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Editorial

Due to financial constraints upon Brecon Library, this publication will now be compiled and published by Brecknock History Forum. Our thanks go to Sally Weller for her tenure as editor and hope that she has a long and enjoyable retirement.

The publication will initially be sent by email to associated History Groups and Archives for them to print copies for general circulation. If funding becomes available at a later date it may be printed as previously.

Hanes will be published every 3 months. The next edition is to be published August 2014. Please email any articles or information about events etc. with the heading "HANES" to alan.j.nicholls@btinternet.com by July 30th 2014.

Introducing The Forum

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NEWS AND EVENTS

Brecknock Society and Museum Friends.

Saturday May 3rd - Sunday May 4th 2014

Commemorative weekend for Dr Thomas Coke (1746-1814) On the Saturday, the BS&MF is hosting two lectures in the Memorial Hall at Christ College : 9.30 am. John Vickers - "Brecon, Wales: the background to Thomas Cole": 10.15am Rev. Robert Williams " Getting Coke out of Asbury's Shadow: his legacy for American Methodism". See www.brecknocksociety.co.uk for weekend programme.

Tuesday June 10th 2014

"The Mint and Joseph Harris" Jenny Moody 6.p.m. at Tredustan Court, Talgarth (by kind invitation of Jenny and Peter Moody). Light supper to be provided. Please book with Elaine Starling (01874711484) or evstarling@lineone.net) Numbers limited.

Saturday July 12th 2014

Festival of British Archaeology

Friday September 5th - Sunday 14th September 2014

Brecknock History Week.

Friday September 5th 2014

"Brecknock Remembers: Reflections and Memories of the Great War". Joint meeting with other members of the Brecknock History Forum 6.00 p. m. The Studio, Theatr Brycheiniog.

Friday October 17th 2014

Artists of the Crickhowell Area. William Gibbs and Elizabeth Siberry 6.00pm. Upper House Farm Crickhowell (by kind permission of Paul and Abigail Keane. Supper provided. Please book with Elaine Starling (01874711484) or evstarling@lineone.net) Numbers limited.

Breconshire Local & Family History Society

Jack Clark began photographing people and landscapes around Brecon at the turn of the 20th Century and continued for 50 years. The Clark Family have generously given the Breconshire Local & Family History Society permission to create an exhibition of photographs taken by Jack. The display will be in Brecon Library Room Upstairs from 7 – 21 June 2014 when nearly 200 photographs will be on show. The main purpose of the exhibition is to try to identify the people in the pictures – who do you think they are! The exhibition will be free of charge and everyone is encouraged to come along and scribble down names. The exhibition is supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

2013 marked another successful year for the **BLFHS**. Our monthly meetings at Brecon Library continue to be well attended, and Society membership is stable at over one hundred.

The BLFHS website, at <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/> is expanding, month by month. Details of all new features are provided on the BLFHS *News* webpages.

The BLFHS continues to play an active role in the *Brecknock History Forum*.

We have provided regular **Family History 'Drop-in Sessions'** on the third Saturday of each month at Brecon Library, and hope to continue this programme through 2014.

To find out more about the BLFHS, please contact Mrs Hilary Williams, chairperson of the BLFHS Management Committee: email chair@blfhs.co.uk or telephone 01874 624432.

Dates for your Diary are mostly confirmed right through to January 2015. Advance details are posted on our website, on Brecon Library noticeboard, and in other prominent locations in the county.

Builth Wells Heritage Society Programme

8 May 14 - Colin Hughes - The Cattle Drovers in Mid-Wales
12 Jun 14 - Brian E Davies - Last part of his walk in Wales
11 Sep 14 - Richard Rees - Irfon & Towy Dams
9 Oct 14 - Duncan James - Architectural History in Builth Wells
13 Nov 14 - An Evening of Remembrance
11 Dec 14 - Social Evening at the Greyhound

Crickhowell History Society

Wednesday 21st May - Brian Davies "The Welsh painting of Julius Ibbetson circa 1790"
Wednesday 18th June - Malcolm Johnson "Who was Iron-Bottom Rogers?"

Talks take place in the Dragon Inn, High Street and commence at 7.30 pm.

Hay History Group

Hay History Group have been busy recently. We are planning Hay History Weekend, set for 5-7 September this year and enjoyed a lively meeting in March. The project to restore the to-scale replica model of Hay railway station is underway and we are also involved with an ambitious project interpreting the history of all the buildings in Hay, which will occupy the next five years. The results of this research project will marry the history of the buildings, their usage and development, with that of the lives of the people who occupied them. See our website for street by street census details which will be uploaded soon.

We have also set up Hay Tours, which offers guided cultural heritage tours of Hay. We have a number of core routes, a new team of volunteer tour guides and some promising bookings for large parties visiting Hay over the summer. We are organising eight walks over the Hay Festival period this year (23 May - 1 June) and locals are welcome to join us. The list of walks can be found on our website www.hayhistorygroup.co.uk or on the Hay Festival website under 'Festival Extras' - www.hayfestival.org

The next meeting of Hay History Group will take place on 18 June, 8pm, Three Tuns, Hay. All welcome.

Llangynidr Local History Society

The Society will be publishing a small book this summer as part of the centenary events to commemorate World War 1. It will tell of the history and military service of those men from Llangynidr who went to fight in the Great War and didn't return. It has been a fascinating journey, discovering the history of these men and, with it, a glimpse of the social history of our community at that time. We hope you'll get real interest from the book which will be available at the Llangynidr Agricultural Show on Monday 25th August 2014 alongside an exhibition of the project.

The Llyn Syfaddan History Group

The Llyn Syfaddan History Group is slowly but surely taking shape. We have been holding a number of planning meetings and currently forming a committee and agreeing a constitution. We have been ably helped by Janet Bailey of Llangynidr Local History Society who is kindly acting as a mentor.

Our first major undertaking will be to create a digital archive of photographs and personal memories of the railway era in our local area around Llangors Lake and in particular the Talyllyn railway junction.

Recent accessions to Powys Archives.

Hay & District Community Support records: reports, 1986-2013 & booklet entitled 'Hay and District Community Support: The First 25 years', 2011 [Acc 2186]

Material collected during the course of research for articles and booklet about Brecon Girls' Grammar School, 1991-1996; originals and photocopies of 'The Daisy', 1922-1962; photocopies of Llanspydidd & Llanfaes Primary School and Brecon Girls' Grammar School log books [Acc 2193]

Printed booklet of a poem entitled 'Dydd Cononiad', 1894 & postcard of Abernant Hotel, Llanwrtyd Wells, C20 [Acc 2167].

Bundle of documents concerning Gough Constitutional Working Men's Club, Ystradgynlais, 1984-1990; Ystradgynlais British Legion records: contribution register, 1956-65; summary accounts, 1959-1963; minutes of meetings, 1934-1965 [Acc 2175].

Sales particulars from various rectories & former chapels in Llangurig, Carno, Mellington, Llanidloes, Welshpool, Cwmbelan, Tregynon, Llanwyddelan and Machynlleth in Montgomeryshire: Newbridge on Wye in Radnorshire and Felindre, Cilmery, Builth Wells and Llanfilo in Breconshire, 1997-2010 [Acc 2176].

The piece that follows is from a book held in the Powys Archives Local History Reference Collection

Historical Memoranda of Breconshire by John Lloyd. Vol 2 1904.

Forgotten Industries of Breconshire

An account of the vast Black Cattle droves that were brought along the cattle track on Epynt mountain from Carmarthenshire and other West Wales counties to England has previously been given (page 53).

And a friend, I am glad to say, has written at my request an account of the old Mail Coach days, and I hope in due time to be permitted to include it among these papers for publication. There is no one so competent to write it as my friend, who has a facile pen, a wonderfully good memory, and a long experience himself of the mail coach days. The persons of the famous coachmen and guards of that time are pictured in his memory, as if he saw them yesterday.

But there are other forgotten industries of our County, which deserve description.

Cardy Carts

The large trade by means of the Cardy Carts in dressed pigs, and in casks of butter from Cardiganshire and West Carmarthenshire through the County to the iron works on the hills, is well described in the poem by my father entitled:

"It was in early winter, at the time
When to the Southern range of Cambrian hills,
Whose mineral wealth is a boundless sea,
Widespread, and to its centre deepening still,
Light carts from all our inland vallies wend,
Giving each road an air of cheerfulness:
Some with their tempting tiers of slaughtered swine
Outstretched, as if the Goddess Plenty held
A pageant, and her portly emblems these.
Others again with dairy casks replete,
That through the summer season day by day
Filled up, as hives with honey, by the bees,
Must now rejoice the good wife's eyes no more,
But through that mountain tract be scattered wide
To help the industrious miner's hard-won meal."

These verses tell practically the whole story to those who have once seen a procession of the Cardy Carts passing along our roads, but to those who have not, a short description in prose is necessary to enable them to understand the trade, and to form a true idea of the mode of transit.

In the days we are writing of, there were no railways to the Hill districts, while those districts themselves were the scene of far larger iron mining operations than any the present generation have seen, or that ever will be seen again. From Hirwain onwards to the east at Nantyglo and Blaenavon, the borders of Breconshire and Glamorganshire, including Cyfartha, Plymouth, Rhymney, Tredegar, Sirhowy, Ebbw Vale, and Beaufort, had vast iron-works in full swing, with a large and increasing population that had to be fed. And so, in the vales of Teivy and Towy, and even farther west, it

became the habit of the farmers to breed pigs, and prepare casks of slightly salted butter to be sent to the Hills in the early autumn and winter seasons.

The pigs were fresh-killed, and dressed, just as you see sheep in our ordinary butcher's shop. But a weighty pig dressed, and stretched out at full length, was rather a gruesome sight, and when reposing on their journey in the Cardy Cart were practically hidden by folds of clean white sheets. However, the points of the outstretched legs and the head were always visible. I think the pigs had the cart to themselves generally, while the rows of butter casks filled another.

The Cardy Cart was peculiar, and is foreign to Breconshire. We have nothing like it, and I wonder if the learned King's Counsel, who said and maintained in spite of the laughter of the Court, that a Breconshire "gambo" had no wheels, would be able to describe a "Cardy Cart!" The peculiarity is the lightness of the wheels and sides, the latter being open with low upright turned rails. I expect it was designed for this particular trade, though useful for harvest work at home. The cart was always painted a light red ochre colour and kept spotlessly clean.

The one horse in the shaft was a "Cardy" horse-a breed of itself, of a medium brown colour, but light and slinky, 14 hands or a little more in height, a good free walker, and capable of going long distances without tiring.

The driver-for he sat on the cart with the G.O.-like reins in his hand-was either the farmer or the hired carrier, and he was of that spare lathy breed of men you find today on the borders of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire. And we know that district has produced many a shrewd man of business, who has made his mark in trade in trade in England. The party of carts, usually 10 or 12 together in a string, all came from Llandovery to Brecon by way of Trecastle. Some turned up the road for Merthyr either at Pont Senny or at the Tarrall bridge, but the bulk came on and always made the Bridge End Inn, kept then by Prosser, as their resting place for the night. It was rare to see the road by the side of the college wall unoccupied by a string of un-horsed carts, those laden or those returning empty.

Of course they had their regular stopping places. Their object was, leaving Teivy side on a Monday, to get to the Hills, transact their business there, and then be back home in good time for Friday, or Saturday, and so have the Sunday quietly at home.

After leaving Brecon by the Watton road, the carts usually turned over the Lock bridge, and made for Llangynider, and then up the Trefil hill to the Works, where their best customers dwelt, probably in those days the Companys shops, like Bychan's at Rhymney, and Jayne's at Nantyglo. These journeys were not unattended with risk, and the sad story so well told in the "Week's Journey" is an illustration of the dangers. And of course they had to keep a good look out for Howel Rees, coming down the 3 miles from Trecastle to Sennybridge in 7½ Minutes. They knew his time and prudently drove on one side when they heard old Compton, the guard, blowing his horn. What a lot of money they must have paid in Tolls to the Breconshire Trust! I think I have heard the freight of two full Cardy Carts worth £70-but I have no means of verifying it now.

The distance to be travelled in the week, to and fro, would be about 180 miles, and a good deal of the travelling was done at night, or in the very early morning.

Oak-planking for New Quay and Aberayron

Another lost industry is that of the conveyance of oak timber, converted into planks at Brecon, from our County westward into Cardiganshire to New Quay, Cardigan, and Aberayron. I think most of it went to New Quay, and was used for the purpose of building and repairing coasting vessels there. It was not uncommon for Breconshire small capitalists to have a share in these vessels, and I remember some cousins of mine having this investment. Messrs. John Griffiths & Son mainly provided the oak timber, and converted it into planks of the required dimensions at their Brecon yard. The timber carriages used were a Cardiganshire speciality, having the lightest of narrow wheels and framework. And the horses used were two in number only, one before the other, and of the strong class of Cardy breed, but smart walkers. Of course this was but a small industry, and you only occasionally met these timber carriages on the road. However, this traffic, with that of the frequent strings of Cardy carts, and the rush by of the mail coaches, adding to the passing of postchaises, imparted a life and cheerfulness to our roads that we can hardly realise now. Bicycles and motor cars are but a poor substitute, and only to be met with on the roads when they are dry.

This demand for a small class of lengthy oak timber for Cardiganshire helped to keep the price up, and Breconshire landowners were in those days able to obtain £9 for a full-sized oak tree, containing about 60 to 70 feet cube of timber. I have by me the prices realised at a timber sale on the Tregunter estate, when 90 trees were sold for £900.

Mr Davies, of Ffrwdvale, in Carmarthenshire, who gave me many valuable notes, when preparing the paper on Black Cattle dreves, writes me thus:

"I remember a great number of carts passing through Llansawell from South Cardigan and North Pembrokeshire, and another string from Lampeter and Tregaron district-in fact, Mid-Cardiganshire-passing through Pumpsaint on their way to the ironworks, carrying 'Pigs in carcase.' It was winter, I should think, from November to the end of March. The pigs were freshly killed, but not salted, and would not, I suppose, stand carrying in warm weather."

And he adds-

"There was another great industry in those days, the carrying of oak timber from Radnorshire and Breconshire to Aberayron for ship-building."