

# **Welsh Grain Forum Meeting**

**26 January 2015, Victoria Hall, Lampeter**

## **1. Welcome & introductions**

Anne Parry welcomed everyone and agreed to chair the meeting. Tony Little agreed to take the notes

## **2. Welsh Grain Forum Activity**

### **2.1 Organic Fresh Food Company, Ben Pratt & Lucy Watson**

Used April Bearded to bake sourdough bread, but getting the volume needed for the shop was difficult. The loaf was a bit sticky when it was cut, but retained moisture well and tasted great.

### **2.2 Felin Ganol Mill, Anne and Andy Parry**

Attended 'Terra Madre' in Turin last October as Slow Food Cymru delegates. The meeting brought people from all around the world together. What was interesting was how common the problems were: lack of consumer education; obstructive seed legislation; supply chain problems; lack of infrastructure, machinery and facilities of an appropriate scale; lack of support from government/ 'main stream' agricultural support policies

Whilst there attended the 'New Models for old cereal varieties; a comparison of local supply chains' workshop with our Welsh Grain Forum hats on. It was an inspiring meeting and has led to the formation of an international network with the same vision as the Welsh Grain Forum. Also presented a sample of Hen Gymro to the [Slow Food Ark of Taste](#). The Ark was created to point out the existence of products which face a risk of extinction within a few generations and to invite everyone to take action to protect them.

International networks can really support development.

Currently milling April Bearded from Andrew Broad, also a couple of locally grown modern wheat varieties.

### **2.3 Torth y Tir, Rupert Dunn**

Currently producing 35 sourdough loaves per week, and learning to use different flours and grains. Benefitting from good links between growers, bakers and millers. Thinking about how to scale up production.

Developing 'Torth y Tir' a baking co-op based on the 'Paysanne' approach. Growing several varieties including Hen Gymro, Red Fife and a Lithuanian variety. These have a range of protein levels and other characteristics which means great versatility in the baking process.

Hen Gymro, has germinated well, but we need to be looking for an effective organic seed treatment (based on mustard)

#### 2.4 Fronlas Farm, Andrew Broad and Daphne Field

Last season grew 2 heritage varieties and one modern variety. The heritage varieties, Attle and April Bearded are being bulked up for seed. Finding seed, and obtaining it legally are serious problems. Andrew said the hardest bit was getting the grain to the condition required by the miller, i.e. sufficiently dry and clean. The Attle was never tested for milling quality. There were storage and drying problems, so grain unfit for milling and will be used for next season's sowing.

April Bearded had a slow start, but caught up and eventually produced a 5ft 7" straw.

The modern variety, Granary, was less successful; it was not competitive against weeds, had disease problems and only produced a 2ft 7" straw.

This season experimenting with several species/ varieties, including spelt and several winter wheat varieties.

Have invested in a cleaner and drier and can process small quantities for other growers.

#### 2.5 Talgarth Mill, Gez Richards

Milled wheat variety 'Mulika' grown by Roger Bufton and launched Brawd Cymreig at the Winter Fair, as part of a bread-making kit. The protein was thought a bit low (11.7%) so it was blended with a Canadian variety (17 - 18%), but it made decent bread. Flour could be improved by better cleaning and drying of the grain, and there is an antique winnower available at the mill.

Would like to bake with 100% welsh flour and this means using slightly different baking techniques.

#### 2.6 Mair's Bakehouse, Rick Coldman

Baked with April Bearded alone and April Bearded mixed with other stone ground flours to challenge the idea that better bread needs high protein flours. It is very hard to promote Welsh grain while this attitude persists. Higher protein varieties can lose flavour and Welsh flours, which are often lower protein, do taste better but they also cost more. What we need is better bakers!

#### 2.7 Other developments

Developing links with Andy Forbes and his **Heritage Wheat project** in SE England. Through him we are also linking to Andrew Whitley's project '[Scotland the Bread](#)'. Andy has supplied us with a stock of [Hen Gymro](#) an old Welsh landrace (paid for by Felin Ganol), which has been sown this autumn for multiplication by Rupert Dunn at Caerhys and more is also being grown by Syd Aston.

**Naked barley** work at Bangor is progressing well. Plans are afoot to get a variety to market and locally the flour is proving popular with several bakers

Getting the right **machinery** for the right scale is problematic. Mobile processing units could be the answer. Rupert noted that Chinese manufacturers are producing some

excellent kit for smaller scale grain businesses. Tony will confirm that the dehuller at IBERS will be available for use for use to grain group members.

### 3. Future activities

#### 3.1 Promoting ourselves

Leanne Wright is starting work on developing a logo for the group, which will support all our promotional materials, website, social media sites etc. We discussed what ideas needed to be encapsulated, which included:

- ← Smaller producers
- ← Whole supply chains
- ← Heritage wheat varieties
- ← We're a community – growers, bakers, millers, thatchers, brewers distillers
- ← Food sovereignty

It needs to be 'soft' logo that tells a story. Look at Alan Jones' [Pembrokeshire Thatch and Carpentry Services](#) logo

The website is an important part of the profile of the group. Gary Whitely is managing this, but it needs the whole group to send in content. Please send your news/ updates/ information to [Gary](#).

#### 3.2 Promoting our grain and our products

We want to promote Welsh grain both to consumers and other grain based businesses

##### Consumers

Key messages/ questions are:

- ← Why does "proper" bread cost more and why is highly processed bread so cheap? What is a fair price?
- ← Good bread is good. Good Welsh bread is VERY good!
- ← Nutrition – nutrient density; mineral/ trace element content
- ← Bread is not a commodity – Limitless range of varieties, tastes, textures styles. We should look at bread in the same way we look at wine. Pull out what makes bread special
- ← Tell the story of history of Welsh grain. It's not just about heritage grain. It's about heritage full stop.
- ← Rebuilding trust

Activities include:

- ← Education workshops (Tony to secure space at the Spring Festival)
- ← Events on farms, bakeries breweries & distilleries
- ← Growing kits for children
- ← DVDs
- ← Leaflets/ banners etc
- ← Website

We need images – send your pictures to Leanne

### **Businesses**

We agreed that running workshops for bakers was premature, and if we went ahead attendance would be very low. Comments from bakers are invited as to what we could do instead. Information on using welsh flour as leaflets & a film/ dvd were suggested.

### **3.3 Gathering supply chain information**

A draft of a survey was circulated. Some felt the level of detail requested was too detailed and bakers might feel that the information was commercially sensitive. At this stage, what we need is a rough idea of what demand for Welsh grain is and is likely to be in the future. Banded information (e.g. Less than 1; 1-5; 5-10 etc)

### **3.4 Malting Barley**

Information on growing 'Pipkin' has been collated. Report currently being checked for accuracy. Tony to send as soon as it is available. Forum members need to decide, on the basis of the report whether there is still interest in pursuing work on this variety.

### **3.5 International links**

Suggestions to date include:

- ← North Germany (Rick & Maggie)
- ← Milan for follow up meeting of the 'New Models for old cereal varieties; a comparison of local supply chains' workshop.
- ← Paysanne Bakeries, Brittany, Rupert.

Tony to clarify what the BOBL can offer in terms of support and ask for others who wish to travel to come forward

## **4. Constitution**

There was insufficient time to discuss the constitution in detail. Anne Parry circulated a draft which members need to consider, to be signed off at the next meeting.

## **5. AOB**

None

## **6. Next meeting:**

Agreed as 16 March at eth meeting, but subsequently re-arranged for 11<sup>th</sup> March to enable discussion of promotional materials