

September 2012 Simon Hancock, - 'Last Man Hanged in Pembrokeshire'

There was an encouraging start to the new term of Society meetings where a most interesting and absorbing talk by well known historian Mr Simon Hancock, curator of Haverfordwest Town Museum, was given.

His subject 'Last man hanged in Pembrokeshire', was a piece of Victorian theatre. He recounted the original versions of the crime which were well known and contrasted these with information uncovered in his more recent research.

William Roblin was convicted in 1821 for the murder of 23-year-old William Davies, with whom there had been an ongoing dispute for some considerable time.

After the fatal assault, Roblin was a fugitive from justice, hiding out in Canaston Woods, and his native Martletwy for 18 days. His wife Margaret was accused of aiding and abetting her husband, although at the trial she was found not guilty.

The couple had a little daughter Martha who lived until 1889 and whose descendants still live in the area today.

The execution took place on Easter Monday, 1821. Forty years after Roblin's burial, his remains were dug up and sold for one shilling and sixpence with his skull still kept locally.

So there we have it! The tranquillity of Haverfordwest hopefully will remain intact after this macabre piece of history.

(Doug Havard)