart; it also boosted employment in the printing industry. In that connection, *Kelly's Directory* advertises: '*The Brecon and Radnor County Times was published Thursday*,

Table 5

Trades, Crafts and Professional Services in Brecon 1901

Functions and services	*High St. (incl. Market St & St Mary's St)*	*The Watton*	*Llanfaes (incl. Orchard St & St David's St)*	*Ship St (incl Wheat St)*	*The Struet (incl George St)*	*Castle St*	*Lion St*	*The Bulwark*	*Watergate*	*Pendre (incl Mill St & Baileyglas)*	*Mount St (incl Camden Rd & Free St)*	*TOTAL N=*	*TOTAL %*
Civil/social administration	4	3	1	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	**14**	**5.0**
Professional/finance	6	7	3	3	3	5	6	5	0	0	1	**39**	**13.9**
Manufacturing/craft													
building trades	0	5	2	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	3	**16**	**5.7**
craft services	15	3	8	6	12	5	5	3	0	1	2	**60**	**21.4**
Transport/distribution													
merchants/dealers	3	3	0	1	0	2	3	0	0	0	3	**15**	**5.3**
retail	30	9	12	7	13	10	1	1	0	8	2	**93**	**33.1**
Accommodation/catering	5	11	6	4	6	1	1	1	4	3	2	**44**	**15.7**
Total	**63**	**41**	**32**	**24**	**38**	**24**	**18**	**11**	**4**	**13**	**13**	**281**	**100.0**

Source: Kelly's Directory 1895.

Table 5 Trades, crafts and professional services in Brecon, 1901.

and the Brecknock Beacon published in the town on Friday morning , are the county papers, and have a large circulation in the district. The Brecon and Radnor Express is also published here on Thursday'.[57]

Employment profile

Employment is a robust indicator of economic activity. In Table 6 the diverse occupations recorded in 1901 for 1780 males and 851 females have been assigned to the *International Standard Industrial Classification of Economic Activities (SIC)*.[58] The SIC is structured around ten major divisions (including one for activities inadequately defined), sub-divided into groups. Overall, 95% of economically-active males and 99% of females were allocated to a total of 48 groups. For males aged over 10 years the economic activity rate is 81%; that for females 35%. The urban economy had a broad base with significant employment in a number of sectors. Occupations for *males* are spread across a range of community, social and personal services (21%) (almost half served in the military and were listed under the 'defence group'); construction (17%); manufacturing (16%); wholesale and retail trades (15%); transport, storage and communication (15%); and the primary sector including agriculture, forestry and fishing (7%). In contrast, *females* were concentrated in three main divisions: those occupied in community, social and personal services accounted for 61% of the total; two-thirds of these were in domestic services of various kinds. A further 21% of the total were engaged in wholesale and retail trades, restaurants and hotels; this division included the 12% involved in various types of retail activity. Finally, 16% were included in manufacturing, almost all of whom worked in occupations connected with textiles, wearing apparel and leather. Such specialisation confirms the strength of services underpinning the urban economy; it also highlights the importance of sewing trades, including dressmaking, as a specialist feature.

It is unfortunate that supplementary information required in the census on the working practices of 'workers' (home-based or otherwise), 'employers' and 'own-account workers' is incomplete. Records cover only 62% of economically active males and 49% of females. These indicate that 8% of *males* were employers and a further 10% were 'own account' workers. The 9% who worked from home included important contingents from footwear manufacturing and repair, retail trades, and the hotel and catering industries. In contrast, 3% of *females* were employers and a further 29% were classed as 'own account' workers. Overall, 31% of females worked from home: this component includes strong representations from the 'wearing apparel', retail, hotel and catering and laundry services groups. In summary: the available evidence confirms that homeworking (possibly on a casual or intermittent basis) and self-employment were important strands in the organisation of the local labour market.

SIC Division		Male		Female		Total	
		No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
100	***Agriculture, Hunting, Forestry and Fishing***						
111	agriculture and livestock production	53	3.0	6	0.7	59	2.2
112	agricultural services	37	2.1	1	0.1	38	1.4
113	hunting, trapping and game propagation	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.2
121	forestry	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.0
122	logging	19	1.1	0	0.0	19	0.7
130	fishing	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.2
	Sub total	***120***	***6.7***	***7***	***0.8***	***127***	***4.8***
200	***Mining and Quarrying***						
210	coal mining	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.2
290	quarrying	8	0.4	0	0.0	8	0.3
	Sub total	***13***	***0.7***	***0***	***0***	***13***	***0.5***
300	***Manufacturing***						
311	food manufacturing	26	1.5	3	0.4	29	1.1
313	beverage industries	14	0.8	1	0.1	15	0.6
321	manufacture of textiles	17	1.0	2	0.2	19	0.7
322	manufacture of wearing apparel excl. footwear	55	3.1	127	14.9	182	6.9
323	manufacturee of leather products excl. footwear	18	1.0	2	0.2	20	0.8
324	manufacture of footwear	25	1.4	0	0.0	25	1.0
331	manufacture of wood products excl. furniture	22	1.2	0	0.0	22	0.8
332	manufacture of furniture and fixtures	9	0.5	0	0.0	9	0.3
342	printing, publishing and allied industries	36	2.0	0	0.0	36	1.4
369	manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.0
371	iron and steel basic industries	9	0.5	0	0.0	9	0.3
381	manufacture of fabricated metal products	36	2.0	0	0.0	36	1.4
382	manufacture of machinery excl. electrical	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.0
390	other manufacturing industries	12	0.7	0	0.0	12	0.5
	Sub total	***281***	***15.8***	***135***	***15.9***	***416***	***15.8***
400	***Electricity, gas and water***						
410	electricity, gas and steam	11	0.6	0	0.0	11	0.4
420	water works and supply	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.0
	Sub total	***12***	***0.7***	***0***	***0***	***12***	***0.5***
500	***Construction and building***	**297**	**16.7**	**1**	**0.1**	**298**	**11.3**
600	***Wholesale and retail trades, restaurants and hotels***						
610	wholesale trade	19	1.1	4	0.5	23	0.9
620	retail trade	217	12.2	100	11.8	317	12.0
631	restaurants, cafes and other eating places	23	1.3	42	4.9	65	2.5
632	hotels, rooming houses, lodging houses	13	0.7	31	3.6	44	1.7
	Sub total	***272***	***15.3***	***177***	***20.8***	***449***	***17.1***
700	***Transport, storage and communications***						
711	land transport	221	12.4	1	0.1	222	8.4
712	water transport	5	0.3	1	0.1	6	0.2
719	services allied to transport	9	0.5	0	0.0	9	0.3
720	communication	28	1.6	6	0.7	34	1.3
	Sub total	***263***	***14.8***	***8***	***0.9***	***271***	***10.3***
800	***Finance, insurance, real estate and business services***						
810	financial institutions	11	0.6	0	0.0	11	0.4
820	insurance	6	0.3	0	0.0	6	0.2
831	real estate	7	0.4	2	0.2	9	0.3
832	business services (incl. clerical)	23	1.3	3	0.4	26	1.0
	Sub total	***47***	***2.6***	***5***	***0.6***	***52***	***2.0***
900	***Community, social and personal services***						
910	public administration and defence (incl army)	219	12.3	19	2.2	238	9.0
920	sanitary and similar services	1	0.1	0	0.0	1	0.0
931	education services	33	1.9	68	8.0	101	3.8
933	medical, dental, other health and vetinerary services	12	0.7	24	2.8	36	1.4
935	business, professional and labour associations	34	1.9	0	0.0	34	1.3
939	other social and related community services	18	1.0	2	0.2	20	0.8
949	amusement and recreational services	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.2
951	repair services	5	0.3	0	0.0	5	0.2
952	laundry services, and cleaning and dyeing plants	1	0.1	44	5.2	45	1.7
953	domestic services	39	2.2	359	42.2	398	15.1
959	miscellaneous personal services	13	0.7	0	0.0	13	0.5
	Sub total	***380***	***21.3***	***516***	***60.6***	***896***	***34.1***
000	***Insufficient information to assign SIC***	***95***	***5.3***	***2***	***0.2***	***97***	***3.7***

Note: Some sub-totals are subject to minor errors in rounding the components.

Source: PRO RG13/5168.

Table 6 Brecon 1901: Distribution of grades within the Standard Industrial Classification.

The railway industry

The 1901 census recorded 170 railway workers engaged in 29 categories of work connected with: track, signalling and safe traffic movements; station installations and goods yards; and the servicing and maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock. Numerically, the most prominent grades were: engine drivers (37); railway guards ('unspecified', passenger and goods) (24); engine stokers (17); engine cleaners (15); and firemen (14). Only 14 (8%) of the railway staff were aged under 20. Numbers peaked at 29 (17%) in the age range 30–34, falling gradually to 8% in the quinary group 60–64. Engine drivers were distributed across the full age range; in contrast, porters, engine stokers and firemen were characteristically younger and at an earlier stage in career.

Railwaymen lived in 148 households: whilst in two-thirds the male head was the sole railway employee, in 8% both the male head and either one son or a combination of son(s) and boarder(s) were employed by the railway. Households headed by non-railwaymen accommodated the remaining railway staff, including son(s), distant blood relatives and non-family boarders/lodgers. Railway households were scattered throughout the suburbs: in the small terraced houses in Newmarch Street (15 households) and adjoining St. David's Street (3) and Talbot Terrace (2); towards the northern end of The Struet (13); at intervals in the narrow streets in Kensington/Pendre (13) and Postern/Priory Hill (7); along The Watton (19) with adjoining John Street (16) and Charles Street (5); and in Free Street (14). Four of the 16 boarders employed in the railway industry co-resided in Harp Terrace; a further two pairs boarded in small terraced houses in John Street.

Overall, 65 (38%) of railway staff were natives of Brecon; several of the younger employees were the sons of serving railwaymen. In addition, 25 (15%) originated in the county, some from neighbouring parishes Given the demand for experience and specialist skills in engineering and traffic management, it is not unexpected that the remaining 80 (47%), including a large contingent aged over 40 years, came from parts of industrial South Wales or elsewhere in England, particularly London. Six of the 16 boarders originated from the north of the county; two came from industrial Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire; the remainder from English counties, mainly in the South West.

Military presence

Brecon has a long history as a garrison town. In 1805, to the great relief of townsfolk, the armoury located at the Townhall had been re-sited to a specially-constructed and secure building in The Watton. This became the core of the barracks which by mid-century could accommodate 270 foot soldiers. Further additions ensued and under Lord Cardwell's Act (1873) Brecon was designated a military centre for the counties of Brecknockshire, Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire and Monmouthshire, subsequently becoming the home of the South Wales Borderers (24th Regiment). The headquarters of the South Wales Volunteer Brigade

and the 1st (Brecknockshire) Volunteer battalion, South Wales Borderers, were also located in The Watton. Further reorganisation of the army in 1881 consolidated this position.[59]

On census-night the family of the commanding officer, Colonel Richard Hare,[60] seven commissioned officers and 18 soldiers occupied married quarters in the Barracks. These co-existed with a total of 130 unmarried soldiers, most of whom were designated as 'private-infantry' (including two drummers and a trumpeter). Enumerated elsewhere in the town were 18 married soldiers and one lodger. Captain George Gilden, for instance, lived with his wife in the household of his widower father-in-law at Glyngarth on Camden Road and Major Lowry James, married (but wife absent), resided with two domestic servants in Alexandra Road; and several men from the lower ranks lived in The Watton, including four in small terraced cottages in John Street and Charles Street, and a further two in similar accommodation in Newmarch Street in Llanfaes. Examination of the census casts light on military organisation and deployment. The distribution of military ranks confirms a training and administrative function with several personnel designated 'in pay corps'. Moreover, the pattern and spacing of childbirth confirms both stability in posting and service overseas.[61] For instance, the census reveals that four of the households in married quarters and two living elsewhere in the town were headed by women, suggesting that the male head was absent on military duties.

Servicemen and their families, including the seven retirees, added to the social mix of market town society. Birthplace records for the 166 serving soldiers indicate origins from a wide catchment area. Six (4%) were born in Brecon; a further 45 (28%) in other Welsh counties (especially Monmouthshire and Glamorgan); and 107 (66%) in English counties (especially Lancashire, Northamptonshire and Gloucestershire) and Scotland. Two soldiers (classed as British subjects) had been born in Turkey and Canada, respectively.

Conclusion: writing the personal

Readers may wonder why I have written this piece about Brecon at the turn of the twentieth century. Curiosity is one answer. A curiosity awakened by interest in family connections. At the time of the 1901 census, my grandmother, May Skinner, aged 18 years and described as a 'shop assistant', lived in her grandfather's home – the King's Head public house in Kensington – with her Brecon-born mother, three sisters and a brother. Later, she married Arthur Whatley, a Wiltshire-born haullier and economic migrant to the town who had enlisted in the South Wales Borderers on 8th August, 1894.[62] Serving in India at the time of the 1901 census, he had risen through the ranks to Company Serjeant Major of the First Battalion when killed in France, in October 1914, prior to the birth of my mother. To supplement her military pension, my widowed grandmother (living in John Street) worked for Thomas Phillips, the grocer in Ship Street. I have vivid memories of the tales my three great aunts told (repetitively) about their childhood; these included colourful

accounts of Brecon's weekly markets and the periodic fairs that punctuated the rhythm of life, highlights from the social calendar of the county town (including military parades, county balls and carnivals) and, of course, private incidents in family life. Whilst for me the statistical interpretation of census records chimes with personal reminiscences, for readers it will hopefully illuminate aspects of the built environment, work and society in the county town at the turn of the twentieth century.

ROBERT GANT

Notes

[1] The rank-ordered importance of Welsh towns based on functions performed is examined in Carter, H. *The Towns of Wales. A study in urban geography*. Cowbridge (1966), Chapter 3. The functional grades assigned to settlements in the Usk valley and related spheres of influence are depicted diagrammatically on page 139.

[2] Carter, H., *op. cit.*, (1966), p.56. This theme is developed by Parry, E. G. 'Brecon: Occupations and Society, 1500–1800', *Brycheiniog*, Vol.19, (1981), pp.60-68. Based on evidence of occupations extracted from parish records and family papers, Parry claims that '*Brecon was not the provincial backwater one might expect. On the contrary, it was one of the premier towns of Wales with a thriving business community which enjoyed an increasingly varied social life.*' (p. 68).

[3] For a further illustration see Gant, R. 'The townscape and economy of Brecon 1800–1860', *Brycheiniog*, Vol. XVI, (1972), pp. 103–124; and Gant, R.'The topography as a resource for Welsh urban studies', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, Vol. XIX, (1976), pp. 217–226.

[4] Kelly's Directory of South Wales and Monmouthshire 1895, London (1895), p. 87.

[5] The case for writing people-based 'community history' as opposed to a 'place-based 'local history' is argued by Mills, D. 'Defining community: a critical review of community in family and community history', *Family and Community History*, Vol. 7, (2004), pp. 5–12. The debate is continued in Deacon, B. and Donald, M. 'In search of community history', *Family and Community History*, Vol. 7, (2004), pp. 13–18.

[6] Gant, R. 'Crickhowell 1851–1901: continuity and change in the small Welsh market town', *Brycheiniog*, Vol.XL, (2009), pp. 37–58; Gant, R. *Crickhowell through the eyes of the tourist 1780–1870*. Crickhowell, Crickhowell and District Archive Centre (2009); Gant, R. 'Domestic service in a small market town: Crickhowell, 1851–1901', *Local Population Studies*, Vol.84, (2010), pp. 11–20.

[7] Micro-level census-based studies of settlements in Wales include: Pryce, W. T. R. and Edwards, J. A. 'The social structure of the embryonic towns in rural Wales: Llanfair Caereinion in the mid nineteenth century', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, Vol. 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) Vol.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.

[8] The contents of the census enumerators' books and definitions of variables are fully discussed in: Higgs, E. *Making sense of the census. The Manuscript returns for England and Wales 1801–1901*. London (1989); Mills, D. and Schurer, K. (eds). *Local communities in the late Victorian census enumerators' books*. Oxford (1996); Mills, D. *A guide to census enumerators' books*. Milton Keynes (2002); and Woollard, M. 'The 1901 census: an introduction', *Local Population Studies*, Vol. 67, (2001), pp. 26–43.

[9] '*Whichever way the schedules were completed, the historian has to rely essentially on information given by the householder, although enumerators were instructed to correct any manifestly false particulars*'. Mills, D. and Schurer, K (eds), *op. cit.*, (1996), p. 17.

[10] Higgs, E., *op. cit.*, (1989) reviews a number of more problematic issues connected with both the

enumerators' and householders' interpretations of occupations, the definition and counting of rooms in tenements, and birthplace. A few obvious errors in transcription and the mis-recording of information in columns of the schedule were detected in Brecon (PRO R.G.13/5168). These were readily corrected.

[11] An informative account of the early development of Brecon with regard to its natural defences, positioning of river-crossing points and subsequent transition from a military to civil settlement is presented in Parry, E. G. 'Brecon: topography and townscape', *Brycheiniog*, Vol. 21 (1984/85), pp. 12–20.

[12] Cartographic evidence appropriate to this task is reviewed in: Oliver, R. *Ordnance Survey maps. A concise guide for historians*. London (1993); and Beech, C. and Mitchell, R. *Maps for family and local history. Readers' Guide 26*. London (2004).

[13] Parry, E. G. *op. cit.*, (1984/85), pp. 12–20 relates the shape and dimensions of burgage plots to urban planning in the twelfth century, and differentiated rental values in the seventeenth century, to relative position and the use of land.

[14] Gant, R., *op. cit.,* (1972). Howe, G. M. *Wales from the air*. Cardiff (1957), p. 26, includes a black and white aerial photograph, taken from the west, that relates the sinuous railway tracks to the existing street network and patterns of land use.

[15] 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; Carter, H. and Wheatley, S. E. *op. cit.,* (1979), pp.214–238. Problems with the fringe-belt concept are discussed in Carter H. and Lewis, C. R. *op. cit.*, (1990), pp. 118–119.

[16] These processes are fully discussed in Carter, H. *An Introduction to Urban Historical Geography*. London, (1983), pp. 146–148.

[17] Social and institutional factors in site selection for country houses are illustrated in 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.

[18] Several informative images of the townscape and street-scenes are included in: Moore, D. *Brecon in old photographs*. Stroud, Alan Sutton Publishing (2006); Davies, M. (compiler) *Around Brecon*. Stroud, Tempus Publishing Ltd. (2000); and in Williams H. (and contributors) *Bulwark and Bridge. Pamphlet produced in memory of Elsie Pritchard 1919–1982*. Mountain Ash, D. J. Pryse and Son (1984).

[19] de la Beche, H. T.'The Sanitary Condition of Brecon', in *The Second Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts*, (1844), pp. 88–102, graphically describes the inadequacy of drains, sewers and safe drinking water supply in Brecon, pinpointing ill-drained localities that included the backstreets of Llanfaes, Heol Hwnt, Kensington and Mill Street, areas where ill-ventilated, two-roomed, 'poor cottages' were deemed to be sub-standard and largely unfit for healthy habitation. The cholera epidemics of 1849 and 1854 in which two and 57 people, respectively, died are examined by Parry, E.G. 'A poor man's plague – the cholera epidemic', *Brycheiniog,* Vol.1986/1987, pp. 42–56.

[20] Poole, E. *The Illustrated History and Biography of Brecknockshire from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. Brecknock (1886), p. 76.

[21] Jones, T. *A History of the County of Brecknock*. Vol. 2. Brecknock.(1909), p.126, records that '. . . *it was not until the year 1879 that the system now in operation was proceeded with*'.

[22] In The Struet, census properties 80 and 81 jointly accommodated 15 male lodgers, nine of whom were designated as '*waterworks labourer – unemployed*'. These men ranged in age from 24–65 years. Only one was a native of Brecon: two came from Welsh counties; the remainder from England, with three from Lancashire.

[23] Kelly's Directory, *op. cit.*, (1895), p. 98.

[24] Kelly's Directory (1895), *op. cit.,* p. 87. The census in 1901 records 10 patients (5 males, five females), tended by the resident surgeon, one resident nurse and four domestic staff.

[25] Kelly's Directory, *op. cit.*, (1895), p. 91.

[26] Horse fairs, however, were still held on Bridge Street in Llanfaes. Jones. T., *op. cit.*, (1909), p. 122.

[27] The meticulous 'street geography' of Camden Road prepared by Bell, A. 'Camden Road, Brecon 1868–1937', *Brycheiniog*, Vol.XL, (2009), pp. 83–12, strikes a contrast with the more densely developed areas of terraced housing in The Watton and Llanfaes.

[28] Kelly's Directory, *op. cit.*, (1895), p. 90.

[29] The need to relate migration processes more closely to consequences and to develop, for individuals, micro-level life-course studies based on pattern and process is argued in: Pryce, W. T. R. 'A migration typology and some topics for the research agenda', *Family and Community History*, Vol.3, (2000), pp. 65–80.

[30] For illustration: Geoffrey Cobb, County Councillor, of Nyddfa employed five domestic servants, including one stable boy; Henry Maybery, solicitor, of The Priory employed five females servants; and Dawson Kinchingbourne, Civil Engineer, of 1 Woodlands employed four female domestic staff, and accommodated (as a visitor) one female 'monthly nurse'.

[31] This theme of social perception and class segregation is explored by Cowlard, R. 'The identification of social class areas and their place in 19th century urban development', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol. 4, (1979), pp. 239–257.

[32] A description and critique of Tillott's classification is presented in Mills, D. R. 'Central villages: theory, sources and enquiries', in *Historical sources and the social sciences*. Milton Keynes, (1983), pp. 36–37; and Mills, D. R. and Schurer, K. (eds), *op. cit.*, (1996), pp. 142–145. This schema links the social status of gainfully-occupied household heads (male or, by default, female) to sectors of the local economy and labour market: Categories 1, 2 and 6 relate to the primary economic sector covering agriculture and extractive industries; categories 4 and 5 apply to manufacturing and the secondary sector; whilst the remaining categories cover various service activities in the tertiary sector.

[33] Household heads without a recorded occupation included: several elderly widows; a few 'incapacitated' individuals; some people accorded the description 'nil' or 'no occupation'; and instances where, for reason unknown, the occupation column had not been not completed.

[34] Gant, R., *op.cit.*, (2010).

[35] Issues regarding the definition and role of domestic service are considered in Ebury, M. G. and Preston B. T. 'Domestic service in the late Victorian and Edwardian England, 1871–1914'. Reading, *University of Reading Geographical Papers* (1976), pp. 11–15. These issues are further addressed by Pooley, S. 'Domestic servants and their urban employers: a case study of Lancaster 1880–1914', *Economic History Review*, Vol.62, (2009), pp. 405–429.

[36] The categorisation of servants' employment is discussed by Drake, M., 'Aspects of domestic service in Great Britain and Ireland, 1841–1911', *Family and Community History*, Vol.2, (1999), pp. 119–128.

[37] Schwarz, L. 'English servants and their employers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 52, (1999), p. 236.

[38] The wide scope of the term 'servant' is typified in the household of Alfred Adcock, draper, of 14–15 High Street. He employed eight *servants* two of whom (males) were described as 'draper's apprentice'; two female 'domestic servants'; and four females categorised, respectively, as 'dressmaker', 'dressmaker's assistant', 'milliner' and 'milliner's assistant'. The household of his neighbour, Edward Llewellyn a practising draper, contained seven 'boarders'(six females and one male) each of whom was labelled as 'draper's assistant'.

[39] *'Even detailed family histories leave many unanswered questions about migration decisions and motives, and we will never know how alternative destinations were appraised and evaluated by migrants in the past'* Pooley C. J. and Turnbull, J. 'Migration and urbanisation in North-West England: a re-assessment of the role of towns in the migration process' in Siddle, D. J. (ed). *Migration, mobility and modernisation*. Liverpool (2000), p. 212.

[40] *'But in the hundreds of small market towns, which continued to perform their traditional central place functions as service centres for their region, there was little in the way of alternative jobs for women. Consequently, for large parts of the country, service in private homes remained the only avenue open to girls in the surrounding villages'*. Ebury, M. G. and Preston, B. T. *op.cit.*, (1976), p. 25.

[41] Drake, M., *op. cit.*, (1999), p. 122.

[42] Emily Fowles aged 37, the unmarried manageress of The Castle Hotel, employed one assistant bookkeeper and a further nine servants – eight females classed as domestic servants and one male defined as a 'billiard marker'; on census night they attended to five visitors and one boarder.

[43] Kelly's Directory, *op. cit.*, (1895), p. 87.

[44] The principal tramroad connections and canal-side industrial sites are located by Norris, J. *The Brecon and Abergavenny Canal.* Hurstpierpoint (1991), p. 9.

[45] For the development of railway connections, and their impact on the fabric of Brecon in the nineteenth century, refer to Rattenbury, G. and Cook, R. *The Hay and Kington Railways.* Mold (1996); Barrie, D. S. M. *The Brecon and Merthyr Railway.* The Oakwood Press (1964); and Jones, G. B., Brunstone, D. and Watkins, T. *The Neath and Brecon Railway. A History.* Gomer Press (2005).The reduced transfer costs incurred in marketing agricultural products to industrial towns are itemised in Bowen, E. *Traditional Industries of Rural Wales. Self Sufficiency to Dependency.* Cardiff (2000), p. 26.

[46] Thomas, W. S. K. *Journey into Brecon's past.* Llandyssul, Gomer Press (1996), p. 29.

[47] The website (www.historical directories.org) provides a well-constructed and searchable listing of trade directories for settlements in Wales.

[48] 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).

[49] For example: 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; and Gant, R., *op. cit.*, (2009), pp. 42–43.

[50] 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), *op.cit.*, (1996), pp.138–139.

[51] Kelly's Directory, *op. cit.*, (1895).

[52] Representative cases include: '*Price, John timber mer. & farmer & purveyor of milk & butter to all parts of the town, Watton villa, Watton'; and 'Isaac, David surveyor of highways & hot and cold water engineer, Ruperra House, Wheat Street'.*

[53] Two examples suffice: *'Nott J. E. & Co. wholesale & retail ironmongers, iron & brass founders & agricultural implement makers, High St. & wholesale & retail china & glass dirs. 10 Ship St'; and 'Jones, Lewis W.H. wholesale & retail wine & spirit merchant, High Street; bonded warehouse, Market Street'.*

[54] Professional persons often publicised their multi-functional roles, as evidenced by '*Francis, George Philip L.R.C.S. Edin, L.A.H. Dublin. Surgn. surgeon to Brecknock County & Borough Infirmary, medical officer to Christ college & hon medical officer to the Dinas home, H.M. prison and post office; also medical officer of health for Merthyr Cynog district of the Brecon Rural District Council, 12 Bulwark'; and 'Thomas, David William Jones solicitor, commissioner for taking acknowledgements of deeds by married women, clerk to the magistrates for the Hundreds of Merthyr & Pencelly, to the borough magistrates, to the rural district council & to the board of guardians & assessment & school attendance committees & supt registrar of Brecon Union, coroner for the northern division of the county of Brecon & under sheriff, Castle Street'.*

[55] Typical examples include the following: '*Argo Direct Supply coal merchants, wholesale & retail (manager John Owens); sellers of all kinds of coal, lime, manure & firewood; wholesale and retail throughout the Principality. Haulage when required, 1s (shilling) per ton mile'; and 'Griffiths, Frederick bulb importer, seedsman and nurseryman; for all kinds of roses, fruit trees, shrubs & forest trees, which are made a speciality of; landscape gardening done, laid out & planted at lowest prices, & customers receive best attention; Priory Lodge, Pendre'.*

[56] Jointly-managed companies include the following entries: *'Jebb, John Atcherley, general merchant & manager to the Tylerybont Lime & Limestone Co. the Penwyllt Lime & Limestone Co. & the Crynant Colliery Co. 32 Castle Street; Penwylt Lime & Limestone Co. (John Atcherley Jebb, manager) 12 Castle Street; and Penwyllt; Tylerbont (The) Lime & Limestone Co. (Jon. Atcherley Jebb, man.), 12 Castle St. & Pontsticill, near Dowlais'.*

[57] Kelly's Directory, *op. cit.*, (1895), p. 93.

[58] For guidance and further explanation, see ISIC-Rev 2 (1968) *International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities*. http://laborsta.ilo.org/applv8/data/isic2e.html. This analysis *excludes* the following: 96 persons living on their own means; 68 pensioners/retired; 2 disabled persons; and 1 living at home, without specified occupation.

[59] Poole, E. *op. cit.*, (1886), p. 76.

[60] Devon-born Colonel Richard Hare, age 56, had 2 co-residing daughters aged 21 and 16, respectively. He employed: a governess (born in Middlesex); domestic nurse (Northamptonshire); housemaid (Ireland); cook (Ireland); and domestic footman (Ireland).

[61] More *stable* residence is illustrated by the family profile of Aberystwyth-born Private Bartolomew Mannion, aged 45, who had seven Brecon-born daughters aged from 2 months to 14 years. Accompanied *overseas* military service characterised the life-time migration of several families in the Barracks: for instance, Jane Cole (husband absent at census) aged 29 and born in Nova Scotia, had four children aged 1 to 12 years, born sequentially in Gibraltar, Portishead, Gibraltar and Brecon. Likewise, Aldershot-born Margaret Johnston (husband absent at census), aged 31, had five children, aged 5 months to 8 years, born in sequence in Brecon, Cairo, Gibraltar, Brecon and Brecon.

[62] Information abstracted from the microfiche records of enlistment to the South Wales Borderers at the Brecon Military Museum.

'A FACTORY TO BE PROUD OF ': THE DUNLOP SEMTEX RUBBER FACTORY

During the 1930s, 80% of the workforce of the Brynmawr area was unemployed and into this vacuum of unemployment came the Quakers to try and alleviate the problems the people were having. They thought the best way forward was to introduce new industry. The leader of the Quakers was James Forrester, an Old Etonian, and it was he who set about the task of establishing the Brynmawr Furniture Factory, Brynmawr Boot Makers, constructing an open-air swimming pool and a model farm to create employment. However they ran into opposition from the local Labour Party who were of the opinion that they were exploiting their workers by offering low wages.

The industries flourished until the war when the Brynmawr Furniture Factory and the Model Farm were forced to close, although the Brynmawr Boot Makers continued production up to 1980s. During the early part of 1930 the government under Ramsay MacDonald became increasingly alarmed at the unrest amongst the country's work force. The government set up a Royal Commission to look at decentralisation of industry from the London area to unemployment black spots in the rest of the country. The findings of the Commission, under the Chairmanship of Sir Anderson Montague Barlow, stated it was matter of urgency to try and defuse the problem. It was also known that the Communist Party was gaining in membership strength and could cause public unrest.

During 1938, because of the lack of money, James Forrester, who later became The Earl of Verulam, had to leave the Brynmawr to undertake work elsewhere in the country for the Quakers. On leaving the town he promised that at a future date he would build a factory 'the town would be proud of'. With the onset of war and the production of weapons, the labour problem was temporarily forgotten.

When peace returned, the Government under Clement Attlee faced the problem of Britain regaining its pre war position as the workshop of the world in a country with a wide range of worn-out industrial complexes. The government knew we would have adopt many new methods of building and incorporate new production methods that the war had produced.

To assist in this venture the Government sent many up-and-coming young architects to Germany, where new concepts of building and building design had been experimented with before the war. The group visited the Submarine Pens at Brest and Lorient in Brittany to see how these had withstood the RAF Bomber Command's 10 ton Tall Boy bombs. Built to protect the submarines, these concrete constructions had partially withstood bombardment.

James Forrester was now in the vanguard of post war reconstruction and did not forget his promise to the people of Brynmawr of 'a factory they would be proud of'. He gave the task of its design and construction to a talented young architect Ove

Plate 1 The roof of the Main Production Area of the factory is formed by nine rectangular concrete shell domes, each 82 ft long by 63 ft 9 in. wide and supported at the four corners only, the largest of their kind ever built. The concrete is 4 ins. thick and each shell curved in section in two directions; columns occur in only four places in the whole expanse of floor (77,000 square feet). The roof will support four times the weight of the heaviest known snowfall in Brynmawr. The Building Research Station at Garston has advised on the natural lighting. Fluorescent artificial lighting is fitted in the circular openings in each dome, with access for maintenance from outside.

Arup, born of Danish parents, who was fast becoming an authority on reinforced concrete design. Ove Arup gathered a design team including Michel Powers, David Grey, W. J. Barns and Kenneth Capon but the driving force in control of the project was James Forrester.

The area earmarked for the construction of the factory was near the Waun Pond, a feeder for the old Nant y Glo Iron Works since the factory would require a plentiful supply of water. This was the site of Holy Trinity Church and Vicarage; both were demolished to make way for the complex. The factory was built in Monmouthshire but the Boiler House in Breconshire, the main road from Nant y Glo leading to Brynmawr being the county boundary.

The design team envisaged an area 350 ft by 450 ft area covered by nine domes 85 ft by 65 ft and 4 ins thick. The height from the floor to the centre of the dome was 270 ft, giving a production area of 220,315 square ft. The Boiler House (a listed building and still standing) is a semi elliptic in shape with the minor axis being its base, 39 ft wide and 50 ft high and had a direct rail link from the B.R. sidings at

Plate 2 As there was no other access for rail-borne coal, bottom-opening trucks enter the boilerhouse at high level, protected from wind and snow by a parabolic concrete shell roof. The coal is then fed by gravity to Hodgkinson stokers. 4 Davey Paxman 'Economic' Boilers are to be installed (three are already there), each with a steaming capacity of 4,500 lbs. per hour at a pressure of 150 lbs. per square inch. An underground corridor takes steam and other services under the road to the factory. General Contractors: Holland & Cubitts Ltd., London.

the Brynmawr goods yard to allow the trucks to carry coal into the fuel hoppers. The west-facing end was of glass to allow maximum light for those working there. The design changed the concept of ugly boiler houses that scarred for many years the skyline of many industrial town and created an elegant and futuristic concept of new industrial design. A pump house and weir had also to be built on the right hand side of the road to Winchestown, to maintain the water level in the pond and feed water into the main western valley sewer. Being in Breconshire, Brynmawr was not connected to the Western Valley sewer, which is why the town had its own sewage plant at Black Rock in the Clydach Gorge.

Another unique factor in the design was the Warren Beam, the first to be incorporated in a building. This surprised every one by its delicacy. Normally this type of girder would have been constructed using steel. However the beam was made out of reinforced concrete, the first in the country. It had a total length of 64 ft and was 13 ft deep. It was described in an architectural journal as having proportions so well balanced that lightness seems to have brought outstanding

quality to it. The boiler house also housed an unusual spiral stairway, an extended helix without a newel post, supported at the top and bottom only.

A model of the factory went on display at the Festival of Britain as an example of the 'New Elizabethan Age' we were entering. Robert Eunson Jorgema, very well known in architectural circles, stated in an article in the Architect Review of 1951 that 'under the leadership of James Forrester the team would show that the philosophy was that the new dynamics of structure lost to us at the Renaissance must be recaptured in the context of new material and structure'. Without doubt this building outshone any other being built in the country at the time.
The cost of construction was estimated at £125,999 in 1945; in 1950 the Board of Trade set it at £500,000; the final cost, way over budget, was £800,0000. The material for the concrete came from the Kidderminster area, as aggregate from this area was unsuitable. The site preparation contract was given to Geo Wimpy and Co. and the building contract went to Holland Hannan & Cubitts , who passed the contract on to Gee Walker and Slater who completed the building.

The casting of the domes was a continuous process, taking two days to complete, with a constant team of men carrying out the work. I can remember as a school boy seeing the first dome collapsing under its own weight of concrete. It was the first time that the procedures they employed had been used. The problem was solved and there no more difficulties when the next eight were completed. When the factory was in full production a three shift system of work was used, and, walking past at night, the blaze of light coming from it revealed the futuristic dimension of its features: it was as if a gigantic space craft had landed.

The first tenants were Enfield Cables who manufactured electrical cables, and later Dunlop who manufactured floor coverings and tiles. Dunlop later became Dunlop Semtex until the factory closed in 1990 with a loss of 800 jobs.

Over the years since closure, the factory remained unused and was allowed to become derelict. The local people asked for it to be demolished as no one wanted it. A local Councillor called it a carbuncle on the face of Brynmawr. The Blaenau Gwent Borough was forced to carry out a feasibility study which in 1994 produced the following figures:

To refurbish the factory	£65,000.00
To moth ball it	£26,600.00
To demolish it	£9,770.00

In its feasibility study, the Borough stated that the reinforcement in the concrete was corroded, making it unsafe. This enabled CADW to remove the grade one listed building status, allowing it to be demolished. In my endeavours to save the building I asked the Concrete and Cement Institute, three years before the feasibility study, to take samples of the concrete and its structure to find out its condition. They reported that it was in better condition than the day it was constructed. The Welsh Office then gave the order that it could be demolished. The cost of demolition and

making the site available for development was given as £4.5 million when it was finished, quite a difference from the £800,000 to build it.

It is completely wrong to say nothing was done to save the factory from demolition. For four years before it was demolished, I personally did everything I could to try and make the public aware of its architectural value. It was part of our heritage and had give a completely new dimension to working conditions for the working population of the country. Within a very short distance we had the squalor of the collieries and the grime and heat of the steel works. At this factory, all staff entered through the same entrance, all used the same dining facilities. Many letters were written to the London and Welsh newspapers and to MPs and Members of the Welsh Assembly. I also wrote to universities with a Chair of Architecture for their support. The BBC gave me an hour-long programme on Radio Four and half hour an on television in a programme entitled 'One Foot in the Past'. This generated a great deal of interest from various people engaged in architecture on the continent but very little from where it was needed, i.e. Wales. The history of the efforts to save the factory illustrates the short sightedness of our elected members.

The factory was lost, the Boiler House stills stands, but already someone is advocating the demolition of the Boiler House, the last surviving part of the original factory, because it's there doing nothing. Few people realise that so many people, many of them architects and artists, still come to admire the building and mourn the loss of the main factory.

When it became known that CADW and the Welsh Office had given permission for the factory to be demolished, some thought it was worth saving, but this upsurge in interest came three years too late and the die had already been cast. I saw with great sorrow one man in a crane with a pincushion hammer on the end of its jib break up the first dome. It took one man to reduce to a pile of rubble a building that had been designed by a brilliant team of architects which had put this country in the forefront of modernistic designs. I stood there with many others, and flooding back came the words of a local elected member, who had said the factory was a carbuncle on the face of Brynmawr and should be removed. His wish had been granted.

NORMAN MILES GRIFFITHS

ONE HUNDRED YEARS – A TRIBUTE TO GWENLLIAN MORGAN

Plate 1 Gwenllian Morgan

Nineteenth century Britain led the world in its growing pains toward change. In her imperialistic designs no country exceeded the British Empire as she continued expansion around the globe. Even at home, new innovations kept flowing in, from the grand to the mundane and the necessary, such as the introduction of the first public toilets in London, one for men and a few months later, one for women. But behind the scenes of the grand Britain one segment of society began a relentless stirring of the political and social pot. The foment began at the end of the eighteenth century with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's book *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in which she argued that women are not naturally inferior to men, but appear to be only because they lack education. She suggested that both men and women should be treated as rational beings and imagines a social order founded on reason. As potent as any 'shot heard around the world', this dictum rocked Western societies for many decades and the reverberations are still being felt.

Into this climate, in 1852 Gwenllian Elizabeth Fanny Morgan was born in the small Welsh village of Defynnog, near Brecon. Gwenllian Morgan's life revolved around the potent words of equality for women in education, politics, the home,

and every other sphere of life and as history indicates, she dedicated her life to the fulfillment of a woman's rightful place in society. A child born of privilege, she could easily have ignored the needs of others and lived a pampered and selfish life while so many suffered unemployment, lack of education, with no voice either in the home or the larger arena of politics. But she avoided this easy existence and devoted her long life to improving the general welfare, although her tactics never reached militant proportions like many nineteenth century suffragettes. Regardless of the manner in which she campaigned for women and others in need, she recognized that the inequality between the sexes, in all areas of life, could no longer be tolerated.

Sadly, outside the Welsh borders, Gwenllian Morgan's extraordinary life often gets swept away in a hidden cupboard. It is imperative to correct this neglect of a woman who literally brushed away any obstructions to her life goals by her courageous actions. In the midst of growing political and social turmoil on both sides of the Atlantic, women struggled to make theirs a prime cause, but they continually had to battle the old male guard whose dictums regarding male superiority in all areas of the world outside the home were considered as final. However, many mid-nineteenth century women refused to be gagged for long. Already on the American side of the Atlantic women such as Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote the groundbreaking novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* which brought her into the light in her fight against slavery, while Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman doctor in the US recognized the vitality of the campaign for women's rights. In Britain the Suffrage movement, begun in earnest with the 1850 London Convention, stuck to the political underbelly with their cause like barnacles on a ship's hull. No matter how hard the male community tried, their efforts to scrape these annoying Suffragists from their purview failed.

Suffragists knew their abilities, knew that women could no longer be mere chattels to the men in their lives. They knew that the current status quo of

> hierarchical organization and control . . . job segregation where men hold jobs with greater material rewards keep women dependent on men because they encourage women to marry . . . and must therefore perform domestic chores for their husbands . . . thus weakening women's position in the labour market' was intolerable'.[1]

From these beginnings another remarkable British woman, Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon emerged. She, with parental approval, became the one commonly given credit as being one of the founding Suffragists. She cultivated a Bohemian lifestyle and a circle of like-minded friends who became members of the Kensington Society, which in 1865 drafted a petition for Women's Suffrage. This petition brought to the House of Commons by one of its members and supporter of women's suffrage, John Stuart Mill, was meant to be added to the Reform Act of 1866. The petition, defeated by 123 votes, nevertheless marked a real beginning in the campaign for women's equality.[2]

Plate 2 Buckingham Place, Gwenllian Morgan's Brecon residence.

Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon receives credit for being one of the founders of the women's rights movements in Britain, and in so doing she provided the needed spark to continue this fight, for fight it became and into this flickering flame, Gwenllian Morgan began her own career. Her early years appear unremarkable except that her father Philip Morgan, who received appointments as perpetual curate of Penpont (1841–64), the small parish church where she is buried, and of Battle, near Brecon (1859–64), and from 1864 till his death in 1868, rector of Llanhamlach, encouraged his daughters' education, encouraging them not to succumb to traditional Victorian expectations for young women.[3]

Gwenllian Elizabeth Fanny Morgan, who preferred to be called Philip after her father, made an indelible mark on the history of Wales with her phenomenal election as mayor in 1910 for the town of Brecon. A distinctive honour because she was the first woman to be elected as mayor of any borough or city in Wales [1910], and the second woman in all of Britain to attain this position. She devoted her life, energies, and personal wealth to the promotion of Wales, her people and particularly women's rights through the use of her talents for activism with steadfast, intelligent leadership. She emerged as a diligent advocate for women's rights, achieving much for the changes necessary to improve the lives of those whom she served.

Born into privilege, she had a long career serving her borough of Brecon. Less of a vocal activist than many of her sister suffragettes, Gwenllian Morgan's quietly fought campaign for women deserves remembrance. Her personal activism began early. At sixteen, after her father's death in 1868, she and her sister Nellie established an independent home. They had no living brother, apparently Philip's

only son died young; this left the two young women without immediate family with whom to live. The two sisters received an inheritance from their grandfather which made them financially independent, and after their father's death independence appeared to be the most fortuitous move the two could make. British law at the time allowed spinsters to inherit property, to make wills, and to live free of male supervision and interference, something of which these two young women took advantage, neither allowing influence nor youth to deter them. The expectations for young women in mid nineteenth century Britain was marriage, child-bearing, subjection to a man's will, submitting all personal wealth and property to a man's control, including rights over her own body. A husband had the right to force his wife to have sexual relations regardless of her health, desires, or other circumstances. Additionally, in the rare case of divorce, a woman lost her children, these came under her husband's domination; she would lose not only children, but any financial means of support, any wages or inheritance became the sole possession of her husband. Not until 1882 with the passing of the *Married Property Act,* did a woman receive the right to her earnings both before and after marriage. Perhaps the fear of losing status and control of her own life and destiny took away any desire for marriage in Gwenllian Morgan's mind or heart. Her letters do not reveal what motivations she had for remaining unmarried, it can only be assumed she recognized the disadvantages of submitting to a man's will and with her sister who remained her lifelong companion, chose a life of freedom rather than surrender.

Prior to the *Act of 1882,* the *Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857* demonstrated even more fully the destitution in which a woman could find herself in an unhappy marital situation. This *Act* gave men the right to divorce their wives on the grounds of adultery. However, a married woman was not able to obtain a divorce even if she discovered her husband in an adulterous relationship. She had to prove her husband not only committed adultery, but also incest, bigamy, cruelty, or desertion. A woman needed to be on the point of absolute desperation to try and prove any of the above circumstances and if she did, she remained destitute. She lost control of her children, any money or inheritance, any earnings she may have possessed. She also lost social status, any financial help, and the emotional desperation of losing children, in addition to familial support. Many abandoned women took to what was termed 'casual prostitution' to earn enough money to survive; many ended their days in a workhouse. These circumstances may have influenced Gwenllian Morgan to become involved in administering the Poor Laws of the later nineteenth century. For these desperate women becoming a housemaid or other domestic earned her very little, statistics have shown that where a house servant might earn the equivalent of two or three pounds a week, a prostitute might earn as much as fifteen pounds a week. In the nineteenth century, this amounted to a minor fortune! To bring about changes in this world of neglect and abuse Gwenllian Morgan worked in her own sort of magic to improve the conditions of

women. One very significant way was her own progress to the position of mayor of Brecon, the first woman mayor in Wales and the second in Britain.

Miss Morgan proved herself unique, virtually anachronistic, especially in Wales, as she actively immersed herself in community life. She did not blow up post-boxes as did a later Suffragette, Lady Rhondda, or appear in mass marches for the Suffragette cause, but she directed her energies toward humanitarian causes with a genuine concern for those less fortunate than herself including appointment as Governor of the Poor Laws. Part of her responsibility entailed oversight of the Brecknockshire workhouses. One interesting statistic from the 1881 Brecknock workhouse showed that of the ninety-nine residents, male and female, listing previous occupations, thirteen women claimed to be scholars. This phenomenon of out of work scholars could be explained because these women lost positions as governesses or teachers. Although they had an education adequate enough to teach basic skills, their own education may have been too inadequate to offer higher training to students beyond the primary level. Education or the lack of education plays a significant role in the attitude of 'others' toward the Welsh. Gwenllian Morgan and her fellow governors had a very difficult task in both improving the conditions in workhouses and raising the educational levels in Wales.

The charge was all the more difficult because, in 1847, the English Parliament commissioned what came to be called the *Blue Books Survey*. This apparently altruistic effort, called *'Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales'*, attempted to define the problems of Welsh education. Rather than a help, it came to be somewhat of a scourge to the Welsh people inferring that the people of Wales were taught by schoolmasters who were 'incompetent, the schools were without system, moral training, writing, and of low standards in general' among other results.[4]

These were not the only findings by the commissioners. They claimed that the moral and physical condition of the people was found wanting, overall, they believed the Welsh to be of 'immoral character, perjurers, ignorant, superstitious . . . and that the Welsh language itself could be held responsible for many of these evils'.[5] The commissioners also described Welsh men 'to a large extent drunkards and lazy, not desiring any real work . . . and Welsh women as immoral, thinking nothing of cohabitation with a man, bearing many illegitimate children'.[6] These attitudes became pervasive in the manner in which Wales and its people were viewed by the non-Welsh. They comprised a large segment of Gwenllian Morgan's world, and although of a privileged background herself, she believed in bringing about changes to her people of Wales rather than desert to a civilized England as did many others. Yet, in spite of all her achievements, Gwenllian Morgan's personal life remains somewhat of an enigma. Details are unavailable; her letters discuss borough matters rather than express her personality. Reports indicate that her work and service to the community had nothing to do with the Victorian attitude that women of social status must devote some energy to the performance of good works in some form of Christian charity, though it appears she did adhere to a

strong Christian belief. What she did practice was who she was, a woman of privileged birth yes, but a woman of arrogant complacency, no. Her intelligence, benevolence, and firm advocacy against those less fortunate, including women, marked her lifelong efforts.

A member of another Brecon Morgan family stands out alongside Gwenllian Morgan who also asserted her ambitions towards independence and carved for herself a career most unusual for a nineteenth century woman. Frances Morgan Hoggan, nine years Gwenllian's senior, and a woman dedicated to serving those less fortunate determined on a medical career; unsatisfied with nursing or pharmacology she eventually went to Zürich University. In three years rather than the normal six, she completed her medical training and successfully received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. Not surprisingly, Frances Morgan's credentials and the timing of her degree take a back seat to Elizabeth Garrett Anderson who also received her medical degree from Paris in 1870. Most records give Elizabeth Garrett Anderson the credit for being the first woman doctor in Britain, while in actual fact Frances Morgan's degree completion preceded Garrett Anderson's by three months. However, while Gwenllian Morgan remained in Brecon, Frances Morgan Hoggan [married to fellow physician George Hoggan] left Wales. After the early death of her husband, she spent much time in America exerting herself in the struggle not only for the rights of women but for freedom of slaves.

In the same manner of public and historic neglect which Frances Morgan Hoggan received, Gwenllian Morgan merely received honourable mention alongside her contemporary Sarah Lees who became mayor of Oldham, England on the same day and year as Gwenllian Morgan. Sara Lees later achieved a knighthood for her work, while Gwenllian Morgan was given a Medal for the Coronation of Edward VII. Although Gwenllian Morgan's name is well-known in Wales, outside the Welsh borders, she becomes an unknown, yes, recognized by her contemporaries throughout the UK, but for the past 100 years relegated to a back seat on the stage of women's rights advocates.

The culmination of her political activities was made possible by the1907 Act of Parliament, designated as *The Qualification of Women Act.* The *Act* stated in part that any woman serving in a borough council must either be a spinster or a widow. In 1910, Miss Morgan the spinster accepted her election to the mayoralty as the duly elected head of Brecon Borough. Sadly her victory came with a burden. Several of her male Councillors despised the idea their mayor was a woman; however, they had no choice but to accept her as she topped the polls by 110 votes. Her sister Nellie acted as Mayoress during her tenure in office. During her year in office, she overcame the objections of her male colleagues and demonstrated her abilities to administer the Borough capably while at the same time continuing her strong advocacy for women's suffrage.

After leaving the office of mayor, Gwenllian Morgan kept on with all her activities, not abrogating her social or political duties to others. The world would

not stop. Suffragettes became more activist, more vocal, always prepared to bring the needed changes in as status quo. In 1910 the future Lady Rhondda [nee Thomas] bombed a postbox near Newport, for which she was imprisoned. She also attacked the car of Herbert Asquith, the then Prime Minister. In 1912, in Wales, tensions mounted against Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. He appeared at a meeting in Pwylheli where a few militant Suffragettes tried to break up his meeting and were subsequently themselves violently attacked by members of the crowd. These women, members of the WSPU [Women's Social and Political Union] heckled at his meeting because he opposed the extension of the vote to women for national elections. The New York Times reported that one of the women had 'scarcely uttered the cry Votes for Women when the man nearest her struck her in the face with his fist and men and women seized her…in an instant she was stripped to the waist and then pummeled and beaten with fists and sticks. Her hair was torn out, and she was dragged through the crowd and flung, bruised and bleeding over a hedge'.[7] No evidence suggests that Gwenllian Morgan attended this event either as a Suffragette or former mayor even though she expressed very strong feelings against Parliamentary refusal to extend the vote to women.

In 1913 in London, a bomb was thrown at Lloyd George's home, destroying part of its structure; and one woman, Emily Wilding Davison, died after she ran out into the race track at Epsom and was hit by the king's horse. There was much publicity about this event, but strikingly, the concern does not appear to be Miss Davison's unfortunate injuries and subsequent death, but the injury to the horse and jockey and the loss of the race for the king and for a second horse whose jockey swerved to avoid Miss Davison. A world of turmoil, why, because women, who comprised more than one-half the population of Britain, desired the right to determine their own lives, futures, and have a say in the government that determined these things. Gwenllian Morgan's world in Wales, although perhaps a microcosm of this wider struggle, certainly sustained an effect on her actions and determination to see women given their rightful place in the political and social arenas.

Gwenllian [Philip] Morgan embraced her independent lifestyle, imbued with abilities which served to imprint her personality on her community. Throughout her life and public career, intolerance for staid tradition, most particularly regarding women and their place within society often displayed itself. She endeared herself to all women through her examples of service for more than just the rights of women but to any in unfortunate circumstances. The facts of her life are fairly uncomplicated, but the essence of the woman is much more difficult to capture. She evinced a sincere devotion to caring for and helping the underprivileged, yet there is no indication of arrogant superiority in any of her actions. Hers were more than the good works expected of Victorian women.

Facts yes, but who was Gwenllian [Philip] Morgan – a public figure, a mayor, a woman of Brecon, a Welsh patriot, an avid member and supporter of temperance, not afraid of public office, member and chair of numerous committees for

education, Poor Law Governor, women's rights advocate, and activist for changes to the public health system, all the while maintaining her idea of Christian principles, in name and practice. In addition her love of Welsh history is evident by the numerous articles she wrote for *Y Cymmrodor* and *Archaeologia Cambrensis* among others, and her commitment to restore artefacts destroyed or stolen from Brecon, including the St Eluned [Alud] stained glass window in Brecon Cathedral, a woman she honoured by an article dedicated to the saint. Gwenllian Morgan correctly identifies technical difficulties in historical research which she worked diligently to overcome. Her attention to detail and perfection is obvious in the execution of this article, published in 1903 in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. Her other literary efforts include a biography of Theophilus Jones, the eighteenth century historian of Breconshire and her major intellectual pursuit was of the poet and poetry of Henry Vaughan, Silurist. Her desire was to produce the definitive compendium of his works; unfortunately she died before accomplishing this feat. Although the research on Vaughan remained unpublished her intensive study of Vaughan's poetry earned her an honorary MA from the University of Wales in 1925.

Gwenllian Elizabeth Fanny Morgan received many other honours from those she served, one of which came from 1000 women who signed a petition recognizing her efforts to the community as mayor and citizen. These women raised subscriptions from women only, no men allowed, commissioning her portrait which still hangs in the Guild Hall, Brecon. Peeresses of the realm, women from noble families, women from Wales and England, signed the homage to this great woman of Wales. In so doing they acknowledged the diligence, kindness, efforts, and achievements of Miss Morgan to Brecon, Wales, and the United Kingdom, in that order which allows the public a small glimpse into the woman. One of the signatories was her fellow mayor, Sara Lees of Oldham in Lancashire. Mrs Lees and Miss Morgan shared the mayoral honour, both elected as mayors by their respective towns on 8 November 1910. It is fitting to have Miss Morgan's own words elicit some of her personality. In her final letter as Mayor of Brecon, Miss Gwenllian Philip Morgan wrote to Sara Lees:

> I want my last letter written as Mayor of Brecon to go <u>to you</u>, congratulating you on the successful year of office which ends tomorrow. It has all been so satisfactory and so triumphant, and the fact that you have received the writ for <u>two</u> Parliamentary Elections in such a constituency is most remarkable. I also want to tell you how stunned (and angry) I feel by the morning's news, that it is Mr Asquith's intention to introduce an adult Suffrage Bill for men to the exclusion of women! It is the worst thing he has done for us, and men will never allow women to be included in it, as they so much outnumber the male voters.

Signed with love and best wishes, Gwenllian Morgan retired to private life, but did not end her public activities. She deserves remembrance for her passions and efforts on the centenary of her Mayoralty of Brecon.

- Poor Law Guardian – 1894
- Governor of Brecon County Schools – 1895
- Justice of the Peace for the County and Borough of Brecon, the first woman appointed on each Bench
- Appointed by the Lord Chancellor to the Advisory Committee for appointing Magistrates – Brecon
- Member of the Brecon Corporation – sixteen years
- Governor of the National Library of Wales from 1923
- University of Wales honorary MA – 1925
- Correspondent for Brecon of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments
- Co-founder and contributor to the Brecknock Society and its Museum Restorer of many objects of antiquity to churches or places of origin
- Town Councillor – 1907–1910
- Mayor of Brecon – 1910–1911
- Coronation Medal – 1911
- National Health Insurance Advisory Committee
- Welsh Advisory Committee
- President and Chair of Breconshire Association of Friendly Societies
- Chair Welsh Temperance Society

Women and men today should remember the tremendous sacrifices of time and energy that women of the early twentieth century gave for posterity. Their efforts began a societal balancing act, putting women on an equal plane, giving them their rightful place in a world in which they are more than one-half the population. But it is not just women who chose a militant stand who deserve a place in our memory, but a woman such as Gwenllian Morgan who trod the road to equality every day of her life, seeing wrongs corrected, becoming angry when men in power, like Mr Asquith, decided to ignore the rights of women in the public sphere. Even after her official year as mayor of Brecon came to a close, she continued on with her quiet campaign, as the list above demonstrates. Gwenllian Morgan is a woman to whom all women and men should look with appreciation in her accomplishments, her life, her dedication to creating an environment of equality, and not least to her pride of country as a Welshwoman who loved her home in Brecon and her country – Wales.

I would like to extend thanks and appreciation to Frances Jones-Davies for her friendship and untiring production of *Cambria Magazine,* and for her generosity in allowing excerpts of my *Cambria* article to be extended to *Brycheiniog* for publication. I also want to thank the Oldham Records Archivist, the Town Clerk of Brecon and the staff of the Brecon Museum for all their assistance while researching the remarkable achievements of Gwenllian Elizabeth Fanny Morgan, 1852–1939.

GWENLLIAN MEREDITH

Notes

[1] Jane Pilcher & Imelda Whelehan, *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies* (Sage Press, Los Angeles, London, 2008), 65.

[2] Helena Wojtczak, *Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon: The Hastings Connection*, (www.hastingspress.co.uk/history, 2010), 5.

[3] *Gwenllian Morgan* in Welsh Biography Online, The National Library of Wales, (yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-MORG-FAN-1852.html).

[4] *Blue Books Introduction*, National Library of Wales Digital Collection, (Brecknock, Cardigan, Radnor and Monmouth, Part 2), 1.

[5] *Blue Books*, Part 2, sections 8–9.

[6] *Blue Books*, Parts 1–3, various.

[7] *The New York Times*, September 23, 1912.

DRYGARN FAWR

The following extract from a longer poem by John Lloyd, published in 1849, is included, as it expresses well the feeling of the emptiness of the landscape of north Brecknockshire, so well portrayed in *Elenydd*, the volume of photographs and text reviewed in this edition of Brycheiniog. Drygarn Fawr, at 641 metres, is the highest point in the north of the county (cf Pen-y-Fan in the south at 886m.)

Drugarn

'Tis noon, the moorlands to the crest
Of Drugarn we have tried,
My wearied dogs around me rest
High on its western side.

The clear blue sky is overhead,
And on the heath reclined
A long, long look I've riveted
Its hidden things to find:

Yet still that cloudless, waveless pall
Unalter'd meets the view,
Its blue depths if they change at all
Changed to a deeper blue!

Mountains on mountains piled, around
One boundless waste is seen,
Here miles of black and broken ground
There of unvarying green;

Of green, yet o'er that level plain
So creeps the whispering air
Of solitude almost to pain
The stronger sense is there!

No living object meets the eye
In all th' horizon bound,
The lone air of the hills comes by,
It comes and brings no sound:

No sound, save of the bird that throned
A speck amid the sky,
As though its loneliness it moan'd
Sends forth a wailing cry.

How wide the prospect! Northward lo!
Plinlimmon's massive mound,
Half lost 'mid meaner hills that throw
Their giant arms around;

While far beyond that mountain chain,
Unrivall'd and alone,
An isle amid its sea-like plain
Is Cader Idris shown!

Southward if thence I turn my gaze,
Famed Arthur's beacon chair!*
His seat in those same wondrous days
That placed an Idris there.

* The reference is to an older name for the central group of the Brecon Beacons: Cadair Arthur *Arthur's Seat*.

BRECKNOCK OVERSEAS

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

BRECKNOCK PENINSULA AND BRECKNOCK SOUND

Robert Fitzroy.

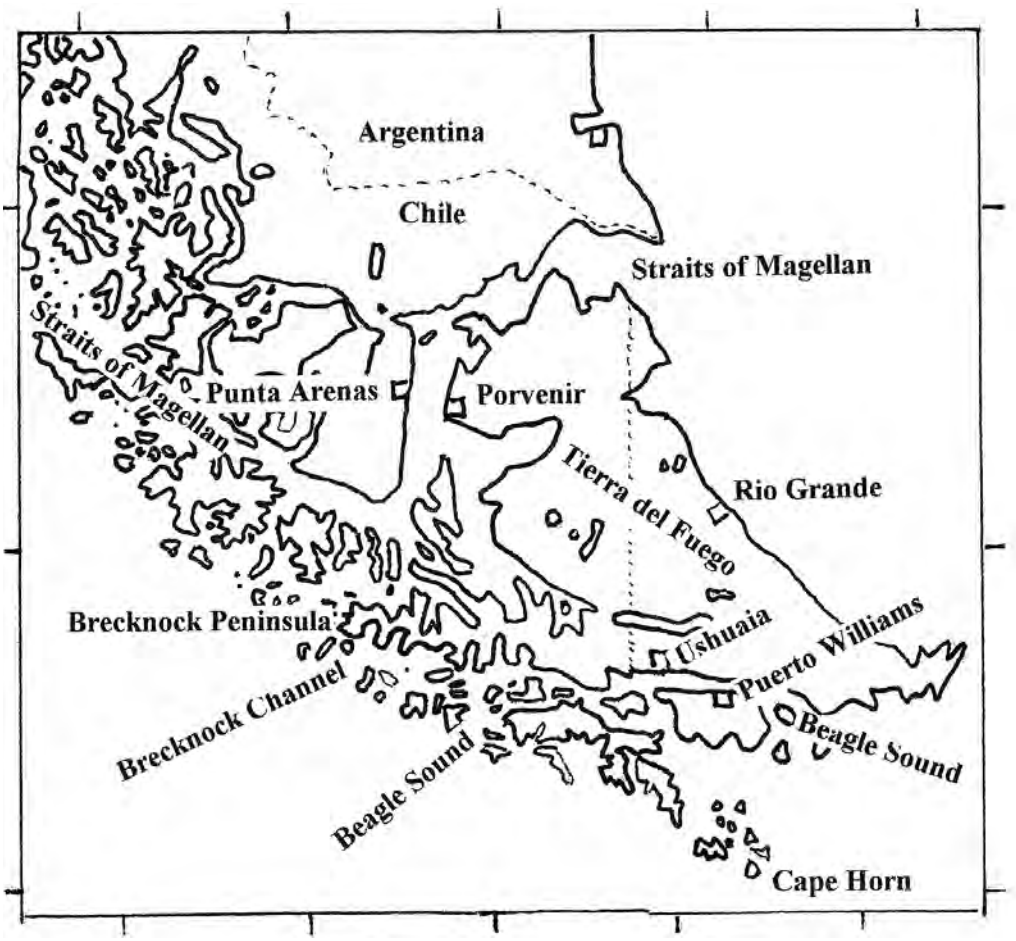
At one of the furthermost points on the globe from Brecknockshire, in the far, far south of South America, lie two places which, seemingly incongruously, bear the name Brecknock – the Brecknock Peninsula and Brecknock Sound.

The Brecknock Peninsula is the westernmost projection of the island of Tierra del Fuego, situated at Latitude 54° 34′ 60 South and Longitude 71° 49′ 60 West, in the Chilean Province of Magallanes, approximately 80 miles south south east of Punta Arenas, the southernmost, and reputedly most windswept, city in the world.

It forms part of the Alberto M. de Agostini National Park, named after the Italian missionary and explorer Father Alberto Maria De Agostini, (2 November 1893–25 December 1960) who was active in this area of South America, and who pioneered many expeditions into this remote and roadless wilderness of rock, ice and sea, much of which remained uncharted until late into the twentieth century.

Brecknock Sound is the northwesterly prolongation of the Beagle Channel, itself named after the *Beagle* on its first, pre-Darwin, expedition to the area, which established a safe passage from Atlantic to Pacific, south of the Magellan Straits, and north of the dangerous storm-swept Cape Horn.

Much attention has focussed in the past two years on Charles Darwin on the occasion of the bicentenary of his birth in 1809, and it is indeed interesting to note that the Brecknock names were probably given to these features of this remote region by Captain Philip Parker King, who commanded the *Beagle* on part of its first voyage to the far south of South America. He committed suicide on the voyage, and was replaced as temporary captain in November 1828 by Robert Fitzroy, who became Captain of the ship for its second, historic Darwin-voyage in 1831.



Sketch map of Tierra del Fuego showing Brecknock Peninsula.

HMS Beagle in Brecknock Channel.

The name Fitzroy – Son of the King – refers to his descent from Augustus Henry Fitzroy, 3rd Duke of Grafton, illegitimate son of King Charles II. The sea area formerly known as Finisterre was renamed Fitzroy after him in February 2002, in recognition of his pioneering work in meteorology, which really began with his introduction of weather forecasting for seamen, it having proved necessary to avoid confusion with a Spanish sea area, greater in extent than Fitzroy, and the Breton Département of Finisterre/Pen-ar-Bed.

FitzRoy was appointed temporary captain of the *Beagle*, after the suicide of its previous commander, and returned to Britain with 4 native Fuegians he had kidnapped. Three of these were later returned to Tierra del Fuego as missionaries at the time of the second voyage of the Beagle in December 1831, carrying the young Charles Darwin as naturalist – the fourth had died of smallpox contracted from an attempted inoculation. The mission was a failure, the last surviving Fuegian returning to his native tribal ways.

The Brecknock Peninsula and the Brecknock Channel were named after one of the Lords of the Admiralty at the time of Fitzroy's three visits to Patagonia. They received their Brecknock designation after one George Charles Pratt, 2nd Marquess Camden (2 May 1799–6 August 1866). When Pratt's father inherited the earldom of Camden in 1794, his son became known as Viscount Bayham until his father's elevation to Marquess in 1812, when he took the title Earl of Brecknock, because

of the family estate's associations with Brecknockshire. He was a Lord of the Admiralty 1828–29.

Both Brecknock and Fitzroy stood for Parliament as Tory candidates in 1831, but Fitzroy was defeated. His friend Francis Beaufort (of the Beaufort Scale of wind strength fame), hydrographer to the British Admiralty, and his uncle the Duke of Grafton, interceded at the Admiralty for him, and he became commander of the *Beagle* which shortly set sail for South America on what was to be a round-the-world voyage of exploration, study and discovery. This historic second voyage of the *Beagle* to Tierra del Fuego is remembered chiefly for Charles Darwin's presence on the ship, and it was his observations on this journey – including the finches and giant tortoises of the Galapagos Islands – which, together with information and observations supplied to Darwin by the Usk-born Welshman Alfred Russel Wallace, provided the basis of his theory of Evolution. Topically, Darwin also recorded a very serious earthquake in southern Chile in the course of the voyage.

Sir George Cockburn was also a naval lord at the time, and there is a Cockburn Channel in the same area, first mentioned in the 1829 report of Parker King's first voyage, which is probably when the name Brecknock was bestowed: the names are not recorded in the text, but do appear on the chart of the Magellan Straits included with it. Many features of this coastline were given English names honouring members of the Admiralty, the Chileans only moving into the area when the interest shown by British and French marine expeditions seemed the indicate a possible annexation by those countries.

FitzRoy began a brief parliamentary career in 1841, as the Tory member for Durham. On 7 April 1843 he was appointed governor of New Zealand but was dismissed in 1846 largely because he contended that Maori land claims were just as valid as those of the white settlers. During a bout of severe mental depression, Fitzroy emulated his former captain, and took his own life on 30 April 1865 at Lyndhurst House, Upper Norwood, Surrey, leaving as part of his legacy his own name as that of the sea-area, and the two Brecknock names in the chilly wind-battered fastnesses of Tierra del Fuego.

This article is compiled by the editor from notes supplied by Dr Carlos Rios, Lecturer at the University of Magallanes, Punta Arenas, Chile and Charlie Falzon, International Consultant on National Parks, Aberystwyth.

EARLY WELSH LITERATURE – A WINDOW ON THE DARK AGES?

In 1964, Kenneth Jackson[1] argued that early Irish sagas composed between the 7th and the 9th centuries AD reflected the social and material realities of the 4th century AD and could therefore shed light on earlier Celtic society – 'a window on the Iron Age'.[2] This led to an indiscriminate use of Irish literature as a key to understanding Iron Age societies. Such an approach was soon questioned and, in the way of much archaeological discourse, opinion and practise duly swung to the opposite extreme. The unfortunate archaeological baby found itself thrown out with the academic bathwater! However, more recent studies of the material culture represented in the early Irish literature have demonstrated that these sources do reflect the realities of the society that produced them – the Ireland of the 7th to 9th centuries AD. They are, in effect, a 'window on the Dark Ages'.[3]

This paper seeks to examine whether early Welsh literature can shed light on the society that produced and appreciated it. To do so, it will examine a specific site 'the Llangors Crannog' in relation to a specific early literary source – *Canu Llywarch Hen* (The Poems of Llywarch the Old).

Llangors Crannog

Llangors Lake (W. *Llyn Syfaddan*) is the largest natural body of water in south Wales. The Llangors crannog – the correct name of which is Ynys Bwlc – stands some 40m from the northern shore of the lake and today measures approximately 40m across. The remains of the crannog were first recorded in the 1860s by two local antiquarians, Edgar and Henry Dumbleton. They noted a substantial mound of boulders lying on top of brushwood, reeds and lenses of sand. They also recorded that the south and west sides of the mound were edged with one or two oak palisades.[4]

The date of the crannog remained a mystery until excavations carried out by Cardiff University in 1987 established that ancient timber had survived on the south and east sites of the island. Dendrochronology dated these timbers to AD 747–859, indicating construction of the crannog in the late 9th or early 10th centuries AD – certainly after AD 860 and probably before AD 906. Further programmes of survey and excavation established that the island had been extended at various times and that crescent-shaped extensions of vertical oak planks were accompanied by settings of vertical piles with post and wattle revetments on the inside.[5] The excavations also produced evidence that the site, or part of it, had been destroyed by fire.[6]

Although the incorporation of re-used timbers from earlier structures has provided valuable evidence for Dark Age woodworking and building methods, no occupational horizons or house plans were recovered within the palisade. It is likely that the crannog was originally connected to the shore by causeway some 100m in length.[7]

So, who built it? Documentary evidence indicates a royal site (*llys*) of the kings of Brycheiniog near Llangors. An ostensibly 8th century charter in the Book of Llandaff records the gift of *Llan Cors* and its *territorium* by Awst, king of Brycheiniog, to Bishop Euddogwy.[8] The boundary clause, written in Old Welsh, probably dates to c. 1010 to c.1030[9] and indicates a royal estate of over a thousand hectares. The bounds correspond roughly to the present parish of Llangors with part of the adjacent parish of Llanfihangel Tal y Llyn.[10] The charter also records Awst's wish that he and his sons be buried in the church at Llangors – implying that the church served as a royal burial site. In AD 925, Llangors was the location for the settlement of a dispute between king Tewdwr and bishop Libiau – a fact that further strengthens the case for a royal *llys* here.[11]

The excavations of 1989 and 1990 produced evidence for a mixed local economy. Small fragments of fired clay from furnace linings or hearths and pieces of slag indicate metalworking. Other finds included a single-sided, composite bone comb typical of the period. The most spectacular discovery, however, was fragments of textile found in silts outside the plank palisade on the north side of the crannog. This represented the remains of a costly garment, possibly a shirt or tunic, decorated with soumak brocading or embroidery imitating it. Other finds included a terminal from a pseudo-penannular brooch of Irish type (dated to the 8th or 9th century) and a strap hinge from a small, portable reliquary shrine with distinctively Irish decoration and again dating to the 8th century.[12] This is clear evidence of the high social status of those occupying the site.[13]

The possibility that the royal *llys* actually occupied the crannog is strengthened by the record in manuscript B of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that tells that shortly before midsummer in AD 916 Aethelflaed, 'Lady of the Mercians', sent an army into Wales, destroyed *Brecenanmere* and captured the king's wife and thirty-three other persons. *Brecenanmere* ('Brecknockmere') is the old English name for the lake and the Chronicle mentions an attack on the Mere itself. This is almost certainly a reference to the crannog itself and so it is here that the wife of Tewdwr ap Elisedd was captured by the Mercians. In the 9th and 10th centuries, therefore, the crannog was home to the ruling house of Brycheiniog – a dynasty that could afford fine, high quality textiles and could expend effort on the construction of a crannog that required specialised knowledge and a high level of resources.[14]

The political context of the English attack on Llangors is also interesting. In the AD 880s, Elisedd, the father of king Tewdwr, had sought the lordship and protection of Alfred the Great against the attacks of Gwynedd.[15] The attack on *Brecenanmere* suggests that Tewdwr had broken his father's submission to the English kings. In AD 914, a Viking army had raided south Wales and the English border and it may be that Tewdwr had allied himself with them and thus incurred Aethelflaed's wrath in AD 916.[16] In AD 934, Tewdwr attended the court of Athlestan at Winchester and witnessed a charter as *subregulus* – this is the last reference to the kings of Brycheiniog.[17]

Canu Llywarch Hen

The cycle of poems known as *Canu Llywarch Hen* ('The Poems of Llywarch the Old') was composed sometime between the 8th and mid-10th century AD and centres on the destruction of a Welsh kingdom by the English and the fate of its king, Llywarch, and his sons. Originally, the poems were used to mark the dramatic highlights of an orally transmitted prose saga, though the narrative story itself has not survived. The main character, Llywarch Hen was probably an historic 6th century prince who later became the centre of a growing body of lore and legend.

In the past, the poems were seen as having been orally composed by a court bard or *cyfarwydd* (professional story teller), transmitted orally by pupils and then written down and recopied 'by bards or monks, in royal palaces, or monasteries great and small'.[18] Recent Welsh scholars see the genesis of the saga poems as high status in origin (whether courtly or clerical) within a learned, literate context from the start. Such poetry was appreciated at the highest ecclesiastical level as well as in secular society.[19] In early Wales, court and church (*llys* and *llan*) were often paired and staffed by the same aristocratic dynasties. A *llys-llan* complex of the sort would have been the ideal location for the composition and preservation of the Llywarch Hen poems.

The internal topography of the poems is centred on Brycheiniog. The poems to Mechydd son of Llywarch preserved in the mid-13th century Black Book of Carmarthen[20] tell us that Mechydd was killed by the followers of Mwng Mawr Drefi ('Mwng of great settlements'). The name Mwng is derived from Caer Fong or 'Caer Vwng' the old name of Brecon Gaer, the Roman fort at Aberysgir, west of Brecon [SO002297].[21]

The poems to Llywarch's son, Gwên (see below), portray him fighting against the English defending his father's kingdom and finally being slain. He makes his last stand at a ford called Rhyd Orlas ('the green ford') beside a dyke called Clawdd Gorlas on a stream called the *Llawen*. The name survives in modern Welsh as *Llawennant* – a tributary of the river Tarell, [SO 001255 – 015269] south-west of Brecon and not far from Caer Fong.[22] A story concerning Maen and a witch (see below) is set at *Mewyrnyawn*, namely *Mafurn* – the old Welsh name for Abbey Dore in Ergyng, now part of Herefordshire.[23]

The argument for a Brycheiniog origin for the Llywarch cycle is further strengthened by an early reference to *claud lyuarch hen* ('the dyke of Llywarch Hen'). This occurs in the Llangors charter of king Awst discussed above.[24] Whilst the charter claims to be 8th century in date, the Old Welsh boundary clause dates to period between 1010 and 1030.[25] Even so, *claud lyuarch hen* is still the earliest topographical reference to Llywarch outside the poems themselves.[26] It is also significant that the charter associates Llywarch with a ditch or dyke – implying local knowledge of the stories of Llywarch and his sons defending dykes and borders against the English. The dyke itself still survives as a 1km stretch of bivallate rampart at the pass at the head of Cwm Sorgwm (NGR SO 1611 2831) and still

forms part of the eastern boundary of the parish of Llangors – the side from which an English attack would come and probably *did* come in AD 916! What is clear is that certainly as early as the 12th century (the date of the compilation of the Book of Llandaff) and possibly as early as the period between 1010 and 1030, stories about Llywarch and a defensive dyke were current at Llangors.[27]

The royal centre at Llangors is, therefore, the likeliest place to have produced the Llywarch Hen poems – 'Llywarch Hen's Dyke' marked its eastern bounds and, as we have seen above, it enjoyed strong royal connections and patronage.[28] Caught between the equally aggressive neighbours of Gwynedd to the north and Mercia to the east, people at Llangors would have been appreciated the poetry's descriptions of brave last stands against the English. Although once thought to date to the period c. AD 850,[29] the likeliest date for the composition of the poems themselves is between the 8th and mid-10th century – the heyday of both Llangors itself and the Brycheiniog dynasty.[30]

A Window on the Dark Ages?

What do the poems tell us of the society for which and in which they were composed?

They are much concerned with traditional martial values – courage, steadfastness and loyalty. Llywarch uses his own past prowess as a warrior to reproach his sons for what he sees as their shortcomings. As a result, they go one by one to war against the English and are all killed in battle. Llywarch's dialogue with Gwên, the last of his sons, illustrates the sort of heroic ideals valued at the royal *llys* of Brycheiniog:

Llywarch	
Medal migned; kalet riw.	Soft the quagmire, hard the slope.
Rac carn cann tal glann a vriw.	By the horse's hoof the stream bank's broken.
Edewit ni wnelher ny diw.	A promise not compassed is less than nought.
Gwên	
Gwasgarawt neint am glawdcaer.	Streams divert around the fortress dyke;
A minneu armaaf	And it is I that purpose
Ysgwyt brwyt briw kynn techaf.	Before I flee, my shield stained and broken.
Llywarch	
Y corn a'th rodes di Vryen,	The horn that Urien gave you
A'e arwest eur am y en,	With a gold baldric round its neck
Chwyth yndaw, o'th daw aghen.	Sound that, if you're sorely pressed.
Gwên	
Yr ergryt aghen rac aghwyr Lloegyr	Though terror press around me, and the fierce thieves of England,

Ny lygraf vym mawred	I'll not shame my pride.
Ni duhunaf rianedd.	I shall not wake your maidens.

[Williams 1978, 2; Conran 1992, 122]

Gwên stands his ground, defends the dyke and ford against the invaders and is killed. Llywarch mourns the last of his sons and repents his own arrogance and pride:

Gwen wrth Lawen yd welas neithwyr,	Gwên by Llawen stood watch last night,
Cat gathuc ny thechas,	He did not flee in the murk of war –
Oer adrawd, ar glawd gorlas.	Dire the tale on the green dyke!
Gwen wrth Lawen yd wyliis neithwyr	Gwên by Llawen kept guard last night,
A'r ysgwyt ar y gnis.	His shield to his cheek.
Kan bu mab ymi nyt egis.	Since he was my son, he did not escape.

[Williams 1978, 3; Conran 1992, 123; Sims-Williams 1993, 44]

Destroyed by the English, Llywarch's kingdom is now in ruins and he wanders alone. Decrepit and bent-backed, he has outlived his own kingdom, his friends and his own children. He muses upon old age and adversity:

Kynn bum kein uaglawc, bum hy,	Ere my back was bent I was bold,
Am kynnwyssit yg kyuyrdy	Was welcomed in the beer-hall
Powys, paradwys gymry.	Of Powys, paradise of Welshmen.
Kynn bum kein vaglawc, bum eiryan;	Ere my back was bent, I was brilliant.
Oed kynwaew vym par, oed kynwan,	My spear was the first to strike.
Wyf keuyngrwm, wyf trwm, wyf truan.	A hunchback now, heavy and wretched.

[Williams 1978, 9; Conran 1992, 124]

In time past, he says, he has enjoyed the company of brave warriors and good friends. Now, his only companion is the wooden crutch he uses to support himself and he compares his own fate to that of a leaf blown on the wind:

Baglan brenn, neut kynteuin.	Wooden crook, it is maytime.
Neut rud rych; neut crych egin.	Red the furrow, shoots are curled.
Etlit ym edrych y'th yluin.	For me to gaze at your beak is woe!
Y deilen hon, neus kenniret gwynt.	This leaf, chased here and there by the wind,
Gwae hi o'e thynget	Its destiny's drear.
Hi hen; eleni y ganet	It is old; it was born this year.

[Williams 1978, 9–10; Conran 1992, 125–6]

Fragments of other, more enigmatic tales are also preserved in the poems. One concerns another of Llywarch's sons – Maen:

Anrec ry'm gallat o dyfryn Mewyrnyawn	I have been robbed of a gift from the valley of Mewyrnyawn,
Yg kud yg kelwrn.	Hidden in a cauldron;
A haearn llym llas o dwrn.	With sharp iron in the fist he was killed.
Boet bendigeit yr anghysbell wrach,	Blessed be the strange witch
A dywawt o drws y chell,	Who said from the entrance of her cell,
"Maen Wynn, nac adaw dy gyllell!"	"Fair Maen, do not leave your knife behind!"

[Williams 1978, 21; Sims-Williams 1993, 49]

As well as these heroic tales, the Llywarch poet also evokes nature and the seasons with a spareness of expression that compares with the best of *haiku* poetry. Using the fate of Llywarch's son, Cynddilig, as background, he captures perfectly the bleakness of the lakeside winter:

Llym awel llum brin.	Wind sharp, hillside bleak,
anhaut caffael clid.	hard to win shelter;
llicrid rid reuhid llin.	Ford is impassable, lake is frozen;
Ryseiw gur ar vn conin.	A man may stand on one stalk of grass.
Oer lle. lluch rac brythuch gaeaw.	Lake-haunts cold, with the storm winds of winter;
crin caun calaw truch.	Withered the reeds, stalks all broken;
kedic awel. coed in i bluch.	Wind-gusts angry, stripping of woods.
Ottid eiry guin y cnes.	Snow falls, covers with white;
nid a kedwir oe neges.	Warriors go not forth on foray;
oer llinnev eu llyu heb tes	Lakes cold, their tint without sunlight.
Ottid eiry; tohid istrad.	Snow falls, covers the vale;
diuryssint vy kedwir y cad.	Warriors hurry to battle;
mi nid aw. anaw nim gad	I'll not go, wound does not let me.

[Jarman 1982, 62; Conran 1992, 134]

Perhaps the most poignant of the whole cycle is a group of poems known as *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged* ('The Ruined Hearth of Rheged'), describing the destruction of the court of Rheged – one of the old Welsh kingdoms of the north of England:

Llawer ki geilic, a hebawc gwyrennic,	Many a fine hound and powerful hawk
A lithiwyt ar y llawr,	Was fed on its floor
Kyn bu erlleon llawedrawr.	Before this place became a ruin.

Yr aelwyt honn, neus clad hwch.	This hearth, a pig roots it,
Mwy gordyfnassei elwch	it had been more accustomed to the joyful shout
Gwyr, ac am gyrn kyuedwch.	Of men, and drinking around the mead-horns.
Yr ystwffwl hwnn, a'r hwnn draw.	This pillar, and the one yonder,
Mwy gordyfnassei amdanwa	It had been more accustomed around it
Elwch llu a llwybyr arnaw.	To a host's cry and the distribution of gifts.

[Williams 1978, 19; Jarman 1976, 84]

In such a powerful evocation of the atmosphere of a royal *llys*, both at the height of its power and in its destruction, the poet could almost be describing the fate of Ynys Bwlc itself.

It is obvious that the royal court of Brycheiniog could command the services of court poets of rare ability and great skill. It is also clear that the court was a place where fine poetry was appreciated and given patronage. Courage, loyalty and steadfastness – the martial values of a warrior elite – were valued and the poems also evoke the sights and sounds of the court itself – the pillared mead-hall with its noise and merriment, its hounds and hawks. Drinking, feasting, hunting, story-telling and gift-giving were all central to the life of the *llys*.

As well as these more public aspects of life in a royal court, the poems also offer something that archaeology never can – a direct insight into the hearts and minds, thoughts and emotions of the people of Dark Age Wales. With a masterly use of imagery, the poems consider the fragility of human life and happiness, the transitory nature of power and wealth and the trials of old age. Their atmospheric evocation of nature and the cycle of the seasons tell us of the ability of Dark Age people to appreciate and meditate on the beauties of the world around them with remarkable insight and sensitivity. In a very direct and human way, the poems of Llywarch Hen do indeed offer us the privilege of 'a window on the Dark Ages'.

FRANK OLDING

Notes

[1] Jackson, K. H. 1964, *The Oldest Irish Tradition: A Window on the Iron Age* (Cambridge: CUP).

[2] Cunliffe, B. 1999, *The Ancient Celts* (London: Penguin) p. 26 .

[3] Redknap, M. 1991, *The Christian Celts: Treasures of Late Celtic Wales* (Cardiff: NMW) p.16.

[4] ibid., p. 17.

[5] Campbell, E. and Lane, A., 1989, 'Llangorse: a 10th century royal crannog in Wales', *Antiquity* 63, 675–81.

[6] Redknap, ibid., 1991a, p. 25.

[7] Davies, Wendy, The Llandaff Charters (Aberystwyth 1979), 98; no. 146.

[8] Coe, B., 2004, 'Dating the boundary clauses in the Book of Llandaf', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 48, p. 38.

[9] Campbell, E. and Lane, A., 1989, 'Llangorse: a 10th century royal crannog in Wales', *Antiquity* 63, p. 679.

[10] Redknap, M. op. cit., p. 24.

[11] Redknap 1991b, 'Llangorse Crannog', *Archaeology in Wales* 31, 38.

[12] Wait, G., Benfield, S. and McKewan, C., 2005, 'Rescuing Llangors crannog', *British Archaeology* 84, 36–9.

[13] Redknap 1991a, *The Christian Celts: Treasures of Late Celtic Wales* (Cardiff: NMW) 24.

[14] Sims-Williams P., 1993. 'The provenance of the Llywarch Hen poems: a case for Llan-gors, Brycheiniog', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 26, 1993.

[15] Campbell, E. and Lane, A., op. cit., 1989, 679.

[16] Sims-Williams, op. cit., 1993, 60.

[17] Williams, I., 'The Poems of Llywarch Hen' in Bromwich, R. (ed. and trans.) *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: UWP, 2nd ed.), 122–54, 1980.

[18] Sims-Williams, op. cit., 28.

[19] Jarman, A.O.H., 1982, *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press) xxiv; 65.

[20] Sims-Williams, 1993, op. cit., 36.

[21] Sims-Williams, 1993, ibid., 42.

[22] Sims-Williams, 1993, ibid., 50.

[23] Davies Wendy op. cit., no. 146.

[24] Coe, B., 'Dating the boundary clauses in the Book of Llandaf', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 2004, 48, p. 38.

[25] Sims-Williams, 1993, op. cit., 53.

[26] Sims-Williams, 1993, ibid., 54.

[27] Sims-Williams, 1993, op. cit., 58.

[28] Williams, I., *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Cardiff: UWP), 1978, lxxiv.

[29] Sims-Williams, 1993, op. cit., 63.

ILLTUD, ONE OF OUR EARLIEST BRECKNOCKSHIRE SAINTS

Any study or treatment of the earliest Welsh saints at a distance of 1500 years is bound to be fraught with immense difficulties, dependent as we are on legend, myth, early hagiographies and little, if any, concrete evidence. Even those scant sources we do have are often contradictory, sometimes through mistaken interpretations in the past, and sometimes for reasons of ecclesiastic politics.

All of this is true of Illtud. The one eponymous hagiography which we do possess – Vita Ilctuti[1] – has been dated after the Norman conquest, at around 1140, contemporaneous with Llyvr Llandav, and probably originally composed there or at Illtud's great teaching monastery at Llanilltud Fawr/*Llantwit Major*. Even though it contains a wide range of interesting stories and traditions regarding the life of the saint, and is therefore a valuable source for the character of Illtud, it is seriously flawed by tendentiousness and by a complete misunderstanding of the location of the early part of his life.

It is seemingly intent on bolstering Llandaf's claim to Illtud and thus the parishes and areas associated with him. The Normans sought to reorganise the church in Wales in accordance with the metropolitan French system of territorial dioceses, thus replacing the historic Celtic custom of allegiance of daughter churches to their *clas* or mother church, which had produced a network of related churches rather than a territorial block. Ironically, the best illustration of the old Celtic system was the ancient diocese of Dol, in Brittany, founded by Illtud's pupil Samson. The contiguous territory of Dol was the smallest of all the Breton dioceses,[2] but, up until the French Revolution, it held more than fifty individual parishes scattered as enclaves over seven bishoprics right across Brittany, from Locquelene near Montroulez/Morlaix on the borders of Leon in the west, and east as far as Pentale at the mouth of the Seine in Normandy, greater in area to more than the 'mother' diocese itself.

The Anglo-Norman church was also intent on blackening the reputation of the earlier Celtic monastic tradition with its married clergy and mixed monasteries, using the pronouncements of an angelic visitor to Illtud at the time of his conversion, or reversion, to a religious way of life, to fiercely advocate celibacy, and to denigrate the position of Trynihid, Illtud's wife.

This post-Conquest Life, almost as distant in time from Illtud's age as it is from ours, claims that Illtud was of Breton origin, migrating from Brittany to Wales after having received education at the feet of the illustrious Germanus of Auxerre, to visit his cousin, Arthur, and taking up a military career under Pawl of Penychen, the illustrious son of Glywys, in Glamorgan. It states that Illtud was the son of Bicanus, a prince of Letavia, and Rhieinwylydd, daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, a King of 'Britannia'. The confusion hinges on the mistaken interpretation of Letavia as Llydaw, which is indeed the Welsh name for Brittany, although the name Llydaw[3] was also used in the Mabinogi, in the tale of Culhwch ac Olwen,[4] the great

mythological boarhunt across Ireland, Wales and Cornwall, to refer to the Ystrad Yw area of Breconshire:[5] Ystrad Yw – the small side valley between Bwlch and Tretower – is where the Men of Llydaw assemble to fight the boar, and where Arthur himself comes to seek Ained and Aethlem, the hunting dogs of Glythmyr Ledewig (*the Letavian*), instrumental in the success of the hunt.

We are fortunate that clear and unequivocal reference is made to Illtud in the Life of Saint Samson.[6] This is the earliest of all Celtic hagiographies, and probably the most authentic, since the author of the document claims it was written down in the eightieth year of a nephew of Deacon Henog or Enoch, a cousin of Samson, who obtained the information from Samson's own mother. Samson was Welsh born, and attended the school of Eltut, namely Llanilltud Fawr, *Llantwit Major*, where he was ordained by no less a personage than Dyfrig, our earliest saint of all, who is strongly associated with Brycheiniog's neighbour, the old kingdom of Ergyng, now that part of Herefordshire south of the Wye.

This Life was probably written at Samson's great foundation at Dol in Brittany sometime around 610 to 620. After studying under Illtud, Samson became the second abbot of Caldey, and engaged in missionary work in the Dublin area of Ireland, later crossing the sea from Cornwall to Armorica (Brittany) where he founded the great monastery of Dol, which became the prime bishopric of Brittany until 1189, when it was superseded by Tours.

This Life of Samson states quite unequivocally that Illtud was not Breton, but Welsh, and that he was buried in his native region, which we equate with Brecknock.

Two nineteenth century Breton devotional books, both entitled Buhez ar Zent – *the Lives of the Saints*[7] – also confirm Illtud's origin as being on this side of the channel: one tells us he was born in Breiz Veur – Great Brittany, or Great Britain, the other says in Bro Saos, England, an example of the all too common confusion of England and Britain.

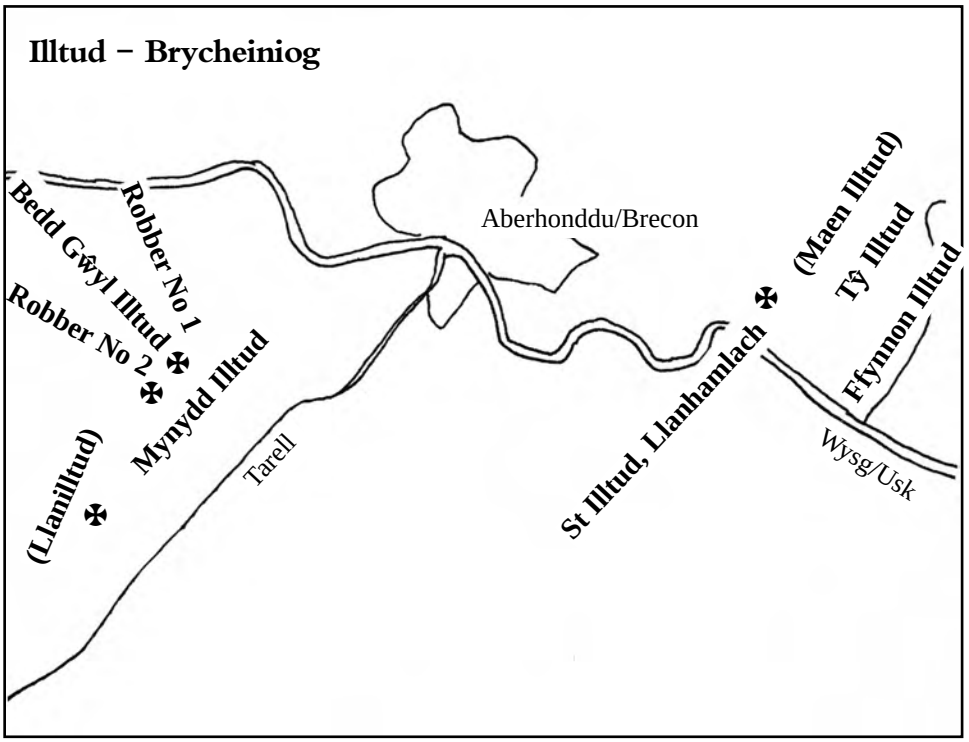
Illtud obviously has an intense association with Brecknock: the common land to the north of the central Beacons is called Mynydd Illtud, after the saint, and it was claimed traditionally that the now demolished ancient church of Llanilltud[8] was the site of his burial. Nearby we find an ancient gravesite, Bedd Gŵyl Illtud – *the Grave of the Vigil of Illtud*, where a watch was kept on November 5th, the eve of his feast day. Note that this was never claimed as his grave, but as the Grave of his Vigil, associated with the memory of Illtud, as is the ancient cromlech called Tŷ Illtud,[9] *Illtud's House*, near Llanhamlach. Two standing stones[10] near the Mynydd Illtud tomb are said to be the petrified remains of two robbers, turned to stone when they attempted to steal Illtud's pigs, a common theme in Welsh hagiography, although this story is also connected with Llanharan* in Glamorgan, where the robbers are identified as 'from Brycheiniog'. The church at Llanhamlach,[11] a mile south of Tŷ Illtud, is dedicated to Illtud, although the village name probably refers to Anlach, the father of Brychan Brycheiniog. Tŷ Illtud above the village, and Bedd Gŵyl Illtud are the only examples in Wales of prehistoric tombs named for a saint, but

we shall see an exact parallel in Brittany to this association of the saint with much earlier graves. The inner surface of the stones at Tŷ Illtud bear a large number of incised crosses and other graffiti, believed to have been made by pilgrims to a site associated with Illtud, possibly as a hermitage or retreat.

Also near Llanhamlach stood Maen Illtud – *Illtud's stone*, a standing stone, or, as described by Theophilus Jones,[12] a stone circle, which was removed in the late C17. The nearby stream separating the parishes of Llanhamlach and Llansantffraed is called Ffynnon Illtud, *Illtud's Well*.

This association of the cult of Illtud with two stone-age graves in Brecknock, and a similar link in Brittany, is resonant of the brief mention in Chapter 14 of St Mark's Gospel,[13] where, at the time of Christ's arrest in the garden of Gethsemane, a young man flees the burial ground, naked, leaving behind the linen cloth he had been wearing, which event has been interpreted as a Rebirth Initiation, perhaps a re-enactment of the Lazarus story. Whether the three ancient graves, two in Wales, one in Brittany, played a similar rôle in the Illtud story must remain the subject of speculation and conjecture.

The name of the saint appears in two ancient Latin forms, and in three different contemporary forms in Welsh: Illtud, Elltud and Twit, (said to be an abbreviated form of an Irish Ilctuit) but there are however a further five variants – Hilleth,



Hilad, Illteyrn, Trithyd and Tŵd – once only in the five parishes bearing those names, although Illteyrn may not be an original dedication to Illtud. In Brittany, there are two main forms – Ildut and Iltut – but once again with four variants, Erdut, Ideuc, Idut and Igneuc.

The correct Welsh form is Illtud. 'U' in Welsh, particularly in the North, has a quality not unlike the 'u' of French, but without lip-rounding. In the south, the 'u' has fallen together with 'open' sound of 'y', which then fell together with 'i'. This explains why the name is usually spelt with a 'y' in English nowadays, and many non-Welsh speakers prefer this form, as they tend mistakenly to give the Welsh vowel 'u' the same quality as the corresponding English letter.

One alternative spelling is Elltud, which is how the name appears in the village of Llanelltud in Meirioneth, just beyond Dolgellau, and although the early saints' names can be rather kaleidoscopic in spelling, it is clear that we are dealing here with our own Saint Illtud. Some versions of the Ordnance Survey maps also use Elltud as the spelling for Tŷ Illtud at Llanhamlach. A house near Blaenau Ffestiniog is also called Bryn Elltud, but it is believed that this is a recent name for a Victorian house built for a slate quarry manager. The personal name is still 'active' in both Brittany and Wales, and any search engine will bring up modern examples of Illtud or Ildut.

The name deserves some investigation, but we can dismiss out of hand the mediaeval explanation in the Vita Iltuti, which would derive it from a Latin sentence: **Ill**e ab omne crimine **tut**us – *He who is safe from all evil.*

The name is an obvious Welsh derivation, probably a pagan name, as were the names of many of the early saints: Illtud was either born a pagan, or in the second or third generation of Christian Wales.

The first syllable – *ill* – does occur as a word in its own right, and it does derive from the Latin *ille* mentioned above, but it is a strange beast in that it has no meaning on its own, and is exclusively used with the lower numerals in phrases such as ill dau, ill dwy, ill tri, ill tair, meaning 'the two/three of them'.

I would suggest that the Meirionnydd spelling of the first element in Illtud – *Ell* – is the correct original form and in some early references, Illtud is referred to at Elctutus.

Ell is related to Ellyll, meaning goblins, or phantoms, or fairies, and even sprites that inhabit old ruins. The Welsh idea of fairies, however, has nothing to do with the sentimental Victorian concept: the ancient Celts had a strong belief in the Other World as a parallel universe, colliding with our world on certain occasions, usually at sensitive days such as Calan Mai, (May 1st) and Calan Gaeaf (1st November) and in certain places, often, interestingly in the case of Illtud, caves and of course stone age tombs, as well as in springs and watercourses.

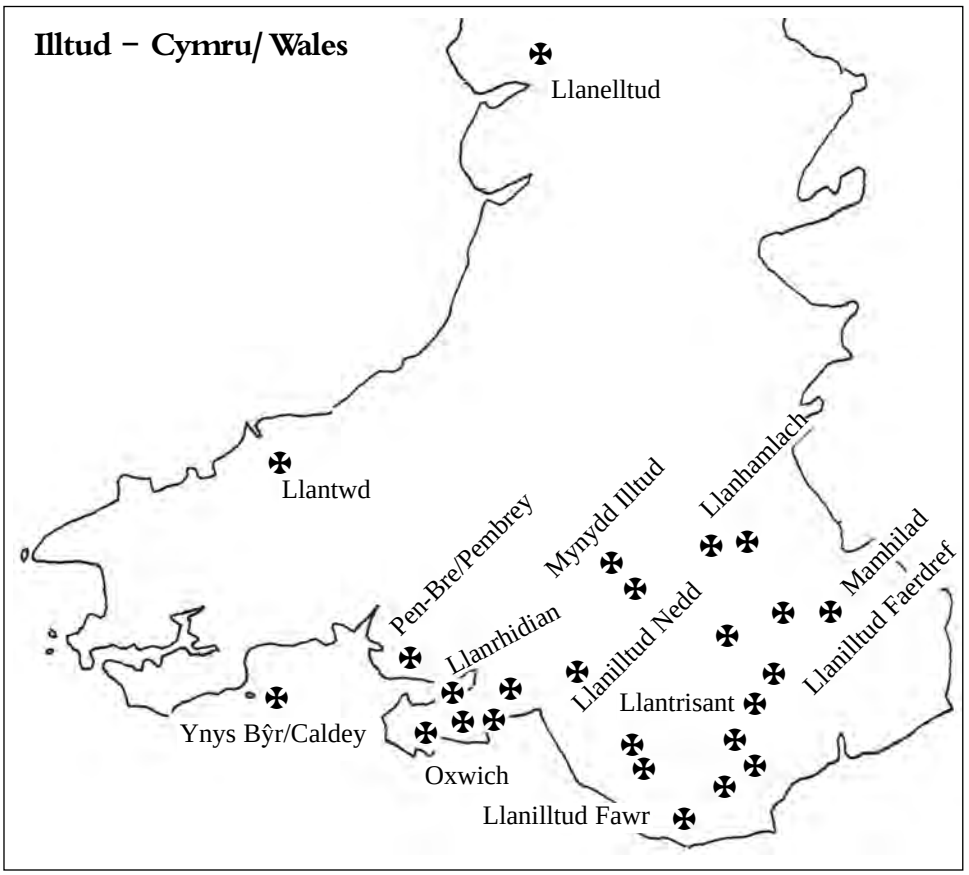
The second element, '*tud*', now obsolete as an independent word, means 'people' or 'folk', but still appears in combinations such as *ieuenctid* – young people – and *alltud* – exile. In Breton, however, *tud* is still the usual word for people, and the word

is related in origin to the word *deutsch* in German and *toutu* in Oscan (an extinct Italic language) as well as the name of a Gaulish war-leader Teutomatos – *Good of the People*.

Together, the two elements would give us a name meaning something like 'of the otherworld folk'.

Apart from the total of 10 associations with Illtud in Brecknock, there are a further 22 sites associated with him in the rest of Wales.

Illtud is the patron saint of nineteen churches or parishes in Wales, many betraying their ancient foundation by their locations which pre-date the contemporary pattern of roads. Some are in breathtakingly beautiful sites, many have been lovingly maintained, others carefully restored and some, such as St Illtud at Pen-bre/Pembrey have received interesting modern additions. The only loss we are aware of is, ironically, Llanilltud on Mynydd Illtud, reputed to have been his burial place. However, the Brecknock Museum is still in possession of the pulpit from the now demolished church. Some of the other sites claim to have preserved



items or features contemporary with the saint himself: Llanilltud Gŵyr or Ilston, Gower, has beautifully restored what is claimed to be the original cell built by the saint on his return from Caldey Island, and nearby Oxwich contains a font reputed to have been brought over from Caldey by Illtud, but which is dismissed as 'a crude hewn stone' by the Buildings of Wales volume on Glamorgan.[14] Caldey Island has a special role in the Illtud saga, since the second abbot, between 550 and 552, was none other than Illtud's pupil, Samson of Dol in Brittany. Illtud is the patron of the Priory Church on Caldey, which also contains a 6th century stone bearing the name Dubracunus whom we know to be associated with Illtud and Samson, and who is said to have consecrated Samson Abbot of Caldey. Dubracunus may in fact be Dubricius, or Dyfrig, our earliest saint of all, and who consecrated Illtud.

Llanrhidian on the north coast of Gower was originally missed as an Illtud dedication by Wade Evans,* who also gave an erroneous grid reference for Illtud's Well near the village. The church is a double dedication to Illtud and Rhidian, and the porch contains a rather crude stone bearing the figures of two holy men. This has been tentatively identified as depicting St Paul and Saint Anthony meeting in the desert, said to be a common theme on Irish High Crosses of the ninth century. However, the depictions of these desert fathers at Monasterboice, Co Louth* are much more accomplished and elaborate than these two figures, and it would be satisfying to ascribe them from their form to an earlier period, and to interpret them as depictions of the two patrons of this church.

Llantwit Major on the Glamorgan Coast, is of course the most important Illtud connection of all, being the site of the monastic school, even university, founded by Illtud, and where he taught such important saints and missionaries as David, Samson, Gildas, Pol Aurelian, Teilo and Odoceus and, it is claimed, many others. The church contains an impressive collection of inscribed stones, one bearing Illtud's name, and stating it was set up by Samson in his memory.*

Two of the eastern outliers of the Illtud Churches in Wales – Mamhilad and Llanhilleth, both in Gwent – have very abberant spellings, as, coincidently, do the two easternmost Illtud dedications in Brittany, and Capel Llanillteyrn, on the western outskirts of Cardiff, may in fact not be ascribable to Illtud at all, but to Illteyrn, the second element of whose name – teyrn – means *ruler*.

Away from South Wales, there are two outlying Illtud dedications, at Llantŵd in Pembrokeshire, just south of Cardigan, and Llanelltyd, near Dolgellau in Meirionnydd. As well as the churches, he is also associated with several holy wells: Wade-Evans noted Ffynnon Illtud at Llanrhidian although he gives an erroneous grid reference – (it is in fact at SS495920, in the garden of a house called St Illtyd's Well but, sadly, recently renamed Bay Tree House), and other wells bearing his name are recorded at Llansamlet,[15] Llanwynno[16] and at Graig Ddu, Michaelstone[17] above the Afan valley near Ton Mawr. Illtud is also associated with two caves, one at Oystermouth, on Swansea Bay, another (impossible to find) at Ewenni, although

the latter is probably a mistaken interpretation of the name Ystumllwynarth/ Oystermouth.

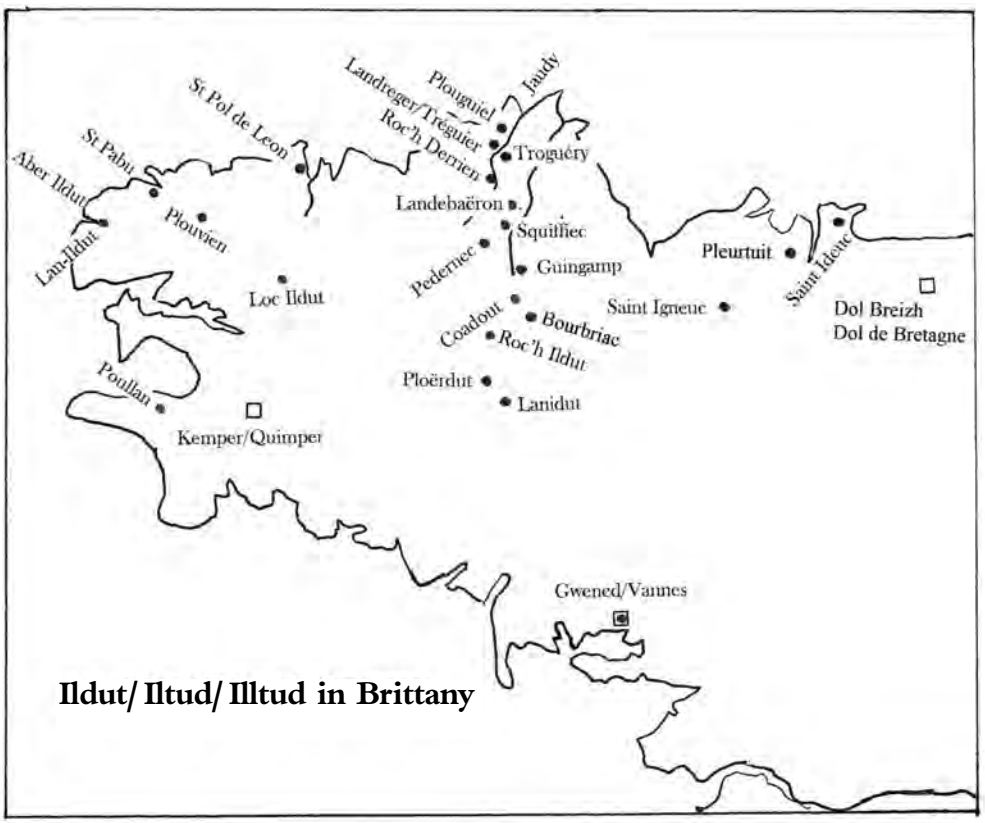
This gives us a grand total of 31 ancient Illtud dedications or associations in Wales, more than any other early saint.

Doble[18] lists 10 sites in Brittany, but a further 14 sites claim or display an association with Ildut making a total of 24 for Brittany. These sites, mostly in northern Brittany, fall naturally into three groups associated with three periods of his life.

The earliest are associated with eastern Brittany, and seem to refer to a visit by Illtud to his now famous pupil, Samson, at Dol.

The three sites are Saint Ideuc, a suburb of Saint Malo (himself a missionary from North Gwent), Pleurtuit and at Saint Igneuc, a little further west, but still in the Département of Ille-et-Vilaine.

This area of eastern Brittany was Breton speaking for only a short period in the early Middle Ages, which may account for the curious spellings, although the dedications are to Illtud. Here again there is a parallel with Wales, as the two easternmost Illtud churches, Mamhilad and Llanhilleth, also have distorted spellings.



The second group of six sites appear in Pen ar Bed – 'the End of the World', or Finistère, mostly in the province of Leon, in the north west corner of the département. These would appear to be associated with missionary activity on the part of Illtud, or perhaps his pupils and followers, and they include the harbour now known as Aber Ildut, where it is claimed he first landed (as did St Pol de Leon, our Peulin or Paulinus of Llangors and Llanddeusant). Nearby is the church of Lan-Ildut. In the same area were St Illtud Chapels at Plouvien, and St Pabu all west and north of Brest but Ker Ildut (Illtud's town) at Plouvien, is nowadays only a street name. An outlier, now also only a street name, Lanildut, occurs at Poullan, near Douarnenez, and between these areas lies Loc Ildut near Sizun, where a spectacular Pardon de Saint Ildut, or saint's festival, is held each year on the fourth Sunday in July, and which has St Illtud's well in the grounds. The now almost abandoned church contains a series of primitive paintings illustrating Illtud's arrival across the sea, his church building activity and his involvement in education.

The third group of 16 connections is scattered around the province of Landreger/Tréguier, in the Côtes d'Armor, and on south into Morbihan. These are associated with the legend of an expedition by Illtud to alleviate a famine affecting the British settlers in this part of Brittany. He is reputed to have sailed with a fleet of three grain ships, landing first at his old harbour at Aber Ildut, and then travelling east, going with the tide up the river Jaudy as far as Roc'h Derrien /La Roche Derrien.

It is in this area that we find a Chapel at Plouguiel, a reputed breviary at Landreger/Tréguier, and a dedication at Troguéry. Squiffiec and Pedernec nearby have Ildut connections, as does Landebaëron, which has a statue of Illtud in the church, and also a reliquary, reputed to contain his skull, a little odd if he died and was buried here in Breconshire. However, the church there is dedicated to Saint Maudez, a pupil of Illtud's, and probably the same person as St Mawes of Cornwall. It may well be that the relic is in fact the skull of this disciple, and not Illtud. A Statue of Illtud alongside one of Maudez at a nearby well was stolen sometime in the 1960s, and never recovered. Guingamp further south had a district called St Idut.

An important site is the church at Coadout, Koad Ildut, *Illtud's Wood*, one of the main centres of the cult of Illtud in the area. Rather disappointingly, the old church was thoroughly rebuilt in the nineteenth century, like so many others in Wales as well as Brittany. It has lost most of its mediaeval features, notably special stone cages for hens, since Illtud here is the patron saint of poultry! It is said that a white cockerel was released from the top of the tower on the feast of Illtud, and brought luck to the first of the crowd gathered below to catch it.

There was close by a prehistoric gallery grave known as Roc'h Ildut, La Pierre de Saint Ildut, St Illtud's rock, which is a curious parallel with Tŷ Illtud at Llanhamlach, and Bedd Gŵyl Illtud on Mynydd Illtud. It is said that the stone grave was where Illtud used to meet and pray with his disciple and fellow Breconian Briog, grandson of Brychan Brycheiniog, and patron of Llandyfriog in Ceredigion.

The latter is also the patron of Bourbrieg or Bourbriac (although the church formerly held an Ildut statue) nearby as well as of Saint Brieuc and a further fourteen parishes scattered throughout Brittany.

One of the larger stones of this prehistoric monument was quite polished, and was said to have been worn down by the knees of the two saints at prayer. However, after a long search I failed to locate the site, only to discover, very recently, that the tomb had already been pulled apart before 1870,[19] the final remains being bulldozed away about twenty years ago.

St Pol de Leon also claims to have a Breviary which belonged to Illtud, as does Vannes in Morbihan, where we can also find both Ploërdut, earlier recorded as Plou Eldut and a nearby Lanidut, nowadays the name of a farm, where an earlier chapel was pulled down in the eighteenth century.

It is strange that Illtud, so widely associated with sites in Wales and Brittany, seems to have little connection with Cornwall, as many early British saints made their way to Brittany by crossing Cornwall by land to avoid the dangers of the rough seas at Land's End, and dedications to various saints are repeated in all three countries. The only mention of Illtud in the Duchy is a reputed lost chapel at Saint Dominick, near Saltash in Cornwall (SX400677), but no further information on this site has come to light.

Perhaps, since we are told he sailed with grain ships from South Wales to Brittany, he was a more skilled or adventurous sailor than his contemporaries, taking the direct route around Land's End.

The extensive distribution of locations with an Illtud connection point to his wide-ranging activity but we need to examine his other activities as recorded in the Vita Elctuti and other traditions and legends, some of which give us a picture of a very vigorous and inventive man, quite unlike the pious sentimentality of later descriptions.

Firstly, his origin. Having dismissed an Armorican or Breton origin for Illtud, we read that his father, Bicanus, and his mother Rheinwylydd[20] are in origin from Erging, the old Celtic kingdom of South Herefordshire, which seems to have had close relations with the other Celtic kingdoms and lordships of the area, namely Brycheiniog, Gwent Uwch Coed, Fferig and Euas. Rheinwylydd was the daughter of Amlawdd Wledig,[21] king of Erging, grandfather of Culhwch in the tale of the hunting of the boar, and also of Arthur, son of his daughter Eigr. Two of her brothers, Llygadrudd Emys and Gwrfoddw Hen were killed in Ystrad Yw, near Bwlch, by Llwydog, a wild boar, and offspring of Twrch Trwth, the prime object of the great boarhunt. Amlawdd was married to Gwen, daughter of Cunedda. Illtud is therefore ascribed to a family with great connections, and his missionary activity would fit well with the little we know of the settlement of Brittany, many of whose leaders were holy men strongly associated with important dynasties. He also appears to be a brother of Sadwrn who is commemorated on an early stone in Llansadwrn, Anglesey, and in two churches in Carmarthenshire.[22]

We are told he was sent by his parents to be educated, possibly by Germanus: in

Brittany, this is taken to be Germanus of Auxerre, the hero of Battle of Maes Garmon, the Halleluiah Victory over the pagan Saxons and Picts near Mold, and this is also the claim in the Life of Samson of Dol. The dates however are confusing,[23] and it is possible that another Germanus, who was bishop of Paris at a later date, might have been involved in the education of Illtud and his kinsman, friend and companion Briog. This is not universally accepted, however, and we are perhaps dealing with a disciple of Germanus, or possibly an entirely different individual. Illtud received an erudite education, becoming versed in religion and oratory and even in the old pagan religion.

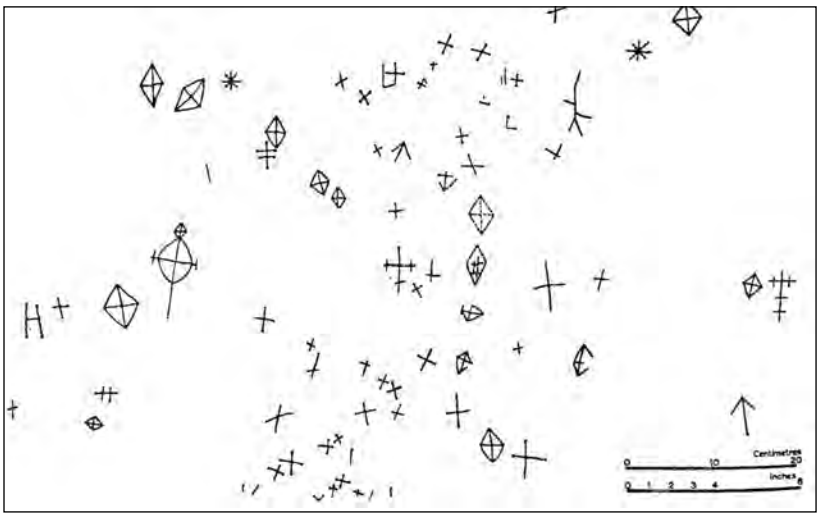
Illtud visited his cousin Arthur, and decided to take up the military life, entering the service of Pawl Penychen, 'King' of a part of Glywysing in Glamorgan, a son of Glywys and brother of Gwynllyw, and an uncle of S. Cadoc. This accounts for his epithet Illtud Farchog – Illtud the Knight and for frequent depictions of him in stained glass and statuary and on banners in military garb, and armed. Pawl Penychen gave Cadoc land, on which he established his famous monastery of Nantcarfan, now Llancarfan. 50 soldiers under the command of Illtud were out hawking in the area, without their commander, and violently demanded food of Cadog, who eventually gave in to them and handed over bread, ale and roast pig. In divine punishment for this behaviour, they were all drowned in the marshes nearby, probably in the area of Llancarfan, but Illtud, not being with them, survived, and was encouraged to return to religion by Cadog, to whom he went for instruction.

He is recorded as having a prodigious memory, and of being highly educated in religion, philosophy and even in the old native druidical religion. He was revered as being the most erudite person in Gaul, for which read Britain, and as being extremely eloquent.

He was married to a lady called Trynihid, a sister of Emyr Llydaw[24] whose name would seem to mean something like 'without any cares', but the 12th Century Life of Saint Illtud claims that when he took up religion again, he cruelly sent his wife away, and had no further communication with her, refusing to speak to her when she came to visit him later, which is interpreted as a Norman interjection to condemn the Celtic tradition of married clergy and mixed monasteries.

He founded the great school, some say university, at Llanilltud Fawr, where he was ordained Abbot by Dyfrig, our earliest Welsh saint, from Henllan or Hentland in what is now Herefordshire. After some initial disagreement, Meirchion, king of Glamorgan, confirmed Illtud's tenure of the site, and his foundation prospered and went on to become the first and prime centre of Christian teaching in North West Europe. At his school, Illtud taught the saints Dewi, Samson, Gildas, Pol Aurelian, Padarn, Teilo, and Dogo, and even Maelgwn, King of Gwynedd. Gildas later castigated Maelgwn as a sinful tyrant, but referred to his training under 'the most refined teacher of almost the whole of Britain', taken to mean Illtud.

It is suggested that the change from Bishop Dyfrig to Abbot Illtud reflects a change from the Romanised diocesan tradition of Dyfrig, who started life near the



Tŷ Illtud: carvings on west wall-slab of chamber.

Roman town of Ariconium, Weston under Penyard near the Forest of Dean, and the austere monastic Christianity preferred by the next generation of saints. This change from episcopal sees to Abbeys is paralleled in Brittany in a long struggle for supremacy within the Breton church.[25] Illtud is reputed to have founded the monastery on Caldey or at least to be closely associated with it, and it is claimed that he visited it.

It is said that he had a retreat in a cave at Ewenni, reputedly called Illtud's cave, and it was there that he heard the sound of a bell sent by Gildas to Dewi, which fascinated Illtud, who offered to buy it, but was refused. We should remember that the individual saints' bells were highly prized objects in the Early Celtic Church, and were usually oblong handbells made of bronze. The Museum at the ancient Breton Monastery of Landevennec has a striking collection of such objects.[26] When Dewi was told of Illtud's desire to own this bell, he sent it as a gift to Illtud: one version says that the bell would not ring for Dewi, and only regained its voice when returned to Illtud. However, this association with Ewenni is disputed, and it is said that the cave was actually one at Oystermouth, on Swansea Bay, where he is also said to have accepted for burial the body of a holy man, transported miraculously across the sea – perhaps Samson, perhaps Brychan Brycheiniog.

Illtud is credited with activities other than education and religion: it is said that he reclaimed land from the sea at Gileston and Hodnant near the Abbey of Llanilltud Fawr, building dykes and sea walls to protect the coastline.

He seems to have been an innovator in agriculture too, and to have invented a new type of plough which replaced the old mattock and foot plough in use previously. This tale seems to be connected with a tradition about Illtud using a

deer, or a deer-ox hybrid, to pull his plough, but this theme recurs frequently, and is associated with other saints both in Wales and in Brittany.

All the evidence points to a strong and vigorous character, extremely well educated, and himself a great educator, who initially followed an active military career, who travelled extensively in Wales and Brittany, and possibly Cornwall too, was innovative in matters agricultural, and who was a great educator, the lynchpin of early Christian education and training in the British Isles and beyond.

The widespread cult of St Illtud has survived over a remarkable period of some fifteen hundred years, and bears witness to his strength of character and the deep impression he must have made on his contemporaries.

BRYNACH PARRI

Notes

[1] Vita Iltuti, Cotton MS. Vespasian A xiv. Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae, pp. 194–233.

[2] A. W. Wade Evans, Cardiff 1944.

[3] Merdrignac, Bernard , *The British Settlement of Brittany*, Tempus Publishing, Stroud, 2003, p. 141 ff.

[4] Parri, B, Brycheiniog and Letavia, Llydaw and Brittany, *Brycheiniog XL*, pp.127–138.

[5] Davies, Sioned, *The Mabinogion* Oxford University Press 2007, pp. 179 ff.

[6] ibid., p. 211.

[7] Flobert, Pierre, La vie ancienne de Saint Samson de Dol, CNRS Éditions, Paris 1997.

[8] Buhez ar Zent, Ot. Perrot, Editor: E Ar Moal, Montroulez, 1912, Private Collection, Jacques Dervilly, Paimpol.

[9] SN 971 261.

[10] SO 098 264.

[11] SN976266 and SN 963255.

[12] SO 089 265.

[13] Jones, Theophilus, A History of the County of Brecknock, 1809, p. 577.

[14] Mark 14 vv. 51 & 52.

[15] Newman, John, *Glamorgan* – Buildings of Wales, Penguin Books/University of Wales Press 1995 p. 481.

[16] Llansamlet SS 687 978.

[17] Llanwynno ST 029 956.

[18] Graig Ddu SS 813 967.

[19] Doble.

[20] Légendaire Préhistorique de Bretagne, Ed. Emile Nourry, Paris 1936, Reprint La Découvrance, Rennes, 1995.

[21] A Welsh Classical Dictionary, Peter C. Bartrum, National Library of Wales, 1993 p. 385.

[22] ibid, p. 130.

[23] Llansadwrn SN696314 and Llansadyrnin. SN282103.

[24] Bartrum, Peter A Classical Welsh Dictionary, National Library of Wales.

[25] ibid, p. 249.

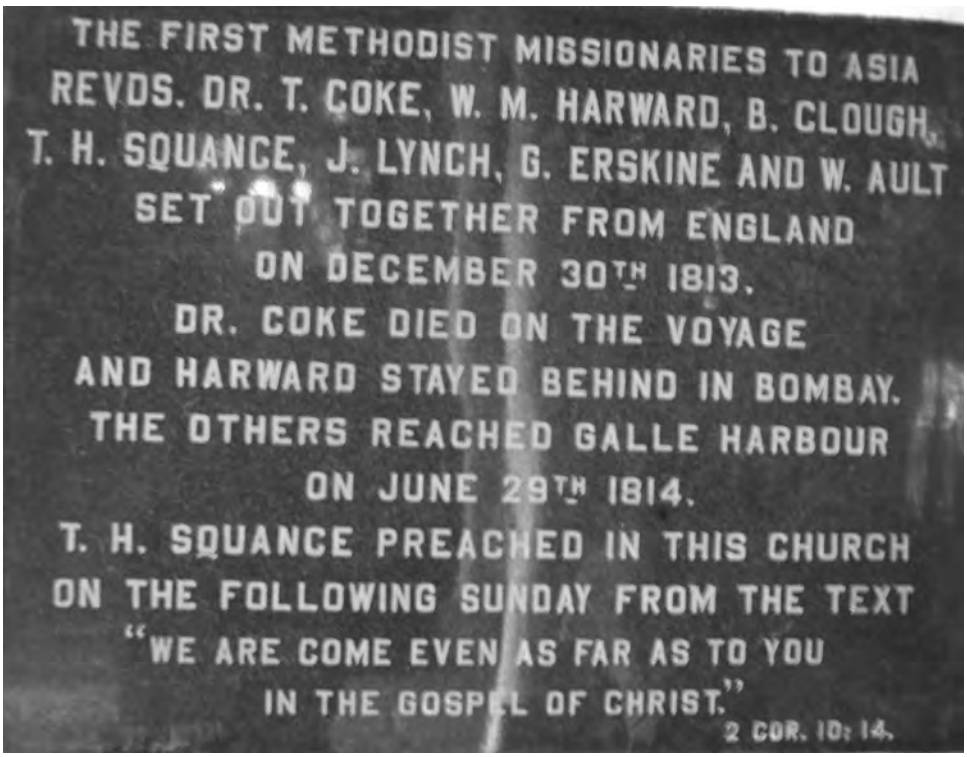
[26] Merdrignac, Bernard, The British Settlement of Brittany, Tempus Publishing, Stroud 2003.

[27] Merdrignac, Bernard *La Bretagne des origines à nos jours*, Editions Ouest-France 2009 p. 28.

DR COKE – A FOOTNOTE

A footnote to the article '*Dr Thomas Coke – Methodist Extraordinary'* by John Vickery in Brycheiniog XLI last year.

This is a photo of a plaque in the Groote Kerk, the Dutch Reformed 'Great Church' in Galle near the southern-most tip of Sri Lanka. The church was founded in 1640 but the present building is mid 18th century. The church is still in use. *Brycheiniog* is grateful to Bryan Davies of Brecon, who took the photograph whilst on a recent visit to Sri Lanka.



Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches, ed. Barry C. Burnham and Jeffrey L. Davies; 380pp. published (2010) by RCAHMW; ISBN 978-1-871184-39-6 £35.00.

This is the third volume to bear a similar title. The first 'Roman Frontier in Wales' published by V. E. Nash-Williams in 1954 was itself a landmark in the collation of information then available for the Roman military occupation of Wales. Michael Jarrett's revised second edition of 1969 benefitted from much information which had become available in the intervening fifteen years, and set a chronological framework which became the basis for subsequent study. Since then much has happened. The four Welsh Archaeological Trusts were established in 1976, and the work of these, together with the Royal Commission, CADW, and university archaeological departments has brought about a substantial expansion in our knowledge and understanding of the material. In addition, the development of scientific techniques, and in particular geophysics – in its infancy in 1969 – has led to an increase in information about the interiors of forts and their attendant civilian settlements, evinced by the number of geophysical maps (more than thirty) in the book. Furthermore, the extension of the title of this latest edition to include the Marches reflects the acknowledgment that the Roman military presence in Wales was not constrained by the modern boundary – indeed, the springboards for much military activity in the area lay outside the principality, at the legionary fortresses of Gloucester, Wroxeter, and Chester, and these and their associated sites are rightly included in the volume.

The book is divided into two roughly equal parts. The first part consists of chapters analysing various aspects of the military occupation of Wales – an introduction which also contains the evidence of epigraphy, coinage, and pottery, followed by chapters on the chronology of the occupation, the forts and their garrisons, communications, and two chapters on the 'military-civilian interface'. These latter (some sixty pages) are an important development in approach compared with the previous volumes, bringing together as they do information about the civilian settlements – *canabae* and *vici* – which grew up outside the legionary and auxiliary forts. Such information was scarcely available in 1969, causing Jarrett to comment that 'little of value could be said' about them. Subsequent excavations combined with a detailed geophysical survey programme in the last ten years have now added substantially to our understanding of these extra-mural settlements, and interesting puzzles are emerging, for example that few *vici* in Wales seem to have survived the second century diminution of their associated military garrisons, whereas in northern Britain the vici apparently continued to flourish independently long after their forts were decommissioned.

In this first part of the book references are placed in brackets within the text.

This has the advantage of making them readily available without the need to turn to the end for a numbered footnote, but the disadvantage that it interrupts the flow of the narrative. This hardly matters where the references are few and the text dominant, but where there are close-packed references in addition to photographs, maps, or charts, as for example in Chapter 2 (the chronological review), it could be found distracting. The narrative itself is scholarly and precise, as one would expect, with just occasional sallies – this reviewer particularly enjoyed Casey's demolition of Magnus Maximus' supposed withdrawal of troops around AD 383: 'propagated by Gildas, hallowed by centuries of Welsh legend, reinforced by poets . . . the shade of Maxen Wledig still haunts the scene. In his ghostly entourage serve bands of Irish mercenaries and local chieftains raised to the status of surrogate imperial governors'. These chapters of analysis and discussion are carefully even-handed; where alternative interpretations are possible all are given with fairness, and where editorial judgment is imposed this is made clear.

The second part of the book is a detailed gazetteer of the sites and roads involved, with full references and bibliography. Virtually every site is accompanied by an aerial photograph or ground plan or both, and many have geophysical maps as well. Anyone wondering about the effectiveness of geophysical surveys should compare the aerial photograph of Llanfor (a fort with no surface indications, and visible from the air only in times of drought) with the astonishing results of the flux gradiometer survey of the site. It would however have been useful to have the Roman roads map repeated at the beginning of the gazetteer of roads, and preferably at full-page size – the existing map is some chapters away and the reduced size makes the print rather small.

Inevitably in a work of this fullness and complexity there have to be omissions. The most striking, noted by the editors themselves in the preface, is that the book does not deal with temporary camps or practice camps. These are fully covered in an earlier work (Davies J. L. and Jones R. H. (2006) 'Roman Camps in Wales and the Marches') to which the reader is directed when appropriate, but it does mean that anyone wishing to check information about a specific area may need to consult both books, since temporary camps often occur with or close to later forts.

The book is printed in two columns, appropriate for pages of this size. The volume of information in its 380 pages is immense, and in addition virtually every page contains a photograph or diagram. Even better, the photographs (which are of superb quality) are regularly reproduced at half-page size or greater, making the book a joy just to dip into. Congratulations are due to the RCAHMW on publishing a book to such high production standards, and to the editors on synthesizing such a large volume of material into discrete and accessible sections. This is a book to inform, to stimulate discussion, and to savour.

DAVID MORGAN

Elenydd – Hen Berfeddwlad Gymreig. Lluniau a thestun gan Anthony Griffiths, Cyhoeddwyr Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst ISBN 978-1-84527-0, 96 tudalen. Pris £12.00.

Dyma gyfrol ddwyieithog sydd yn dathlu mewn lluniau a thestun ardal sydd yn mynd y tu hwnt i Frycheiniog, ond sydd yn cynnwys ein hardaloedd mwyaf gwyllt ar y ffiniau i Faesyfed a Cheredigion. Mae'r gyfres o dros gant o luniau a dynnwyd gan yr awdur yn dystioli i harddwch y fro anghysbell a gwyllt hon, sydd hefyd â lle nid bychan yn hanes ein gwlad, gydag adseiniau o un o frwydrau pwysicaf Owain Glyndŵr, abatai'n gysylltiedig â'n Tywysogion, atgofion o George Borrow a'i gyfrol *Wild Wales*, ac wrth gwrs hanes Cwm Elan ei hunan, ei gysylltiad â Shelley a thristwch boddi'r cymoedd culion. Mae'r testun yn huawdl am werthfawrogiad yr awdur o'r ardal a'i gariad tuag ati a'i ddealltwriaeth ddofn ohoni.

Gol.

Elenydd – ancient heartland of the Cambrian Mountains. Photography and Text by Anthony Griffiths, Pub. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst ISBN 978-1-84527-0, 96 pp. Price £12.00.

The traditional name of the wild and empty heartland of Wales derives from one of our most noted rivers, Elan, with its associated memories of Shelley's visit and the drowning of the remote valleys of Claerwen and Elan. Although extending widely beyond Brycheiniog into Radnorshire and Ceredigion, this bilingual volume celebrates the wildest corner of Brecknock and surrounding areas in a series of over one hundred beautiful photographs taken by the author, whose text displays his deep love and knowledge of the area. Elenydd's place in our history is by no means as insignificant as its remoteness would suggest: here we have the site of one of Glyndŵr earliest and most important battles, many places linked to the history of our Princes and their associated Abbeys, and literary associations with Dafydd ap Gwilym, George Borrow, and Shelley. A delightful book that serves to remind us of the small scale beauty of detail and the wider historical canvas of the whole of wildest Wales. Ed.

Celfi Brynmawr, Mary, Eurwyn a Dafydd Wiliam, Llyfrau Llafar Gwlad Rhif 78, ISBN 978-1-84527-294-4, 104 pp. Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst. £6.50.

Hanes ddiddorol digwyddiadau mewn cornel fach o'r hen Sir Frycheiniog yn dechrau ym 1928 yng nghanol y dirwasgiad a drawiodd tref Bryn-Mawr bron yn waeth nag unman arall mewn gwlad a ddioddefodd cymaint adeg hynny. Mewn ymdrech i leddfu tlodi trigolion y dref fynyddig hon, sefydlodd nifer o Grynwyr yr hyn a alwyd yn 'Arbrawf Bryn-Mawr', menter a barodd hyd at 1940. Dyma hanes

gwneuthurwyr celfi Bryn-mawr, o'r cychwyn cyntaf hyd at y diwedd, gyda llu o luniau a dogfennau i gofnodi ymgyrch i sefydlu busnesau a chyfleoedd gwaith mewn cyfnod o ddi-weithdra erchyll. Y Crynwyr oedd wrth gefn yr ymdrechion dyngarol ond ymarferol hyn , ac mae llawer o'r lluniau yn dangos coethni, ceinedd a symlrwydd celfi Brynmawr y mae rhai wedi eu cymharu â rhai 'Crynwyr' eraill, sef y *Shakers* yn America. Darfod fu hanes y gwneuthurwyr yn y pendraw ar ddechrau'r Ail Ryfel Byd, yn wyneb diffyg gwerthiannau, a cholli gweithwyr a aeth i'r fyddin. Dyma gofnod hyfryd, manwl a brwd sydd yn haeddu lle ar silff lyfrau pob Brycheiniwr. Gol.

This small volume, currently only available in Welsh, gives a warm, detailed and highly interesting account of the Quakers' efforts in alleviating the tremendous unemployment in Brynmawr in the Thirties through the establishment of the company Brynmawr Furniture Makers Ltd. The three authors express a great affection for both the crusade to relieve poverty in the area and for the beauty and simplicity of the items of furniture themselves. In June, the Brecknock Society will be making an excursion to Brynmawr to view some of these items, and it would be very appropriate if the items of Brynmawr furniture held at Saint Ffagans and at Newport Museum and Art Gallery, and currently not on display, could be exhibited at Brecknock Museum at some time in the future.

Ed.

Market Town Wales. David Williams, Graffeg, Cardiff 2010. 224 pp. ISBN 978 1 905582 23 5. £14.99.

Four market towns in Brecknockshire – Brecon, Builth, Crickhowell and Hay – are featured amongst the 25 small rural communities in Wales examined in this book of beautiful photographs taken by David Williams, who also wrote the text. Readers familiar with our towns will enjoy delightful images of many aspects of Brecknockshire life, and can also learn a great deal about towns further away in all parts of rural Wales. An excellent addition to the Welsh bookshelf, and an ideal souvenir or gift for visitors

Welsh Marches Pomona. Michael Porter, illustrated by Margaret Gill, 94 pp. Pub Marches Apple Network 2010. ISBN 978 0 9555621 3 6. £25.00.

Brecknockshire and its neighbours used to be apple and cider country, but sadly a great deal of our heritage has been lost over the years: we no longer have a mobile cider press operator, our former Cider House, Nant-y-Ffin, now sells all manner of drinks, including the once-banned beer, and accounts of cider-making in the county now only exist on heritage tapes at the Museum of Welsh Life, St Ffagans. Attempts have been made at reviving the cider industry, and apple juice features as a new product in the Crickhowell area.

This beautiful volume, by Brecknockshire resident and former biology master at Christ College, Michael Porter, does a great deal to set the record straight, listing and describing as it does the thirty one varieties of apple originating in the Welsh Marches in thorough detail. Michael Porter's introduction will be an eye-opener to many of us, unfamiliar as we are with the history of apple growing, and its development in the Marches of Wales, which once contained roughly 30% of the orchards of this island. We learn of the comparative valuation of sweet apple trees and the wild sour crab-apple in the Laws of Hywel Dda, and of the drastic and often regrettable changes in both apple-growing and, sadly, government subsidised grubbing out of orchards in the last century, when, it is estimated, over 95% of traditional orchards disappeared. Each variety is given a meticulous description in terms unfamiliar to the layman, but clearly explained by this expert in his field.

But it is the illustrations that make this one of the most interesting and visually attractive volumes that have appeared in recent years. Margaret Gill, of Glasbury, has produced a series of beautiful plates, showing each apple variety in wonderfully clear detail, placing this book at the highest level of botanical illustration. A worthy volume for all interested in the horticultural and agricultural history and diversity of our area. Ed.

Slave Wales – The Welsh and Atlantic Slavery 1666–1850. Chris Evans University of Wales Press 2010. 136 pp. ISBN 978 –0-70832 –303-8, £19.99.

This book is a compelling read. It has no illustrations, and is visually aloof from the television programme of the 2007 bicentenary of the Abolition of Slavery. Yet Chris Evans acknowledges the BBC Wales programme, to which he contributed, as the starting point for his book. *Slave Wales* is in his own style and voice – one which presents evidence objectively but whose commentary expresses unhesitating personal commitment. This is also the voice of a storyteller. The pace of his 136 page narrative is brisk; the end of one section leads compellingly to the next. Although the book begins at the start of his time-chart, continuing chronologically to the mid C19th, Evans provides ample background, and peoples his pages with memorable individuals, from Africa to the Americas, the Atlantic to the Caribbean, by way of Wales, the Bristol Channel and the Irish Sea.

Diverse strands are deftly woven into a complex comprehensive appraisal of the Slave World. From the Welsh perspective, the development of the copper industry, and the exploitation of upland Welsh cloth makers are, from the C17th, inevitably and inextricably linked to trade in a human commodity. Welshmen stalk the pages as powerful, often rapacious figures. Henry Morgan, the pirate, is compromised: he settles as a slave owner on a Jamaican plantation he names Llanrumney. General Sir Thomas Picton, remembered with honour on the Wellington Memorial in Brecon, is revealed as a tyrannical sadistic Governor of Trinidad, promoting the use

of slaves on plantations. Atlantic slavery gave Anthony Bacon the commercial basis for his investment in Merthyr Tydfil's burgeoning industries. Welsh abolitionist voices are few: William Williams, Pantycelyn contributed, as did Iolo Morgannwg, though embarrassed by his three brothers who left for work in Jamaica and 'eased themselves into the slave-holding class'. For Breconians, the obvious name connected with (but not necessarily committed to) the slave trade is Captain Thomas Phillips. By page 15, Evans has embarked with him on the 1693 voyage of the *Hannibal* from London to the Caribbean, first trading Welsh goods for an African transatlantic human cargo. But Phillips' ship could not have set off on this voyage (45% of his slave-cargo perished) without the investment of Jeffrey Jeffreys, MP for the borough and new owner of the Brecon Priory estate. His uncle, John Jeffreys of Llywel, an assistant of the Royal African Company, had imported large numbers of slaves to Virginia in the 1670s and 80s; his nephews benefited from his fortune and connections.

Slave Wales documents the recurring process of investment of profits from slave trading and plantations into Welsh industries: copper on Parys Mountain, coal in South Wales, slate quarries, Swansea copper works. Their owners, developers, investors, entrepreneurs and traders were often respected members of church and chapel, some self-declared Christian evangelists.

Evans explains how 'Slave Wales . . . supplied niche products to the slave Atlantic. Some parts of Wales stood outside, but others hummed with activity in response to the commands of the Royal African Company and the private traders'. He recognises the need for breadth in his book. 'It needs to stretch from the Gold Coast in the 1680s, where Welsh woollens were exchanged for slaves, to Cuba in the 1840s and 50s, where captives laboured at the behest of Welsh industry'.

Astutely, Evans indicates that righteous and moral indignation alone were insufficient to carry the Abolitionists' cause: 'The new science of political economy, with its predeliction for free labour . . . cast slavery in an evermore unappealing light'. In this too, there was an influential Welsh figure, Maurice Morgann of Blaenbylan, Pembrokeshire. He was no evangelical; it was the 'utility' of slavery he called into question in his *Plan for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies* (1772).

For the naïve reader, one additional attraction, perhaps, of this absorbing book may be the knowledge that the story turns out well in the end – slavery is abolished. But Evans' conclusion is far from complacent. 'The legacy of Slave Wales is complex and ambivalent. Atlantic slavery is gone, but its residues dot the Welsh landscape. Slave Wales can be seen in the shattered rubble of abandoned slate quarries in the north-west. It is there in the ruins of Cyfarthfa ironworks . . . the now landscaped slag tip at the old White Rock copper works . . . For every obvious landmark like Penrhyn Castle . . . built on the rewards of slavery and slate, there are others that are reticent about their past. A mostly mute landscape must be made to speak.'

HELEN GICHARD

Herefordshire, the Welsh Connection. Colin Lewis, pub Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, Llanrwst 2006, 193 pp. ISBN 0-86381-958-3. £6.90.

This delightful little book gives meticulous attention to an all too often neglected aspect of the history of our neighbouring county across the border in England, and is a thoroughly researched work. It is written in a lively, personal style, revealing the author's enthusiasm for his subject and his deep knowledge and understanding of the almost deliberately forgotten Welsh aspects of the history of Herefordshire, in particular Ergyng, the ancient Welsh kingdom stretching from the Wye at Hereford to the borders of the Welsh shires of Brecknock and Monmouth. As well as being a very enjoyable read, the book is well illustrated, and deserves a place on every Breconian's bookshelf. To those unfamiliar with the area, it will prove to be a real eye-opener. Ed.