

## Minutes of Local Interest Group 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016

**Present:** Maureen Lloyd (ML), John Price – Rhosgoch (JPR), Roy and Avryl Lloyd (RL, AL), Neville (NH) and Pat Harley, Jenny Francis (JF), Wendy and Dainis Ozols (WO, DO), Richard Harris (RH), Margaret and John Price – Hay (JPH), Edwina Griffiths, Sue Ievers, Adrian Chambers, Peter and Pauline Spode, Evelyn Bally (EB) and Grace Davies (GD).

ML opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. She pointed out some of the resources that had been put out for people to look at, including a copy of the 1950 Clyro Estate sale.

### **War Ag in the local area (War Ag is short for War Agricultural Executive Committees)**

RL had brought some documents relating to War Ag, dating from WW2 and the years following the War when rationing was still in force. He told us that farmers were each given an allocation of certain crops that they had to grow in order to feed the nation. He read out what his Father had been told to produce on the land belonging to Pendre and told us that farmers had to reduce stock numbers in order to achieve their quotas because they needed to plough up some of their pasture to gain the necessary arable area.

JF said that War Ag decided what each farm should produce and they would take over a farm if the farmer did not achieve this quota.

JPR mentioned Bryncynon on Bryngwyn Hill which was taken over by War Ag. A manager was appointed to run this farm, as well as Llanoley.

ML asked whether the farm had been returned to the farmer after the War. No-one knew. Apparently, Ivor Bowen bought Bryncynon some time later.

JPR said that War Ag's local head office was at Glasbury.

RL mentioned the big sheds that had been built up on the Begwyns, to the west of the Roundabout, the foundations of which are still visible today.

JPR told us that farmers were also restricted as to the number of pigs that could be reared/sold and so the animals were often kept for longer than they should have been, often in the garden, becoming fatter and fatter the longer they were kept.

DO asked whether War Ag had paid a fair and proper price for the produce but RL did not know the answer to this. RL's paperwork shows that farmers were paid per acre rather than per ton.

JPR said that Newchurch Hill had been cultivated for corn (wheat) and that this was cut with a combine harvester, a rare sight at the time. This combine was towed by a tractor.

NH told us that his father had seen a D4 caterpillar tractor arriving at Glasbury station for use in this scheme and this was another first for the area.

JPR also told us that because 1954 was such a wet year the corn had been cut with a binder. It wasn't until January of 1955 that the corn was dry enough to be taken in to the barn. This was highly unusual.

WO agreed to work with RL and to try to write a case study of Pendre Farm's contribution to War Ag, possibly for the community's website.

### **Photographs**

RL had brought some old photos taken during Coronation Year (1953) for people to see.

ML said that she had made little progress on the photo taken at Portway in the 1940s that had been published in the Gossip, apart from identifying Arty Griffiths and Ivor Bowen, and she asked whether anyone had further information.

AL said that she had asked John Meredith and Eddie Pugh, but they had not been able to help.

JPR said that one of the men is Jack Greenway and another Ben Price, who lived up at Ireland. He was the local gamekeeper and is the man holding the gun in the photo. Ben Price later moved to Rhulen.

ML asked whether the remaining man, the one in the uniform with the cap, might be Roly Morris, but JPR said that he did not think that it was. So, there are still two men to be identified. Perhaps people could compare them with men in old family photos and let her know if they come up with any names.

RL brought a photo cut out from an old newspaper for us to see. This is useful as all of the names are printed beneath, but he could not give a date for the cutting.

GD had brought a number of photos taken at Painscastle School in 1927; much interest was shown in these. Again, they are very useful because she has all of the names recorded on the back of each photo. These photos could obviously go on the community website.

**Community Website** [www.painscastle-rhosgoch.co.uk](http://www.painscastle-rhosgoch.co.uk)

ML told those present that quite a bit of work has been done on the community website recently and she encouraged people to have a look. She invited DO to say a few words about the Local History page, on which he is currently working.

DO said that the aim of the website was not only to provide information for locals and to record some of our local history, but also to inform people from other parts of the world. Quite a bit of basic information has already been completed and now he and ML are working on the rather complicated history of the area. The best way of showing this is on a timeline and this will be posted on the website as soon as it is complete. Consequently, no detail will be recorded in these minutes. DO outlined some of the main events and said that much of the information has come from a book published by Paul Remfry, with whom he has been in contact. Mr Remfry is interested in coming back to the area to do some research for a book on the Battle of Painscastle and might be persuaded to come to talk to the group if there is any interest. DO went on to say that there is one odd thing about the village of Painscastle in that, although it had a very important castle, there is no church in the village and that various theories relating to this anomaly abound. DO said that it would be great to have some feedback about the website, please.

ML told the group that more work is going to be done on the churches and chapels very soon.

EB reminded ML that there used to be information leaflets in all of the churches and asked whether these were still available. ML said that there is information about the various churches available. ML thanked EB for reminding everyone about their availability.

DO asked whether anyone had information relating to the history of Rhosgoch as this is in short supply at the moment. Please could people see what they might have in their possession.

ML told the group that one of the main strengths of the website was its use of links – this is where the internet really comes into its own. Already, the history page includes a huge number of links that people can follow in order to learn more.

DO emphasised how important local groups like this one are in the recording of local history and this will be even more significant in the future. We can no longer rely on public organisations such as CADW to do this as they are all short of funds and are having to cut back.

EB asked whether we would be having advertising on the website in order to generate capital to cover running costs.

ML said that there are currently some discussions going on about this with the community council. Initially, the site has been funded by the Community Council, who received a grant from Powys Council for this purpose.

ML went on to encourage everyone to think about contributing in any way to the website, eg by writing an article/helping with the website management/sending in information, etc.

DO said that it might be nice to have some short items on individual houses to upload and that this would be a manageable way for people to get involved.

ML asked for people to send in favourite photos, either old or recent, so that they can be added to the gallery.

AL suggested that it would be interesting and useful to have some information about places that no longer exist. She thinks that she has a photo of Llan y Cae that she can contribute.

ML appealed for photos of places that no longer exist for the website and for our records, eg Bryntegan and Wernfelin. JPR said that Wernfelin used to be a sweet shop.

ML asked JPR about the time that he dug up part of the Castle in order to build a shed for Castle Farm.

JPR said that they found 8ft wide stones which appeared to be part of the wall around the moat.

### **Other Items**

ML asked whether anyone had borrowed a book belonging to JPR which had been brought to one of the meetings, and which is now missing; it is called "A Jubilee of County Councils". Please could people check to see whether they have it at home.

ML also said that RL had brought a number of resources, including sales documents relating to local estates, to the meeting and that these are well worth looking at.

ML asked whether people would like her to arrange for the following to come to talk to the group:

- A representative from CPAT (Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust) – a lady is willing to come to talk about local archaeology, including a chambered tomb at Cwm Illa, near Rhosgoch. There would be a charge for this, along with travel expenses, which we might be able to cover out of our funds. A show of hands indicated that this would be a popular event.
- Paul Remfry – he might be willing to come to talk about the history of Painscastle. Since he lives in N Wales, we would have to provide accommodation, an evening meal and travel expenses and, therefore, it would be necessary to make a small charge of about £5 or so to cover the costs. This meeting could also be open to others to attend and this might generate more money to cover our costs. Once again, a show of hands showed support for this event.

EB said that there is a site at Lane Farm which was excavated in Victorian times, but she does not know whether this is the Cwm Illa site.

JPH said, at this point, that there is not much information about our local area in the archives in Llandrindod and that there is much "hidden" history for us to uncover.

ML told us that she has worked on an indenture, dated 1825, which shows that the Black Ox pub was the building which is now New House. It also mentions a kiln (yet to be located) and a blacksmith as part of the same property. She obtained a copy of the indenture on the group's visit to the National Library of Wales in December 2015.

ML told the group that she had brought some old maps of the Lordships and Manors for us to look at over tea.

JPH informed the group that the 1939 Register is now available on Find My Past, but that one needs to pay a subscription to access this information. This is not Census data, but it does give the name, date of birth and occupation of those registered, and this information could be useful as one might recognise some of the names. However, we need to be aware that some of the information has been redacted as the people may still be alive.

## **AOB**

EB said that she hoped that members of the group and others in the community would get behind the fight to keep Gwernyfed High School open. It is important that people other than parents become involved in the campaign – this is a broader community issue. She suggested that we could write a letter as a group in support of the school.

RH said that he had been at the meeting at the school held on 24<sup>th</sup> February and felt that any letters needed to be sent off quickly. They should not be addressed to Powys Council – they have already made the decision to close the school. However, their decision could be overturned by the Welsh Assembly Government and so letters should be addressed to the First Minister or the Minister for Education in Cardiff. Do not address the letters to named individuals as these might change after the Welsh Assembly elections. He suggested that comments from individuals may possibly hold more weight than those received from groups of people.

We then broke for tea and biscuits, kindly made for us by Avryl and Edwina, and members had the opportunity to look at the resources brought to the meeting by members of the group.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016, 7.30 pm, at the Adullam Hall, Painscastle.