

Local Interest Group Visit to Castle Farm, Painscastle 29th Aug 2019

Present: Maureen Lloyd (ML), Victor & Cherry Williams (CW), Jenny Francis, John Price (JP), Tim Francis, Rob Tyler, Lucy Trench, Robert Collingwood, Ann Dean, Joan Hughes (JH), Shirley Meredith (SM), Evelyn Bally, Edwina Griffiths, Jenny Smith, Grace Davies. We were joined at the hall by Avryl & Roy Lloyd (RL) and Ken Lloyd (KL)

Apologies: Helen Barnett, Joan Lloyd, Dainis and Wendy Ozols, Richard Thomas

The group met in the middle of the village and ML outlined the plan for the evening, which was to walk to Castle Farm taking note of some of the differences in the village from some old photographs which John Price had brought along. We would then return to the Village Hall and compare the building as it is now with the school which some of our group had attended.

The Old Shop and Nap House

The Old Shop is a very old cruck building which is much altered. It appears to be smaller than it was in the photograph of 1907. The Old Shop was called Lower House for some time in the 19th century; it was a grocer's shop again during the 1880s/90s. Just along from the Old Shop was Nap House, which was two cottages joining on to the shed at the end of New House yard. They were variously called Nap, Naps or Knapps. They were set back slightly off the road and it is still possible to see the outline of the front wall and roof on the outside of the adjoining shed wall. The last people to live at the Nap were, according to the 1911 census, John & Ada Roberts. It is believed that the cottages were demolished around the time of the first World War. JH said that John Costin lived at the Old Shop at one time. SM reminded us that Green Door was a cottage adjacent to Gate House which has been demolished. Granny Roberts lived there; she cleaned at the school. JP said she also lived at Whitehall at one time.



The Old Shop as it is now

We passed the bus shelter which is now an information centre, alongside the well which Kilvert refers to. Opposite the well is the village tap where the Painscastle village water supply provided water for village residents.

The Post Office, The Dyffryn and The Pub

We stopped to look at the changes at this corner of the village. JP provided photos of the Post Office with the two different petrol pumps outside; some were postcards, some were from the WI scrapbook. Several people remembered the layout of the Post Office and the family accommodation when the Morris family lived there. One of the old pictures shows the Morris family in front of the house, the babe in arms is Betty Lloyd, née Morris, who lived at Castle Farm for many years. The picture also shows the two sheds in front of the Congregational Chapel, used for storage for the shop. KL told the story of two of the Lloyd family riding their motorbikes which had defective breaks; they failed to stop and ran straight into the doors of the garage. Mrs Morris soon came out to give them 'a piece of her mind'! CW told the story of when her grandfather, Septimus Lloyd, lived at New House, and 'Pop' Morris was at the Post Office. They used to talk to each other from their upstairs windows. She recalled the tale that Morris shouted "Lloyd, Lloyd – we're at war!", a system so much simpler than Facebook! The view of the pub is also much changed with the road straight up from the 'square' and the blacksmith shop to the side. The pub burned down twice and so it is only the lower part that is recognisable from early photographs.



The former Post Office as it is now

Castle Farm

We moved on past the converted Congregational Chapel which is now let for holidays. Iris Lloyd met us and took us into the recently renovated Castle Farm. She told us the Georgian front is Grade II listed, while the end of the building had previously been hackney stables, where the horses were kept, and more recently where Tom's prize bull was kept. When Iris was first married, she and Andrew started their married life there before building Caemawr where she still lives. She showed us around, with some amusing anecdotes about 'life at the Castle'. At one time Betty (her mother-in-law) had kept chickens up in the attic. Iris remembers how cold it was with snow coming through the roof, in fact she said that when she first stayed at The Castle they wore more clothes in bed at night than they wore during the day! Betty also did bed and breakfast for many years, and lots of families came to stay. Often the children would want to stay on after their week's holiday so they would be allowed to, as long as they agreed to help Tom and Andrew on the farm in lieu of payment.

So many children enjoyed their summer holidays in Painscastle and even now some return to reminisce about their 'farm holiday childhood'. The three Rockefeller children were fostered by Tom and Betty, when their mum died, so they also lived at the Castle.

This year, Castle Farm has been completely renovated by Owain and Suzanne Lloyd (Iris's son and daughter-in-law) to make it into holiday accommodation for up to 16 people. It has been furnished beautifully, embracing the history of some lovely oak beams, the floors and stairs polished by generations of feet. They have added bathrooms and all the modern essentials for their visitors. On the side of the attic stair was a feature which Iris thought was to do with raising bags of corn, for storage in the attic. Corn was very important and was often stored in the upper part of a farmhouse. On inspection by the more technically focused members of the group, it was thought this could in fact be for grinding the corn ready for use by the household, another interesting feature from the past. CW said that her ancestors were the Tuck family who are recorded on every census from 1841 to 1911, at Castle Farm. The farm, like many others, was sold off by the Maesllwch estate in 1919 when John Lloyd (Betty Lloyd's father-in-law) bought it. In 1807 there was a Castle Inn which probably was at Castle Farm as there is a memorial in Llanbedr Church recording a Tuck who was an innkeeper. On the 1841 census there were 8 drovers recorded at Castle Farm, and it is thought that the Tuck family had been at Castle Farm for 300 years. Iris had hunted out a lot of old photos for people to look at, as well as some diary entries by Betty.

Village Hall (Painscastle School)

The group then walked back to the Village Hall to look at more local photographs belonging to Roy and Avryl Lloyd, Pendre, as well as some from Cherry Williams, née Lloyd. The WI scrapbooks were also on display for anyone to look through. After a welcome cup of tea, served by Avryl and Edwina, there was some discussion on the old Painscastle School which closed in 1954 when Rhosgoch School opened. RL, KL and CW shared lots of memories of going to school in Painscastle. There was a photo of the outside of the building showing the two chimneys, which Roy said he pulled down. There were two school classes, the little class in the smaller room nearer the village, while 'top class' was in the other part. There were separate playgrounds for the boys and the girls, with two porches on the front of the building next to the road. The toilets were outside at the back and the canteen was adjacent to the school on the west side. Painscastle School opened on 5th January, 1874, with nineteen scholars attending, four of these were adults.



Painscastle School at its closure in 1954

After the closure of the school it was converted into a community hall and was officially opened on 6th November 1981. JP read a piece from the Woolhope Society field meeting in June 1927. George Price, born 1828, lived at the Maesllwch Arms at one time, and in 1927 he was the publican at the King's Head pub in Hay: "tea was served at the Crown Hotel, Hay, when two cannon balls, one about 3 ³/₄ inches in diameter and the other 2 ¹/₂ inches, were exhibited by Mr Price of the King's Head, who found them and others in pulling down a wall of the castle at Painscastle to build the school there." Rev. Francis Kilvert mentioned the school being built in his diary entry of Wednesday 3rd July, 1872, when "Tom Williams talked to the Mayor about quarrying stone for the Painscastle school, who said the stone for the school came from Llanbedr Hill."

Our thanks go to Iris, Owain and Suzanne Lloyd for our visit to Castle Farm and also to everyone who contributed to a memorable evening, recalling the local history of Painscastle.