

Paincastle Local Interest Group visit to Cregrina on Thursday Aug 28th 2025

Apologies were received from Joan Lloyd, Wendy & Dainis Ozols, Janet Russell, Jenny Francis, Sylvia Bigglestone, Joan Clinkske, Allison Joyce

Present: Mary Kinsey, Jo McNulty, Beth Jobson & Rebecca, John Price, Mo Lloyd, Elsa Harflett, Bronwen Jenkins, James Davies, Elizabeth Powell, Victor & Cherry Williams, Kevin, Jen, Jakeway, & Iefan & Arwen, Jane Lloyd, Stuart Hulse, Nicola Morgan, Diana Davies, Tim Fulford, Dawn Richards, Helen Barnett, Ann & Howard Dean, Joan Hughes, Jackie Symcock. Richard Harris, Roy & Avryl Lloyd, Paul Buckingham, Celia Jones, Leonie Waithman, Rob Davies, Jon & Archibald Fawcett.

Parking for the evening was on the Dole belonging to Glan-Edw farm, by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Andrew Evans. Maureen Lloyd introduced everyone to our three guides, Mary Kinsey, Jo McNulty, and Beth Jobson. John Price recorded the visit which was put onto YouTube.



Cregrina Village in 1900

The group walked on the Dole (river meadow) alongside the River Edw to see how the village had developed to take advantage of water for power and consumption. On the Tithe map of 1839 there were very few buildings in the village. The church is on a platform above the bridge which would have been an ancient crossing point, and there were one or two buildings close by. At that time the village appears to have been a basic stopping place for drovers, with a pub, a blacksmith and a mill alongside the river. The leat for

the mill runs at the back of what used to be the inn, The Black Lion; this is now a house called Edw View. The mill was originally a grain mill but later it became a saw mill, still powered by the waterwheel.

All the original properties in Cregrina are on the right hand side of the village when heading towards Hundred House. The first cottage is **Edw Cottage**, previously called Ivy Cottage or Lower House. **Middle House**, with the adjoining barn, was the carpenter's shop and wheelwright's; they would have used the sawmill for making cartwheels as well as their other wood work. The barn was later used to house a pony and trap and it had a loft above. In the past, before the time of radio and television, important notices were pinned onto the barn door for all the villagers to see, including the notice of the start of World War I.

The next place on the right is **Edw View**. This was the Black Lion Inn with the adjacent blacksmith shop on the roadside. These were the only buildings that are shown on the Tithe map. From Tudor times, there would have been a steady stream of drovers with their herds of cattle making their way from West Wales to the markets of England. The blacksmith would shoe the cattle for their onward journey, while the pub would supply hospitality for the drovers. Adjoining Edw View is the **Mission Hall**, which was built in the mid 19th century and originally called Front House. It was unoccupied in 1901 and was bought for £50 by John Morris, The Park, and Charles Evans. The ceilings were removed to make a meeting place, and it was opened as a Methodist Mission Room sometime about 1904. It served the local community alongside the



Methodist Chapel in Rhulen. In 1966 it became a non-denominational mission room, with Christian services still held once a month. They do not adhere to doctrines set by larger organisations. Their speakers come from near and far with gifts and collections, given to missionary societies at home and abroad. Beth Jobson then showed the group the interior of the building.

Further up the road is the Old Rectory or Upper House; this was built in the mid 18th century and the last rector to live in it was

Rev John Evans who left in 1950s. During the 19th century several rectors were living and farming the **Vron**, a farm of 50 acres just outside the village.

Stonefield is the last older property in the village. The first census it is mentioned on is the 1881 census when it was occupied by a farmer of 50 acres. Later it was occupied by a shoemaker and the business continued up at least until 1911.

Penarth Farm and Motte: The de Tosny family from Clifford Castle swept up the River Edw in 1093 after the battle of Brecon, when the Welsh King of South Wales (Rhys ap Tewdwr) was killed, and they built the motte and bailey castle at Glan-Edw Hundred House. Whether the Penarth motte was built by his supporters at that time as a look out for Colwyn Castle, or built later, maybe by Welsh supporters when the local area was under Welsh rule in order to protect it from further Norman invasion, is a matter of conjecture. If it was built by the Welsh it would have been sometime around 1150-1180. Penarth Farm has a long history and may have originally been a Welsh Longhouse with the cattle living one end and the family living the other. In Tudor times the last wolf killed in Radnorshire was reputed to have been killed in Penarth Wood. It has been said that John Wesley (1703-1791) preached at Penarth. The first Radnorshire Eisteddfod was supposed to have been held in a barn at Penarth; this barn has now been replaced by a modern building. In the 15th century Bedo Chwith lived at Penarth. He was a patron of one of the most famous of all the Welsh poets, Lewys Glyn Cothi (1420-1490), and there is a praise poem to Bedo written by Lewys Glyn Cothi.

Celyn: There was a walk mill or woollen mill close to a waterfall on the River Edw, near Lower Llanedw, but on the Cregrina side of the river. This was advertised to be let in 1809, having a tucking mill, carding engine, and spinning machinery, and it was run in connection with the farm called Celyn or Gelluna. Between the years 1824 and 1875 woollen factors, dyers and carders were living at Celyn. The Quakers, founded by George Fox in about 1650, were active in the Edw valley, and in the early 18th century Nathan Woodcliffe [Woodcliffe] lived at Cregrina [Celunnon]. The Woodcliffe family were responsible for establishing the Quaker burial ground at Llanoley, near Painscastle. Howel Harris (1714-1773) formed his first Radnorshire Methodist Society at Celyn, Cregrina. By 1780 it had moved to Hundred House and in 1861 built its own chapel at Hope in the parish of Llanfaredd.

Craig-yr-Onnen Farm was owned by the Boughrood Charity which was set up by Rev Rice Powell in 1686. The Boughrood Charity owned the manors of Upper Elvel, Aberedw and Garreg.

The trust provided apprenticeships for children from local parishes, as well as paying a school master in a school in Brecon and funding for two local scholars at Jesus College, Oxford.

Cregrina Church is dedicated to St David, as are Glascwm and Rhulen. Glascwm was a Clas church where Celtic Monks lived and worked. They in turn would have set up the early church at Cregrina. Nothing remains of these Celtic churches. They would probably have been built of wattle and daub, their roofs thatched. The congregations would have had to stand outside while the priest celebrated the holy mysteries. Celtic churches were far too small for congregational worship. The nave of Cregrina shows the modest dimensions of the churches set up by the Normans, the font is also from this period. The chancel was added in

the first half of the 14th century; it is wider than the nave and joins it at an angle. The chancel screen separates the different functions of the nave and chancel. The rood above the screen has been removed. There are some wall paintings visible on the North wall of the chancel. Before the restoration in the early 20th century, Cregrina church had a large porch which would have been the parish meeting place. The church hall was built in 1913 and it was constructed from wood covered with zinc; it was taken down in 2012. It was dedicated as a Community Area in August 2024 after local children helped construct the mosaic on the surrounding wall.

There is a file which was produced for the Millennium; this documents much of the village at that time, and is really interesting. There are also several leaflets in the church which have been produced over the years.

Thanks to Mary Kinsey, Jo McNulty, Beth Jobson and Pete Nicholls for all their help in gathering the local history. Also thanks to John Price for his video of the evening, a wonderful visual record of the area.

