

## Minutes of Local Interest Group 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Present: Maureen Lloyd (ML), John (JP) and Margaret Price, John Price (Rhosgoch), Jenny Francis, Richard Martin, Roy and Avryl Lloyd, Edwina Griffiths, Deri Jones, Wendy and Dainis Ozols (DO), Adrian Chambers, Pauline and Peter Spode, Grace Davies.

Apologies: Richard Harris, Jess Bailey

ML opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She gave a brief outline of the programme for the evening. She thanked JP for bringing along some films for us to see.

### 1. Films

JP started the meeting by showing some films. The first was divided into 3 parts and featured experts from the RCAHMW. The first part, Mounds on the Hill, was about Pen Blaenmeilw, near Aberedw. It talked about some pillow mounds high up on moorland. These are artificial rabbit warrens built especially because rabbit was a luxury food item for the richer classes in medieval times. The ancient farmstead of Pen Blaenmeilw is now ruined, but there are records of people living there about 150 years ago. This area suffered from rural depopulation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as people moved off the land to the industrial centres in the Valleys, where they could find work and terraced houses (with privies) in which to live. Another ancient feature found at the farmstead was an old kiln for drying grain. The second part was about a Victorian model farm, Leighton Park, near Welshpool. This was built in the 1850s at a cost of £200 000 and was given to John Naylor, who was a Liverpool banker, as a wedding present. The house was designed to impress and the farm had water power and its own tramway; it also employed humane farming methods. The tramway was used to carry hay and straw for the animals right the way through the large barns. Water power was used for threshing. In the sheep and pig houses, there was a system for collecting waste and this was then recycled out onto the fields, which was revolutionary at the time. The use of HEP made perfect sense as Wales has both lots of water and steep slopes for gravity. There was also a water-powered funicular which took the slurry upslope. The chicken house (built in 1861) was particularly elaborate, with nesting boxes containing perches and flying spaces. The chickens also had access to the outside. The welfare of all of the animals on the farm was a priority. The final part of the film was about Ciliau, near Erwood. This is a C16 gentry hall house partially constructed of stonework and high quality timber work and, in its day, it would have been considered “cutting edge”. There are two beautiful roof trusses and a recently uncovered feature is an elaborate wall painting on a timber room partition. The painting probably dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and features turning and curling leaves, in red, yellow and orange, on a black background. There are also some flowers, birds and animals. The painting is an imitation of a tapestry – the Welsh climate is not kind to fabric wall coverings.

JP then showed us a short clip from a recent news programme which featured some of our local farmers at Talgarth Market on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

The final clip that JP had brought along dated from 1958 and showed the triumphant return of local man, Les Goodwin, the first British World Champion Ploughman.

### 2. General Information

ML told us that she had found that all of the tithe maps were available on the website [thegenealogist.co.uk](http://thegenealogist.co.uk) in addition to those held at the National Library in Aberystwyth.

ML informed us that she had arranged for Ray Woods to lead a visit to Rhosgoch Bog for our group on the last Thursday in June (as long as it is not flooded).

ML said that someone from Ceredigion had been in touch with her having seen our local website. He wanted some information about field names. She added that it was very gratifying that he had seen the website and that this shows how important it could be. She asked that people should contribute items if they would like to in order to make it even more useful.

DO added that the site needs some more photographs and urged people to contribute pictures, old or new.

### 3. Llanbedr Census

ML introduced the section about the Llanbedr census. She and JP have been working on the data and there is now an Excel file for this parish, as well as the one already completed for Bryngwyn.

JP said that he was happy to email the files to people but that they would need to have Excel on their computers in order to use it.

ML pointed out that the strength of the program is that it allows you to interrogate the data, ie you can follow families, or look at individual properties.

JP said that we should be aware that spellings are not always consistent and ML added that this was, in part, because they were not always spelled correctly on the originals. It can actually be interesting to see how names have changed over the years.

JP went through the data to show us what is available, particularly going through all the property names.

ML asked whether anyone knows where Blackoaks was as this is one property that they have not yet been able to identify/locate.

JP used Pendre as an example to demonstrate how we could investigate a property and its occupants over time. He showed us that all of the properties are identified by grid references (completed by ML) and that, if you click on the GR and have access to the internet, you can link to a map and locate the property.

Some time was spent investigating properties and families in Llanbedr parish as a further demonstration of how the spreadsheet can be used. It has the potential to be an extremely useful resource for anyone investigating the local area.

JP and ML must be thanked for the considerable amount of time and effort that they have put into creating this file for us all to use.

This was followed by tea and biscuits, kindly made for us by Avryl and Edwina.