

Maureen Spinks

From: <Revbrianpcw@aol.com>
To: <maureen.spinks@btopenworld.com>
Sent: 26 June 2008 13:15
Attach: William Seward (2).doc
Subject: Re: William Seward

Dear Maureen,

Many thanks for the information about our mutual friend and a copy of his will from the Records Office. I will study both documents with great interest.

During the last few months I have been looking into the matter of the restoration of gravestones of those who played an important role in the 18th century Welsh Revival. Howell Harris and his family was one such gravestone to be looked at and that can be found in Talgarth Churchyard some 2 miles from Trefeca where Harris lived before and after his conversion in 1735. The other was the grave of William Seward that is known to be in the graveyard of Cusop Church. I knew a good deal about this martyr beforehand as my father-in-law, the late Rev J.J. Williams was the rector of the church during the time when the plaque was erected in 1978 inside the church. He and the Warden at Trefeca Lay Centre at that time, A. Merion Roberts between them decided to mark the fact that William Seward was buried in the churchyard.

In 1978, I was shown where the grave site was, but over the years forget the actual location and had to set out to find it again this Spring. Having located the grave (after looking at old records in the Trefeca library) traced it to the second large yew tree on the left from the porch door. Now the interesting bit. The gravestone clearly states that WS died on the 22nd October 1742 and also contains the quotation from Philippians that appears on the tablet in the church and also some other engravings that at this stage cannot be deciphered.

I have written a report about the findings and all the documentation has now been forwarded to the Presbyterian Church of Wales History Department for their comments! I have at this time heard nothing.

I have also cross-referenced other data about the whereabouts of Howell Harris at the time of the incident i.e. 1740 or 1742 and discovered some strange occurrences.

The attacks by the mobs in Newport, Monmouth and Caerleon did take place in 1740 when Harris and others (including the said William Seward) came under fire and Seward was indeed injured and blinded apparently. The incident in Hay-on-Wye is linked in certain writings to be at the same time, but it is unlikely I think. There is further evidence that after 1740 Howell Harris and William Seward went to Coleford and the city of Gloucester together after the Newport, Monmouth and Caerleon riots, so it is unlikely that what happened to WS in martyrdom took place later, probably 1742.

There is much more and much yet to examine. I have already created another link with yourself and will keep you up to date with the developments. I do have some photographs of the grave etc., but my camera and computer programme will not let me send the finished article via e mail. If you give me your home address I will send you copies that will be of interest to your group.

Thanks for all your help so far,

Kind regards,

Brain Reardon

26/06/2008

William Seward Christian Martyr 1702 – 1740
Buried at St Mary's Churchyard Cusop

The Connexion has known that the body of William Seward, the first martyr of the 18th century revival, was buried in the graveyard of St.Mary's Church Cusop, Herefordshire around about 1740. He was the first martyr who lost his life after a rebellion when Seward and Howell Harris were preaching in Hay-on-Wye. It became an angry meeting when stones and clods of earth were thrown at the pair during which a large stone struck Seward on the side of the head. He had previously been blinded by a similar action in the towns of Newport and Monmouth about a week earlier and as a result of these wounds he died about a week or so later. The vicar of Hay refused burial because Seward was a "nonconformist", but the vicar of Cusop just over the English border allowed for the body to be interred in his churchyard.

In 1978 a plaque was placed on the wall of the Nave by the then Warden of Trefeca Rev A. Merion Roberts and the Rector of Cusop Rev J.J.Williams, following a service of dedication to a full church.

Over the years, the site of the actual grave has been neglected even although the location of it has been described in the St Mary's Church Guide; it has never been located in recent times until now.

The then Brecon, Radnor and Hereford Presbytery (now part of the Mid-Wales and Borders Presbytery) discussed at a meeting in 2005, the need to consider making necessary repairs to the grave stone of Howell Harris's parents grave in St Gwendoline's Churchyard Talgarth. The Rev Brian Reardon informed Presbytery that the grave of William Seward was only some 8 miles distant from Talgarth in Cusop just outside Hay-on-Wye on the English side of the border in Herefordshire. He suggested that the site should be sought out to see if any repairs would be needed as the work could probably be undertaken at the same time. The Rev J.J.Williams, the Rector of Cusop when the plaque was erected in 1978 had once indicated to Rev Brian Reardon where the grave site was but they were unable to locate it at that time (Rev Brian Reardon's wife Anne is the daughter of the Rev J.J.Williams).

The grave sight proved difficult to locate but after some considerable time searching, the site was finally discovered in June 2008 beneath a large yew tree about 100 yards towards the left of the entrance porch of the church.

The grave stone is laid flat upon a raised section of stones that have been cemented to form a base within the last 30/40 years. It is difficult to read as moss and lichen covered the surface. It has been possible to identify that this as the actual site of the grave although there may be some inaccuracies regarding dates. The plaque within the church and some of the historical documents of the time state that William Seward died in the autumn of 1740 and that he was 38 years old at death. Subsequent investigations show that a map on the inside cover of a publication "**Howell Harris and the Dawn of Revival**" by Richard Bennett (translated from the Welsh by Gomer M.Roberts) clearly state that the martyrdom took place in Hay in 1742. Further

study of **"Origin and history of Methodism in Wales"** by David Young not only describes the exact location of the grave but confirms the date of 1742.

The incidents that took place in 1740 when Harris and Seward were attacked in Newport, Cearleon, and Monmouth by hostile crowds are not connected to the Hay-on-Wye incident when Seward lost his life. Seward was not in the company of Howell Harris in Hay as Harris's diaries show that he was in London throughout the whole of October 1742. Strangely, there does not seem to be any mention of the martyrdom by Harris in his diary for October and November 1742 in the book **"Howell Harris, Reformer and Solider"** when diary entries for these dates are published from pages 24 onwards. In **"Memoirs of the Life and Religious Labours of Howell Harris Esq."** by John Bulmer published in 1824, there is mention of Harris and Seward ministering together in Coleford and Gloucester after the Newport and Cearleon incident when they were attacked this being in 1740.

The gravestone states that he died on the 22nd October 1742, a date that is further borne out by information in **"Howell Harris – His own story"** published by Bridge Publications Chepstow UK where on page 9 it says *"One such itinerant preacher was William Seward, who was martyred at Hay in 1742"*

If the stone is to be refurbished it should be done soon before it is not possible to read the whole of the inscription.

Photographs have been taken of the site and are enclosed with this report. The stone has been treated with a light brushing with a scrubbing brush and mild detergent to remove the lichen and moss and the engraving treated with white chalk dust in order to read as much as possible of the stone's inscriptions.

The Denomination may consider it appropriate to provide renovations to the existing stone by professionals and a form of sealant applied that will allow the stone to stand up to weathering better than the original has.

There is still the matter of the memorial tablet that is in the nave of Cusop church where the Hay-on-Wye incident relates to the year 1740, that on the balance of information available elsewhere is clearly not the date of William Seward's death.

Details found on the tombstone of William Seward in Cusop Churchyard

"Here lyeth the body of William Seward of Badsay in the County of Worcester, gent, who departed y life Oct y 22 1742 aged 38"

The gravestone of William Seward has been cleaned using a mild detergent in order to remove the lichen and damp deposits of green algae. It is possible to read the data at the centre quite easily including the text from Philippians chapter 1 verse 21 ***"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"***, but the text at the bottom of the stone is mostly indistinguishable.

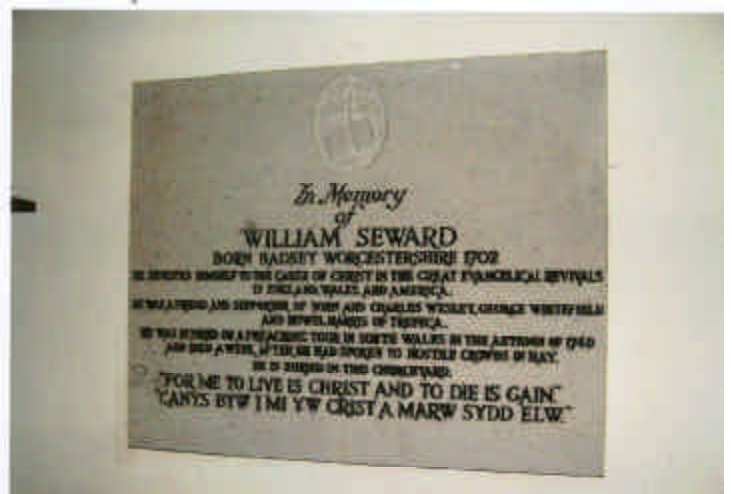
What can be read is this:- ***"The earth beneath..... live onbeaten path.....nothing.....wait in/on Jesus."***

There is also a date 1797.

It is possible that a monumental mason would be able to treat the face of the stone to provide a more legible interpretation of what was originally carved.

According to the gravestone the date of William Seward's death is given as the **22nd October 1742**. This information is not in line with records contained within certain Connexional archives as William Seward died in Hay-on-Wye in 1740 at the age of 38 years after being attacked by the crowds when preaching God's word. The plaque within the St Mary's Church at Cusop states the year of his death as 1740.

**Brian Reardon
June 2008**









July 2008

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

A. D. 1740

- Bap: Elizabeth W. of John Lewis & Mary his wife Sept: 14
 Bap: Tho: son of Thos: Bruce & Eliz: his wife Sept: 21
 Bur: M^r: William Seward Oct: 24
 Bur: Jane wife of John Bruce Nov: 2
 Bur: Mary Williams wid: Nov: 7
 Bap: Eliz: W. of Erasmus Rogers & Eliz: his wife Dec: 7
 Bur: Thomas Bruce of Landis Dec: 14
 Bur: William Lloyd Mar: 14
 Bur: Martha Gunter wid: Mar: 20

A. D. 1741

- Bur: William Samuel Mar: 27
 Bap: Samuel the son of Evan Bruce & Mary his wife Mar: 31
 Bur: Elizabeth Powell wid: Apr: 30
 Mar: Tho: Lloyd & Mary Aubrey May: 3
 Bur: Eliz: wife of Walter Scapan Jun: 14
 Mar: John Powell & Eliz: Proffer Jun: 16
 Bap: Evan son of Rees Evans & Joan his wife Oct: 4
 Bur: Joanna W. of P. Williams Nov: 6

Memoirs

OF THE

LIFE

AND

RELIGIOUS LABOURS

OF

HOWELL HARRIS, ESQ.

INCLUDING AN

AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT

OF THE

Calvinistic Methodist
IN WALES.

BY JOHN BULMER.

Inspicere nunquam in speculum in vitas ornatum
jubeo, atque ex aliis sumere exemplum sibi.

TERENCE.

Harberfordwest:

Printed and sold by J. Thomas;

Sold also by F. Westley, 10, Stationers' Court, London.

1824.

PROBATA
CELESTINA
ETIQUA

ing eggs, plum-stones, and other hard substances in our faces, while they hollowed so loud as entirely to drown my voice. Brother Seward had a furious blow on his right eye, which caused him much anguish. As this affected his left eye, he was obliged to be led by the hand for a few days; and at length he became totally blind of the other. When we arrived in Monmouth, we had much the same treatment as we had at Newport and Caerleion. There happened to be Races there, when both high and low were assembled against us. As I began to discourse on a table over against the windows of the Town Hall, where the Duke of Beaufort, and Lord N., with a great number of gentlemen and ladies, were at dinner, they ordered a drum to be beaten at our sides, although the Lord enabled me to bear my testimony against their horse-races, balls, assemblies, whoredom, and drunkenness. The drum continued to beat, and the mob pelted us with apples, pears, stones, and a dead dog. During this storm, brother Seward was much afraid of being hurt; yet he endured it with calmness of spirit, saying, 'Better endure this than Hell.' Thus all their opposition could not hinder our progress; but in the strength of the Lord we went on from conquering to conquer. Brother Seward went with me to Coleford, and to Gloucester, where we had much power to discourse to many hundreds, both in public and private.—Being in Gloucester on the Lord's Day, and hearing that the Sacrament would be at St. Nicholas's church, I went there, and had a fresh sense of my spiritual poverty and vileness; so that I could feelingly say, 'O Lord, I am the poorest and unworthiest here before thee.' And when I

thus fell at my Saviour's feet, I had sweet and close communion with him. Then my soul felt compassion for the whole world; longing that all might be born again, and brought to the true knowledge of the Saviour of sinners: yea, I felt that I deserved hell for not valuing his precious blood more.

"My reception at different places was daily facilitated, although the enemy caused some disturbance almost every where. At the entreaty of several friends, I went to a Revel in Radnorshire,—a yearly meeting, where numbers of people had assembled to dance. I usually went on such occasions, to speak to the people; and God was pleased to bless his word to the conversion of some, and conviction of many, who would not attend preaching elsewhere. As I was showing the attentive crowd the folly, vanity, and danger of these ways, and inviting them to the Saviour, I was apprehended by two justices; and after I had suffered much contempt and derision, they drew up my commitment. But when they perceived that I was willing to go to prison, they sent for some of my friends to bail me; which I assented to, lest they should think me obstinate. Being thus bound to appear at the Quarter Sessions, they dismissed me, and I departed, filled with unspeakable joy.

"In consequence of my obligation, I appeared at the Quarter Sessions, accompanied by those who had answered for me; but though my trial was required of the justices, they declined it, and obliged us to appear again the next Quarter Sessions. At this time an attempt was made to destroy me. The Hall, wherein the Sessions were held, was an upper room, leading to which was a high flight of stairs,

Origin
and
History
of
Methodism
in
Wales
D. YOUNG

Origin and History
of
Methodism in Wales

41

EIDDO COLĒG TREFECA PROFF

Peidiwch a chymeryd hys
Do not take this a

Meth. - you

David Young

and Mr. Fletcher preached again. In the evening, between seven and eight, the love-feast began. This was the first instance of the Agape being held in Wales, and the record is 'many were comforted.' In addition to those mentioned above, Daniel Rowlands, Howel Davies, Peter Williams, and John Shirley took part in these memorable services.

Mr. Wesley came to Brecon again on Wednesday, August 14, 1771. He continued in the neighbourhood till the 19th, preaching at Brecon, Hay, and probably in other places. It was on this occasion that the first reference is made to the cause at Hay, but inasmuch as Mr. Wesley preached at 'the neat new chapel,' a Society had been formed here some years previously. He had preached at Clyro in 1747, and possibly in the neighbourhood of Hay, as there are several places Mr. Wesley visited in the Principality which are not mentioned in the journals. Hay would have special attractions for him. It was here where the protomartyr of Methodism had been 'faithful unto death.' William Seward was a man of considerable property, of meagre education and talents, but of great zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ. He was a native of Badsey in Worcestershire, and had been out to America with Whitefield during his second visit. In 1740 he visited Cowbridge, where he met with Howell Harris. They travelled together to Newport, where they were pelted with apples, stones, and dirt. Harris's coat was torn to tatters, and his wig stolen by a furious mob. At Caerleon, in addition to a similar repetition of brutalities, Seward had a furious blow on the eye, in consequence of which he became totally blind. At Monmouth the Duke of B—— and Lord N—— ordered a drum to be beaten by their sides. Two years later Seward came to Hay, where he stood on the green at one end of the town, known as the Black Lion Green. After listening for a short time in silence, the ignorant crowd began assaulting the preacher by throwing stones. One huge missile, thrown by a cowardly ruffian,

1740
incident

struck the messenger of peace, who fell senseless to the ground. Seward, like his Master, prayed for his murderer, entreated those around not to punish him, and

'Took his last triumphant flight
From Calvary's to Zion's height.'

Beneath a giant yew-tree in Cusop churchyard, about a mile from Hay, is found the martyr's grave. He died October 22, 1742, aged thirty-eight. ✗

William Williams, the Welsh hymnologist, then a medical student at Hay, was converted under the preaching of Howell Harris some time prior to 1740, when he took deacon's orders in the Established Church. These and other facts point out the probably early formation of a Methodist Society at Hay. It was at Hay that Mr. Wesley first met with Dr. Maclaine's translation of Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, and commented upon Mr. Shustler's 'Letter against Fanaticism,' which, he says, 'if the reasoning were just, would fix the charge of fanaticism on our Lord Himself and all His apostles.'

Travelling from the north of England *via* Salop, Mr. Wesley visited the county of Brecon again on Thursday, August 13, 1772, and during the following three days he preached at Trevecca, Brecon, etc. While at Trevecca, Mr. Howell Harris complained sadly to him about the 'barefaced reprobation and broad Antinomianism' preached by the young men who were then at the college. Mr. Wesley writes that Mr. Howell Harris's heart and his own were 'knit together as in the beginning.' He spent two very comfortable days at Brecon, and went on to the western parts of the Principality.

Returning from the western counties *via* Llandilo, Mr. Wesley came to Brecon on Wednesday, August 24, 1774, and preached to a large congregation, which included most of the gentry of the town, with great plainness of speech, on

✗ ¹ Tyerman's *Wesley*, vol. i. p. 342.

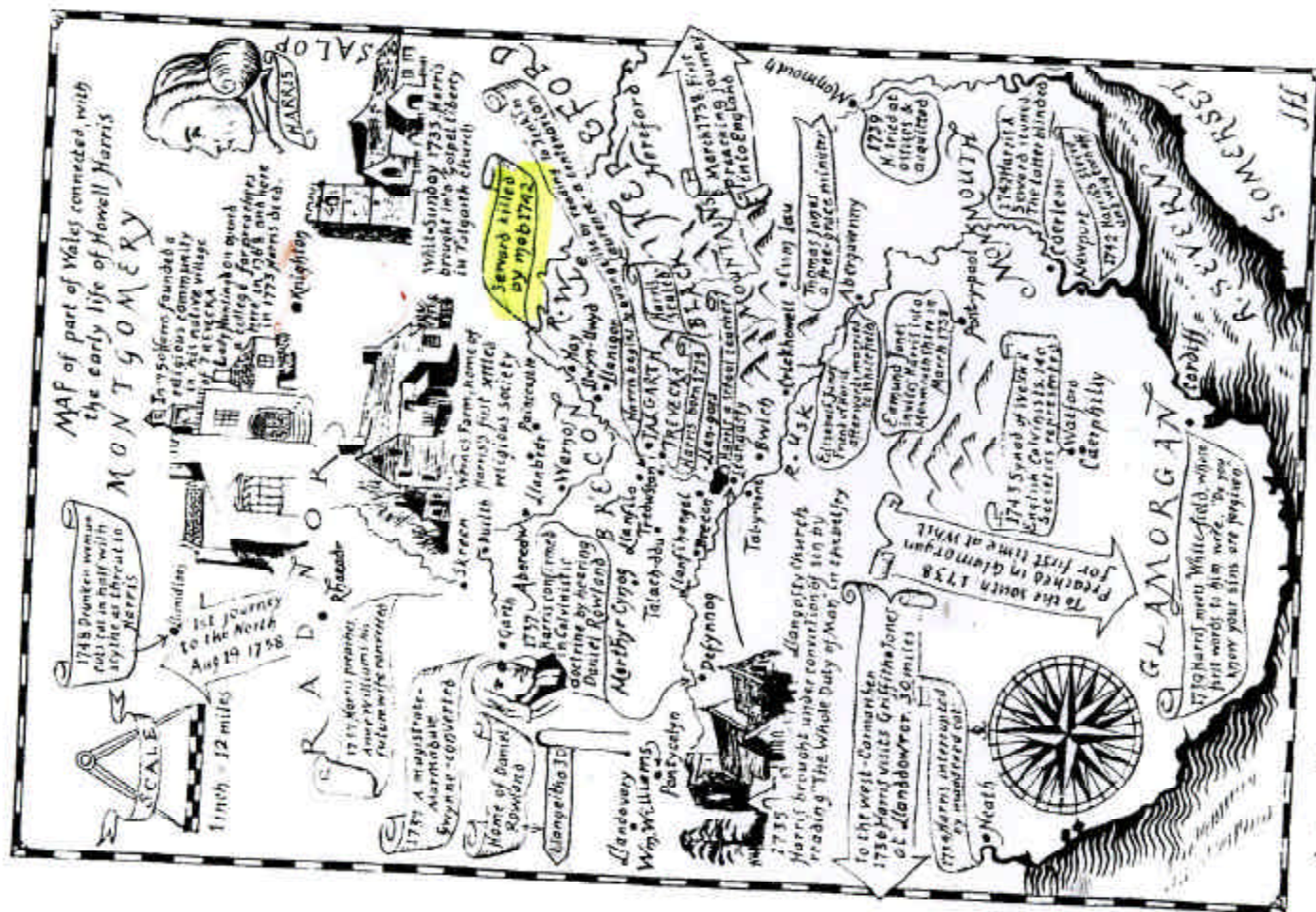
Have not seen this
can't find the page

**HOWELL HARRIS
AND THE DAWN
OF REVIVAL**

RICHARD BENNETT

translated from the Welsh by
GOMER M. ROBERTS

EVANGELICAL PRESS OF WALES



A map of the part of Wales connected with the early life of Howell Harris



The Northern Pastorate
Rev Brian C. Beardon OSL
23 North Road
Builth Wells
Powys
LD23 3BU

Phone: 01 982 552677
Fax: 01 982 551402
E-Mail: Revbrianpcw@aol.com

With Compliments