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

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Closing date for the May 2013 issue is the 1st April.

EDITORIAL

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year. During last year many exciting events and activities took place for the celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal. As a result of the collaboration of Forum members, regular meetings are now taking place to encourage further co-operation regarding an annual Forum event. For further information see the Brecknock History Forum on page 2. My thanks to John Gibbs and Alison Noble for their continued work as Chair and Secretary of the Forum meetings.

I would like to welcome Hay Cheese Market Project to the Forum. I hope their members find it a useful and productive experience.

Rebecca Pugh has returned as Branch Librarian after her maternity leave. I look forward to co-editing Hanes again with her.

All that's left is to hope you, the reader, enjoy this edition of Hanes.

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

BRECON LOCAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Hilary Williams Alison Noble

Tel. 01874 624432

Tel. 01874 620133

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

HAY CHEESE MARKET PROJECT

Contact: Clare Purcell Tel. 07717312286

LLANGAMMARCH WELLS LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Gaynor Williams

Kay Coldrick,

Tel 01591 620368

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LLANGYNIDR LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Jan Bailey Tel. 07766010090

PONTNEATHVAUGHAN LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Stephen Morris Tel. 01639 720728

POWYS COUNTY ARCHIVE OFFICE

Contact: Catherine Richards Tel. 01597 826088

POWYS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Contact: Sheila Leitch Tel. 01497 847354

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

During 2012, a number of members of the Brecknock History Forum worked together to produce a leaflet on the **History of the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal**. We are very grateful to Brecon Beacons National Park and Collabor8 funding for their help with the production costs. The leaflet covered the Canal from Brecon to the Ashford Tunnel – we have managed to hand out all 5,000 printed! A group is now working on a leaflet for the next section from Ashford Tunnel to Gilwern.

The Forum members are also working together to hold a Brecknock History Event from 7th – 15th September 2013. Various local and family history societies will be arranging events across the whole county of Brecknock and a leaflet/poster will be produced advertising all the activities.

These plans are still in the early stages but if you would like to take part or for more information please contact Brecon Library.

My thanks to Alison Noble Secretary of the Forum for this synopsis of the past year and the plans for this year.Ed.

News from the Breconshire Local & Family History Society

- 2012 marked another successful year for the **Breconshire Local & Family History Society** (BLFHS). Our first AGM was held in June, and our monthly meetings at Brecon Library continued to be well attended. Society membership is stable at over one hundred.
- The BLFHS website, at <http://www.blfhs.co.uk/> is proving a popular internet resource, typically receiving between 600 and 700 visits per month. In November, we switched to a new webhost to enable our site to offer even more local and family history resources to our members. Details of all new features are provided on the BLFHS *News* webpages.
- The BLFHS is involved in a growing number of projects related to local and family history. The results of our first major project, an illustrated database of the monumental inscriptions at Troedrhiwdalar Chapel, Llanafan Fawr, was added to our website in May, and published in book form two months later.
- The BLFHS has been an active participant in the *Brecknock History Forum*, a group which has been reinvigorated following its

involvement in the Canal200 festival. We will be contributing to the Local History Weekend events to be held in September 2013.

- Beginning in September, at the request of Brecon Library, we have been running a **Family History ‘Drop-in Session’** on the third Saturday of the month. We hope to continue this programme through 2013.
- To find out more about the BLFHS, please contact Mrs Hilary Williams, chairperson of the BLFHS Management Committee: e-mail chair@blfhs.co.uk or telephone 01874 624432.
- See *Dates for your Diary* for details of our forthcoming meetings, which are mostly confirmed right through to January 2014. Advance details are also posted on our website, on Brecon Library noticeboard, and in other prominent locations in the county.

Parallel histories: the Canal and the Armoury in Brecon.

At the time the Canal was being constructed, another significant development was taking place in Brecon in the form of John Maund’s red-brick Armoury on The Watton. This is well known now as the home of the Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh.

The building was erected by public subscription in 1805, for the storage of powder, arms and ammunition for the Brecknock County Militia. The inhabitants of Brecon were pleased that the large quantities of gunpowder which had previously been stored in the Guildhall were now kept at a safer distance from the town centre. The main building is 99 feet long by 35 feet wide, and two stories high. The architect, John Maund, was a Brecon man, and was also responsible for several bridges in Brecknockshire. Memorials to his family can be seen in the South Aisle of Brecon Cathedral.

In 1813 the lower storey of the building was adapted and fitted out as an armoury with racks capable of holding 15,000 muskets and bayonets, and 1,500 swords. Later the armoury was converted into a barracks to accommodate 270 men. From here, in 1831, soldiers were sent to suppress the Merthyr riots. Eight years later more troops were dispatched from Brecon to quell the Chartist Riots in Llanidloes and Newport and the Rebecca Riots in Narberth.

While the canal faced competition from the railways and subsequent decline, the barracks were extended. Between 1842 and 1844, Royal Engineer Colonel WR Ord of the War Office designed and oversaw the erection of the main barracks buildings for infantry

and cavalry. Samuel Hancorn, of Brecon was the contractor, and the cost was nearly £60,000.

Further evidence of the contrasting fortunes of the barracks and the canal, was the expansion of the barracks in the late 19th Century at a time when the canal was falling out of use. In 1879 the landmark large keep and entrance to the barracks was built, providing more storage for arms, ammunition and accommodation.

Since 1964, John Maund's 1805 building has been the home of the Regimental Museum, a much-loved local landmark and valued part of Brecon's history. Just as the original function of the canal has been replaced with a new role, so too has that of the Armoury. Both are now valued leisure attractions to local residents and to tourists alike, each playing their part in attracting people to this area.

The Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh , The Watton in Brecon is open Monday to Friday 10am to 5 pm. Additionally, it is open on Saturday between 7th April and 29th September 10am to 4pm. Telephone 01874 613310 for further information.

A Welsh Hermit

Radnorshire Standard 15th August 1908

Hoard of gold in a hillside hut.

Cut his own gravestone

The story of the discovery in mysterious circumstances of a miser's hoard of gold in his hut on the hillside comes from the village of Bwlch, in the Usk Valley, Breconshire.

An old man, known as "Jack o' Jim" lived the life of a hermit in a stone hut on Myndd Troed, a hill on the Black Mountain Range, overlooking the quiet little village of Bwlch. His age at death was 90, and he had led the "simple life" ever since the death of his parents when he was a young man. He earned his living, and savings, as a messenger to the markets of Brecon and other towns for the villagers. He would execute the orders and carry the good eight miles from Brecon for the sum of sixpence per message and a cup of tea or a pint of beer at the end of sixteen miles journey. By the snaring of game on the hill, and the sale of these if he trapped too many for his own use, and the good-heartedness of the people who gave him food, he subsisted, and saved enough to leave some poor relations well off. He lived the life of a recluse, and

seldom attended any place of worship or showed himself to the villagers excepting on a market day. He always guessed the time by the movements of the sun, and his once black clothes were green with age and exposure to all kinds of weather.

Some years before his death he hewed a gravestone for himself out of a quarry on the hill near his house. He always resented the intrusion of visitors to his domain, and would accept no gift which would tend to add to his personal comfort, such as bedclothes and the like. His bed was of fern cut from the hill mounted upon some boards and stakes which jutted from the wall, and it was near his "bed" in a crevice in the wall where his savings were ultimately found.

After his death some relations of the old man had several hunts for the money which they thought he had left, but for some time they failed to find it, and kept the place barred and locked to stop others who were not entitled to it from making the attempt.

It got abroad recently that the money of the old hermit had at last been found, but it was not made known how much he had left, although it is certain that his once poor relations have been made comfortable by the find, and have suddenly brightened up and commenced to farm a small holding which includes some land around the dwelling of their late friend "Jack".

The body of "Jack o' Jim" now rests in the graveyard of the village chapel, and his own headstone has been fixed up to mark the spot.

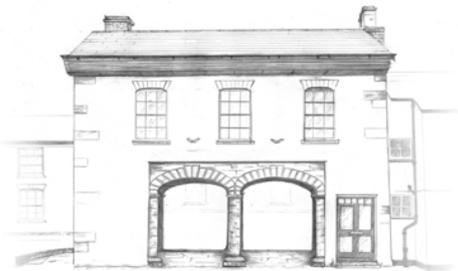
Our thanks to Bryan Lawrence who sent the above article.

Hay Cheese Market Project

The Hay Cheese Market Project focuses on restoring a currently derelict Grade II listed building, situated in a prominent location in the centre of Hay-on-Wye and returning it to public use. The first floor, formerly the Manorial Court Room, will be transformed into top end self-catering accommodation for holiday lets, which will pay for the ongoing maintenance of the building. The ground floor, formerly the Market Hall, will be returned to its former function and will be available for hire to groups or individuals, as well as being available to stall holders on Hay's weekly market. The walls will be used to provide interpretation material about Hay's history, that of the building and of Hay's weekly market, via bilingual

interpretation displays, photographs, archive pictures, and a listening post. We are managing a wide range of community projects to explore our local history and heritage, these are open to everyone. More information at www.cheesemarket.org.

Thank you to Clare Purcell for providing this piece about the Project in Hay.



Hay Cheese Market

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 27th January 2013. Powys Family History Society (Brecknock Group). *Annual Lunch*. Bishops Meadow Hotel, Brecon.

Wednesday 6th February 2013. Breconshire Local & Family History Society. *Brynore Tramroad talk* by John Jones. Brecon Library at 2pm.

Thursday 14th February 2013. Builth Wells & District Heritage Society. *Mistakes by well-known bands*, talk by Duncan MacDonald. Greyhound Hotel (upstairs), Builth Wells at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 20th February 2013. Brecknock Society & Museum Friends. *The Llynfi Basin: a medieval manorial landscape rediscovered*. A talk by Bob Silvester of the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. Brecon Guildhall at 6pm.

Monday 25th February 2013. Powys Family History Society (Brecknock Group). *Early place names in the Borough of Brecknock* by Peter Powell. Kensington Baptist Chapel, Brecon at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 6th March 2013. Brecon Local & Family History Society. *Notable women in the Ayrton Family Tree* by Deanna Leboff. Brecon library at 2pm.

Thursday 14th March 2013. Builth Wells & District Heritage Society. *A.G.M and Walking from Brecon to the North Wales Coast* by Brian E Davies. Greyhound Hotel (upstairs), Builth Wells at 7.30pm.

Friday 15th March 2013. Brecknock Society & Museum Friends. *Sir John Lloyd Memorial Lecture*.

Early Medieval Connection: Brycheiniog in the time of the Llangorse Crannog and Viking Age Britain. A lecture by Dr Mark Redknapp, Acting Keeper of the Department of Archaeology and Numismatics, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Theatr Brycheiniog at 7.30pm.

Tickets are free from the Theatre Box Office but need to be booked. Box Office telephone no. 01874 611622 or www.theatrebrycheiniog.co.uk. The Victor Jones History prize which aims to encourage history in Primary School, will be presented at the same event.

Monday 25th March 2013. Powys Family History Society (Brecknock Group). *Old Gwernyfed, Felindre a talk* by Roger Beetham, who has lived at the house for 25 years. Kensington Baptist Chapel at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 3rd April 2013. Brecon Local & Family History Society. *Madame Adelina Patti* by Len Ley. Brecon Library at 2pm.

Monday 8th April 2013. Brecknock Society & Museum Friends. *A.G.M*. The Studio, Theatr Brycheiniog at 2.30pm.

Monday 29th April 2013. Powys Family History Society (Brecknock Group) *Farm diaries from 1780 in Ynys Wen a talk* by William (Len) Ley. Kensington Baptist Chapel at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 1st May 2013. Brecon Local & Family History Society. *Visit to Brecon Cathedral*.

Monday 27th May 2013. Powys Family History Society, (Brecknock Group). *The origins and early days of the Salvation Army with particular reference to Wales*, a talk by Dr Glenn Horridge. Kensington Baptist Chapel at 7.30pm.

Wednesday 5th June 2013. Brecon Local & Family History Society. *A.G.M. and a talk on Tithe Maps* by Roy Davies. Brecon Library at 2pm.

Monday 24th June 2013. Powys Family History Society (Brecknock Group). *Brecknock Group AGM and research evening*. Kensington Baptist Chapel at 7.30pm.

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