

## Notes from Local Interest Group Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016

**Present:** Maureen Lloyd (ML), Wendy and Dainis Ozols, John Price – Rhosgoch (JPR), Neville Harley, Pauline and Peter Spode, Edwina Griffiths, Tim Francis, Mike and Val Head, Avryl and Roy Lloyd (RL), Jeremy and Christine Rose, Mollie and Geoff Moore, John and Margaret Price (Hay), Ginny Guy, John Herdman, Richard Harris, Tom Hawson.

**Apologies:** Jenny Francis and Grace Davies.

ML welcomed everyone and said that the main part of the meeting would involve a field trip to the site of Painscastle Mill.

Firstly, she told everyone to make sure that they had seen the small corn mill that JPR had brought along to the meeting. This came from his family home at Llwyn y Meibion, on the road up to Bryngwyn. It used to be mounted on one of the beams in the loft of the house where it was quite normal for the grain to be stored. The mill is obviously blacksmith-made – it has no maker's mark – and the pins, etc are all also made by a blacksmith. JPR has no idea how old it is except that he has known it all his life. It was worked by hand and it must have taken a long time for the operator to mill the grain. Perhaps it was done in small quantities, as and when it was needed. JPR had also brought along a very old chain, made up of 100 individual pieces each a foot long. This was used for measuring in the days before tapes. ML thanked JPR for showing us these most interesting artefacts.

### Visit to the Site of Painscastle Mill

The group then walked out of the village and down Oaks Road, along to the site of Painscastle Mill, which is on land now owned by John Herdman (JH). JH had brought along an OS map, scale 1:2500, dating from 1889. This shows the location of the mill, the mill house, the mill pond and the mill leat very clearly, all set slightly above the Bachawy Brook. It also clearly states that it was a "corn" mill. ML has done some research and was able to tell us that the earliest mention of this mill was in 1816. The building was 6.1 x 4.9 metres. It was built on a platform cut into the slope and some of the walls are still visible, especially the SW wall which stands 3m high above the wheel pit. Within the ruins, you can see a metal wheel shape, possibly part of the water wheel. The miller's cottage was on top of the bank above the mill, but nothing of this now remains. The leat was 1.13 km long, probably one of the longest in Radnorshire; the length would have given enough height difference to provide a good head of water. The intake for this is quite clearly visible on JH's map and is located to the SE of Lane Farm. The line of the leat is now marked by trees and field boundaries. ML told us that the 1841 and 1851 censuses show that the mill was functioning and that the millers were called Pritchard. By the 1861 census the miller was called Davies. There is no record of anyone living at the mill in the 1871 census and so it must have ceased to function sometime between 1861 and 1871. The group had a good look at the site and went up onto the bank to see where the line of the leat and the location of the mill pond were. From the tithe map of 1838 it was clear there was another building close to the mill; this may well have been a kiln but no record exists.

ML has also found mention of a fulling mill in Painscastle. The OS grid reference for this gives its site as being Trewylod. There is a record of a fulling mill near Painscastle in 1309, but there is no further information. She explained that these mills were used to process wool by cleansing it to eliminate

oils, dirt and other impurities, and to make it thicker. The Welsh word for a fulling mill is a pandy and this appears in many place names.

ML explained that there were quite a few mills in this area, many on the Bachawy. The highest (upstream) was the one in Rhosgoch, which is still standing. This was a corn mill and the earliest record of its existence is from 1550. It ceased working in 1954. Downstream from Painscastle is the Cefnige Mill; there have been many variations of its name - Kevenyge, Kilvenege, Cefnygaer. Some of the walls of this mill are still standing. It is thought to date from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century and it was one of the eight crown mills in Radnorshire in 1608. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it was under private ownership. It appears that it was rebuilt in 1830 and it was certainly still working until 1895. Roy Lloyd told us a sad story about this mill. Some years ago it was bought by a family but whilst they were there their little girl was bitten by a mosquito and she died. The distraught family lost interest in the place and it fell into disrepair.

The next mill downstream is called Lower Mill, another corn mill. The earliest mention of this is in 1833, even though it is marked on the 1817 map, but little is known about it. It is situated near a crossing point of the Bachawy river where four tracks meet; at one time there was a bridge wide enough to take a horse and cart, however there is only a foot bridge now. On the tithe map of 1839 it is recorded as the site of Lower Mill and in the 1841 census there are several cottages situated either side of the brook. In 1861 they are referred to as Bottle Dock.

The final two mills on the Bachawy are the Screens Mill and Screens Fulling Mill. The Screens Mill (corn) was working in 1666, but by 1871 it no longer appears on the census return. The original name appears to have been Melyn Ynys Greene, which probably explains how it became the Screen. Some stone walls are still standing, together with what could be the remains of the wheel pit and about 50-60 metres of the leat. The Screens Fulling Mill is shown as belonging to Ciliau in 1747 and so it is assumed that its location was on the Bachawy on land belonging to the farm, but its exact site has not been located. This mill is recorded as having been in use in 1779.

Hothnant Mill, Bryngwyn, is recorded as decayed in 1563 and situated below Mytton pool, but is recorded as a crown mill in 1608 and 1784. It is not clear whether this is another name for Rhosgoch Mill or could it be a completely different mill?

Other local mills for which there are records are at Llandeilo Graban, Cwmwhely and Glasnant; these were all corn mills. The earliest mention of the mill at Llandeilo is in 1781, but there is no other information about it. ML said that it is possible that this might be another name for the Screens Mill. Cwmwhely Mill is on a tributary of the Bachawy and the first known reference to it is in an indenture of 1631. Again, there are no visible remains. Glasnant Mill, not on the Bachawy Brook, is known to have been in existence in 1813; yet again, there is no more information about it.

ML thanked JH for allowing us access to his land and the mill, and for bringing along his most interesting map. Thanks are also due to ML for doing all of the necessary research.

A really interesting visit, on a beautiful early summer's evening, was enjoyed by all. Afterwards, we repaired to the Roast Ox for refreshments.