

## BAKER, ELIZABETH (c. 1720 - 1789), diarist

**Name:** Elizabeth Baker  
**Date of birth:** c. 1720  
**Date of death:** 1789  
**Gender:** Female  
**Occupation:** diarist  
**Area of activity:** Literature and Writing  
**Author:** William Llewelyn Davies

Although not a Welshwoman - she was the daughter of a clergyman living in the Midlands - Elizabeth Baker spent so much of her life in Merioneth and became so inextricably bound up with the house and household at Hengwrt, near Dolgelley, and its owners, that she merits a note, particularly on account of the diary which she kept. On 25 July 1770, after obtaining, in conjunction with persons called Ralph Lodge, Mrs. Gilbert, and Mrs. Rawlins, a patent enabling her to search for metals on certain Crown lands lying between Dolgelley and Llanuwchllyn, she left England for the purpose of implementing the patent. She was doomed to be disappointed, had little help from her partners, and, being obliged to relinquish her prospecting, lived at Hengwrt from 1771 to 1778 as secretary to Hugh Vaughan, great-great-grandson of [Robert Vaughan](#) the antiquary, who was then in considerable financial difficulties and threatened even with the loss of his patrimony.

Towards the end of 1778 she went to live in the adjoining house of Doluwcheogryd, which she literally held against the assaults of under-sheriffs and bailiffs, who eventually, however, secured admission on behalf of Hugh Vaughan's creditors. Later she lived at Bryn Adda on the other side of the valley where she remained until 26 April 1784, after which she lived in Dolgelley. Her experiences are related in her unpublished diary, now Pen. MS. 416 (in ten volumes) in N.L.W. Extracts from the diary, together with details of her struggle on her own behalf and on behalf of the Hengwrt house and estate, were printed (ed. [B. B. Thomas](#)) in *N.L.W. Jnl.*, iii, 81-101; they throw much interesting light on local history and persons both in the Dolgelley district and elsewhere. She was buried in Dolgelley churchyard on 26 November 1789, probably in a pauper's grave.

### Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

### Sources

To the references given in the text add Nannau and Hengwrt documents at U.C.N.W.

B. B. Thomas, *The Old Order based on the diary of Elizabeth Baker (Dolgelley, 1778 - 1786)* (Cardiff 1945)

### Further Reading

People's Collection Wales: [The journal of Elizabeth Baker, Dolgellau, 1779-1782](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Elizabeth Baker](#)

### Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Peniarth MSS 416: A diary and a letter book, 1770-1788](#)

Wikidata: [Q20732989](#)

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