

Notes from Local Interest Group Meeting 25th May 2023

Present: Maureen Lloyd, John Price, Roy & Avryl Lloyd, Iris Lloyd, Vicky Gore, Gina Goodge, Dawn Richards, James & Jenny Martin, Sylvia Illingsworth, Elsa Harflett, Bronwen Jenkins, Victor & Cherry Williams, Helen Barnett, Judith Coles, Elaine Curtis, Jennifer Lewis, Jenny Francis, Celia Jones, Jacquie Mills, Joan Hughes, Gaynor Price, Grace Davies, Joan Lloyd, Richard Thomas & Arthur & Anna, Howard & Ann Dean, Paul & Sue Buckingham, Phil & Chris Lewis.

Apologies: Wendy & Dainis Ozols

Visit to Llanddewi Fach Church and the Cwm Farm

ML welcomed everyone to the Cwm farmyard where we had parked. We were joined by Yvonne Bowkett from the Cwm and Joe Bowkett, church warden. ML had done some research into the area and would relate that. We started by walking across the field to Llanddewi Fach church.



The origin and early history of Llanddewi Fach are not recorded; the first reference to it is in the 12th century when it was recorded as Llann dewi y crwys. By the 16th century it appeared with the affix Ismynydd, which was the Norman Manor centred on Painscastle in the south of Radnorshire. The church was rebuilt in 1860 by Pritchard and Sedden and very little remains of the earlier structure. The church is dedicated to St David, the patron saint of Wales, who died in 601AD. This could have been a site of one of the early Christian followers, perhaps one of St David's disciples. Often the early Welsh Church spread the word with holy men who lived as hermits within the community. These cells were like early churches, often part of pilgrimage routes for the early Christians. It certainly is an ancient site with the churchyard containing yew trees between 600 and 700 years old. Although it now seems to be in a very remote spot, there is evidence of a deserted medieval village

less than a mile away on the Begwns, above Pentre Jack farm. There are also other abandoned farmsteads on the lower slopes of the Begwns.

The church has a small nave and chancel with a west belfry. The communion rails are dated 1712 and two benches by the font are seventeenth century. There is a fireplace on the north wall. The rebuilding of the church cost £300. The rector at that time was Rev Garnons Williams and the church warden was David Lewis, a farmer and shoemaker living at New House (Top 'o' Lane). The harmonium came from Bryngwyn church. The church registers date from 1725 and the oldest gravestone is alongside the porch entrance and is that of Lewis Griffith, aged 71, 1691. From a book by WET Morgan, 'Hay and Neighbourhood' (1932), we hear of a custom at Llanddewi Fach church where all the men sat on one side of the church and all the women sat on the other. Also it is recorded that the women curtsied as they entered the Church and it was suggested that this was a relic of pre-reformation days.

Prior to 1899 Llanddewi Fach was a chapel held with Llowes. From 1899 it joined with Llanbedr Painscastle. In Kilvert's diary in the 1870s, there is mention of a Sunday School at Llanddewi Fach church, the teacher being Mr Williams, the vicar.

The parish is 2297 acres with a population in 1801 of 116. In 1833 there were 139 inhabitants, in 1851 there were 129, and by 1911 there were 75 residents in roughly 20 dwellings. After looking around the interior of the church and sitting awhile in the churchyard taking in the view down the Bachawy valley, we made our way back to the Cwm farmhouse where Yvonne provided very welcome refreshments and took groups on a guided tour of the farm house.

The Cwm was built in about 1700 and was at one time the vicarage. It is listed (together with the farm buildings alongside it) as a good example of a vicarage or small gentry house in the area. The U shaped building range is a good example of an 18th to 19th century farmstead.



It was a lovely summer's evening, and people enjoyed the refreshments either sitting outside and listening to the birds singing in the trees, or catching up with friends and neighbours in the sitting room. Donations amounting to £124 were divided between MacMillan Cancer Support and Llanddewi Fach Church.

Grateful thanks go to the Bowkett family for the welcome we received; it was a lovely evening providing lots of interest for all.