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SPECIAL EDITION 200 BRECONSHIRE & MONMOUTHSHIRE CANAL ANNIVERSARY



If you have something to say, a question to ask, a view to promote, please contact:

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Welcome to the special edition celebrating the 200th anniversary of the Brecon & Monmouthshire Canal.

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Sue Jones (former Assistant Branch Librarian) on her appointment as Temporary Branch Librarian covering Becky Pugh's maternity leave. I'm sure you would like to join with me in wishing her every success in her new post.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition with articles, events and photographs. These have gone into making this Hanes a very special treat. I hope you enjoy reading it.
Sally

Introducing The Forum

BRECKNOCK MUSEUM

Tel. 01874 624121

BRECKNOCK SOCIETY AND MUSEUM FRIENDS

Contact: Elaine Starling Tel. 01874 711484

BRECON LIBRARY: LOCAL STUDIES DEPT.

Contact: Sally Wheller Tel. 01874 623346

BUILTH WELLS & DISTRICT HERITAGE SOCIETY

Contact: Dave and Felicity Gill Tel. 01982 570230

CHRIST COLLEGE ARCHIVE

Contact: Felicity Kilpatrick Tel. 01874 615440

CRAI & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY ARCHIVE

Contact: Frances Jenkins Liz Matthews
Tel. 01874 636990 Tel. 01874 636797

CRICKHOWELL DISTRICT ARCHIVE

Contact: Angela Waring Tel. 01873 810922

CRICKHOWELL & DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Janice Marshall Tel. 01873 810305

LLANGAMMARCH WELLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Gaynor Williams Kay Coldrick,
Tel 01591 620368 Tel. 01591 610123

LLANGYNIDR LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Christine Porter Tel. 01874 730354

PONTNEATHVAUGHAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Stephen Morris Tel. 01639 720728

POWYS COUNTY ARCHIVE OFFICE

Contact: Catherine Richards Tel. 01597 826088

BRECON LOCAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Hilary Williams Alison Noble
Tel. 01874 624432 Tel. 01874 620133

REGIMENTAL MUSEUM OF THE ROYAL WELSH

Contact: Bill Cainan / Celia Green Tel. 01874 613310

TALGARTH AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Contact: Jan Hughes Tel. 01874 711397

WELSH HISTORIC GARDENS TRUST

Contact: Elizabeth Siberry Tel: 01873 812169

YSTRADGYNLAIS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Caryl Jones Tel. 01269 825306

Brecknock History Forum: Canal Anniversary

Some of the members of The Brecknock History Forum whose areas of interest overlap the Mons & Brec Canal have been working together to draft a History Trail leaflet. This will provide basic information on the historic features along the canal from Brecon to the Ashford Tunnel. The Forum members are grateful for the support of Brecon Beacons National Park, British Waterways, Brecknock Museum, Theatr Brycheiniog and especially to Brecon Library for the use of its premises for the meetings. If you want to know more about this project please contact Sally Wheller at Brecon Library.

Victor Jones History Competition 2012

The aim of the Victor Jones Junior School History Competition is to encourage Year 6 pupils in local schools to find out about the history of Breconshire and further develop the link between primary schools and Brecknock Museum. Historically, only schools within Brecon and just outside had been invited to take part but this year it was decided to open up the competition to all

primary schools in Breconshire. Interest in the competition has grown and this year entries were received from 3 more schools and some entries were in Welsh.

The competition is designed to complement the teaching of the National Curriculum and, whilst entries should be about the history of Breconshire, the children are free to choose a subject from any period from the Roman occupation of Wales to the present day. Their work is assessed independently by a number of experienced judges on content, originality and presentation.

Thanks to a generous endowment by Dr Evan Jones of Bristol University, in memory of his grandfather Victor Jones who was a founding member of the Brecknock Society and who taught in Breconshire for 35 years, there are 3 individual prizes awarded.

In the past, 'Highly Commended' certificates have also been awarded to entries considered to be of particular merit; this year 'Highly Commended' book token prizes were also introduced. There is also a school prize for the school that gains the greatest number of individual marks. This makes it possible for a school to win the school prize even though their pupils may not have won an individual one.

The standard of work produced by the children this year has been outstanding and the judging was a long & difficult process. As a result, there were 2 first prize winners, 1 second and 3 third!

Third prize was shared between Robert Jones of Talgarth School for his project 'Talgarth War Memorial', Shannon Evans of Llangors School for her project 'Farming in the 1900s' and Jessica Rayner for her project 'A journey through time at Bryn Bolgoed'.

Robert chose to research five of the fallen heroes recorded on the Talgarth War Memorial, using information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, local newspapers and the South Wales Borderers' Museum. Shannon focussed on how farming has changed over the last 100 years, interviewing both sets of grandparents who are farmers and adding information gained from other sources. Jessica wanted to find out more about the people who had lived on her family's farm before she did. She interviewed local residents, visited the local graveyards and trawled through census records, producing an enormous amount of information on the previous occupants.

Second prize went to Eryl Joy of Ysgol y Bannau for his project 'Cwm Dylan', the house in which his grandmother lives. Once again, the judges were impressed with the amount of research Eryl put into his project, using census records and title maps to explore the history of the house.

First prize was awarded jointly to Griff Thomas of Llangors School and to Daniel Hiscocks of Sennybridge School.

Griff's project 'Upper Pendre Farm' explored the history of his family's farm from 1851 to the present day using census records, title deeds, maps, interviews and photographs. Daniel's project, 'Hanes Cwm Senni', which was written in Welsh, looked at the history of the Senni Valley through its name, its churches, its schools and its farms and finished with the story of action taken in the 1970s by local residents to stop the flooding of the valley to create a reservoir. The judges were impressed by the breadth of both boys' research and their use of original material. Both Griff and Daniel chose topics dear to their hearts and their enthusiasm for their subjects was very much in evidence in their interpretation of the information they discovered.

As always, the children have discovered previously unrecorded information about the history of Breconshire which can now be held at the Museum. Some of the winning projects will be on display for the public to view at Brecon Library until 17th April and then at Talgarth Library until 19th May.

THE BRECON AND MONMOUTH CANAL **SIR CHARLES MORGAN**

In 1793 an Act of Parliament for 'Making and Maintaining a Navigable Canal from the Town of Brecknock to the Monmouthshire Canal, near the Town of Pontypool in the County of Monmouth; and for making and maintaining Rail Ways and Stone Roads from such Canal to several Iron Works and Mines in the Counties of Brecknock and Monmouth' was passed. Some 285 gentlemen and ladies were named as supporting the Act, including such luminaries as the Duke of Beaufort, Earl Camden, and Sir Charles Morgan of the Tredegar family.

Such supporters had sought certain advantages for their initiative, and the Act amongst other measures allowed 'Owners and Occupiers of lands adjoining the Canal to use upon the same any Pleasure Boats or any Boats for the Purpose of Husbandry (except for Conveyance of Lime), and for conveying Cattle from any Farm or Land. Boats were to be no more than twelve feet in length, and no use of locks'. The Schedule to the Act listed a number of Parishes where properties would be affected for purchase, and in the Parish of St. Johns, twelve such places were involved, those of Charles Morgan for example being

a shed occupied by Captain Hughes
a garden in Captains Walk occupied by Wm. Morgan, clerk
and Mary Robertson
a Mill and Mill Pond occupied by Wm. Watkins

✂

The Canal had reached Talybont by 1799, and was open to Brecon by December 1800. But it was not until early in 1812 that the southwards link to the Monmouthshire Canal was completed. Charles Morgan, like other estate owners, became involved in the Canal as a property seller, a shareholder, and a user. By a Deed of Land Sale, dated 22 January 1800, from John Powell, Clerk of the Canal, and Wm. Powell, Treasurer for the Abergavenny part of the Canal, Morgan was paid £ 951.4.10. The detail of this was set out in a 'Statement of and Calculations of all the Lands of Sir Charles Morgan in the Parishes of St. Johns and Llanhamlach taken by Brecon and Abergavenny Canal', in the Deed of Conveyance dated 12 July, 1802. The lands sold were:

Cefn Brynich Farm part of
Brynich Farm part of
Lands tenanted by Thos. Meredith, Hugh Bold, David Jones,
Charles Pritchard, Wm. Williams. These totalled 15 acres 2
roods 38 perches.

✂

The Act of 1793 had also provided for 1,000 shares to be sold to underpin the cost of the project. Charles Morgan decided to be an investor and on the 3rd November, 1800 paid £300 for 5 shares, numbers 88-92, the deal being conducted by his agent Thos. Bold with Wm. Wynter. Bold kept his employer up to date with the progress of his investment which reached £150 by August 1803, before sinking back to £80 in November 1807.

✂

The purpose of the Canal was, of course, it's utilisation as a conveyor of heavy goods. A sample of such activities showed Charles Morgan taking advantage of this facility and Canal records from Christmas 1809 to Christmas 1810 confirm Morgan paying £5.0.6 for the transportation of:

Joinery Work

7 tons

Castings	2.75 tons
Bricks	1.75 tons
Planks	1.75 tons
Flagstones	16.5 tons

✂

The above information has been obtained from the Tredegar Papers held at The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

References: Tredegar Pts 11 & 2.

Our thanks to Mr A.J.Bell for this article on the canal.

Canal Breach 1994

Report from The Western Mail Dec 1994

Special is flood hero

Part-time bobby Allan Jones saved his village from disaster because he fancied an evening pint in his local.

Special constable Allan, 45, was strolling to the pub when he spotted a trickle of water seeping from the rain-swollen Brecon and Monmouthshire canal.

He frantically ran through the village knocking on doors telling people to flee their homes just minutes before the canal burst its banks.

Then he ran to the pub where a darts match was underway to lead drinkers upstairs to safety.

Seconds later, as the Western Mail reported yesterday, the village was swamped under a torrent of flood water four feet deep destroying everything in its path.

Emergency services rushed to the picturesque village of Talybont-on-Usk, Powys, but were powerless to stop the water cascading through the main street.

Police said Allan, a special for 20 years, saved numerous lives with his quick thinking.

The modest father-of-one, who works as a nurse in an old people's home, said, "I was on my way for a pint when I saw

the trickle of water coming from the canal bank."

"I knew it was going to burst so I just ran around telling people to get out of their homes quick."

A police spokesman said, "Those few minutes when Allan was rushing around getting everyone to safety were vital."

The popular beauty spot at the foot of the Brecon Beacons was still under four feet of water yesterday.



Photograph and excerpt kindly given by Mr Geoff Sykes.

Our thanks to Margaret Probert for allowing us to print a selection of photographs from her collection showing the Breach at Talybont in 1994.



Canal Anniversary Activities

BRIDGES, BUGS & A BIRTHDAY!

From 21st to 25th May, Brecon schools will be taking part in a day's workshop 'Bridges, bugs & a birthday!' delivered by British Waterways, Brecknock Museum & Brecon Library to help celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal. Key Stage pupils from Ysgol Penmaes and Ysgol y Bannau together with Mount Street Junior, Llanfaes, St Joseph's and Priory Schools will be enjoying a day of hands-on activities based on the history and environment of the Canal. The children will spend half a day at Brecon Library and half at day at Theatr Brycheiniog & along the Canal bank learning about the Canal's past; the flora, fauna & insects that live in and around it; how canals & bridges are built and how to use the Library's resources to research local history topics. The day will also include a 'walk & talk' between the Library and the Theatre.

HALF-TERM ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES IN BRECON 6TH - 8TH JUNE

Brecon Library, Brecknock Museum, British Waterways, Ardent Gallery, Brecknock Wildlife Trust and Breconshire Local & Family History Society have come together to organize 3 days of canal-themed family activities from 6th- 8th June to help celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Mon & Brecon Canal. Children under 8 should be accompanied by an adult at all events.

'WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?'

Wed 6th/Thu 7th 10am-12pm and Fri 8th 2-4pm

Family history research session with Breconshire Local & Family History Society in Brecon Library. Free. Drop-in.

CANAL ART PAINTING

Wed 6th/Thu 7th 11am-1pm

Canal art painting on canvas & masks at Ardent Gallery. £4.50 per head. Booking essential on 01874 623333.

CANAL CRAFT ACTIVITIES

Wed 6th 2-4.30pm and Thu 7th 10-11.30am

Brecon library. £1 per child. Booking essential on 01874 623346.

'WILDLIFE WALK & TALK'

Thu 7th 1-3.30pm.

Walk along Canal & river led by Brecknock Wildlife Trust. Adults £3; children free. Free parking at Subud Centre. Start & finish by bridge at Morrison's garage. No booking required. Further information 01874 625708.

CANAL ART FACE PAINTING

Fri 8th 10am-4pm. Ardent Gallery. £2 per child. Drop-in.

Canal Anniversary events:

Sat 2nd– Mon 4th June 2012. Talybont-on-Usk Village Jubilee & Canal Celebrations.

Mon 4th June 2012. Llangynidr Village Jubilee & Canal Celebrations. An all day celebration with music, dance and activities for all.

Friday 28th – Sunday 30th September 2012. *Crickhowell History*

Weekend. A full weekend of activities and exhibitions on Crickhowell town and surrounding area including the Canal.

Monday 19th November 2012. Brecknock Society and Museum Friends. "*A dozen things you did not know about the Canal.*" Talk, light lunch and a walk, lead by John Norris starting at 11 a.m. More information can be obtained from 01874 711484.

Dates for your Diary

Monday 16th April. Llangammarch Wells Local History Society. Richard Mears, Plasnewydd, is compiling a book of walks of the area. He will show the routes and ask members to contribute historical information, points of interest and anecdotes to illustrate the walks. Alexandra Hall, 7.30pm.

Wednesday 18th April. Crickhowell & District Historical Society. *The Battle of Isandlwana* talk by Bill Cainan. Crickhowell Scout Hall, Castle Road, 7.30pm.

Thursday 26th April. Talgarth & District Historical Society. *Blanche Parry. The closest person to Elizabeth I for 65 years.* Talk and slides by her biographer Ruth Richardson. Gwernyfed Rugby Club, 7.30pm.

Sunday 29th April. Brecknock Society and Museum Friends. Anniversary Service for Henry Vaughan, Llansantffraed Church, 3 p.m.

Wednesday 2nd May. Llangammarch History Society play host to Breconshire Local and Family History Society. *A Walk around Llangammarch.* A gentle walk around this fascinating village led by local historians. The walk will finish with tea at the Alexandra Hall. Donation to Llangammarch £3.00 per person.

Thursday 10th May. Brecknock Society and Museum Friends. *Roland Mathias Prize: Wales Book of the Year Shortlist.* *Announcement.* Theatre Brycheiniog, 7 p.m. Tickets £10 /£8 (Welsh Academy Members). There will be performances by some of Britain's leading poets, including Carol Ann Duffy and Gillian Clarke. Ticket price includes canapés and wine reception.

Wednesday 16th May. Crickhowell & District Historical Society. *Edward Williams and the Celtic Crosses of Llantwit Major.* A talk by Brian Davies. Crickhowell Scout Hall, Castle Road, 7.30pm.

Monday 21st May. Llangammarch Wells Local History Society. *Royal Observer Corps.* Talk by Ray Davies, Glanrafon. Alexandra Hall, 7.30pm.

21st May – 25th May. Brecon Primary Schools Activity Week in the Library. See page 4 for details.

Thursday 24th May. Brecknock Society and Museum Friends. *Brecon Bridges in pictures.* William Gibbs will lead an indoor session in the George Hotel followed by a walking tour. 5.30 p.m.

Thursday 31st May. Talgarth & District Historical Society. Visit to Talgarth Mill.

Wednesday 6th June. Breconshire Local and Family History Society. AGM which will be followed by some informal chats about "Family Skeletons". Members are invited to give a 5 minute talk on the family, please contact Hilary to book a slot.

6th June - 8th June, 10.30am to 3.30pm. Families Canal Anniversary Activities in Brecon at the Library, Canal and Theatre.

Friday 15th June. Brecknock Society and Museum Friends. *Visit to Talgarth Tower and Mill.* Tim Martin, who lives in the Tower and was the millwright for the mill reconstruction will show us around. Numbers limited, so please book with Elaine Starling (01874 711484 or evstarling@lineone.net)

Monday 18th June. Llangammarch Wells Local History Society. *How to research your family tree.* A talk by Hilary Williams from the Brecon Local and Family History Society. Alexandra Hall, 7.30pm.

Wednesday 20th June. Crickhowell & District Historical Society. *Stories in Welsh Stone.* A talk by Geoff Brookes. Crickhowell Scout Hall, Castle Road, 7.30pm.

Thursday 28th June. Talgarth & District Historical Society. *Brynmaur Furniture.* Talk and slides by Eurwyn Wiliam, author of the book about this pioneering project. Gwernyfed Rugby Club, 7.30pm.

Wednesday 4th July. Breconshire Local & Family History Society. *18th Century farming.* A talk by William (Len) Ley based on contemporary diaries from a farmer near Abercrave. Brecon Library 2pm.

Thursday 7th July. Talgarth & District Historical Society. Visit to Brynmaur Museum. Following on from last month's talk.

Wednesday 18th July 2pm. Brecknock Society and Museum Friends. Visit to National Wales Museum Collection and Resource Centre at Nantgarw, near Caerphilly. The theme will be the conservation and care of the collections. It will be followed by a visit to the site of Nantgarw China works 3.45pm. Again numbers will be limited so please book with Elaine Starling (01874 711484 or evstarling@lineone.net)

20th July – 30th July - Canal Exhibition at Theatr Brycheiniog. An exhibition of canal related documents, images and exhibits. www.theatrbrycheiniog.co.uk

18th Century Farming

Wednesday 1st August. Breconshire Local and Family History Society. Please check the society's website for details. Brecon Library 2pm.

Wednesday 5 September. Breconshire Local and Family History Society. *Railways into Brecon.* A talk by Tudor Watkins about the various railway companies who brought trains into Brecon and the social history around the people who worked for them. Brecon Library 2pm.

Wednesday 19th September. Crickhowell & District Historical Society. *Roaming with a camera in the Brecon Beacons.* Crickhowell Scout Hall, Castle Road, 7.30pm.

**Produced by Powys Library
and Archive Service.**