

Newsletter No 1: January 2018



The group will be producing three short newsletters a year. They will be sent to members and friends by email or post. The next newsletter is due early in May.

Recent meetings

John Games regaled us with anecdotes related to his experiences as an auctioneer and other interesting aspects of his life. Ken Palmer proved beyond doubt that the Black Mountains are not an archaeological backwater and William Gibbs read a variety of extracts from pieces written by visitors to the Valley over the centuries, helped by Douglas Wright, Mark Morgan, Rupert Otten, Rosemary Russell, John Evans, Bridget Barnes and Peter Cable. The Christmas films shown by Douglas included old favourites *Man of the Black Mountains* and *the Housekeeper* and we also saw a video of the Llanthony Show in 2002 made by Desmond Serjeant and a film about Craswall.

September: John Games Memories of a Local Auctioneer

October: Ken Palmer An Archaeological Backwater? The Black Mountains

November: William Gibbs "Valley Voices": a selection of readings of accounts made by visitors to the Llanthony Valley

December: Christmas films and Social

Members' research



Schools project – Research Day October 14

Jenny Francis is taking the lead on Llanthony (Upper Cwmyoy) school, and (Lower) Cwmyoy school; she went to both. Viv Davies is leading on Pandy school and Jenny Parry on Forest Coalpit with help from Mel and Ann Powell. The aim is to have a draft by the next Research Day in March. Other people interested in contributing memories or helping out would be very welcome.

A copious and delicious lunch was followed by a memories session, to which various ex-pupils had been invited including Ivor Watkins and Mary Powell (Llanthony School), Joan Watkins and Tony Smith (Cwmyoy School), and Edith Davies (Pandy school). Time was spent telling stories, identifying people and

houses in photographs, and eating cake.

We also looked at Caroline Olsen's photographs of herself as child which she had sent to Caroline Fairclough, mostly taken at Llanthony School. There were also photos of various local houses, nearly all of which were identified during the day. David Filsell, who continues to work on his transport project, identified cars in the photographs. Pip presented a draft 'Llanthonypedia' description of geology in the area which Douglas will improve in time for the next Research Day on Saturday March 10.

Oliver Fairclough has completed a draft of the book about the history of Llanthony Valley and its environs to be published by the Landmark Trust in 2018. He made use of the research archives in our Dropbox folder, while a number of members helped supply photographs.

History group activities at Llwyn Celyn

A number of members attended a History Group visit to Llwyn Celyn on September 23rd. Caroline Stanford's commentary was greatly enjoyed. The major works should be finished by early 2018 and then work will begin on the inside. The [new dendrochronological dating of beams to the 1420s](#) suggests that Llwyn Celyn is the oldest roofed building in Wales. In the light of the new date Landmark has commissioned more historical research with a focus on the Priory at that time.

Some members of the committee met with Caroline and Kasia at Llwyn Celyn on 25th October to discuss the use of Llwyn Celyn outbuildings. The interpretation room will occupy the Beast house divided into two areas: the main beast house and the tack room. The tack room will contain a glazed noticeboard for the History Group which can be used to advertise events and contain photographs, research reports, etc. We were keen that there should be a timeline and will develop suggestions of what should be on it at our Research Day on March 10th. There will also be a space for a stylised History Walk map accompanied by A4-sized folding leaflets for people to take showing what they should look out for. The Group has organised nine walks to date and these could form the basis of the initial leaflets with more added as new walks are designed.

Caroline has provided a link to a [Youtube recording](#) of the Llanthony Carol sung by Landmark staff. She also sent a link to their latest [Llwyn Celyn Newsletter](#).



Future meetings

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| January 17 | John Evans: John II Arnold and the Persecution of Catholics |
| February 21 | Panel: Changes in Local Agriculture in the 20 th century |
| March 21 | Jeff Davies: The Welsh Language in the Black Mountains |
| April 18 | Oliver Fairclough: 19 th century Life in the Llanthony Valley |

A message from John Evans about his talk in January:

This will not be a lecture – more of a seminar. I will give a brief talk on half a dozen aspects, each to be followed by a question and answer session on each topic in turn. At the end, there will be a general question and answer session about the points covered during the evening. Members are encouraged to bring notebooks, as there will be no printed handout.

The next Research Day will be held on Saturday March 10th in Cwmyoy Hall between 10am and 4pm. All are welcome for some or all of the day. The programme will be circulated later.

Looking further ahead

The committee has started to discuss the three History Walks which will take place in May, June and July.

Other news

Since early last year Douglas has been persuading the Cwmyoy Hall Committee to install satellite broadband and this was eventually achieved in early November. At the November meeting we used it to look at our [website](#) and at the December Christmas Social we played a Youtube recording of Anonymous singing the Llanthony Carol.

The website now has a gallery of pictures and there is a plan to develop an online research archive in 2018.

