



LLANTHONY
VALLEY &
DISTRICT
HISTORY
GROUP

www.llanthonyhistory.wales

[Llanthony Valley & District History Group Facebook Page](#)

Newsletter No 5: January 2020



Our meetings September – December 2019



The history of Llanvihangel Court building and people:

In September *Oliver Fairclough* provided us with many photographs and some interesting answers to four questions: Why and when was the Court built? How did it work as a house? How has it changed over time? Who lived there? You can see his powerpoint [here](#).

Florence Blakiston Attwood Mathews
1842-1923



Local apple-growing and cider-making



In October we first heard about growing 17 varieties of apples at Llanfair Kilgeddin from *David Whittingham* who brought examples of 11 varieties to show us. Then *Bryn Probert* described how a group at the Crucorney allotments have so far taken 76 cuttings from old orchards and grafted them although they haven't yet identified all of them. *Oliver Fairclough* had found 17th century references to cider apple orchards in both the Llanthony and Grwyne Fawr valleys, while in the mid-19th century 20 of the larger farms in Cwmyoy parish had orchards including one at the Vishan. *Hilary Engel* described how they had

restored a 17th century cider mill after a gap of 100 years and were working it with a horse. The group's planned visit to an open weekend at [Fair Oak](#) was rained off Saturday 26th October but a number of members went individually the next day. A fuller description of the evening can be found [here](#).

The Priory and local churches



In November *Jean Prosser* talked about 'How the Priory and Churches Came and Survived' in a story which covered 800 years from the arrival in Llanthony of the hermit William de Lacy in the early 1100s to the present day. Now the survival of the Priory depends on Government finance and people interested in heritage, and the survival of St David's church Llanthony and St Martin's Cwmyoy on the work, worship, care and money of local people.



Christmas party in December: This began with selected extracts of interviews from the Llanthony Show 'Voices of our Valley' project. The video collected amusing and interesting bits of interviews with six long-time residents who have died since they were interviewed: Graham Smith Blaenyoy, David Smith Roadside Cottage, Jeffrey Greenow Penyworlod (interviewed with Joan Greenow), Ivor Watkins Nantygwyddel (interviewed with Joan Watkins), John Williams Penywern, and Ken Harris Coed Farm. A [Local History Quiz](#) designed by Caroline Fairclough and Pip Bevan followed the refreshment break where gluhwein, apple juice, tea, mince pies, lots of other delicious food, and plenty of chat were much enjoyed. Try Caroline's People and Places questions [here](#) (the Music

Questions don't work on pdfs). The Writers in the Valley questions are [here](#) and the answers [here](#) while the Anagram round [questions](#) are here and [answers](#) here (only available if you are reading this online)

Evening meetings planned for January – April 2020 in Cwmyoy Hall

January 15	Dick Vigers	<i>The decline of Welsh in the valley</i>
February 19	Pip Bevan, researchers and some pupils	<i>Our research on the histories of our schools</i>
March 18	Eddie Procter	<i>Paths to Llanthony Priory</i>
April 15	Jeremy Knight	<i>The Civil War and after in North Monmouthshire</i>

Research Day, Cwmyoy Hall Saturday March 21 10am –4pm – bring lunch to share

Last year we started a new project involving research into local houses, the families who lived in them, and their social networks and we want to take this forward in the next few months. Those who are already doing relevant research and those who would like to, as well as long-term and newer local residents who would like to learn more, and anyone else interested are all welcome. In the afternoon we will continue the successful memories session we held last April, going round the houses we did not have time for then.

Committee news

Miriam Griffiths and Colette Miles have joined the committee and we have set up two subcommittees. The Research Committee is taking our research programme forward, while an Events committee is working on something to celebrate our 5th anniversary in the autumn.

Researching our local schools

The 1870 education Act created School Boards funded through local rates and in 1880 school attendance to the age of 10 was made compulsory. People in Forest Coalpit had already organised to build a school under the auspices of the British and Foreign Society and it opened in 1869. Llanthony and Pandy schools opened in 1876 and Cwmyoy school in 1878. Llanthony school closed in 1957 with the few pupils moving to Cwmyoy school. When this closed in 1961 pupils moved to Forest Coalpit school. In 1968 the newly built Llanvihangel Crucorney school opened and the Forest Coalpit and Pandy schools closed. Pandy school was knocked down to make way for the A465.

Over the last couple of years we have accumulated school records, interviews, information from Valley Views and Voices of our Valley and other documents in our Dropbox folder. Key contributors include Jenny Francis, Christine Knight, Mel and Ann Powell, Viv Davies, and Judy Hood. The next step is to use Richard Davies' *And so to school...The story of Pandy School from 1876 to 1926* as a guide to write booklets about each school.

Group visit to the Gwent Archives at Ebbw Vale

Oliver Fairclough has arranged a visit to Gwent Archives on 17th March from 10-12. There will be an introduction to local history research including a tour of the Archives and a display of documents and maps relevant to the valley. The Group is covering the cost of the visit but you must make your own way to Gwent Archives, Steelworks Road, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6AA to arrive by 9.55. Please reserve a place by 1st March (pbevan@mokoro.co.uk, 01873 890609) – first come first served. Numbers are limited but we will arrange another visit later in the year if required. We will try to arrange car-sharing once we know who is going.

History Walks Leaflets

The Landmark Trust is providing funding for four history walks leaflets. Walks around the Gaer and at Capel-y-ffin have been written up and Lisa Hellier is designing the leaflets including maps. The other walks will be around Llanthony and around Cwmyoy. We plan to produce further leaflets ourselves,

The Llanthony Valley: a Borderland by Oliver Fairclough

The history group book costs £10 but new members may buy 1 copy for £5.

Contact oliverfairclough@yahoo.co.uk; 01873 890540.

Join the history group: £7 for an individual. Single meetings are £4. Join at a meeting or contact Oliver Fairclough (see above).

