

## Notes from Local Interests Group 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Apologies** were received from: Peter & Pauline Spode, Gwyneth Guy and Wendy & Den Ozols.

**Present:** John (JPH) and Margaret Price, Roy and Avryl Lloyd, Richard Thomas, Richard Harris, Grace Davies, Sue Farmer, Gareth Jenkins, Jenny Frances, Sue Ievers, Richard Martin and Maureen Lloyd (ML).

ML welcomed everyone and explained that the aim of the meeting was to look at "One Thousand Years of Local Administration from Castle Matilda to Painscastle Rural District Council".

The evening was a review of some aspects of local administration and government throughout the ages. At the time of the building of the castle in the twelfth century, the administration of the area would have been based on a feudal system administered by the Lord of the Manor. The Lord would have had his tenants who worked on the manor; they could also be called on to fight in any wars. Later these obligations were often transferred into fines and taxes from the people of the area. There were heriots to be paid when someone died, leirwite (a fine for lying with a bondswoman) and many others.

**JP spoke** about the area after the Norman conquest, when Upper Elfael was administered by Colwyn (Castle Maud) and Lower Elfael by Painscastle (Castle Matilda).

King Henry III was in residence at Painscastle for 3 months in 1231 when he rebuilt the castle in stone; this was illustrated by a slide showing the calendar of the fine rolls of the reign of Henry III.

### **A Collection of Miscellaneous Papers in relation to the History of Radnorshire.**

These papers were mainly inventories produced on the death of the incumbent of the castle, in this case it was Roger de Thony:

*In 1265, the rent of assize as well in moneys as in wheat and oats was £12; he also had rents from tenants holding foreign lands. The Priory of Clifford pay for a certain pool (Monks Pool on the Beqwyns?) five shillings every year.*

*Arable land six caracutes (approx 60 acres) in demesne £12, One meadow worth 60 shillings every year, Three water mills belonging to the said castle £4. 10s per annum, Fulling mills worth 21 shillings per annum. The pleas of the courts and the perquisites of tenants holding foreign lands worth £32 p.a. The herriots 40s, Leirwit 40s, The cows of May are worth 46s 8d every year, The pannage in the woods 60s p.a., Herbage in the woods 60s p.a., Rents of Assize in the town 100s, Tolls of the fair and market £22 per annum, Pleas and perquisites of the Hundred belonging to the castle £6 p.a*

**Sum total £110 2s 8d**

It was said that the lord of the Castle of Matilda might have 1000 Oxen and Cows, 2000 sheep, 5 mares, horse or foals, and pigs as many as he wished.

### **OUT OF THE BUNDLE OF FORFEITURES OF THE 21ST YEAR OF THE REIGN OF KING RICHARD THE SECOND 1397**

Inquisition taken at Painscastle: this itemises the possessions of Thomas Earl of Warwick when the king seized Painscastle and his other properties.

*Including the rent of Carathy 5s (is this possibly Carnass? Clyro Court? Boatside?).*

*Castle Matilda and La Roile (Clyro) Castle of Aberedw mentioned as well as Colwent.*

*Rents of the demesne lands, ways oats, mills and flour there £6 13s 4d.*

*Perquisites of the courts there are worth more than £9 per annum.*

**1578 - in the 39th year in the reign of Queen Elizabeth** - was the last record in this collection.

## **ML continued the presentation**

From 1536 and the Act of Union, Radnorshire as a county came into existence, although this probably did little to change local administration. The system of Court Leets and Court Barons continued through several more centuries, for punishing smaller local crimes.

## **Is Mynydd (Lower Elfael) Court Leet**

The feudal system of Court Leet and Court Baron carried on to the end of the nineteenth century. Court Leets were held twice a year, an Easter Court Leet and one at Michaelmas. The Court Leet was held under the direction of the steward or his deputy, on behalf of the Lord of the Manor.

In the Court Leet of Ishmonydd or Lower Elfael, the Jury of up to 16 or more men were all occupiers of local farms covering the parishes of Llandilo Graban, Llanddewi Fach, Llanbedr-Painscastle, Bryngwyn, Newchurch, Michaelchurch on Arrow, Bettws, Clyro and Llowes. The jury 'presented' any wrong-doing, such as encroachment of another man's property, enclosure of land etc. Another presentment could be to ask the Lord of the Manor to repair bridges or gates on roads and tracks. They also informed the court of the death of a tenant, when a heriot (a type of death duty) would be due to the Lord of the Manor from the deceased's estate.

**Painscastle Borough Court Leet** appointed a Mayor, a Constable and a Pound Keeper.

Manor of the Borough of Painscastle, **29<sup>th</sup> November 1833.**

William Dyke (*New House*) Constable (property encroachment).

William Price (*Pendre*) Bailiff (Mayor) for ensuing year.

**Honor and Manor of the Borough of Painscastle, The Drovers Arms 13<sup>th</sup> October 1846**

William Lloyd Pound keeper, the Pound was in a bad state.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century various Acts of Parliament introduced more structured local government administration. The Highways Act of 1835 introduced Highways Boards to improve the roads and bridges. Local stone was used to repair the roads; excerpts from the records provide an insight into the state of local roads.

The Local Government Act of 1888 began the process of amalgamation of the local administration of the different community requirements. The Highways Boards were amongst the first taken over by the newly formed Radnorshire County Council. The court of quarter sessions continued as previously; they were not reformed until the Court Acts of 1971.

## **The Highways**

The King's highway, and the bridges that carried it, passed through the hands of parish vestries, tollgate trusts, private individuals, ecclesiastical bodies, sanitary authorities and military commands – all intermingling in places and leaving wide gaps in others.

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the Justices of the county in the Quarter Sessions were responsible for the maintenance of the main roads, other roads being under the Highways Boards

## **Painscastle Highways Board**

*Highways Boards were created by the Highways Acts of 1835 and 1862, in order to improve the quality of roads in Britain.*

First meeting was held on **26<sup>th</sup> April 1852** at Baskerville Arms, Clyro.

The clerk was paid ten pounds a year and the surveyor Charles Butcher from Glasbury had £15 per year.

**7<sup>th</sup> April 1857:** *Ordered that the bridge over the brook near Llandevron in the Parish of Llanbedr Painscastle be built and that the Surveyor produce a plan and estimate of the same at the next meeting of the board.*

*Ordered that the sum of £7 be paid to Mr Davies of the Upper House, Painscastle, being the estimated*

*expense of fencing and levelling the old road by a diversion through his land.*

**Kilvert's Diary, July 3rd 1872:** *As we went up the steep hill to Painscastle the huge green Castle mound towered above us..... In the village, a Post office had been established since I was last here and the village well, the only one, which was formerly common and open to ducks and cattle, had been neatly walled and railed round. We went to Pendre, the house of the Mayor of Painscastle, but the Mayor was not at home. At last Mr. Price the Mayor was discovered in the centre of a group of village politicians before the alehouse door where - While village statesmen talked with looks profound The weekly paper with their ale went round.*

*Tom Williams talked to the Mayor about quarrying stone for the Painscastle school while the blacksmith leaned over the wall taking part in the conversation and the rest of the village statesmen lounged in the inn porch. The Mayor came up with us on to Llanbedr Hill to show us the best quarry. He said Painscastle was an old broken borough, one of the Radnorshire boroughs, and they still went through the form of electing one of the chief men of the village as Mayor. Sometimes the office ran in one family for some time. Williams asked the Mayor if he had any power. 'No', answered that dignity, 'I dinna think I have much power.' We stopped to look at the stone of the ruined village pound. With a touch of dry humour the Mayor told us that at the last Court Leet the village authorities and tenants of the Manor had made a present to the Lord of the Manor (Mr. de Winton) of the pound, the stop gate and the village well, that he might keep them in repair. Pointing to one of his fields, whose boundary had lately been moved and enlarged, he said with a merry twinkle in his eye, 'Because the Lord had not land enough before I have taken in a bit more for him off the waste'. The Mayor said there was a small school kept near Llanbedr Church by an old man, who taught the children well. 'But I do consait he do let them out too soon in the evening, he do', said the Mayor disapprovingly.*

*The Mayor took us to the quarry and discoursed without enthusiasm and even with despondency on the badness of the roads, the difficulty of hauling the stone and the labour of 'ridding' the ground before the stone could be raised. After some talk at the quarry about ways and means, we parted, the Mayor returning to his mayoralty which had no emolument, no dignity, and no powers, he "didna think".*

**Monday January 10<sup>th</sup> 1876:** *Approved the building of Erwood bridge across the Cavan Twm Bach ford from the turnpike road from Brecon to Builth to The Cavan Twm Bach Inn.*

**Monday July 24<sup>th</sup> 1876:** *Resolved that the surveyor repair Bottle Dock Bridge in Llanstephan and Llandilo Graban*

**Monday October 16<sup>th</sup> 1876:** *The Surveyor having reported that the bridge leading from the Screen to the railway station in Llandilo Graban had been swept away by the recent floods. Resolved that a new bridge be built.*

From Tudor times to Victorian times, Local Government consisted of lots of different bodies, from parish vestries to Courts of Quarter Sessions.

There was a need to consolidate all rates and have one demand note with a single authority levying the rate.

Administration of Justice – justices met four times a year: Epiphany, Lent, Pentecost and Michaelmas.

The urban and rural districts of Radnorshire were formed by the Local Government Act 1894 (which existed until 1974): they were Llandrindod Wells UD, Knighton UD, Presteigne UD, Rhayader RD, Knighton RD New Radnor RD, Colwyn RD and Painscastle RD.

This was when the existing Hay Rural Sanitary District was divided into three: the section in Breconshire was reconstituted as Hay Rural District, the area in Herefordshire became Bredwardine Rural District, while

the parishes in Radnorshire became Painscastle Rural District. The new district took its name from the ancient hundred of Painscastle. The council continued to be based in Hay on Wye in Breconshire. Painscastle rural district comprised nine civil parishes: Boughrood, Bryngwyn, Clyro, Glasbury, Llanddewi Fach, Llandeilo Graban, Llanstephan, Llowes and Painscastle.

**JP presented** newspaper reports, starting with the **Evening Express, 3rd July 1909**: In the Painscastle Rural District there were 49 births and 28 deaths, one fifth of the deaths were due to phthisis (*tuberculosis?*) and one fifth to cancer, which seemed to be an increase in some districts. Sanitation generally was good and the water supply satisfactory.

**Evening Express 26th February 1910**: There was talk of providing an isolation hospital for Hay District.

**10th April 1914 Brecon County Times**: Painscastle RDC did not agree with Colwyn council about the condition of the roads near Erwood. There was an outbreak of Measles in Painscastle school and it was recommended that the school should be kept in a cleaner condition. The Inspector also warned the school that it needed a proper water supply laid on within two months and they were also requested to have the interior of the school distempered and cleaned during the Whitsun holiday.

Mr Price, Llanbachowey, was elected Chairman and Mr Bishop, Traveley, Vice Chairman.

**18th June 1914 Brecon & Radnor**: Classification of the County Roads was on the Agenda; again they didn't agree with Colwyn Council. Census times and places were arranged.

**2nd July 1914 Brecon & Radnor**: Cwmhelig was in a bad state of repair. Repairs at Newhouse (Bettws, Clyro) were also considered.

**19th November 1914 Brecon County Times**: Newhouse was issued with a closing order. Whitehall had a poor roof and promised repairs had not been carried out so necessary notice to the owner was the conclusion.

**11th March 1915 Brecon County Times**: The Sanitary Inspector reported that Whitehall, Painscastle, and the Cottage, Rhosgoch, were causing a nuisance.

**5th August 1915 Brecon County Times**: The August 5th edition of Brecon County Times reported on a meeting of the Builth Naturalists in Painscastle. They thought that the authors of a book, "Earthworks in England", mentioning the finest extent of Builth castle could not have visited Painscastle, which were of greater extent. They also gave a mention to Walter Scott's delightful romance "The Betrothed", "Garde Doloreuse" is the Norman translation of Painscastle. A sumptuous tea was provided by Mrs Davies at the Post Office in Painscastle.

**26th August 1915 Brecon County Times**: The first mention of a proposal to erect a fence on the Begwyns, which was progressing well.

**23rd September 1915 Brecon County Times**: Mr Charles Butcher, the agent for Gwernalwy, was supplying timber for the gateposts of the Begwyns fence.

**21st October 1915 Brecon County Times**: Major de Winton had kindly given two gates and Mr Baskerville half the number of fencing posts. The Belgian Relief fund had raised a total of £54 9s.

**13th January 1916 Brecon & Radnor** : The District was free of notifiable diseases, there was a case of Mumps at Ffynnon Gynnyd, also a report of water standing on the road at Llandeilo Graban.

**25th May 1916 Brecon County Times**: There was an Open Air meeting of the Women Farm Labourers' Committee in Hay; Mrs Lloyd, Pendre, was one of the names from Painscastle.

**1st June 1916 Brecon & Radnor**: Mary Stephens had second prize for her essay about Ffynnon Gynnydd Well, which she wrote had only been drunk dry once by Cromwell's soldiers when they were besieging Painscastle. However, in the letters page of the **Brecon & Radnor 1st June 1916**, HDW was asking if this statement has any historical foundation, although he understood that small cannon balls had been found at Painscastle.

**15th February 1917 Brecon & Radnor**: A report of Painscastle Brewster Sessions was published. Painscastle

division had 10 fully licenced public houses and one beer house. The transfer of the licence for the Red Lion, Brilley, was also discussed.

**12th April 1917 Brecon County Times:** The RDC has been asked to save all waste paper and bones. The roadmen had complained about their low wages of 3s a day, an increase of 2s a week was agreed.

**12th July 1917 Brecon County Times:** Timber for road making and repairing was discussed. Joining Radnorshire with North Herefordshire for the purpose of Parliamentary representation was proposed by the RDC councillors as the areas were purely agricultural and so that we all spoke the same language.

**9th August 1917 Brecon and Radnor:** Damage caused to local roads by timber haulage was on the Agenda; they were unable to claim against the Local Government board as the hauliers were private.

Mr H Price, Llanbachowey, was unanimously appointed councillor to represent Llanbedr.

**13th September 1917 Brecon County Times:** In September 1917, some farmers were rather slack in getting their hedges trimmed. The roadmen now wanted parity with the Agricultural wage.

**10th January 1918 Brecon County Times:** Mr E. Meredith was appointed temporary Inspector of nuisances for the Painscastle district in January 1918.

**11th July 1918 Brecon County Times:** the clerk's salary was increased from £20 to £30 per annum. The question of obtaining stone for certain roads was adjourned until next meeting.

**8th August 1918 Brecon and Radnor:** the impossibility of local peat production and Roadmen's exemptions were discussed.

**12th September 1918 Brecon County Times:** There were problems with a lack of stone on the Parkey pitch road. An enquiry was made to see if the local farmers could help with stone haulage; the councillors' view was that farmers had enough to do inside their own hedges!

**March 1919 Brecon County Times:** the roadmen and the Surveyor had an increase in their wages.

**The Functions of the Painscastle Rural District Council** (parishes of Boughrood, Bryngwyn, Clyro, Glasbury, Llanbedr-Painscastle, Llandewifach, Llandilo-Graban, Llanstephan, Llowes) **included at various times:**

Inspections of: Shops (Act 1934), Milk Supply, Meat and other foods, Water quality. Dwelling houses inspected for defects under Public Health or Housing Acts, Drainage and Sewers, Rivers and Streams, Sanitary Nuisances, Offensive trades.

Licensed Premises, Common Lodging Houses, Factories, Camping sites, Rodent Control, Eradication of Bed Bugs (with DDT), Inspection of the Supervision Of Food, Slaughter houses, Ice Cream Premises, Fried Fish shops, Food Preparation Rooms (including bakehouses), Prevalence and Control Of Infectious Diseases. Venereal Disease, Tuberculosis, Diphtheria. Improvement Grants were also awarded by the RDC. The disinfection methods used were fumigating and spraying.

The population of Painscastle Rural District in 1931 was 2201, 532 inhabited houses, births 43 and deaths 27 - almost identical figures as in 1909. The population starts to decrease at the end of the War. There was a slight recovery in the early 1950s, but the decline continued and by 1972 the population was 1400, with 608 inhabited houses, 19 births and 22 deaths.

Serious cases of infectious diseases were sent to the Isolation Hospital in Hay. In 1945 only one fresh case of tuberculosis was reported. Water supplies were mainly private springs; Bryngwyn parish suffered greatly if there was a drought. Clyro parish had one water supply which served 37 properties (19 by standpipes, 25 had water laid on); this supply had been laid down by the Clyro Estate in early 1900s.

In 1948 rubbish collections, known as the Control Method, began weekly in Llanstephan, Boughrood, Glasbury, Llowes and Clyro, with monthly collections in Llandilo Graban, Llanbedr-Painscastle, and Bryngwyn; all refuse was tipped at Clyro.

Llanbwchllyn water scheme was under consideration in 1950. There were no sewage disposal works in the area, but plans were in preparation for the villages of Clyro and Glasbury.

In 1950 an extensive housing survey was undertaken of 541 houses for water, sewerage, electricity and transport.

In 1952, 4 Council houses were completed in Llowes and electricity was supplied to the village. Council House building commenced in Boughood 4, Bryngwyn 4, Clyro 4 and Llanstephan 2.

In 1953 there were 8 shops in the area, 1 butcher and 4 shops selling ice cream; 30 council houses had been built since the war as well as 5 private houses. In 1959 there were 34 houses unfit for human habitation.

In 1961 there were negotiations for the acquisition of land for a new water scheme from Llanbwchlllyn, with sewerage priority schemes for Hay UDC, Hay RDC, Llowes, Clyro and Painscastle. Caravan sites began springing up at Llandilo Graban and Clyro, later at Newchurch (1966) and Rhosgoch (1972).

It was 1965 before work started on the Hay and Painscastle Area Water Scheme, with tenders invited for treatment works at Llanbwchlllyn lake and River Wye intakes. In 1966 Radnorshire and North Breconshire Water board took over all existing and proposed water supplies. Consulting Engineers were instructed to prepare a sewerage and disposal scheme for Painscastle village.

Slum clearance involved 18 dwellings between 1970 and 1973. The Llanbwchlllyn water scheme was completed by 1971. The sewerage schemes in Clyro and Llowes were completed by 1972 with the Painscastle scheme underway.

In 1974 Painscastle Rural District Council became Radnorshire District Council and in 1996 Powys became a unitary authority.

Roy Lloyd commented about Painscastle Castle; he had been told by Paul Remfry that plans for the castle were stored at the National Archives and that the Barbican structure had cost somewhere about £100 to build, which was quite a sum in those days.

ML thanked JPH and said that this had been a most interesting evening. The evening finished with refreshments, kindly made by Avryl Lloyd, and people had the opportunity to look at a 1904 map of the Rhosgoch and Painscastle area which Richard Harris had brought to the meeting, as well as a notebook of remedies brought by Roy and a notebook from Aberedw welcoming home the troops after the First World War.