

W.I.S.E. Newsletter

Volume I Issue 4

JulAug 1999

Programs

by James Jeffrey, programs chair W.I.S.E.

Medieval British Genealogy, featuring Kenneth Harper Fenton and Robert Joseph Curfman.

Kenneth Harper Fenton is the publisher of *The Plantagenet Connection*, a serial devoted to studies of the Royal House of Plantagenet. He is the owner of Heliotrope Communication, Inc. of Arvada, Colorado. He has edited the three volumes of *The Ancestry of Elizabeth of York Through Twenty Generations*.

Robert Joseph Curfman is the author of three books, *Paddock Genealogy* (1977); *Petty-Pettis Genealogy* (1974); *Curfman-Kurfman-Corfman-Korffmann Genealogy* (1971). He has published several articles including "Captain George Whitehorne and Some of His Descendants" in the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 1 January 1992, volume 146, number 581. Curfman is most interested in county families and has devoted a great deal of research to medieval Welsh families.

Fenton and Curfman will introduce you to resources and methodologies which will inspire you to explore your Medieval ancestors.

Saturday, 24 July 1999, 1:30 to 4 p.m., this event is free and open to the public, reservations are not required. This session will be held in the Lower Level Conference Center Central Denver Public Library, 10 West Fourteenth Avenue Parkway

Betty Brown: Member Profile

by James Jeffrey, program chair, W.I.S.E.

Member Profiles is an opportunity to get to know your fellow W.I.S.E. members. Please be thinking about what you would like other people to know about you and your W.I.S.E. research.

Elizabeth E. "Betty" Brown was born in Michigan, grew up in New Jersey and worked in New York before retiring to Colorado.

She graduated from Westfield (NJ) High School, Albion College (MI) and Pratt Institute (NY). She majored in Chemistry and Modern Languages at Albion. She commuted by train, ferry and subway from her home in Westfield to Pratt Institute in Brooklyn to obtain a Masters in Library Science.

She worked as a librarian and information retrieval specialist for the IBM Corp for twenty-eight years, witnessing the evolution of electronic accounting machines to electronic computers, on-line systems and networks to today's Internet and the Web.

Betty has had many interesting experiences along the way: hearing the unmistakable and unforgettable low horns of the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth for the transport of troops in World War II, the

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Must You Hire a Genealogist to Research in Wales?

by Betty Brown

Of course you can, but it's more fun to find your ancestry yourself and you can do a great deal by researching films available from the Family History Library and by correspondence. I don't know if my experience is typical, but I'm sure others have had similar experiences. You never know—Lady Luck may smile on you as she did on me. Hoping it will give you some ideas, I'll relate how I found not only my ancestry, but also living cousins in Wales.

George Pelling, a former President of the Federation of Family History Societies and author of

W.I.S.E. Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England Family History Society. Dedicated to research in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, England, Cornwall, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Attention also directed to the emigration and immigration of these peoples as well as heraldry and one name studies.

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Beginning your Family History, was a guest speaker at an early W.I.S.E. meeting and graciously agreed to counsel attendees who had problems. I told him my problem. I had located the grave of my immigrant ancestor in Remsen, Oneida County, New York. The inscription carved on his tombstone said he was a native of Brynorgas, Caernarvonshire, North Wales. My problem was that I could not find such a place, even with the help of local librarians and librarians at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, so I didn't know where to begin to look for records.

He suggested, as Caernarvonshire was given, that I join the local family history Society, the Gwynedd Family History Society, which I did. When the Secretary sent me my membership card, she informed me that she did research for Society members, charging only for her expenses—like postage, photocopying and petrol. That sounded reasonable, so I told her my problem. She figured it out and found the 1766 marriage record in the Caernarfon Record Office. I have seen the grave and realize that the name was misread:

BRYNORGAS
 | | | | | | | |
 BRYNCROES

That got me started and I have been having ball with my Welsh research ever since. It also made it possible for me to find a cousin who descends from my fourth great-grandfather Siarl Marc (Charles Mark), a Calvinistic Methodist preacher who is in the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940*. When she joined the Gwynedd Family History Society and saw that I was researching Siarl Marc, she contacted me. We have visited several times—she has come to the U.S. and I have visited her in her home in Wales.

George Pelling gave me another good steer. Following his suggestions, I wrote to Mrs. Sheila Rowland, co-author with her husband of the recently published book *The Surnames of Wales*, who he recognized as a very knowledgeable Welsh genealogical authority. She forwarded my letter to Gordon Roberts, now the Membership Chairman of the

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W.I.S.E. TIPS

by Donna J. Porter

The Utah Genealogical Society holds a week long Institute every January. In January of 2000 the subjects will be: American Genealogy Records and Research, Pre-1837 English Research, Preparing a Family History in the New Millennium, German and Swiss Research, Preparing for Accreditation, Thoroughly Searching the Midwest, Research Methodology: Problem Solving I and Advanced Methodology: Problem Solving II.

This is a good way to learn. For more information send for a brochure from UGS, PO Box 1144, Salt Lake City Utah 84110-1144.

Just in case you misplaced your first newsletter from WISE here is the address for the Reusch International. A good place to get international money orders to send to Britain for research. The Reusch International, 700 Eleventh Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001-4507. Telephone: 1-800-424-2923

Looking for a Bed and Breakfast in the Wales-England area? Check out the Web page <http://www.conwy-guesthouse.co.uk> of Bob Rubie. Mr. Rubie also does genealogical research if you are interested in a researcher. His mail address is: 3 Mountain Road, Cadnant Park, Conwy LL32 8PU England, he also has e-mail if you want to ask him questions bob@railway-links.demon.co.uk

The Free BMD Project: A volunteer effort to transcribe 19th century index entries for civil registration (birth, marriage, deaths) from England and Wales. <http://FreeBMD.rootsweb.com/> (UGA Newsletter, March 1999)

Genfindit: Scottish and Irish Vital Records Ordering Service. Typed copies of the actual GRO/OPR records for Scotland 1553-1997. Photocopies of the records from the Irish GRO registers for the period 1864-1997. <http://www.genfindit.com/index.html> (UGA Newsletter Mar 1997)

Two informative magazines for beginner and advanced students are the *Practical Family Tree* and

the *Family Tree*. Both magazines have wonderful stories and helpful suggestions for doing your British research. To subscribe you can contact Mrs. F Rand, 1062 North Buhach Road, Merced, CA 95340 or write direct to the publisher at Family Tree Magazines, 61 Great Whyte, Ramsey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE17 1HL, England. They will take credit cards, personal checks and just money.

If you would like to see copies of these magazines before ordering, ask James Jeffrey about them in Genealogy/Western History Dept of Denver Public Library.

In the May issue of the *Practical Family Tree Magazine* I found these helpful addresses:

Civil Registration Certificates (applications by post) Postal Application Section, Office for National Statistics, PO Box 2 Southport, Merseyside PR8 2JD England

The Federation of Family History Societies, c/o The Benson Room, Margaret Street, Birmingham, B3 3BS, England

The Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road, London EC1M 7BA England

The Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Surrey, TW9 4DU

General Register Office for Scotland, New Register House, Edinburgh EH1 3YT, Scotland

The National Library of Wales, Penglais, Aberystwyth SY3 3BU Wales

The British Library Newspaper Library, Collindale Avenue, London, NW9 5HE, England

The Guild of One Name Studies (GOONS) c/o Box g, The Society of Genealogists, 14 Charterhouse Buildings, Goswell Road London, EC1M 7BA, England

The Institute of Heraldic & Genealogical Studies (IHGS) 79-82 Northgate Canterbury, Kent CT11BA England

Also, if you are interested in joining the International Society for British Genealogy and Family History (our president Ann Lisa Pearson is Vice-President) their address is ISBGFH, P.O. Box 3115,

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American Sailor—British Widow Pensioner

Betty Brown

My great-great-uncle, Thomas Thomas, the son of Richard Thomas and Mary Charles (daughter of Charles Mark), was born 27 December 1773 (1) and died 27 December 1774 (2) in Bryn croes, Caernarfonshire, North Wales.

In 1795 Thomas' parents, with several of his siblings, emigrated to the U.S. The tombstone inscription for Thomas Thomas and that of his father both date their emigration in 1795. Did Thomas come with his family? Or, as he was a sailor, did he follow them on another ship? We don't know.

What we do know is that on 27 June 1796 his ship, the *Prevoyance*, was in Caernarfon harbor. At that time the British Navy was suffering a severe shortage of sailors, so press gangs were operating in harbors and at sea to force British mariners into the British Navy. On 27 June there was a press gang from the British warship *Prevoyance* in Caernarfon that fateful June day. They found Thomas Thomas and refused to recognize his American citizenship. They recognized only that he was a native-born Welshman. He was pressed along with shipmates Griffith Griffiths and James Crown onto the *Prevoyance*. The record of his impressment is in *The American State Papers* (3).

England at that time was at war with France and the *Prevoyance* shortly afterward was in a battle with a French frigate. During the battle, Thomas' right leg was shattered by a 36-lb. cannon ball. The ship's surgeon amputated his leg below the knee. Thomas was taken to a hospital in Halifax and later transferred to London (4).

After he recovered, he returned to Wales and married Mary Hughes in Bryn croes. They sailed to the U.S. and joined his family who had moved by then from New York to the Philadelphia area. They all moved north in 1804 and settled in Steuben, Oneida County, NY as pioneers (5).

Thomas Thomas lived to the age of 86, using an artificial leg for 65 years and is said to have been

the last surviving pioneer settler in Steuben. Thomas, his wife, parents, brothers and sisters are buried in the Capel Ucha Cemetery, Remsen/Steuben, NY.

Surprisingly, Thomas, an American citizen, received an English pension as long as he lived, a most unusual if not unique occurrence.(4) Historians disagree as to the true causes of the War of 1812, but an officially stated cause was the impressment of American sailors by the English—a fact I first learned from my family history research. The Remsen, New York Public Library is named the Didymus Thomas Memorial Library in memory of Thomas Thomas' seventh child. Some of their descendants still live in the Remsen/Steuben area.

(1) Tombstone Inscription, Capel Ucha Cemetery, Remsen/Steuben, NY

(2) Bryn croes Parish Record, Caernarfon Record Office; Bishops Transcripts.

(3) *American State Papers*. Class 1. Foreign Relations. Volume 11. No. 135 "American Seamen," Report of the Secretary of State to the House of Representatives of the United States. February 27th 1798. Communicated to the House of Representatives March 1, 1798. [5th Congress, 2d Session] [by] Timothy Pickering.

(4) Roberts, Millard F. *A Narrative History of Remsen, New York, Including parts of adjoining townships of Steuben and Trenton*. 1789-1898. Published by the author, 1914, pp 317-8.

(5) Hughes, Beryl. "The impressment of Thomas (Prichard) Thomas in 1796," *Cjmrur ar ME* Number Seventeen - 1995.

New United Kingdom postal rates

From Terry Quirke via Janice Prater

Postage from the United Kingdom to the United States: up to 10g, 44p; up to 20g, 64p. This is an increase of 1p in each case.

Volunteers are Needed for Summer Festivals

by James Jeffrey

Share your genealogy skills with others at the Scottish Games and Irish Festival. For years many of us have volunteered at the Saint Andrew Society of Colorado Highland Games. It is an opportunity to get to know your fellow W.I.S.E. guys and gals.

Here is how it works, SASC provides a large tent, Denver Public Library provides surname and genealogy reference books, W.I.S.E. members volunteer for four hour shifts and you get into the Games for free. It is the same deal for the Colorado Irish Festival. So, join the fun and help people learn how to explore their family history. While we are at it, introduce them to W.I.S.E.

Enjoy a taste of all things Celtic at the **Saint Andrew Society of Colorado Highland Games**, Saturday and Sunday, 7 and 8 August 1999 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Highlands Ranch, Colorado and the **Colorado Irish Festival**, Saturday and Sunday, 21 and 22 August 1999 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Lakewood Heritage Center 797 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood, Colorado.

To volunteer please call Ann Pearson at 303-770-7164 or James Jeffrey at 303-640-6325.

Lucky to Be Here

by Betty Brown

Sometimes we don't know how lucky we are. I would never have been born if one of my great, great Welsh grandfathers had not been lucky not just once, but four times that I know of.

John Richard Thomas born 23 September 1790 in ByrnCroes, Caernafonshire, North Wales, was the youngest son. In fact the youngest child of nine, of Richard Thomas and Mary Charles.

His mother, a poetress, was the daughter of Charles Mark, a well-known and still-revered Calvinistic Methodist Lay preacher on the Llyn (or Llyn, as the English would have it) Peninsula.

In 1795, at the age of five, John emigrated with his parents and several siblings to the colonies, arriving

in New York. From his obituary (1), we learn that he was delivered from the "mouth of death" several times—I count four.

The first time happened when he was two years old. His clothing caught fire from a candle he was holding. He suffered burns to his limbs, neck and severely to his face. Clothing on his body that had not burned through is credited as "the means of saving him from death." His sister who tried to help him was also burned on her arms. That was in Wales.

The second time occurred after he had come to this country. He came close to being smothered to death when an undercut bank collapsed on him near the Bowery in New York.

The third time happened when he fell off the side of a small boat by a dock, but "he came up with the strength of the water" and they succeeded in catching him and pulling him up.

The fourth time occurred about two years after he married Eleanor Parry 4 May 1821. He was shipwrecked when he was returning to New York from Charleston, North Carolina. It is said that the ship was barely able to land before being broken into fragments by the storm. Why was he on that ship? I'll never know, but it was indeed lucky for me that he survived.

(1) *Y Cenhadwr Americanaidd*, Cyf/Vol. VI, Rhif/No. 68, Awst/August 1845, pp. 29-30.

W.I.S.E. Tips

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Salt Lake city, UT 84110-3115. (Or ask Ann Lisa Pearson for application).

If you are interested in taking a course on how to do British research give your name and address to James Jeffrey, Western/Genealogy Dept of Denver Public Library. You must have the basics of doing genealogy such as knowing how to fill in a pedigree and family group and basic structure of family history recording. Classes for the basics and for British Research will be held this fall so now is the time to get your name on the list.

Hire a Genealogist?

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Gwynedd Family History Society. She knew that he was compiling a publication on emigrants from Gwynedd to America.

At the time he did not have any information on anyone in my family, but he started to look for them whenever he went to Bangor to do his research at the University there. Before long he started to send me translations (knowing that I did not speak Welsh) of articles he found in Welsh. He became so interested in my family that he declared he must be our General Manager, for he has put us in touch with additional cousins. We have become good friends. My niece and I were invited to stay at his home for several days when we visited Wales in 1990.

I have never paid Gordon anything—not a single penny. I have tried to repay in kind by copying for him LDS films of Welsh works he wants to translate. Our LDS facilities are much more convenient than his.

His work, *Emigrants from Gwynedd to the United States of America 1805-1932, A Selected List*, has now been published by the Gwynedd Family History Society. Although the cover and title page do not show him as the compiler, his name and address are given at the end of the Introduction he wrote. My family is in it. I persuaded him to send me two copies (normally, they send only microfiche overseas) which I deposited in the Denver Public Library and the LDS Family History Library in Salt Lake City. A letter to the Editor of the Gwynedd Family History Society's newsletter, *Roots*, from someone in California told of finding two ancestors in it.

This, I believe, is an excellent example of how we can all help each other. Gordon made the compilation, the Society published it, I placed it where it would be useful, the LDS Family History Library added it to its collection and a researcher was helped. I'm sure there will be others we'll never hear about.

In 1996 I attended John and Sheila Rowlands' course on "Family History in Wales" at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth. I gave her a list of

variations of names, including a lengthy patronymic name I found for my great great-uncle, a grandson of Siarl Marc. To my surprise, she included it in her book, *The Surnames of Wales*, as an example of patronymic names in Caernarvonshire in the 18-19th century. Evan Richard ab Tomos ab Evan ab Tomos Prydderch. He is listed in the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography Down to 1940* as Pritchard, Evan.

Another avenue that cost me nothing, but was very fruitful was the result of my own initiative. When I was planning my first trip to Wales, I wrote to the Pwllheli Tourist Information Centre asking for information about the Bryncreos area. I also asked if they could suggest how I might go about trying to determine if there were any living descendants of my ancestors in the area.

The Information Centre turned my letter over to a local genealogist, also a member of the Gwynedd Family History Society, who sent me not only family names, but also the name and address of a cousin still living in the area, who is also a descendant of Siarl Marc. He drove us to her home when she invited me and my niece to visit her, so I not only met another cousin, but I have found friendship with another Society member.

The International Society for British Genealogy and Family History is another organization worth joining if only to receive their quarterly newsletter. It contains excellent articles and accepts queries and research requests from members.

You've heard it before, but it's best advice—it's imperative to do your homework, first, on this side of the Atlantic. You absolutely **must** know where your family came from. Wales is not good enough, unless you get lucky in the IGI. You must determine the town, village or parish if you need to search before Census and Civil Registration records were made, that is, before 1831 and 1837.

Research overseas can be frustrating, but it can also be lots of fun, as I have learned. And before hiring someone to do your research, explore the possibility of help from members of a local Family History Society in the area of your research. They know the language and are very willing to help.

W.I.S.E. Calendar of Events

by James Jeffrey

Medieval British Genealogy featuring Kenneth Harper Fenton and Robert Joseph Curfman, Saturday, 24 July 1999 from 1:30 to 4 p.m., Lower Level Conference Center Central Denver Public Library

Meet Me at the Games! Enjoy a taste of all things Celtic at the **Saint Andrew Society of Colorado Highland Games**, Saturday and Sunday, 7 and 8 August 1999 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Colorado Irish Festival, Saturday and Sunday, 21 and 22 August 1999 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Lakewood Heritage Center 797 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood, Colorado.

Scottish and English Census Research featuring Ann Lisa Pearson, Saturday, 25 September 1999 from 1:30 to 4 p.m., Lower Level Conference Center Central Denver Public Library

What to Know Before You Go to Salt Lake City featuring John Mears. Get ready for the W.I.S.E. research trip to the Family History Center, Salt Lake City, Utah in January 2000. Saturday, 23 October 1999 from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Lower Level Conference Center Central Denver Public Library.

Betty Brown: Member Profile

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office grew silent as the ships left New York and shouted with joy when they returned.

She also remembers V-J Day in New York, Broadway tickertape parades for MacArthur and Eisenhower, the arrival of Khrushchev and Eisenhower at the UN when Khrushchev banged his shoe on the table, and the 1976 Bicentennial Operation Sail with the Parade of Ships up the Hudson River.

She began her genealogical research about 1984 and has found some fascinating families that include the inventor of an improved potato digger, a Revolutionary War Pensioner, a Calvinistic Methodist Welsh lay preacher, a Welsh bard (or poet) and four Mayflower passengers.

She has been to Wales four times and is planning to go again in 2000 with Welsh Heritage Week for its third time at Nant Gwrtheyrn, the home of the Welsh National Language Center.
