

Family History - 25 July 2014

Land of My Fathers

- According to the Laws of the 10th Century under the Welsh King - Hywel Dda
- It was the duty of all to know their relatives to the ninth removed !!!
- Two centuries later the Medieval scholar Giraldus Cambrensis believed the poorest of people were able to recite six or seven generations of their family tree
- Wales was an administrative unit of England since the act of Union in 1536 and 1542 and sources used in tracing Welsh ancestors are the same i.e.
- Parish registers, Census returns, Civil registration documents

Patronymic System

- Each man's personal name was followed by "ab" or "ap"
- Meaning "son of" then the Christian name of the Father
- In the same way a daughter's first name would
- Be followed by "ferch" or "verch"
- Often shortened to "vch" or "vz"
- Then her father's Christian name

Example

- Dafydd ap Gwilym ap Rhydderch ap Thomas
- Dafydd is the son of Gwilym,
- Grandson of Rhydderch
- And great Grandson of Thomas

Surnames

- Many Welsh surnames are derived from personal names with an additional "s"
- ie. Jones, Evans, Williams and Davies
- Others used the addition of the "b" or "p" from "ab" or "ap"
- This produced names such as –
- Bowen from ab Owen
- Probert from ap Robert

Variations

- Rees could appear as Rice, Rhys, or Reese
- Or later as
- Price
- ie. ap Rice

Welsh Probate Records pre 1858

- Original Wills proved before 1858 are held at The National Library of Wales
- Website. www.llgc.org.uk/probate

Welsh Newspapers and Journals

- Newspapers and Journals published before 1911 have been digitalised and can be searched by words, phrases and dates
- Website. www.llgc.org.uk

Marriage Bonds

- Marriage licence Bonds and Allegations are again held at National Library of Wales and date between 1616 and 1837
- And many more up to the 20th Century which are not Indexed

Great Session Records

- These are Unique to Wales and are the equivalent of English Assizes Courts
- Established after the second act of Union in 1542 and continue up to 1830
- Gaol files for the period 1730 to 1830 give details of Crimes, Criminals and Punishments
- Website. www.llgc.org.uk/sesiwn_fawr/index_s.htm

Manorial Records

- This was not as widespread as in England and records commenced in the 16th century
- Look for the estates such as -
- Wynnstay, Powis Castle, Tredegar and Golden Grove
- Website. www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr

Welsh Place Names

- Welsh place names can cause all sorts of problems but the following may help
- A good web site to use is –
- www.e-gymraeg.co.uk/enwaulleoedd/amr/agreement.aspx