



ISSUE 82

November 2023



### Editorial

The Brecknock History Festival provided us with many excellent events and there are many more to look forward to as detailed here. Try to get out this autumn to enjoy Brecknock history.

Hanes is published every 3 months. The next edition is to be published on February 1st 2024. Please email any articles or information about events etc. with the heading "HANES" to [alan.j.nicholls@btinternet.com](mailto:alan.j.nicholls@btinternet.com) by January 31st 2024.

### *Introducing The Forum*

#### **ABERGAVANNY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

Contact: Gill Wakley  
Email: [wakley76@gmail.com](mailto:wakley76@gmail.com)

#### **BRECKNOCK SOCIETY AND MUSEUM FRIENDS**

Contact: Elaine Starling Tel. 01874 711484  
email: [evstarling@lineone.net](mailto:evstarling@lineone.net)

#### **BRECON LIBRARY**

Tel. 01874 623346

#### **BRECONSHIRE LOCAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY**

Contact: Alison Noble – Secretary  
Email: [blfhsenquires@gmail.com](mailto:blfhsenquires@gmail.com)

#### **BUILT WELLS & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY**

Contact: Anna Page Tel. 01982 553376  
Mal Morrison [mal911@yahoo.com](mailto:mal911@yahoo.com)

#### **CHRIST COLLEGE ARCHIVE**

Contact: Felicity Kilpatrick  
Tel. 01874 615440  
[archive@christcollegebrecon.com](mailto:archive@christcollegebrecon.com)

**CRICKHOWELL DISTRICT ARCHIVE  
CENTRE**

Contact: Elaine Wigzell  
CDAC, Ty-y-Fro, Beaufort Street,  
Crickhowell, Powys NP8 1BN  
e-mail:  
[info@crickhowellarchives.org.uk](mailto:info@crickhowellarchives.org.uk)

**CRICKHOWELL & DISTRICT HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

Contact: Clive Ralph  
Tel. 01873 810262

**CUSOP HISTORY GROUP**

<http://cusophistory.wix.com/cusop>

**HAY HISTORY GROUP**

Contact: Peter Ford  
Tel. 01497820676  
email: [pcf1@hotmail.com](mailto:pcf1@hotmail.com)  
[www.haytours.co.uk](http://www.haytours.co.uk)

**HEREFORDSHIRE FHS and POWYS  
FHS**

email: [philbufton@hotmail.com](mailto:philbufton@hotmail.com)  
3, Cagebrook Avenue, Hunderton,  
Hereford. HR2 7AS Tel. 01432 355723

**LLANGAMMARCH WELLS LOCAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY**

Contact: Sue Lilly  
Tel. 01591 610792 Email:  
[llangammarchhs@gmail.com](mailto:llangammarchhs@gmail.com)

**LLANGYNIDR LOCAL HISTORY  
SOCIETY**

Contact: Ann Jessopp Tel. 01874  
730431  
email: [dfjessopp@btinternet.com](mailto:dfjessopp@btinternet.com)

**LLANTHONY HISTORY GROUP**

Contact: Oliver Fairclough  
Tel. 01873 890 540  
email: [oliverfairclough@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:oliverfairclough@yahoo.co.uk)

**LLANWRTYD & DISTRICT HERITAGE  
& ARTS CENTRE**

Contact: Rob Thomas  
Tel. 01591 610661  
email: [r.w.thomas@talk21.com](mailto:r.w.thomas@talk21.com)  
[www.llanwrtydhistorygroup.com](http://www.llanwrtydhistorygroup.com)

**LLYN SYFADDAN HISTORY GROUP**

Contact: Roger Reese  
email: [roreese2013@gmail.com](mailto:roreese2013@gmail.com)  
website - [llangorshistory.wales](http://llangorshistory.wales)

**POWYS COUNTY ARCHIVE OFFICE**

email: [archives@powys.gov.uk](mailto:archives@powys.gov.uk)  
[www.powys.gov.uk/archives](http://www.powys.gov.uk/archives)  
Tel. 01597 826088

**REGIMENTAL MUSEUM OF THE  
ROYAL WELSH**

Contact: Richard Davies / Celia Green  
Tel. 01874 613310

**Y GAER – BRECON LIBRARY &  
BRECKNOCK MUSEUM**

Tel: 01874623346

**YSTRADGYNLAIS DISTRICT HISTORY  
AND LANGUAGE SOCIETY**

Contact: John Owens  
[johnowens38@talktalk.net](mailto:johnowens38@talktalk.net)

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### *Bannau Brycheiniog*

#### Heritage Day and Launch of the Historic Environment Action Plan



The recent Heritage Day held at the Guildhall in Brecon was a huge success. Chaired by Bannau Brycheiniog's CEO, Catherine Mealing-Jones, the venue's Adelina Patti Theatre provided a great setting for the launch of the Bannau Brycheiniog Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) and other presentations which included: Y Bannau Dyfodol, climate change and the historic environment, the natural history of the River Usk, conservation grazing, the Penpont Project, tramroads, Op Heritage Cymru, traditional farm buildings and the peatland restoration project. The exhibitors with stands in the Chamber included Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust, Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Op Heritage Cymru, Local Nature Partnership, Bannau Brycheiniog's Geopark,

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Cymru/Wales Group, Brecon Beacons Park Society and Brecon Story which all provided information and discussion points for visitors throughout the day.

At the end of the day, Brecon Story's Elizabeth Jeffreys provided a guided walk around Brecon town taking in buildings and sites of historical interest.

The HEAP document can be viewed and downloaded here

<https://bannau.wales/planning/heritage2/historic-environment-action-plan/>

Also, all the presentations were recorded and will soon be available on Bannau Brycheiniog's YouTube channel.

### *Breconshire Local & Family History Society*



The Brecknock Society and Museum Friends  
The Royal Welsh Regimental Museum  
The Dean and Chapter of Brecon Cathedral  
The Breconshire Local & Family History Society

A presentation by

**Amy Kitcher**

**Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

8<sup>th</sup> November 2023

6.00pm

Brecon Cathedral

Retiring collection in aid of

**Commonwealth War Graves Commission**

**November 14th 2023** Talk on Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal. Jane Collier from Mon & Brecon Canal Trust. Kensington Baptist Church. 2.00pm . £1.00 for non-members

[blfhsenquiries@gmail.com](mailto:blfhsenquiries@gmail.com)

## *Brecknock Society and Museum Friends.*

**18th January at 1.15.**

The Brecknock Society is joining with U3A for a lecture and workshop on Welsh place names. The title of the talk is 'Archaeological and Landscape Associations with Welsh Place Names'.

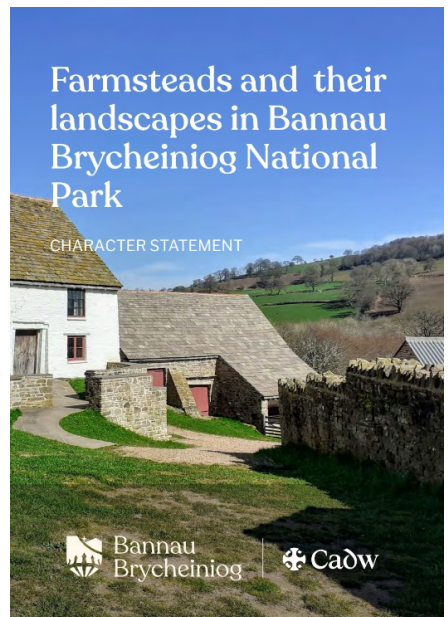
The speaker is Dr James J-McCann of the Royal Commission.

The lecture will be held in the Studio at Theatr Brycheiniog. The charge for non u3a members is £2. Enquiries to Elaine Starling.

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

Sir John Lloyd Lecture at Theatr Brycheiniog. Our speaker is Ben Guy, Assistant Professor in Celtic at Cambridge University.

**May 2024** BSMF will visit Brynmawr Museum to see their collection of Brynmawr furniture. Date tbc. Details of all these events will be available on the Society's website [www.brecknocksociety.wales](http://www.brecknocksociety.wales)



The National Park has recently posted an online document entitled *Farmsteads and their Landscapes in Bannau Brycheiniog National Park: Character Statement*.

It can be found at

<https://bannau.wales/planning/heritage2/farmsteads>.

The work was funded by the Park with a supplementary grant from The Brecknock Society & Museum Friends. With a wealth of illustrations, the document shows how variations in building materials and farming practices have resulted in much fascinating variation from area to area. *Inter alia*, it is intended to help inform residents, stimulate local history research and aid the planning process.

A case study based on farms in Llangynidr is featured in the document and this is a reflection of the quantity and quality of research conducted over the years by members of the Llangynidr Local History Society. An event to celebrate this activity was held in the village on Saturday October 28<sup>th</sup>. John Gibbs gave a talk on the information on the farms of the parish that can be gained from examination of a number of key sources: these principally being the Beaufort Estate records, the Tithe maps and the war-time National Farm Survey. Then Jan Bailey gave an account of field work conducted a few years ago in the Dyffryn Crawnion by members of the Society. This has resulted in much new information being added to the Historic Environment Record (HER) for Wales, as well as a much greater understanding being gained of life in this part of the parish. Later in the day two site visits were made: the first to a lowland farm near the river and the other to a former longhouse up on the steep hillside of the Dyffryn Crawnion.

### *Hay History Group*

As we approach Remembrance Sunday the following very moving account of events in 1915 reminds us of the selfless actions by our local heroes during the 1914-18 war. A whole account of how the war affected Hay people can be found in "Hay at War" by Alan Nicholls and can be bought on [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)

### **Hay Doctor at the Front - Thrilling Experiences.**

Dr. A. C. Hincks, son of Dr. T. S.H. Hincks, of Church Street, Hay, and an old pupil of Christ College, Brecon, is doing strenuous work at the Front, and having some thrilling experiences, as the following extracts from letters received from him will show. He holds a Lieutenant's commission and is serving with the 26th Field Ambulance, 8th Division, British Expeditionary Force :—

**November 29th.** Here I am at our advanced dressing station for 24 hours' duty. We had to change it, further from the firing line, as the last got badly shelled. We heard it was being shelled, so I went out with a motor ambulance and brought the men in. There were shells all around us, but none hit the cottage itself: here we are, fairly safe, it is the village school.

**November 30th.** On arrival at Headquarters I found 60 fresh cases waiting to be examined and treated. Have just finished those when I hear a further batch of 50, chiefly West Yorks, are on their way. Such nice boys, real Yorkshire. Just heard that Sir J. French is well pleased with everything. 200 new cases just come in tonight.

**December 2nd.** Yesterday was a great day here. We had a visit from King George. We had a long wait in the streets for him, and then there was a

great procession of about ten cars. The first was driven by the Prince of Wales himself. In the second was the King and the French President then some Indian celebrities, General Joffre, and others. There were half a dozen aeroplanes hovering over them, and German bullets bursting within half a mile. I suppose it was a sight that will never be seen again. We should have liked to give the King a good old cheer, but had to stand still at attention. Our aeroplanes are very busy over the German position. We have generally one or two hovering over them all day long. We watch the shells from their anti-aircraft guns bursting below them. It is a pretty sight. We scarcely ever see a German aeroplane. I have seen one air duel, but the German machine soon cleared off. We have just brought up some new 6in. guns, and they are going off now, making a tremendous noise.

**December 9th.** A new order has just come out saying that we are to collect wounded twice every night, instead of once. This means that we have to go out to each regimental dressing station at 8 p.m. and then again at 5 a.m. Each trip takes about three hours.

**Sunday, December 13th.** Since writing to you this morning we have had a telegram to evacuate every patient from the hospital at once, and stand by, ready to move at any moment. I had to evacuate 250 cases in one hour, which meant a fair amount of work. Inspection of every

one, roll of name, number, regiment, religion, disease, and notes. Inspection of equipment to see it is complete. However I got through with it. It is as dark as pitch tonight, but looking eastward there is glare in the distance, and every few minutes the whole place is illuminated with German searchlights. A wonderful sight.

**December 15th.** I can see two English aeroplanes hovering over the German lines directing our artillery fire. When the war is over we shall learn what an enormous difference aeroplanes have made to modern warfare. There is much less sickness amongst our troops just now, I am glad to say.

**December 16th.** We have had a very quiet night, except for our guns, which have kept up a continual fire all night. The scream as the shells go over our heads towards the German line is tremendous.

**December 19th.** Yesterday we had another order to clear the hospital, and we waited about all day wondering what was going to happen. At four o'clock there was no longer any doubt. All our batteries opened fire at once, and we kept up a tremendous fire for two hours. We were then ordered to send up every available ambulance to the firing line. Our infantry were going to attack at six. I was off duty, so I stayed in the hospital to receive the casualties. They began to come in at eight and there has been a continual stream

ever since. Our infantry attack met with awful rifle and machine gun fire, but although no details have yet come through, and the fight is still going on, yet we believe they gained considerable valuable ground. It is an awful price to pay but it cannot be helped. It has been far and away our worst night, and we have not yet got half of them in. If you could see the cheeriness of the soldiers as they come in you would marvel. We have been reading about Scarborough. That ought to bring in more recruits. By the way, we have two Batteries on either side of this road, and I fear the Germans have found the range, so we shall have something to be going on with presently. They get the range from examining the time fuse of an unexploded shell, and the aeroplanes give the direction. This Christmas cannot be a merry one for any of us, but any rate we have much to be thankful for. I have been (in) an invaded country, and I know.

**Christmas Day. The Germans in the trenches opposite us had their Christmas tree, and put rows of candles in front of the trenches: our men met them half way and exchanged cigarettes, chocolates, etc. We have had a quiet Christmas, with Christmas weather, a good old white frost. It is very cold for the men in the trenches. Their feet are already wet through, and now frost. I am afraid of the result.**

**Boxing Day.** We are now starting our concert for the patients and men. We

have opened a dressing station right up at the firing line, and we take it in turns to go out there for 24 hours. It is quite safe, because we have built a dug-out where we can retire if the place is shelled. They generally shell the place for a few minutes every day just to keep us lively.

## *Llangynidr Local History Society*

### **Farms in the parish of Llangynidr: Information from the 1587 Manorial survey**

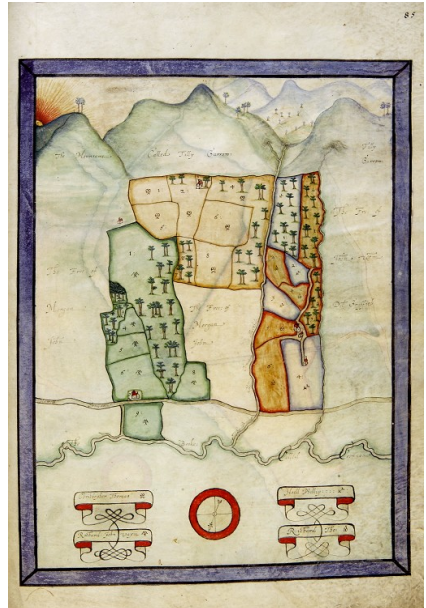
The communities of Llangynidr, Cwm Du, Tretower, Crickhowell and Llangatock are linked by the fact that for many centuries they had strong connections to the Duke of Beaufort's Breconshire Estate. This paper focuses on the relationship between the Estate and the parish of Llangynidr. It began as a talk for a 2018 Brecknock Society conference on the role of the Estate in the history of Breconshire and has been taken forward recently as part of a 'Llangynidr Farmsteads day' linked to the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park online-publication on farmsteads (see elsewhere in this issue of Hanes).

Following the Norman conquest of our part of Wales, the Lordship of Brecon was created under Bernard de Neufmarché (Newmarch). In the early 13<sup>th</sup> Century, part of this area was detached to become a new Lordship of Blaenllynfi with its castle of the

same name just outside Bwlch. This Lordship included the sub-lordships of Straddeuw (Tretower) and of Crickhowell: each of which was controlled from its own castle. For the link with the Beaufort estate, the story really begins in 1429 when Sir William ap Thomas bought both sub-lordships – or as they became known ‘Manors’. The part of the Tretower Manor that lay south of the Usk became the parish of Llangynidr, flanked to the west by the parish of Llandetty with the boundary being the Crownn brook. The boundary to the east, with the parish of Llangattock, is marked by no equally significant geographical feature.

The connection with what eventually became the Beaufort Estate was established when Elizabeth Herbert (William ap Thomas’s great great granddaughter) married Charles Somerset, First Earl of Worcester in 1492. The second Earl was a spendthrift and it fell to the Third Earl to restore the family fortunes in the 1580s. This he did, in part at least, by reorganizing the administration of the Welsh estates, and thereby increasing greatly the landed income.

Part of the process was the 1587 survey of the Manors of Crickhowell and Tretower conducted by Robert Johnson, auditor and surveyor to the Earl, and later MP. For the full Manorial Survey online, see [Badminton Estate - National Library of Wales](#).



Facsimiles prepared by Martin and Pamela Redwood are held in y Gaer and the Crickhowell Archive Centre. The survey was conducted using the procedure of triangulation, a technique that had only become widespread in Europe during the previous 50 years. The wonderful maps are very accurate and the whole represents one of the first surveys produced in Britain of a whole estate, carried out at a single scale, using a single style and method - which is why a few years ago the volume was given special UNESCO heritage status. As far as Llangynidr is concerned, there is a particularly good series of maps: these relating to 22 different tenancies varying in size from two to 46 acres. The illustration shows a block of land in the Dyffryn Crownn. The land is colour-coded and each tenant



has a cartouche showing the symbol that is used to designate his land. According to *Shadows in the Landscape*, produced by the Llangynidr Local History Society in 2000, all the mapped Llangynidr land had previously been tenanted by one man called David Jevan ap Hoell Hyer and this land had reverted to the manor in 1456, quite possibly because he had died without heirs. There are tables to go with the maps showing the rent, the land use, the measured area of each field and the area of land mentioned in the existing lease. This would have allowed an accurate rent to be determined. It would seem that the survey operation must have, quite literally, paid off. Thus I have determined that for five holdings, which were listed in the lease as being of 8 acres or more, the actual measured area was 40% greater than the area cited in the lease. It is important to note that the blocks of land leased out by the estate were distributed widely across the parish and that much additional enclosed land lay between and around them. On the 1587 maps such land is marked as 'The Free of William Vaughan', 'The Free of Rosser Meredith' etc.

I have looked at all the maps for the parish and have come up with over 30 names of people – different from those of the tenants - who are shown as holding land on this basis. In addition some Estate tenants are also shown as having 'The Free of ..' land in one place or another.



Detail of a map showing land marked as 'The Free of William Watkin'

I tried out this term on quite a number of interested people and the firmest response came from the late John Evans of Llanfihangel Crucorney. As a solicitor, he had built up a wealth of knowledge on land-owning and tenancy lore and he had no doubt that it meant 'free-holder', and equally no doubt that this entitlement would have been acquired by squatting on the land for a sufficient period – probably 30 years in those days – to acquire ownership rights. The procedure was to hold the land 'openly without force, fear or fraud and without acknowledging the title of any superior'. In other words, if someone asked you about the possible ownership of land by the Earl of Worcester, you would say 'Earl of where – never heard of him'! I would estimate that in 1587 well over half the enclosed land in Llangynidr was farmed on a freehold

basis, a larger proportion than has been previously recognised. However, this situation did not persist. As a separate exercise, I have looked at the status of occupiers of the enclosed land in Llangynidr parish at the time of the 1840 tithe maps. For farms of over 20 acres there were only five owner-occupiers (15 % of the area). An additional nine owners had one holding each (26 % of the land). There was at least one absentee landlord (Capel Hanbury). Five farms (16% of the land) fell into the newly-formed Glanusk Estate, while The Duke of Beaufort still owned eleven farms and 33% of the land. To some extent, the pendulum swung again in 1915 when the all the properties on the Duke of Beaufort's Breconshire Estate were sold off, many of them to the existing tenants.

The Estate retained ownership of the open mountain, 'Llangynidr Common', at the time of the sale – as it still does.

John Gibbs

## *Powys Family History Society*

As the dark evenings are now with us we have concluded our Monumental Inscriptions recording sessions for 2023, we will re-start in the spring, although that seems a long way off at the moment. We are however open to new volunteers coming and helping with this project next year. We meet on a Tuesday at 10am and stay as long as we are able to, usually about 3pm,

if you would like to come and help with this very interesting project, e-mail [philbufton@hotmail.com](mailto:philbufton@hotmail.com)

Currently we have done 8 sessions at Brecon cemetery and will be there again in the spring several more times. There are about 1000 stones to record in this one graveyard. Once recorded they become a publication on our webshop. All our publications are available on our webshop.

<https://www.powysfhs.org.uk/wordpress/shop/>

See the full list of Zoom Meetings on our website under the Meetings tab. You do not have to be a member to join the Zoom meetings, just contact [philbufton@hotmail.com](mailto:philbufton@hotmail.com) for information.

<https://www.powysfhs.org.uk/wordpress/meetings-by-zoom/>

Our Next Zoom Meetings are:

### **Tuesday 14th November**

Denise Bates – Breach of promise to Marry

### **Tuesday 9th January 2024**

David Turner - Forgotten Staff - Victorian and Edwardian Railwaywomen

**Monday 20th November** - Local Meeting at Kensington Chapel, Brecon at 7-30pm

The subject is "Ancient Crafts". We are asking people to come along to display their products, around the larger room, and members can chat individually to find out about their skills & how things are made.

Local group meetings are now to be found on a separate page; all group meetings are listed here

<https://www.powysfhs.org.uk/wordpress/meetings/>

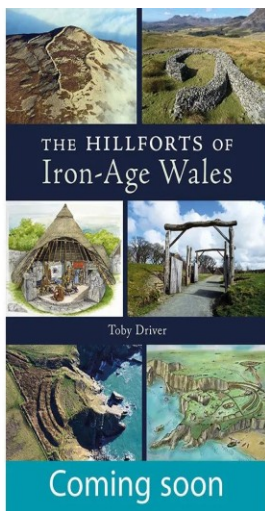
<https://www.facebook.com/PowysFamilyHistorySociety/>

Phil Bufton. Chairman PFHS  
[philbufton@hotmail.com](mailto:philbufton@hotmail.com)

## *The Radnorshire Society*

**Saturday 11 November 2.30pm:**  
Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod,  
followed by:  
4:00 pm Phillip Jones: Spa Town in  
World War I

**Friday 1 December 1:00pm**  
Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod  
Annual lunch.



Coming out shortly is a new book by  
Toby Driver on Welsh iron-age

hillforts. Toby Driver is very well known for his aerial photography of archaeological sites in Wales so it is great to see that this much-awaited book will shortly become available. You may pre-order it, for £20, by calling 01597 851685 or by calling into our Library at Dolmynach House on a Tuesday morning.

## *y Gaer – Brecon Library & Brecknock Museum*

**1<sup>st</sup> July – 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023**  
Mon-Fri – 10am-4:30pm  
*Free Entry*

Running along the Welsh border, the Llanthony Valley provides a route through the Black Mountains. Its wild, closed-in landscape and evocative monastic ruins have been a source of inspiration for many prominent artists and writers. This exhibition brings together works from the artists who have found inspiration in the Valley, from 1800 to 2023.

### **Saturday Morning Talks at y Gaer**

The popular Brecknock Society series of talks at y Gaer continue on the second Saturday of each month at 11.30am.

**9<sup>th</sup> December** Our Christmas event features Mervyn Bramley who will explain some of the work the Brecknock Society has been doing in support of the new exhibition in the Sir John Lloyd Gallery. There will also

be a special Christmas treat and refreshments (for which there will be a small charge).

**13<sup>th</sup> January**, the Very Rev'd Dr Paul Shackerley, Dean of Brecon, will speak on funerary traditions, as illustrated by the objects on display in the Brecon gallery.

**10<sup>th</sup> February**, Anthony Seys Llewellyn will explain the workings of the Assizes and Quarter Sessions which were held in the Courtroom. The talks are free to attend, and everyone is welcome. Please do support us when you can.

Check our new website, [www.brecknocksociety.wales](http://www.brecknocksociety.wales) for full details.

## *Ystradgynlais Heritage and Language Society*

### **Glantawe electric supply company**

In mid September the Society erected its seventh lectern style interpretation panel in the area. The three feet by two feet panel outlines the early history of the *Glantawe Electric Supply Company* using bilingual text and photographs. It is located near the 'Teddy Bear bridge', Derwen Road adjacent to the former company's power plant.

The plant was opened by Miss Lena Lewis the daughter of the Company's managing director Mr Evan Lewis of

Glais. Following the opening of the plant Baron Rolf Cederstrom, Adelina Patti's husband, turned on the switch to illuminate the street lights in the Ystradgynlais district.



This momentous event being the opening of the town's own electric power station took place on the afternoon of 22nd December 1910. The event was celebrated in style. *Pont yr Ystrad*, Commercial Street, was adored by a triumphal arch bearing the slogans 'Let there be light' and 'Forward Ystrad'. The lighting had been carried out under the instructions of the District Council and a long felt want had then been

remedied .

The power station supplied the area until 1936 when the South Wales Electric Power Company extended their high voltage transmission cables to the area. The Glantawe Electric Supply Company was then voluntarily wound up.