

Extra Local Interest Group Meeting 18th February 2021

Present: Ken & Maureen Lloyd (ML), Margaret & John Price (JP), Wendy & Dainis Ozols (DO), Allison Joyce, Brian & Steph Williams, Jenny Francis, David & Ethel Joyce, Ann Tong, Peter & Margaret Joyce, Carol Milward, Elsa Harflett, Eva Morgan, Bronwen Jenkins, Iris Lloyd, Ann & Howard Dean, Juliet Lewis, Marilyn Price, Darren Williams (DW), Roy & Avryl Lloyd, Patricia Hope, Cherry & Victor Williams, Penny Eckley, Helen Barnett, Roy Williams, Sylvia Illingsworth, Tim Francis, Debra Lewis, Grace Davies (GD), Christine & Phil Lewis, Matt Williams, Richard Thomas

ML welcomed everyone and explained that this was an extra evening of films, kindly put together by John Price, with some major input from Grace Davies who supplied many of the films and Dainis Ozols.

The Tour of Britain comes to Painscastle

The first film was one put together by DO of the day that the Tour of Britain cycling race came through Rhosgoch and Painscastle in September 2014. It was a glorious day and refreshments (particularly lots of cake) were served outside the village hall. Many people had gathered to see the cyclists come through the village, which had been specially decorated for the event. It was also an opportunity to raise money to fund a defibrillator for the village and, through people's generosity, this was achieved. ML had a starring role as she was interviewed about the event for ITV Wales News. A lovely reminder of a wonderful day!



The Tour of Britain visits Painscastle on the 9th September 2014

The Martyr of the Storm

The second item was a presentation put together by JP and using some film recorded by GD. It recounted the story of Rosa (Rose) Williams, known as The Martyr of the Storm. She sadly perished in a snowstorm whilst trying to make it home from Hay on Wye to Rhulen on 22nd December, 1925. She had six young children and had been anxious to make it home to them that evening. Many of her descendants were amongst the “audience” this evening. The film included a recording of a play about her that was put on in Hay by the Red Kite Theatre Group in 2000, as well as the Hay Community Choir singing “Almost Home” in 2014, a composition by Catherine Hughes and Alastair Smith, written to commemorate the event. GD had provided some film footage of the ceremony on May 1st, 2006, to unveil a commemorative stone at Cuckoo Piece on Llanbedr Hill, where Rose’s body was found. Roy Lloyd (Pendre) had come up with the idea for the stone to mark the place where she had died. A large crowd had gathered for the event and the stone was unveiled by David Williams, the last surviving of Rose’s six children. After her death, many of the children were sent to live with relatives. The ceremony included a reading of a poem, “The Martyr of the Storm”, by Matt Williams (great grandson). Everyone agreed that JP had done a brilliant job in putting together a well-researched and sensitive film, with newspaper cuttings and old photos of Hay to illustrate what it had been like in 1925.



Memorial to Rose Williams on Llanbedr Hill

Penlan Farm, Brilley, Herefordshire, 1957

The next item was a delightful MAFF film about “Producing Beef Stores” made in 1957. The 90 acre Penlan Farm was situated in NW Herefordshire and was a model of store beef production. Situated at 850 feet (c 260m), the farm reared Hereford X Shorthorn cattle, considered the best for this sort of beef production. Most of the land on the farm was used for cattle production, either as pasture or for growing fodder crops, although some sheep were also kept and crops grown for sale.

The farm supported the Joyce family including five children, three of whom were in the audience, and there was also some hired labour. At the end, a number of people made comments such as: "We can remember farming like this"; "There have been lots of changes since 1957"; and, "Perhaps things haven't changed that much on some farms!". One of the most interesting comments made related to the method of covering the silage. This was done by putting a thick layer of crushed limestone on the top, which had the effect of keeping it dry and it also added weight which helped to expel the air from the silage. DW (grandson) made the comment that there was no plastic used at all and that this might be the way ahead now if farms want to reduce their plastic waste in order to make their practices more environmentally sound.

The Golden Valley

The next film had been supplied by GD, who comes from the Golden Valley herself. So remote was the valley in the past that it was the last place in England to be hit by the Plague. In the past, it has inspired many interesting people, including C S Lewis (who wrote the Narnia books) and Francis Kilvert, author of the well-known (locally) Kilvert's Diary and who was the vicar at Bredwardine; he died there and is buried in the churchyard. The film showed scenes of Clyro (where Kilvert was curate for many years) and Bredwardine. The Golden Valley is thought to have got its name from a Norman name for the river, the d'Or (of gold), possibly named for its dazzling beauty. Of course, they might just have confused d'Or with the Welsh dwr (meaning water) or the actual name of the river, the Dore. Further scenes in the film were: Olchon Court; the Cat's Back, a ridge that divides the Golden Valley and the neighbouring Olchon Valley; Ewyas Harold village shop; the fabulous old petrol pumps and shop in Turnastone run by local character, Hedley Wilding, (now sadly closed); The Bull's Head, a remote and wonderful old pub, now also sadly closed; Great Brampton House in Madley, once the home of an antique dealer called Lady Pamela Pidgeon; and, Snodhill Castle near Dorstone, a ruin now in the care of the Snodhill Castle Preservation Trust and open to the public. This was a fascinating film with some great interviews with some of the local characters.

Clyro Court School and Reunion

For his final item, JP presented a slide show showing photos of children and teachers of Clyro Court School, followed by photos of a reunion in the late 1990s. The school was located in what was then Baskerville Hall (built in 1839 by Thomas Mynors Baskerville for his second wife, Elizabeth). The school opened in 1947 and remained there until it closed in the early 1970s. It was a Farm School and many of the old photos showed children and teachers engaged in practical activities, such as hedge laying and vehicle maintenance. Many amongst the audience had much fun trying to identify pupils and teachers from the old photos and those attending the reunion, sharing reminiscences along the way.

It had been a most enjoyable evening and many thanks were offered to John Price for organising such an interesting show. The films certainly gave those present an opportunity to remember past times and to connect with one another in these strange times when face-to-face contact is impossible. JP thanked Grace Davies and DO for providing some of the film material.

ML reminded everyone that the next LIG meeting is scheduled for its normal meeting day, the last Thursday of the month; this will be 25th February. The time of the meeting is 7.30pm and a Zoom link will be sent out in advance. The topic for the next meeting is "Local Common Land" and the talk will be given by ML.

The March meeting (March 25th) will be a presentation by Cherry Williams about Llandeilo Graban School.

Everyone is welcome to sign up for the meetings – no membership is required.