

Minutes of Local Interest Group meeting 30th October 2014, Adullam Hall, Paincastle

Present: Mo Lloyd (ML), Jenny Francis (JF), Carol Gibbs (CG), Peter & Pauline Spode(PS x 2), Dainis Ozols (DO), Margaret Herdman (MH), Edwina Griffiths (EG), Diana Balm (DB), Evelyn Bally (EB), Roy & Avryl Lloyd (RL, AL), Sue Ievers (SI), Deri Jones (DJ), Jess Fromant (JF), John Price (Bryngwn – JP/B), John & Margaret Price (Hay – JP/H, MP), Bill & Ruth Johnson (BJ,RJ)

Apologies: Wendy Ozols (WO)

ML opened the meeting at 7.45pm and welcomed everyone. She said that refreshments would be available later and hoped that those taking them could make a small donation to cover the cost of heating and lighting in the hall.

ML began by confirming that the Hay U3A Lost Farms and Villages Group would be visiting Paincastle as planned on the 5th November. She thanked BJ for his help and advice in planning the visit. The visit would start at the Adullam Hall at about 10.45am. DO asked what time the hall would be open and AL confirmed that it would be available from about 10.30am.

ML said that she, RL and WO had been looking at tithe maps of the area to try and identify the various cottages that had disappeared and to identify what their names had been. She asked those present to bring in anything they wished to show the visitors. After coffee the visitors would go to Pendre at the invitation of RL and AL, where they would be given a tour. After that they would walk around the village and discuss various buildings. ML was still looking for more information on the Upper House.

BJ said that there was a theme to the visit: “Where were the stones from the Castle?” EB said there was a strong suspicion that many had been used in the building of Lane Farm in about 1650. ML confirmed that the original castle would have been constructed of wooden palisades but that it was converted to stone in 1231. The building had then slowly deteriorated and fallen into disuse after the defeat of Owain Glyndwr at the beginning of the 15th Century.

JP/B said that he had been clearing some land at the rear of Castle Farm in the 1960s in order to build some sheds and had found some very large stones forming a partial wall. It would have been impossible for 4 or 5 men to lift one of these stones.

JP/H said that there were reports that a tessellated (mosaic) floor had been excavated in the vicinity of the Castle in the 19th Century and that it had been covered up in the belief that it was a “fairy pavement”. However, he had seen examples of medieval tiles at Stokesay Castle and he suggested that the mosaic floor may indeed have been medieval rather than Roman. There was a general discussion about the relative absence of Roman remains in the area save for the notable exception of Clyro Fort. DO suggested that it was unlikely that there would have been any villas constructed in an area that was not peaceful. JP/H agreed that although there were many reports of possible Roman remains, nothing had been confirmed.

ML said that she had been shown a collection of objects belonging to Betty Lloyd some years ago that had originated from Castle Farm and that none of these had been Roman.

ML said that Painscastle had been granted Borough status at about the same time that the Castle had been rebuilt in stone. It was thought that the annual market had been dedicated to St. Barnabas. Subsequently cattle markets were held 3 times a year and at these markets elections would sometimes be held for positions such as Mayor and Pound Keeper. The sources for this information were the Court Leets¹ (a manorial court that exercised the view of Frankpledge²).

As an aside ML said that she did not believe that Newhouse had been a farm at the beginning and had more likely originated as an inn. There were parallels elsewhere where the names New Inn and New House had been used for the same building. MH said that Upper House did not originally have much land either and that this had been acquired later.

JP/B said that it had been claimed that there had been as many as nine inns/cider houses in the village at one time. DO said that many had probably just been normal homes where cider was dispensed at certain times of the year. He asked RL if he could recall many cider orchards in the area. RL said that he was aware of several orchards in the area until about 1900.

JP/B said he was aware that there were several marks on the beams and other parts of Grûg at Bryngwyn, such as fingers, crosses and flags. These were thought to have been carved by drovers.

ML said that she had discovered that the Old Shop opposite Pendre used to be called Lower House. Also, it was believed that the village carpenter used to live at Gate House and that this was probably the centre of the village at one time.

MH said that there was a drawing on one of the bedroom walls of the Upper House. This had been exposed when rain got onto the plaster. DO checked whether this had been mentioned in the book³ about famous Radnorshire houses and which featured the Upper House. MH said that it had not been discovered before the book was published, but that it had been viewed by the relevant conservation authorities. She said it appeared to be some sort of hunting scene. [Comment: ML has since submitted a photograph of this drawing, which is apparently of a musket and hunting horn, believed to date from the 18th Century.]

CG asked whether anybody thought there was any significance to seven horseshoes, as this number had been found together in her garden. DO said that this was a popular name for a pub and that there must be some reason for it. RL suggested they may have been used for a game. Any ideas?

CG also said that she had found some carvings of palm trees in the timber framework of her home. Did anybody have any explanation for this? SI said that they may have originally been ship's timbers, as there were several in their home known to have previously been used for that purpose.

ML said that she was surprised to have discovered that only some 25% of the local farms had been owned by the De Wintons. A lot of property had been owned by the clergy. DJ said that clergymen had often been the second sons of wealthy landowners and so could have been given land of their own to look after.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Court_leet

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankpledge>

³ Houses and History in the March of Wales, Radnorshire 1400-1800, Richard Suggett, 2005

BJ said that during the early Georgian period the population in Britain had increased from 6 million to 16 million, which meant that there had been a huge rise in demand for farm produce and therefore greater wealth for the agricultural sector.

JP/H said that he had brought with him some old extracts from the Brecon and Radnor, sourced via Cymru 1914⁴. One was of the Bronith Anniversaries of August 20th 1916 and August 18th 1918, one was about the Painscastle Eisteddfod of the 7th October 1919, held at the Adullam Hall, and another document listed details from Christmas concerts held at the Adullam Hall in 1914, 1915, 1916 and 1917. One of the Bronith papers had paid tribute to Gunner Davies of Lower Glasnant, who had been severely wounded during the Great War.

DO said that he had recently tried to make some searches using the Commonwealth War Graves Commission web site⁵. This enabled you to search for casualties who had either lived in Radnorshire, for example, or whose families lived here. Surprisingly he had not been able to identify any local fatalities yet, although there must have been some. He said that one family in Walton had lost 3 sons. EB said that there was a dedication to at least one victim in Bryngwyn Church and there were also believed to be some at Llandeilo Graban. There were none at Llanbedr.

DJ confirmed that there were war memorials at Clyro, Hay and Glasbury. He agreed that it would be a good idea for the Group to conduct further research into the local victims of the Great War as part of the ongoing centenary activities. We could mark these by articles in the *Gossip*, for example, and also on the web site that we hoped to create.

The meeting concluded at about 9.45pm.

ML, JF and DO subsequently agreed to make further enquiries into the existing community web site⁶ and to ascertain whether it was possible to adopt this for use by the Group.

Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting has not yet been set

⁴ <http://cymru1914.org/>

⁵ <http://www.cwgc.org/>

⁶ <http://www.british-towns.net/wales/powys/painscastle>