

Notes from Local Interest Group 28th September 2017

Present: Maureen Lloyd (ML), Avryl & Roy Lloyd (AL& RL), Jenny Francis (JF), Carol Gibbs (CG), Wendy & Dainis Ozols (WO & DO), John Price – Hay (JP), Richard Thomas (RT), Barbara Lloyd (BL), Tim Francis (TF), Edwina Griffiths (EG), Sue Farmer (SF), Grace Davies (GD)

Apologies: Pauline & Peter Spode, Helen Barnett, Stephen and Judy Mullard.

ML welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that it would follow the format of a review of the previous twelve months of meetings for LIG, as well as for the Gossip, and some discussion about the community's website and the bus shelter.

The Gossip

ML started the discussion by telling us that the Gossip is very strong financially and that, because of this, the shortfall of funds required for the bus shelter renovation were met out of this account, as agreed between the signatories of the Gossip's account. ML said that she saw the Gossip as being more than a newspaper; it is also a community enterprise and this is why it is good to use surplus funds on community projects, such as the bus shelter and website.

The publication is now printed half in colour and the rest in black and white; ML asked what people thought about this arrangement. If it were printed all in colour, the price would have to be increased. DO said that it was certainly worth having colour as this made the photos so much better. WO felt that the balance of half and half was just right as not all of the pages require colour printing and ML is always careful to put the "photo-heavy" pages in the colour section.

JP asked how many copies were printed each month and ML said that this was 200, not all of which will necessarily be sold but it is always good to have a few spares that can be given to newcomers, etc. Twenty are given to the garage in Clyro for sale and the Painscastle Farmers Buyers' Group has ten or fifteen. The rest are delivered to subscribers by local volunteers or posted.

JP went on to ask when the Gossip is published on the community website and ML replied that this was usually about two issues in arrears. RL asked whether the Gossip is available to read free of charge on the website and ML said that it was, but obviously only the past copies, not the current one.

DO asked whether all LIG notes should be summarised in the Gossip. ML replied that they are uploaded to the community website and she e mails them to everyone on her community e mail list and so this is not really necessary, although some summaries of particularly interesting visits had been included in the past if there is room. This is particularly the case when there are good photos available to accompany the articles.

ML asked those present whether they thought that there was anything "missing" from the publication and also whether they had any suggestions for columns, etc. SF said that she thought that it was a particularly impressive publication and that she has heard many very positive comments about it.

This section concluded with ML asking for more articles to be submitted. She does like to have a "bank" of articles that she can include in months when fewer contributions come in.

Community Website

ML introduced this section by saying that the website had been initiated in 2015-16, but really got established in May 2016. She and DO have tried hard to enthuse people to get involved and to write sections, for example about local clubs and societies, but these have not really been forthcoming.

JP asked whether there were links to local history societies, clubs, books about the area, etc on the website. DO replied that there is a local events page but this takes time to keep updated and the webmasters are dependent on those involved telling them about what is going on; this does not always happen. JP offered to send some information and links to DO for inclusion on the website.

At this stage, DO asked whether we should try to link up the community Facebook page and the website. The community Facebook page could certainly include a link to the website. ML said that not everyone likes using Facebook and so the two might work quite well together. JP asked who was responsible for the community Facebook page and WO replied that this was Jess Bailey. A request to be added to the group goes through her. The Facebook page tends to be used by those wishing to share information fairly quickly, for example about local events, lost pets, etc., because it is a more "flexible" resource than the website, which depends on information being sent to the webmasters and then being added by them. Facebook is more instantaneous and not a source of reference.

DO would like to have more old photos of the local area to put on the website. There are a few already on the site, but there must be more within the local community that would be of interest to others. JP said that he had a number of recordings of people talking about the wider local area and that he would be happy for some of these to be uploaded. DO already uploads the Farm Focus articles from the Gossip onto a separate page on the website because he believes that these may be of interest to the wider community as well.

Initially, the Community Council paid for the website to be set up and for the domain name to be registered, for example. DO asked how the future running costs will be met once these funds have run out. ML said that this is exactly the sort of thing that surplus Gossip funds could be used for.

Bus Shelter

ML reminded us that the bus shelter had been officially opened in August 2016, as part of the village fete activities. All of the work had been done by a small group of volunteers. New information is constantly being added, but there is room for more, for example something about the Drovers and the renovation of the well and creation of the garden surrounding it. SF agreed to do something about the latter, and ML suggested that this might include when and how the work was done, and by whom. GD suggested that there might be some helpful information in the scrapbooks that had been put together by Pat Taylor. DO said that there are some old photos in existence that could be added to a short article about the project. SF said that she would put something together and send it to DO so that photos could be added and the information printed in the same style as the rest of the sheets already on display. ML asked RL where the water in the well came from and RL answered that it comes straight off the hill. He added that the well was quite deep and so it was partly filled in (for safety reasons) when it was renovated. JP said that Kilvert mentioned the well in volume 2 of his diary (p223-225).

BL said that she was reading Kilvert's diaries at the moment and would be happy to make note of all references to Painscastle and the surrounding area. DO welcomed this and said that he was keen to put a Kilvert section on the website and so this would be a helpful contribution.

When the bus shelter was renovated, we put a suggestions box inside and we have received many suggestions (not all of them sensible!), and also a good number of very complimentary comments, the most recent of which (from a lady from Knucklas) WO read out to those present. She had asked that we might put up some photos of the castle site and this will certainly be done.

SF said that the mini library was a great idea, but would it be possible for us to clear out the books that have been there for some time to give some space for new ones to be added. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

DO asked whether we need another notice board in the shelter; the existing one does get a bit full from time to time. ML suggested that we might have some pigeon hole type stands in which people could put leaflets as these do have a habit of blowing around in the wind and creating a bit of a mess.

SF asked whether anyone with a chain saw could be recruited to do some work on one or two of the trees in the well garden and ML said that she was certain that a small work party could be arranged.

Local Interest Group

ML started by saying that she thought that we had had an extremely interesting and varied twelve months, both in terms of excellent field trips and also illuminating meetings in the Adullam Hall. Once again, we would like to thank the congregation for so generously allowing us to use the Adullam Hall for our monthly meetings and also those who contribute the tea, coffee and biscuits, as well as other refreshments, that we all enjoy throughout the year. The money that we collect at the meetings is shared; some of it is given to the Adullam Chapel as a contribution towards the cost of heating the hall for our meetings and the rest is put into a fund to pay for speakers. Particular thanks go to Mike Head who has made a generous contribution towards the heating fund, as well as donating a pointer for use during presentations.

ML said that it was now time to plan the programme for the next twelve months. She has e mailed Ken Jones to ask him whether he would be prepared to come to talk to us about the Maesllwch Estate. He is a member of the Brecknock Society and has made a detailed study of the local men who were involved in the East India Company, including Walter Wilkins. DO said that it would be a good idea to invite people from Glasbury to this talk as it would be of interest to them.

DO offered to try to contact Paul Remfry again with a view to his coming to talk about Painscastle castle. We would need to offer him some hospitality as he has quite a distance to travel.

ML would like to have another session on WWI, especially the local men who went to fight, some of whom, sadly, did not come home. She has visited all of the local churches but work still needs to be done on the information which she and others have collected. DO said that any information that we do get should be shared with Powys archives. He went on to say that there is already some detail on the community website, but only one person has been in contact with the webmasters with further information, which was very helpful. ML is keen to bring out the human stories. JP said that it is very difficult to get much information about individuals on the web because the last census to have been published is that for 1911, because of the "one hundred year rule". TF added that it is difficult to track down records – men often gave the wrong name or date of birth in order to enlist. SF said that she would be happy to help ML bring all of the details together in order to present the findings at a LIG meeting in 2018; GD also agreed to be involved.

WO said that she would be happy to look at the small archive of documents that RL and AL had brought to the meeting. These include documents, such as bills, from local businesses, both in

Painscastle and a little further afield. These could form the basis of an evening looking at local businesses and their history. She would do this in conjunction with RL and AL. JP said that he had some information about New End Shop (the Old Post Office) which he would be happy to share. It would be lovely to find some old photos that we could scan in to illustrate this talk.

WO said that she had thoroughly enjoyed RT's presentation about his home, Upper Llandewi, and asked whether anyone else would be willing to do a similar presentation about their house. CG said that she had already done some work on her house, Llavedrog (Llewetrog), and that, given a little time, she could do a presentation for us. She would also be able to talk about the Skreen.

ML suggested that she could contact Diana Lloyd from Skreen Farm who might be willing to come to talk about Llandeilo Graban. GD suggested that EG and Margaret Evans might be happy to contribute to this as well.

DO reminded those present that one of our original aims was to record some of the older local people talking about life in the district in the past. GD suggested that Arthur, Tom and Ted Nicholls would all be good talkers and well worth listening to.

RT suggested that, since Church House and the Rhyn are about to be sold by the Pugh family, the properties might be changed beyond recognition by the new owners. Perhaps we should learn something about these properties before it is too late. (ML is already looking into this.) These buildings are, undoubtedly, very interesting.

BL asked whether anyone had studied Llanshiver; to our knowledge, nothing has been done on this. SF asked about Dolbedwyn; could someone look at this property and also the "castle"? No-one was sure about who actually owns it at present.

RT reminded us that Emma Beynon had offered to talk to us about her trips to the Arctic; ML offered to pursue this suggestion. RT then went on to say that he might be able to persuade a good friend of his to give us a talk about her work in the Antarctic. Although not local, what is happening in the Antarctic has a global reach and may well affect our lives here in Painscastle in the future.

JP asked about the possibility of visiting Powys Archives again, now that they have moved and have all of their records on site. He also said that he had studied Frederick Jones' (1758-1834) diaries, which have a great deal of information about local places, including Hundred House and Clyro. JP might be willing to give us a talk about this.

WO offered to e mail Andy Shaw to ask him whether he would be willing to give us a talk on Stanner Rocks, a National Nature Reserve and SSSI. EG said that she knows two gentlemen from Radnor Valley Vintage who could talk about quarrying at Stanner Rocks. They could also talk about Titley Station.

JP suggested someone from the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust might be willing to take us on a guided visit to Llanbwchllyn Lake for one of our summer field trips. WO has agreed to contact the trust. Another idea for a summer visit came from RT who suggested that we should invite Ray Woods to come to talk once again – location to be decided later.

At the end of this discussion, ML asked anyone with further suggestions to get in touch with her, particularly if they have ideas for summer visits. She already has some ideas of her own which she will be pursuing.

AOB

1. RL asked about the village phone box. Is there any danger of its being removed? ML said that it is owned by BT and that a recent investigation showed that it is still sometimes used, for example by clients of Free Rein. DO said that, because we have no mobile phone coverage here, it is unlikely that it will be removed in the near future. ML said that if the phone box were to be offered to the community, we might take it on and use it in some way. At the moment, BT maintains it; if we were to take it over, we would be responsible for its upkeep. RL said that he had been told by BT engineers that the infrastructure for Superfast Broadband in the village has been installed. DO agreed to make further enquiries about this because no-one has been offered this service as yet. BL said that she would send some contact details to DO in order to help him with his enquiries.
2. JP told those present that the latest edition of the Kilvert Society's magazine (September 2017) includes an article about William Price of Pendre, which will be of particular interest to some of our members.

The meeting ended with our usual refreshments, kindly made by AL and EG. ML thanked everyone for a very constructive evening.