

April 2018 Spring Meeting at Clawdd Newydd, Denbighshire.

Members of the Welsh Mills Society gathered at the Glan Llyn Inn at Clawdd Newydd, for the Society's Spring Meeting on April 21st. Blue skies and warm sunshine encouraged early arrivers to sit outside on the terrace with their coffees and teas. The Inn, village shop and village hall are all run by the lively community, and the coffees, lunch and tea with cakes were all copious and excellent.

We had some technical problems with projection equipment, after which Professor Arnold Hughes, formerly at the University of Birmingham and now retired to his native hearth, gave an excellent presentation on the water mills of the upper Vale of Clwyd. Professor Hughes has researched many aspects of local history, and as well as illustrating more mills than we could possible see in a day, he explained both the former importance of mills in the vale, and the reasons behind their decline. His stories of hacking through the undergrowth to discover the derelict remains of former mills should encourage our members to do likewise in their own areas. Gareth Beech described the history of Llanarmon Mill, and Alan Stoyel illustrated the waterwheel at Court of Noke, Herefordshire, whose restoration he had recently completed.

After a plentiful buffet lunch, we were given maps of the location of the three mills to be visited, and we set off in loose convoy through the lanes to Pwll Glas. Here the daughter of the last miller talked of her early memories, and we walked down to view Melin Einion, now converted to a house but with the frame of a large waterwheel still in situ, from the lane.



Then on to Garth-Gynan Mill in the Vale itself, for which we had been warned to bring wellingtons to wade through the mud – but the continuing strong sun had dried the ground

and there was no problem in accessing this splendid mill. The 17ft. backshot wheel cast by Turner & Jones of Ruabon Furnace was fed from a header tank now supported precariously only by the cast iron pipe which supplied water. Inside, the machinery is almost complete, including some very fine built-in dressing machines; but we were warned that the upper floors were becoming “soft”, so we were very careful. Back at the imposing farm complex, we were shown the impressive C17th walled garden and, at the rear of a fine carhouse, the end of the wire rope system, installed by Antur Edwards of Llanwchllyn, which had brought power from the mill to the farm buildings.



Our last mill was further north, approached through a maze of narrow lanes west of Llanrheadr. Melin Bryn-Lluarth is another estate mill, characterised by machinery on a massive scale. Converted to club premises, the gearing has been retained on the ground floor, and on the stone floor just one pair of stones (possibly not a pair, since the runner is about six inches smaller than the bedstone) is used to support a round table. The large composite waterwheel is internal, with almost all its wooden buckets and soleboards

complete and in good condition. It was fed from a still well-defined pond which was fed by leats from two streams.

Returning through the lanes to Clawdd Newydd with the sun still shining, we were greeted with tea and a plentiful choice of cake to close an excellent day. Our thanks go to our speakers, to the volunteers who looked after us so well at the Glan Llyn Inn, and to Helen Williams and Gareth Beech who organised the meeting.