

Notes from Local Interest Group Meeting 31st October 2024

Present (in Hall): John Price (JP), Cherry and Victor Williams, Avryl and Roy Lloyd, Allison Joyce, Margaret Price, Bronwen Jenkins, Elsa Harflett, Sarah Cope, Robert Daws, Sue and John Ievers, Gaynor Price, Joan Hughes, Edwina Griffiths, David Jones, Carolyn Jones, Emma Jones, Howard Jones, Keith Pyke, Grace Davies, Tim Francis, Jane Lloyd, Janet Russell, Mollie Moore, Regina Goodge, Iris Lloyd, Malc Gonella, Ifor and Penny Williams, Richard Thomas, Richard Harris

On Zoom: Wendy Ozols, Richard and Celia Price, Mike and Val Head, Jennifer Lewis, Helen Barnett, Sylvia Illingsworth, Sue Lawler

Apologies: Maureen Lloyd (ML), Dainis Ozols

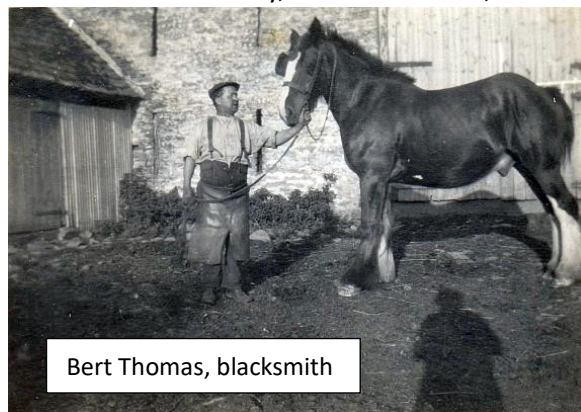
Cherry Williams welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that ML was on holiday and that she was deputising for her. She introduced John Price who had put together a presentation for our enjoyment. (JP began by wishing Cherry a very happy birthday – a sentiment echoed by everyone present.)

Local Farming Nostalgia 1878-2000 (and maybe beyond!)

JP explained that his talk included photos that had been lent to him by many different people, and he is very grateful to them all for their generosity. They include:

Howard Jones, Barbara Lloyd, Celia and Richard Price, Cherry Lloyd, Roy Lloyd, Joan Lloyd, Jean Lindsay, Tim Pugh (including Bryn Like), Neal Field, Michael and Jeff Anthony, Stewart Roberts, Marilyn Price and anyone else we may have missed.

JP started by talking about how cattle and bulls in particular had once been very important on farms, with bullocks used to pull farm wagons. He showed us a short newspaper article reporting that a Mr Price of Painscastle had been gored by his own bull. He then went on to show some photos of bulls taken on various local farms, including Cabalva. with Tom Hughes and his bull, taken in 1930. Further photos were of Maesllwch Farm, Brynsifog (pre 1931) and Blaenllundig Farm in Llowes. He also showed a photo of cattle grazing in a field in Glasbury and another of a woman milking a cow, also in Glasbury.

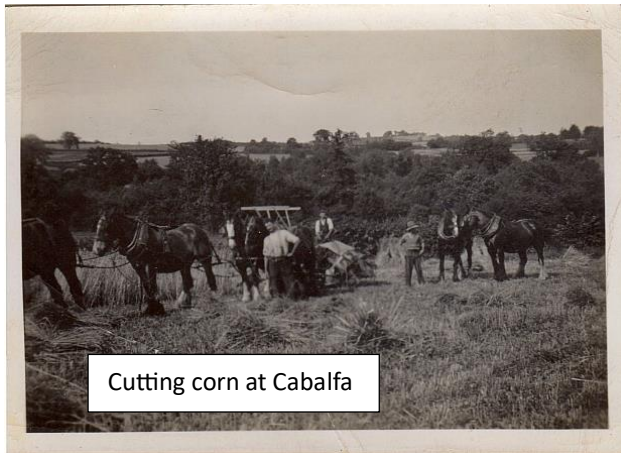


Bert Thomas, blacksmith

The next set of photos related to markets: Builth Wells market on the High Street; Talgarth Market outside the Tower Hotel; Hay on Wye market day in the early 1900s; Horsefair Market, also in Hay, just in front of the Castle; and two photos of Hay Show taken in 1888.

JP then moved on to talk about sheep farming. He had been lent a catalogue by Roy Lloyd listing breeding ewes for sale, followed by a photo of pens full of sheep at Hay Market. The next slide showed a Texel ram owned by Powell Jones of Llanigon which had sold for 2000 guineas, an amazing

sum of money. Another photo taken in the summer of 1990 showed Roddy and Libby Jones with their champion sheep.



There were more photos of champion livestock to follow, more than noted here: Sam Williams with his champion Hereford together with the judge, Mr Baden Powell; and, another champion beast at Hay owned by Mr Price of Clyro Court which had been sold for £96. An article told us that records had been broken in December 1989 at the Christmas Show. Another champion owner was D. Jones of Westbrook Manor in Dorstone who had won Reserve Champion at the Three Counties Show.

The next photo, one of Hay market in the 1950s, began a discussion amongst those in the hall audience as they recognised some of the faces in the crowd viewing a bull in the auction ring. There were more similar photos and JP asked the audience if they could recognise anyone in the pictures.

JP then showed us a couple of very unusual scenes – elephants and a camel in Broad Street, Hay. The photos had been taken by Bryn Like and this must have been an occasion when the circus was in town. In this section, there were also a behind the scenes photo from “Dandelion Dead”, a TV film about the Hay Poisoner filmed locally.

JP talked a little about rural/farm work in the past and showed a photo of Mr Harley of Lower Pengarth and Ivor Price Pencaenewydd washing their sheep in the Bachawy, and another of sheep being dipped in New Radnor. This was followed by photos of the Glasbury hounds (1887) and of blacksmith Thomas, also in Glasbury, in the 1890s. Photos from Cabalva (1930), Maesllwch Farm (1890s), Begwns Bluff and Blaenau, Cusop (1950s) showed what hard work hay raking was in the days of horse power and raking by hand. Ploughing was also hard work in the days before modern tractors, with horses pulling the plough and the farmer walking behind to guide the plough in straight lines. Photos of workers enjoying their lunch break at various local farms showed that there were the occasional rests from work.



The next section of photos showed various types of farm machinery. A photo of The Grange in Glasbury (1889) showed grain being threshed using a steam engine. Steam engines were also being used at Cabalva to do similar work in the 1930s. Eventually farmers got access to tractors and JP showed us a photo of a 1927 Fordson F tractor, followed by further pictures of tractors doing various jobs.

JP went on to talk about the Land Army – very few local photos exist, but he had one of the “Land Girls” at the Maesllwch, and he had also found a poster stating, “Farm work is war work”. He explained the role of the WarAg, with interjections from the owner of the photos, Howard Jones, whose father, J.A.T Jones, worked for the WarAg. Photos shown included rye grass being cultivated on Ffynon Gynydd Common in 1943, and sacks labelled Radnor WarAg. During WW2, land on the hills was ploughed up for the growing of potatoes and he showed us a photo showing just this on

Litton Hill in 1943. It was interesting to see the photos of oats growing on Newchurch Hill in August 1943 - the plants were very tall, reaching above chest height on the men in the photo. Golden grain



Harvesting ryegrass on Ffynnon Gynydd Common

oats were growing on Little Mountain and also at Celyn and Barland in 1943. Another photo taken in 1943 showed a view of a potato site at Rhosfaelog. JP explained that the WarAg had been established first in 1915 to manage wartime agricultural resources in WW1. It was later re-formed in 1939 at the start of WW2 for the same reason. He showed us some of the WarAg paperwork (kindly lent by Roy Lloyd and relating to Pendre Farm in Painscastle) which laid out exactly how the 48 acre farm was to be worked for the war effort. It directed exactly

what farmers had to grow and how they should work the land. Grants and subsidies were available as well. Dates for all of the farm work – ploughing, sowing, harvesting, etc. – were decided and laid out by the WarAg committees. All services provided to farmers by the committees were charged for and the use of fodder was rationed.

The next section of photos was more to do with local people. It included the following photos: Bryngwyn Church with a large group of people; Brecon and Radnor Seed Growers, taken in May 1949; the new magistrates for Radnorshire, taken at Presteigne; Glasbury United football team in the 1960s; and, the Clyro Court School football team taken in 1956, with a young Ken Lloyd. He also showed us some photos of a Young Farmers hedging competition, as well as some taken of hedging activities at Clyro Court School. A interesting articles showed Fred James, Old Forest farm harvesting his crop in December in the late 1950s or early 1960s, quite an unusual event due to a very wet autumn. This was followed by some pictures of local Young Farmers groups – an article about Radnor YFC “sweeping the board” at the Royal Welsh Show, as well as photos of a Rhosgoch YFC event at Llandevron Farm, Painscastle, hosted by Phil Lewis.

At the end of the presentation, JP showed some more recent photos, taken by Stewart Roberts, of the Begwns and the bales of bracken. This is cut by the commoners to use as bedding for their livestock.

A very interesting evening had been enjoyed by all – many in the audience recollecting past times and working practices with fondness and nostalgia. Cherry thanked John for putting together such a fascinating presentation for us all, a task which must have taken many hours, especially in researching the topics and contacting the contributors of the photos.

Thanks also go to Avryl Lloyd and her team of helpers for providing refreshments for the Hall audience to enjoy at the end. (Another thank you to JP for once again providing the technical know-how that enables the Zoom audience to enjoy the talk without leaving their homes. We are extremely grateful to him.)