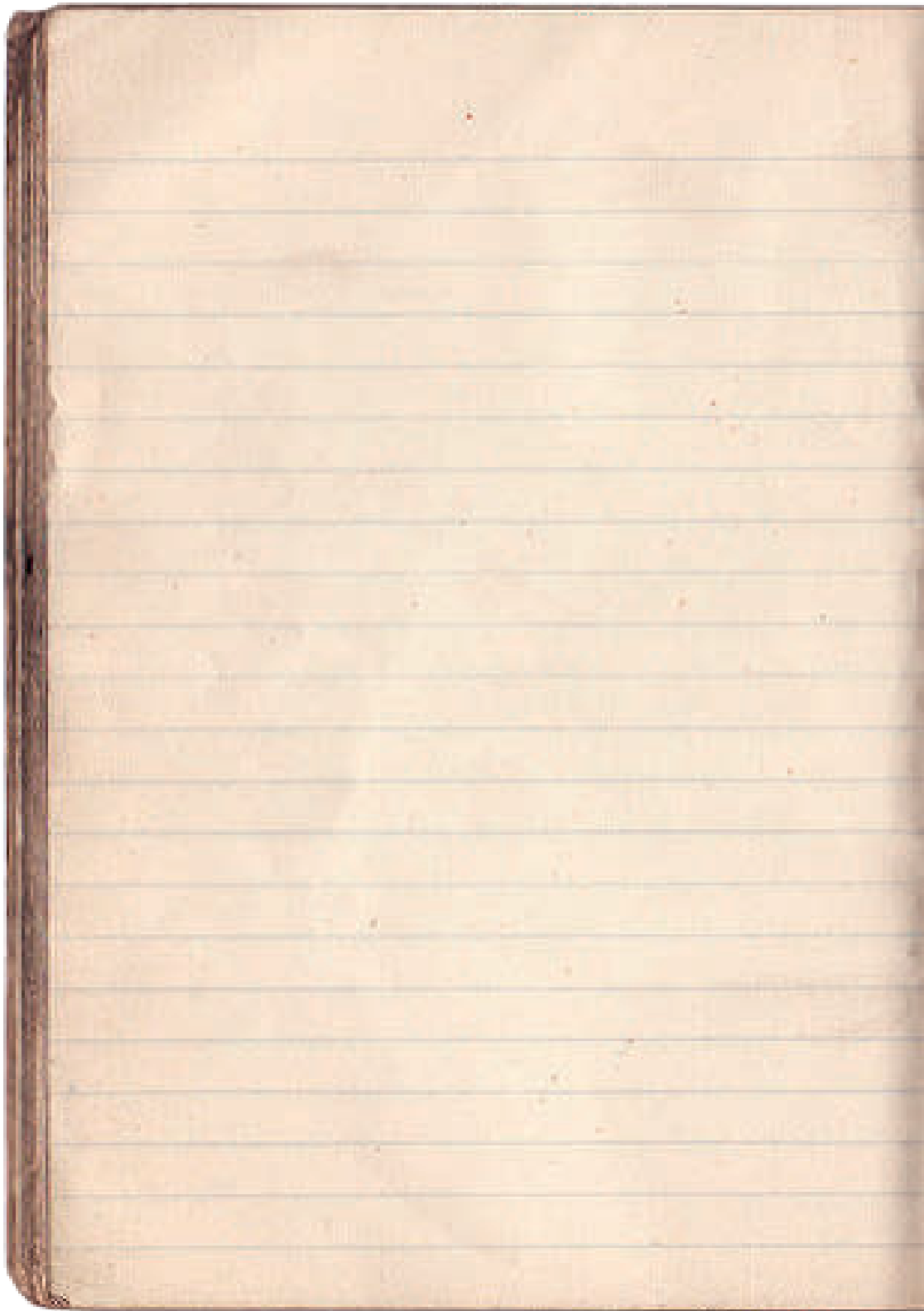




World War 1

Walk around Talgarth, Powys





Introduction ...

Talgarth is a small market town in Powys, mid-Wales. According to records, Talgarth was the capital of the early medieval Welsh Kingdom of Brycheiniog (Brecknockshire).

The name Talgarth means 'front of the hill' and the town is situated at the foot of the Black Mountains.

This circular walk around the town enables you to find out how men and women from Talgarth were involved in and affected by World War 1.

Acknowledgements

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Summary of walk ...

The walk is just over 1 mile. It has been graded "easy" because there is little ascent or descent and most of the walk is on pavements. As with all walks, we recommend that you wear appropriate clothing for walking, including stout shoes or walking boots.

The walk starts at the main car park in Talgarth. The post code for this is LD3 0PQ

Start ...

Leave the car park by the main entrance and turn left into High Street. Continue along High Street for approximately 50 metres. Take the first right turn signposted to Pwll y Wrach, known as Heol Las. You will see the Broken House. This was formerly called Westbrook House and, before that, the Horse and Jockey.

Site 1:

Broken House (Westbrook House/ Horse and Jockey)

Mary, the widowed mother of Private William Francis David Williams, 22nd Bn., Royal Fusiliers (service number 49820), lived in High Street. William's father, Evan, had died and Mary was a grocer at Westbrook House, formerly the Horse and Jockey where his grandfather, William Price, was an innkeeper and wheelwright.

A newspaper report explains that William was born in Talgarth but lived in Abergavenny where he was a clerk in the United Counties Bank. He joined the Bankers Battalion and was transferred to the Royal Fusiliers. He went to France in October 1916 but died from chest wounds in a casualty clearing station just four months later in February 1917. He was 22.

There is a marble memorial commemorating him in the deconsecrated Bethania United Reform Church in Talgarth.

Continue along High Street for about 100 metres and cross the bridge. You will walk past Talgarth Mill and the Bakers Table (café and bakery) on your right. The next building on the right is Talgarth Town Hall.

Site 2:

Talgarth Town Hall

The Brecon and County Times newspaper reported a meeting held in Talgarth Town Hall on 6th August 1914:



“At the request of the Lord Lieutenant (Lord Glanusk) a public meeting was called at Talgarth Town Hall on Tuesday evening and was preceded by the Territorials parading the streets headed by their bugle band. The Town Hall was packed. The chair was taken by Mr C. E. G. Gordon of Tregunter. On the platform, in addition to many ladies, were Lieut. A.G. Phillips, Dr Jayne, Dr Porter, Mr J. Mills, Mr J. Parry and a number of the National Reserve.

The chairman said he was a newcomer amongst them, but he hoped every man who was able to carry a rifle or do anything would join the ranks and help to defend our homes. Lieut. Phillips, Dr Jayne, the Vicar (the Rev. D. Williams) and Dr Porter (an Ulster man) all made patriotic speeches. The Chairman then called for volunteers and there was a rush for the platform. Lieut. Phillips and Drum Major F. T. Morgan took the names of about 20 men to join the Territorials and Mr Fred Morgan took the names and addresses of over 20 men ready to serve in various capacities. A local committee was appointed consisting of 18 gentlemen and 6 ladies with Mr Fred Morgan as Honorary Secretary. The meeting was the most enthusiastic ever held in Talgarth."

Those rushing to the platform can have had little idea of the horror to come. Four months later, at a Parish Council meeting held in the Town Hall, a letter was read from the Secretary of the District Recruiting Committee asking

the council to act as a recruiting authority for the Talgarth area. The Chairman said he was sure each member would do his utmost to induce any young man to do his duty although he thought there were not many young men left in Talgarth; the majority had already answered the call.

Cross the road (The Bank) and stop by the Tower Hotel (1873).

Site 3: The Tower Hotel



The Tower Hotel was the home of Second Lieutenant David Bernard Powell 12th Bn South Wales Borderers. The 12th Battalion was a Bantam battalion. Born in Rhymney (Monmouth), David was the son of John and Sarah Powell of the Tower Hotel. He died on 4th September 1917. According to a newspaper report announcing David's death, he had not feared dying when he left home, reportedly saying, "You can only die once."

In addition to David, Mrs Powell had three other sons serving in the Great War. Thomas Herbert Morgan, who went to Australia before the war, was in the Australian force, Hugh Rowland Stephen was in the Royal Engineers and another son was in the Navy.

Turn to face the shops. This is Market Square.

Site 4:

Market Square

Private Rhys Thomas Prydderch, 13th Labour Coy. The King's (Liverpool Regiment) (service number 70532), preached in the Square. He was a man of great spiritual force and one who thoroughly lived in every detail the Christian life. According to a newspaper report, his name was a household name in Talgarth and nearby Bronllys.

Rhys volunteered in 1914 but was refused due to a bad hip. He died in a military hospital on Easter Monday, 23rd March 1917 aged 34.

Walk past the Co-op shop on your right and turn right into Bronllys Road. You will now be able to see the town's main war memorial on the other side of the road next to the River Ennig.

Cross the road to see the memorial close-up.

Site 5:

Talgarth town war memorial

The original World War 1 memorial was a brass plaque in the Town Hall.



After World War 2, however, the plaque was buried in the base of a new memorial, which was placed on the banks of the River Ennig. The new memorial was unveiled on Armistice Day in November 1957. By 1979, the river had eroded the structure and it was in a dangerous state.

Plans were drawn up for repairs and the current war memorial in Talgarth was completed in 1989.

During the repair work, the original brass plaque was uncovered and stored. It came to light again in 2013 and was restored and returned to the Town Hall, complete with panelling, in 2014.

Almost directly opposite the war memorial, on the other side of the road, is the Red House.

Site 6:

The Red House

Private John Charles Powell, 12th Bn South Wales Borderers (service number 12047) lived in the Red House with his wife, Mary Jeanie Powell.

Before enlisting in 1916, John managed a clothes shop in Talgarth. He died of wounds in France on 8th December 1917 aged 38 years. The report in the Brecon County Times newspaper expressed sympathy for the widow and her two little girls.

Leaving the memorial behind, proceed along the footpath with the River Ennig on your left.

Just before reaching the bypass, cross the road and walk up New Street. You will walk past Talgarth library on your right.

Site 7: New Street

Sergeant Owen Samuel Day, 16th Bn Cheshire Regiment (service number 7953) was born in Devon in 1882. Owen later became the Postman in Talgarth. As soon as World War 1 was declared, Owen joined his old regiment, the Cheshires. He was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry in the field. On 9th September 1917, while on duty at a bombing post, he was hit by a shell and killed instantaneously.

On 20th September 1917, the Brecon and Radnor Express reported, "Talgarth Postman Falls in France." Owen's wife, Edith, heard about the death of her husband. She became a widow with three young children.

Edith later married Arthur Williams. They lived at 4 New Street.

At the end of New Street, cross the road and walk up Queens Avenue. Go straight on to Tower Lane in the right hand corner and at the end turn right. The old school house and school (1845) are on the right.

Site 8:

Old school

Mr W. T. Davies was the former Schoolmaster. He compiled a Roll of Honour of boys educated at the school. There were two Majors, a Captain, four Lieutenants, one Chief Engineer and a large number of other officers. It was reported that former pupils returned from India, Canada and South Africa "to do their bit." There were 95 names recorded in total. It was reported in the local newspaper that a young man, Basil Newells, had enlisted but, while taking a spin on his bicycle, was accidentally killed.

You will see St Gwendoline's church in front of you. The church is named after Gwenffrewi, daughter of Brychan Brycheiniog, one time King of Brecknockshire.

Enter the church yard through the kissing gate. Continue on the path with the church on your left. When you reach the church door, take the narrow middle path of the three opposite. Towards the end, you will see three of the Commonwealth War Graves on your right. Others are elsewhere in the church yard.

Site 9:

Commonwealth War Graves Commission graves in St Gwendoline's church yard

Daphne Elizabeth Powell joined Queen Mary's Army Auxillary Corps in November 1917 and was a member of the branch at Swanage. She died at the Old Vicarage in Talgarth after a brief illness on 11th April 1919 aged 21.

Daphne's brother, Private Charles B Powell of the SW Borderers, is also buried here.

He died in Beechwood House Hospital (Newport, Wales) on 18th February 1921 aged 21.

Daphne and Charles were the children of Charles and Eleanor Powell of the Old Vicarage in Talgarth.

Another grave commemorates Staff Sgt. Percy F Davies of the Royal Army Medical Corps, who died on 4th May 1921 aged 31 in a Military Hospital in Limerick. He was the second son of the Schoolmaster, Mr W. T. Davies. He was educated at Talgarth School, the Intermediate school in Brecon and the Medical College in Cardiff. Percy had qualified as a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and was a House Surgeon at Charing Cross Hospital.

There is a grave for Private Alfred Inseal, 3rd battalion the South Wales Borderers. He died on 2nd October 1917 aged 32.

Sapper John Patrick Power of the Royal Engineers also has a grave in the church yard.

He was the son of John and Bridget Power. John died on 4th January 1921 aged 28.

Leave the church yard through the kissing gate at the far end and turn right into Church Street. Go down Church Street/ The Bank towards the town. This is slightly downhill. Take the first turning left into Brook Lane and see the former Upper Lion Inn on your right.

Site 10:

Upper Lion Inn

Private Reginald Charles Roberts 1st/ 2nd Bn Monmouths (service number 267529) and Private William Arthur Roberts 4th Bn South Wales Borderers (service number 27809) were the sons of David and Annie Roberts.



Reginald was born and baptised in Talgarth in 1886 when the family lived in High Street. In 1901, they lived in the Upper Lion Inn. David was described as an inn keeper and timber haulier.

William and Reggie both enlisted in Talgarth. Willie went to India with the Brecknocks in 1914 and died in Turkey on 25th March 1918. Reginald served in France and was killed in action on 22nd May 1918.

Continue between the cottages down Brook Lane. Cross the bridge over the River Ennig and stay on the path, bearing right. Turn right, going through the gap in the railings. Go down the steps and cross the River Ellywe to the left.

You will come out between the houses in Penbont Road. Turn right and walk towards the Bell Hotel. Continue into Bell Street and walk a short distance until you reach High Street. At High Street, turn left and continue for about 200 metres. You will then arrive back at the car park.

