

Minutes of Local Interest Group Meeting 30th April 2015

Present: Mo Lloyd, Jenny Francis, Carole Gibbs, Peter and Pauline Spode, John and Margaret Price, Richard Martin, Dainis and Wendy Ozols, Margaret Herdman (New House), Evelyn Bally, Sue Farmer, Margaret Herdman (The Hom), Grace Davies, Roy and Avryl Lloyd, Edwina Griffiths, Richard Harris, Adrian Chambers, Sue Ievers.

Apologies: Jess Fromant

ML opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. Firstly she introduced Richard Harris. Richard said that his interest was in the general history of the area and his house in particular. He has found ancient tools in his garden at The Castle, Rhosgoch. He is also interested in the work which the group has been doing. ML said that it would be interesting to investigate Rhosgoch in more detail, in the same way as we had done with Painscastle. RH had asked the BBNP archaeologist about Rhosgoch and was told that it would have been good seasonal hunting ground. The bog was once a lake and this made for good hunting. EB remarked that their land contains some burial grounds and RH said that there were more in the Chapel grounds.

ML then went on to introduce Adrian Chambers. He said that he was particularly interested in Newchurch. It was probably the only village-sized settlement in Radnorshire not to have lost any men in WW1. He told us that there is a Roll of Honour in Llandrindod hospital; ML said that the group should investigate this as we are still missing names from Llanbedr Painscastle

ML said that she and others have visited many local churches looking for the rolls of honour (RoH) and other memorials and that the group is trying to gather information about those who served in both WW1 and WW2.

DO had brought a spreadsheet of the data collected so far for members to look at. He said that names were often duplicated in churches and chapels. ML, CG and Diana Lloyd (DL) have been sending him additional information and this was not yet included on the spreadsheet. So far, we have 90 names and 12 of these men were killed in WW1, or subsequently died of their injuries.

Summary (Longer document available – possibly published in The Gossip)

Crickadarn – 5 names mentioned, all of whom died. Some more men may have gone away to fight but returned.

Bryngwyn – almost all of the names are duplicated in Hermon Chapel. Only 2 of the names are found only in Hermon Chapel. One man is shown on Bryngwyn, Hermon Chapel and Newchurch RoH. Census data is helping in the identification of individuals, but the data is only available up to 1911. Military records are a little sketchy. Gunner David Watkins is the only man listed in Bryngwyn who was killed.

Gwenddwr – 7 names [all returned] and one official WWII war grave.

Aberedw – 29 names and all apparently returned safely. Many of the recruits were servants in the big houses or farm workers and so they may have come from more distant places, and so this makes finding out about them a little more tricky. Two of the names are recorded as having been in the Canadian forces. Can anyone help in identifying descendents of the named individuals?

Llandeilo Graban – 27 men listed, three of whom were killed in WW1. CG and DL have provided information about one of these – John Christopher Arthur Williams-Vaughan of The Skreen. CG told us more about this young man, who was born into a wealthy family in Llandefalle in 1891, the eldest son of John Williams-Vaughan. He had a younger brother, Francis, and a sister, Dorothy (who later became Mrs Lionel Trafford). He joined up as a 2nd Lt and was killed in 1916 at The Somme. He is listed as a Captain on the memorial. He started his military career in the South Wales Borderers but later transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. His brother, Francis, joined the navy when he was just 13 years old and worked his way up through the ranks to become a Lt Cdr. He died in Bath in 1977. Dorothy bought the field gun and may have arranged for it to be brought to Llandeilo Graban.

EG said the The Skreen had later been bought by Captain Graham Clark and that her Mother had been Head Cook there in the 1930s. EG's Father had bought Penrhiw from The Skreen estate - 80 acres for £2500. The Skreen is very old and there is documentary evidence that it existed in the 1600s.

At this point there was some discussion about Hywel Harris [one of the leaders of the Welsh Methodist revival of 18th century] and his links with The Skreen which I did not record as I could not keep up with the conversations! – Hywel Harris [1714-1773] married the daughter of John & Gwen Williams from the Skreen - ML

ML said that CG and DL were making excellent progress with their investigations.

DO said that all of the men listed on the memorials have stories and that it is important that we find out as much about them as possible, both the dead and the survivors.

ML said that it would be great if members could “adopt” a name and do further research. She has been searching the on-line newspapers for information. There are often notices when men came home on leave. Newspapers also have applications for exemptions which are very interesting. She has also found some information about Tom “The Shop” who lost both of his legs. A concert was held for him and details were given in the paper. It raised about £23 and he also had a hand-propelled wheelchair given by Lord Kitchener's Fund. After the concert, Tom spoke and said that he had been glad to do his duty for his country. Later he kept the shop in Rhosgoch, now Folly Cottage.

DO said that an article in the newspaper about an egg collection for the troops lists the names of the ladies who donated and their farms, and this could be a good place to start.

ML said that the Haynes mentioned on the Llandeilo Graban memorial was related to Ray Bagley and so that family may have some useful information. Another was EG's Great Uncle [Edwin Robinson] who lived at Waterloo, (which was a shop) at the bottom of Sunny Bank.

CG said that she would do some more work to try and track down information about Mrs Lionel Trafford (Dorothy Williams-Vaughan).

MH (New House) had brought two gas masks for us to see. One was for a child and she said that she has two of these. She had been advised by AL not to throw them out. They are great artefacts. She also said that she had heard that, because it is the 70th anniversary of VE Day, people were being asked to ring the church bells, on Saturday May 9th, to commemorate this. A short discussion followed about the bells in local churches. Llanbedr has 2 bells. Bryngwyn's are very old and could

not be rung because the wood on which they are mounted is not strong enough and so they have been tied up. Newchurch has bells which could be rung, as does Llandewi. It was suggested that someone should talk to the vicar about this. [The Llanbedr bells are being rung on Saturday May 9th at 11am.]

DO said at this point that it was very important that the Painscastle men should be identified as there is no memorial in Llanbedr church.

ML suggested that someone could go to Llandod hospital to look on the memorial there.

SF suggested that the Powys Archives might have the memorial that used to be in Builth hospital. She then asked what web sites could be used for doing the research.

ML suggested that Ginny could come to talk to the group and show us the different sites that are available, some of which might be free to use. She also said that access to Welsh newspapers on line is free, but that they only go up to 1920. The UK papers charge for use. She has been looking at the forerunners of the B&R in her research.

MH (New House) said that the Hereford Times used to have regular write-ups about Painscastle as this might be of use.

CG reminded us that the Powys Archives has "Find My Past" and "Ancestry" which can be used for free.

SF suggested that the military museum in Brecon might have records which we could use.

DO pointed out that the spelling of names (people and houses) is not very good on the various Census records and that military records often lacked the dates of birth of recruits.

JP said that misspellings on transcripts are terrible.

ML said that she did have a list of where her newspaper excerpts came from which is useful.

The meeting ended with ML asking what people would like to do at May's meeting. She suggested that some people might like to investigate the older buildings in Rhosgoch.