

LIG Notes 25th July 2024 Visit to Llanbadarn y garreg

Present: Maureen Lloyd, Gareth Jones, John & Margaret Price, Victor & Cherry Williams, Sylvia Illingsworth, Evelyn Bally, John Olliver, Bronwen Jenkins, Elsa Harflett, Sylvia Bigglestone, Jennifer Lewis, Judith Lloyd-Thomas, Barbara Gayther, Rob Davies, Grace Davies, Fr Paul Keown, Ann Humphries, James Davies, Jenny Hodge, Ann & Howard Dean, Joan Hughes, Roy Lloyd, Richard Harris, Jenny Francis

Apologies: Wendy & Dainis Ozols, Joan Lloyd, Helen Barnett, Ros Coles

Maureen welcomed everyone to this quiet valley on the side of the Edw river. She said that Gareth Jones would lead the group and they would stop and look at some of the items of interest and share any information they have. Llanbadarn y garreg is a small village within a bend of the river Edw, with a bridge on either side of the village.

In 1093, after the battle of Brecon when Rhys ap Tewdwr, king of South Wales, was killed, the Normans penetrated the area. The De Tosnys and the Baskervilles moved up the Edw valley, first building a motte and bailey castle at Aberedw and then moving through to Hundred House where they built another motte and bailey castle at Glan Edw, thus establishing control over Elfael, the lower part of Radnorshire. However, they probably passed by this area without leaving much trace.

The first place the group visited was the old vicarage which is to the south east of the village up a green lane which continues on to Pentwyn Farm. The property is empty at the moment; it has not been lived in for some time and appears to be used mainly for storage for a newly built (pre-1979) property nearby. Although it is called the vicarage, from the census records of the C19th century it appears to have been the home of agricultural labourer. Unfortunately we do not have any details of when it was built and when it was occupied by the clergy.



The group then returned to the stone bridge (built in 1896) and John Price, our cameraman, was one of the team from the council who re-pointed it in 1979. It is a humped back bridge and there probably was a ford at this point before the bridge was built.

The group then walked back down the road to the 'centre' of the village in the clear area behind the Green. The Green was called Castle Green in the 1861 census and it was a grocer's shop at that

time, whilst in 1841 a carpenter lived there. Looking to the North-west, the remains of Salem Congregational chapel stand out near the skyline; all that is left is part of the southwest corner. The chapel was founded by Richard Lewis in 1817 when the members met in two houses which were licensed for meetings. One was Ty-ysgwydd y gareg (the house on the shoulder of the rocks), which is on the 'square' and was where James Price lived; he gave the site for the chapel to be built in 1826. He is the great, great, great grandfather of Stella Price-Davies, the present owner of the property. He was buried in the chapel graveyard when he

died, in June 1841. Richard Lloyd from Gwenddwr was the minister in 1828 and remained at Llanbadarn y garreg and Aberedw for 12 years before he moved to Rhosgoch and Painscastle, where he was instrumental in establishing the two congregational chapels there. The stone chapel on the hill closed, possibly because of a fire, and it was replaced by a wooden building just behind the Green, still on land belonging to the Price family. This chapel fell into decay and was probably abandoned in the early 1990s.

The village pub was called the Spread Eagle, but again there are no records of when it was

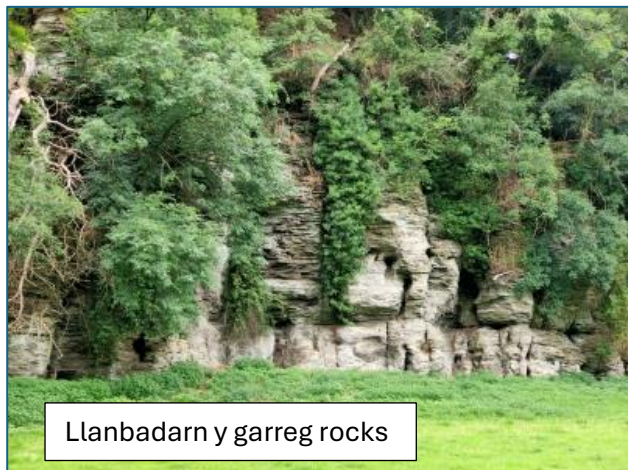


The Spread Eagle Pub

open, although there were coopers living in the village so they may have had employment making barrels for the local brew. The Spread Eagle retained its name even though it probably closed before the 1904 licensing act. Cider was made in the village, in the barn behind the church, where local farmers brought their apples to be crushed to make cider for their own use. This barn has also been used for local smithing work. Was it originally built as a stable for people coming to church? The village has been

home to several trades over the generations, with tailors and blacksmith journeymen, molecatchers and the like. Although it was probably never a large community, it was still a closeknit place which was self-sufficient in its needs.

The group then moved on to the church to look at the gravestones and then to the back of the church. In the neighbouring field are the rocks which give the place its name. These form a magnificent cliff face with cracks, fissures and crevices which have been penetrated by trees, but it provides a spectacular backdrop to the valley. The valley was once known as a poacher's province. Were these rocks hiding places for the locals and their spoils? If only they could talk!



Llanbadarn y garreg rocks



Llanbadarn y garreg Church

The evening finished in the church. It is a small, single-cell, late medieval church, grade II listed, and little altered since the C18. It is dedicated to St Padarn, a 6th century bishop who founded a monastery at Llanbadarn in Ceredigion. Whether he came to this area or not we do

not know, but there are three churches dedicated to him in Radnorshire: Llanbadarn Fawr, near Crossgates; Llanbadarn Fynydd; and Llanbadarn y garreg. The church is probably C13 or C14, with whitewashed walls inside and out. The nave and chancel have a roof of closely spaced scissor-braced trusses, partly renewed in the centre. Between the nave and the chancel, a beam supports a large lath and plaster panel (tympantum), perhaps the remnants of a rood screen. On the nave side is the Hanoverian Royal Arms (c1714-1900), while a biblical text from Timothy is on the east side. There is a faded wall painting on the north wall



The font with the Stuart Royal Arms wall painting behind

of the Stuart Royal Arms (c1630-1700), opposite the entrance door. The C18 communion rails are said to have come from Aberedw. The pulpit is also C18 and may well have been re-erected from elsewhere. The font is probably C13, sixteen sided on a plain round stem. The vicar, Fr Paul Keown, welcomed the group to this special place, highlighting the atmosphere and acoustics of the space between the rocks and the river, with prayers and an invitation to enjoy this tranquil, magical place in its hidden valley.

The evening closed with refreshments provided by Gareth. Thanks also to Peter Batten for his local knowledge, Fr Paul, Stella Price Davies and everyone who contributed to a lovely informative evening.