



Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig Discovering Old Welsh Houses

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**Darganfod Hen
Dai Cymreig**



**Discovering Old
Welsh Houses**

**Caemarch
Llanfachreth, Dolgellau, LL40 2DS**



Researched and written
by Dinah Pickard
2018

HOUSE HISTORY RESEARCH
Written in the language chosen by the volunteers
and researchers & including information
so far discovered

PLEASE NOTE ALL THE HOUSES IN THIS PROJECT ARE PRIVATE AND
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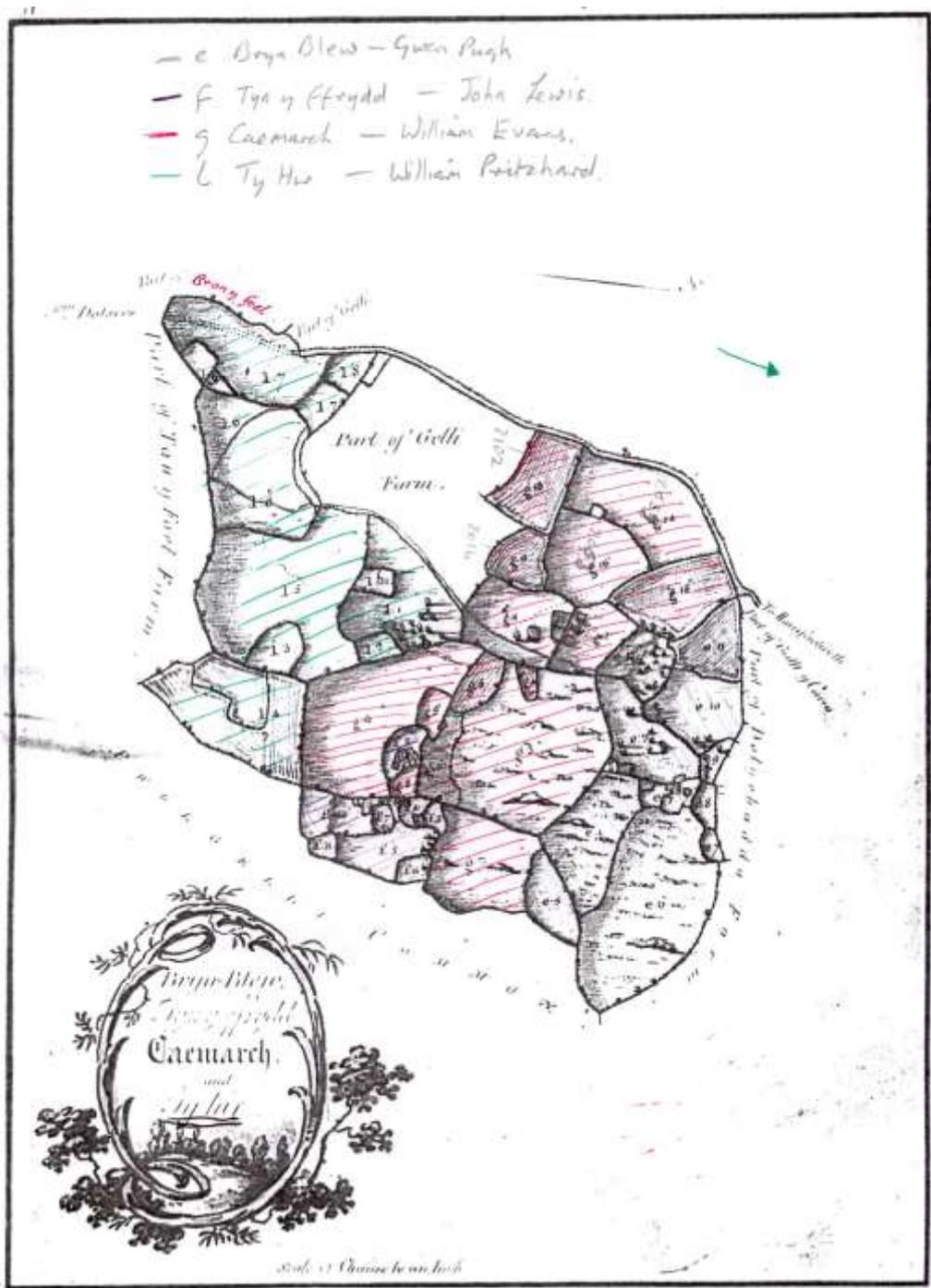
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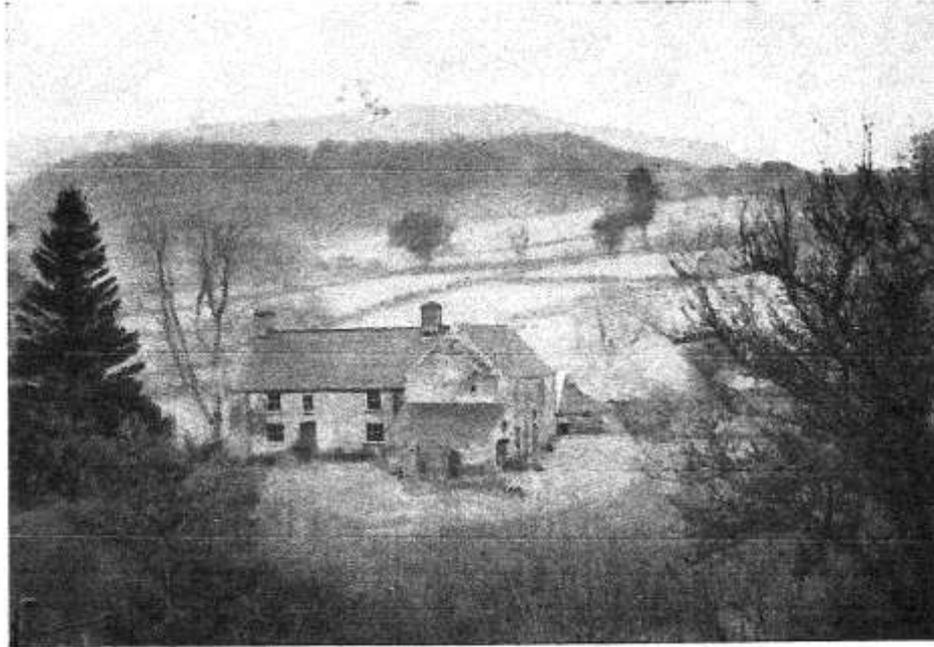
SUMMARY

Probably built in 1542 by William ap Rheinallt ap Meredd this hall house passed from this family to the Nanney of Nannau in 1639 who retained it until 1975 - over 300 years; but as a tenanted farm. At some stage a floor and chimney were inserted. Also another range was built at right angles and this medieval building was maintained as the living quarters in recent times. After 1975 it passed through several owners; the 1542 range continued to deteriorate until bought in 1991 by the present owners who won the Snowdonia National Park award for its sensitive restoration.

DETAIL

This property has been known as Y Neuadd Wen (The White Hall) in Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt pedigree book (probably C15) and on a map of 1796 there is a field called Neuadd Wen; Ceinmyrch, Ceinmarch 1755 and Keirmarch 1701.





V. 4(a)—CAE-MARCH HOUSE AND BARN

Dendrochronology dates 4 timbers in the western, now restored range as 1541/1542 and it was originally a hall house. Unfortunately the timbers of the inserted floor and the fireplace lintel failed to date. The adjoining “farmhouse” has been reroofed and no samples were taken but the wall thickness suggests that it is medieval.

The house was probably built by William ap Rheinallt ap Maredd. William is reputed to have married Elizabeth daughter of Howell ap Daffydd Lord of Nannau (who died in 1540) as his second wife. They had 12 children and she was widowed in 1587 (eulogy by William Cynwal). However there seems to be a previous connection between the Nannau family and this property. On fig. 51 in “Ancestors of the House of Peniarth” 1100-1400 Vol 2 by Susan Campbell Passmore, the family tree gives Ynyr Fychan of Nannau as having a son Einion of Ceinmyrch - this is supported by Dr P.C.Bartrum & Griffiths pedigrees pg. 148. this suggests a C13-C14 connection and must refer to a previous house.

According to Griffith’s pedigrees Hugh ap Sion/John Wyn ap William ap Rheinallt had married Anne daughter of Gruffydd Nanney (1510-1573) probably in 1570. By 1592 Huw Nanny was said to have 38 holdings while the descendants of William ap Rheinallt had 14. Documents Nos. 929-953 in the Nannau Papers (Bangor, but catalogue held by Dolgellau R.O.) are transactions between the Nanneys and William ap Rheinallt and his descendants. From these it is clear that William’s grandson Hugh ap John Wyn held several properties which he sold in 1596 to Hugh Nanney - d.1623 (his brother in law) [940,941, 942, 943] but that he lived in Caermarch.

In 1605 in a marriage settlement of his son John to Jane; Hugh ap John Wyn places Caermarch Isa, Caermarch Ucha and Bronyfoel for the benefit of the newly married couple [946] One wonders if this refers to the two adjoining ranges of the present house or to two different properties.

In 1639 John ap Hugh and his son Hugh sold Caermarch Ucha, Caermarch Isaf and Bronyfoel and Tyddyn Gallt y Carw to Hugh Nanney (1588-1647) for £239.13.0 [948]. By 1666 it seems that Anne Gwyn, sole daughter and heir of Hugh ap John ap Hugh ap John Wyn ap William ap Rhienallt released these properties to Hugh Nanney (? -1676) Grandson of Hugh Nanney who bought them

in 1639. [952] Is this a quit claim?

From 1666 Caemarch was part of the expanding Nannau Estate where it remained until sold in 1975 to Mr Sydney Vaughan Gaskell. Thus the occupiers were tenants.

The rent roll of Nannau Estate of 8 Jan 1701 [467] gives Mrs Humphreys (presumably a widow Of Keirmarch but no sum was given. There are two possible burials in the parish records:-

Jane Humphrey buried 15 Jan 1738/9

Jane John Humphrey wid. of this vill. buried 15 Dec. 1767 84 years she was therefore born 1683 so she is unlikely to have been married and widowed by 1701. However I have discovered that in Wales widows often take their maiden surnames so this complicated any interpretation.

The rent roll of May 1775 [1403] gives Mary Ellis paying £10.12.6. It is known that she was buried 5 March 1784 widow of Ceimarch, 86 years. She left a will dated 26 March 1784 (she was illiterate), in which she left 5 shillings each to 4 nephews and 6 nieces and residue to "my dear friend William Evans of Caemarch, farmer". He was also sole executor. Presumably this was the William Evans who paid £8.10.0 in the rent roll of May 1783 [1405] and 1785-6 [1408] and was tenant in the the Survey of the Estate in 1794 (Z/M/ 3667) when it had a little over 51 acres.

The detailed parish records give the following for Ceimarch:-

Baptism 9 May 1752 Elizabeth d. John Richard Williams, labourer and Ellin Roberts late of Ceimarch Bach
7 Nov. 1782 Mary and Elizabeth daughters of William Evans and Margaret
6 Jan. 1784 Catherine daughter of William Evans and Margaret
19 May 1785 Margaret daughter of William Evans and Margaret
6 May 1787 Jane daughter of William Evans and Margaret
29 Feb 1789 Gwen daughter of William Evans and Margaret
15 Nov. 1795 Howel son of Gabriel Hugh and Elizabeth
3 April 1803 John son of Robert Cadwalader and Jane
28 Aug. 1803 William son of Evan Jones and Margaret
20 Jan. 1811 Elizabeth daughter of Evan Jones and Margaret

Burials
8 Feb. 1755 Morris Williams - Farmer
4 Dec. 1767 Evan Williams - farmer
[John Richard Williams, Morris Williams and Evan Williams may have been brothers]
A William Evans of Bronyfoel was buried 6 Dec. 1828 aged 69 yrs
Margaret Evans of Bronyfoel was buried 12 June 1841 aged 88 yrs
and the gravestones in the churchyard mention their daughters Mary, Catherine, Margaret and Jane. The tenant of Bronyfoel in 1794 was Evan Williams and he was buried 14 Sept 1811 and he left a will in which he mentions five sons including William Evans, so it is likely that William Evans moved from Ceimarch to Bronyfoel when his father William died 1811.

The next data is the census of 1841, when the Griffith family lived at Caemarch, where they remained until after 1881:

John Griffith	70	farmer
Gwen Griffith	60	
Griffith Griffith	25	

Margaret Evans 20 female servant.

Considering John's age in 1841 it is likely that he took the tenancy when William Evans left (1811?).

John died in 1857 and his son Griffith Jones had married Ellin Edwards in 1846 and they had three children: Gwen 1847; William 1850; John Griffith Jones 1860 - no baptisms have been found but since the family graves are in Bethel Chapel they were probably baptised there. In 1881 Griffith Jones was 68 and the acreage of Ceimarch was 70. Ellin was 51; Gwen was 33; William was 30 and John was 21. Griffith died in 1888 so the tenancy probably changed at this time. Gwen and John Griffith lived at 2, Cader Road, Dolgellau (a former Victorian stable block for pony rides up Cadair Idris) in 1901 & 1911 with Edward Jones their nephew (son of William?) - he died in 1917. Gwen died in 1919 and John Griffiths in 1926. They are all buried in Bethel Chapel burial ground as are his parents.

The next family to live at Caemarch were the Williams. 1891 census:

William Williams	35 farmer	Llanfachreth
Mary Williams	32	Llanelltyd
Ann Jane "	4	Llanfachreth
Daniel R. "	3	"
Griffith J. "	9 months	"

William had come from Coed Mawr where his grandfather, William Williams and his wife, Jane Daniel had lived since before 1841 and his father in law, Daniel Roberts had been a tenant in 1794 (he died in 1819). William Williams's father William Pritchard was baptised in 1784 from Ty Hir and he was the tenant there in 1795 - it is next to Caemarch.

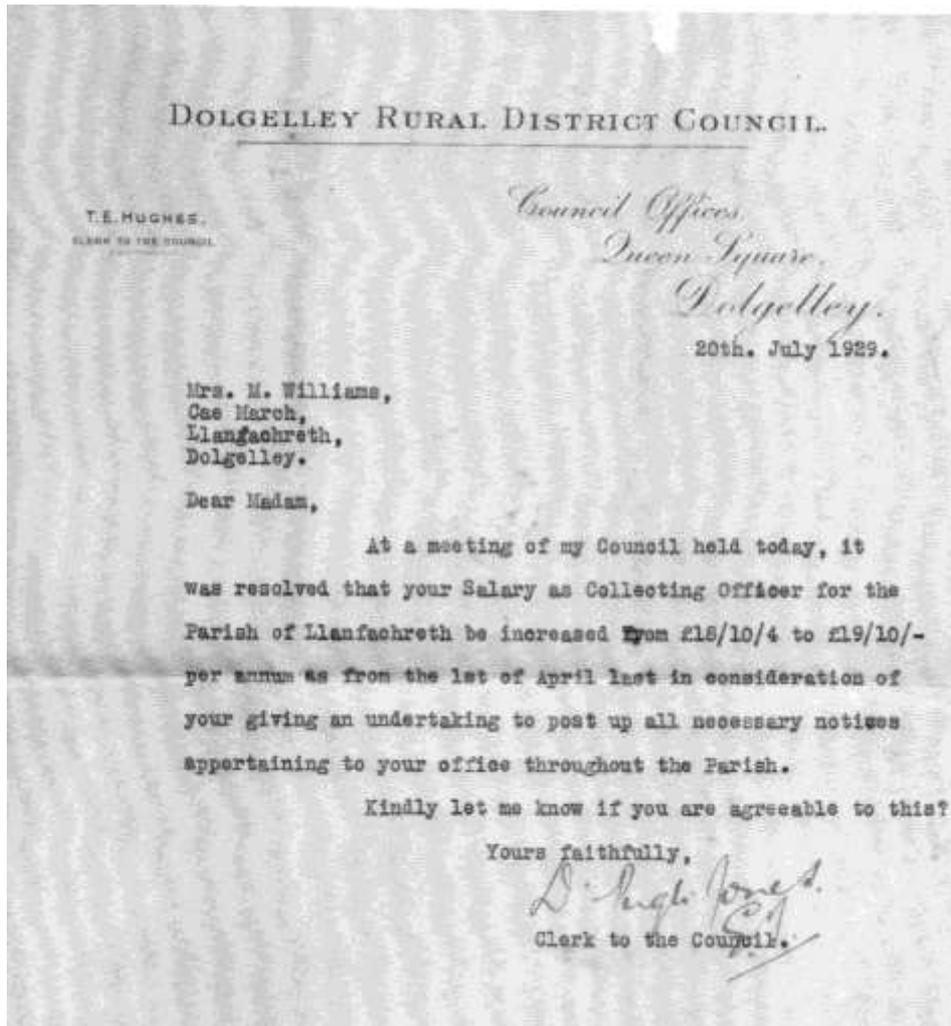
William and Jane had three children -Daniel b. 1816 who died when only 8wks old.

William 1817

Daniel in 1819

Daniel Williams married Jane Jones of Maentwrog (See app. for her ancestry) and they had 4 sons and 1 daughter. William being the eldest born in 1856 he married Mary Jones of Llanelltyd in 1885 and they had 3 children so their family was complete when they moved to Caemarch. However William did not live long, dying on 8 November 1892 (his funeral was the first to use the new horse drawn hearse) leaving his widow, Mary to run the farm which she did until her death on 29 November 1935.

To help with the finances she collected the Parish rates. She left a will and £657. 11 shillings.



Her 3 children never married but continued to farm Caemarch. Ann died 30 June 1942 and Daniel Robert on 19 May 1946 - he left a will and £1551.12.4 . Griffith Jones Williams continued with a Winnie Jones until 1947 when he moved to Tai Newyddion, the Alms House in the village where he died 1961 aged 90.



left → Griffith Jones Williams. Ann Jones Williams Daniel Robert Williams



The tenancy was then taken by William Wyn James and his wife Bethulia C. Jones. He was born in 1904 at Pentre, Farm Llanelltyd where his father Lewis James farmed; he was the last of 13 children. He married in 1930. Bethulia Claudia born in 1904 in Llanfachreth, probably in Caehuad where her father Edward Jones farmed, he came from Llanelltyd while her mother, May, was born in Llanfachreth. William and Bethulia lived in Ty Hir in 1932 and moved to Caemarch in 1947. William died 28 March 1955 but Bethulia continued at Caemarch until 1960 with her son Lewis Merfyn James and 2 daughters. Lewis James was born in 1937 and married Gwen Jones in 1961 and they moved to Brithdir. Bethulia moved to Bryn y wen where she died 10 April 1998 aged 91.

From 1961 - 1991 there are no entries in the electoral rolls.

It appears that Caemarch was empty except that it was used by various people as a "holiday" house. Rev. Robert (Bob) Hughes; son of Richard Hughes, novelist, who now lives near Ynys, Harlech, recalls that it was used as a retreat for students from Birmingham University, his family were friends of the then owners of Caemarch and the Nannau estate.

Nannau Hall was sold in 1966. The estate including Caemarch, Lot 5 with 3,128 acres sold in 1975 to Mr Sydney Vaughn Gaskell.

It was advertised as an unmodernised 2 story farmhouse with 'great potential for improvement'. There is no indication one wing was derelict and obviously very old (listed as a barn!).

It is thought that 3 families from Birmingham University bought it early in 1976 as a holiday home and it is said that probation officers visited and work was done to prevent further deterioration.

In 1991 Mr & Mrs Toesland bought it and they are responsible for the sensitive restoration of the derelict wing, including rebuilding the chimney which had probably fallen down as long ago as late C19 possibly 1892. They received the Snowdonia National Park's Award in 2005 for outstanding achievement of best practise in building conservation, design.

As with any old property there are various myths connected to Caemarch including the assertion that it was moated,

Ref.

Legends and folklore of Llanfachreath Parish by Mary Corbett Harris

Journal of Merioneth Historical Record Society Vol. V 1965-68 pg. 16-17

Celtic Folklore, The Fairies' Revenge by Sir John Rhys pg. 136-7

Appendix

Ancestry of Jane Jones who married Daniel Williams of Coedmawr

This marriage took place in Parish Church of Llanfairisgaer, Caernarvonshire on 24 May 1854 by license.

Daniel Williams 32, Batchelor farmer, Coedmawr, Llanfachreth (father) William Williams Farmer.
Jane Jones, 28, spinster, Crug Llanfairisgaer (father) Thomas Jones, farmer, therefore born 1826.

In censuses Jane Williams gave her birth place as Maentwrog and family members say she came from Penyglanau in Maentwrog. A Jane, daughter of Thomas and Sydney Edwards of Penyglanau was baptised 12 March 1826 at Glanywern Independent Chapel.

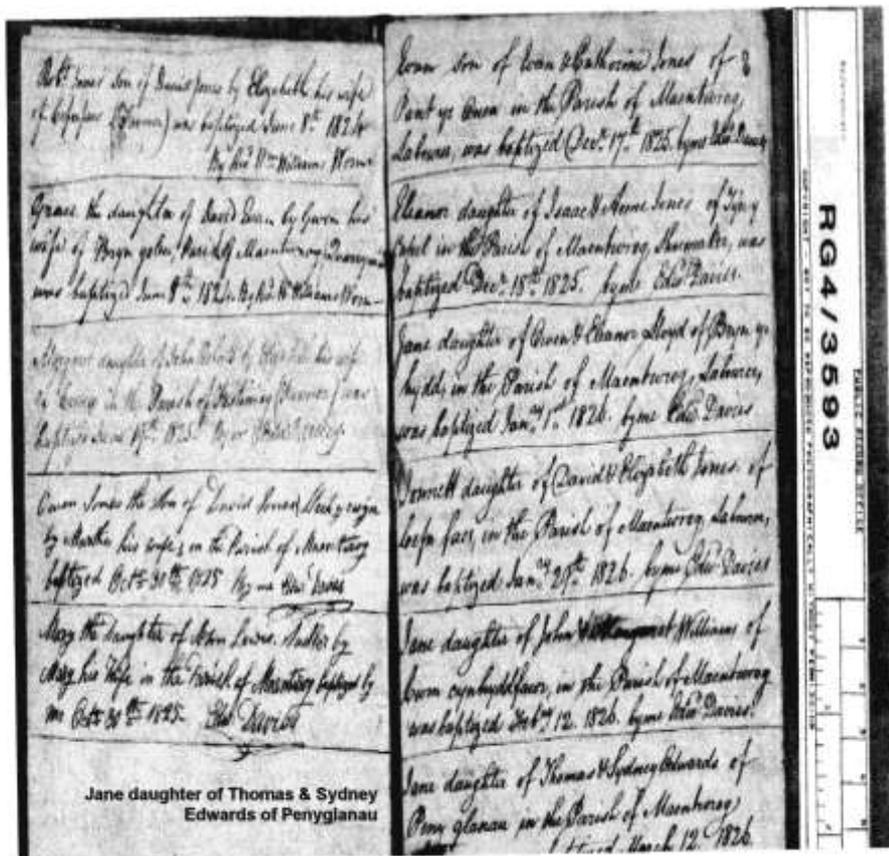
Thomas Edwards of Trawsfynydd Parish married Sydney Roberts of Dolgellau by Banns on 27 November 1819 in Dolgellau.



Jane Williams nee Jones kept Edwards 1926-1916

So what evidence is there that this Jane Edwards is the same person as Jane Jones?

All Jane's siblings born before 1834 were Edwards and they were baptised in Maentwrog 1826 & 1829 and at Pen Street Independent Chapel, Trawsfynydd 1823 & 1831



(Penyglanau is about half way between them). Unfortunately the baptisms of 3 more siblings born in Llanycil have not been found. The Tithe of 19 December 1838, gives Blaenycwm Uchaf, owned by Rev, John Jones with Tenant Thomas Edwards 118 acres 57 perches.

City or Borough of
 Parish or Township of *Maestron*

PLACE	HOUSE	NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night	AGE		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or OF	RELIGION
			M	F		
		Benjamin Lewis	8			
		Eleanor 20		4		
		John 20		2		
		Eleanor Jones	16			
Blaencymon		Griffith Jones	31		Farmer	
		John 20		12		
		Jane 20		6		
		John 20		3		
		Jane Roberts	18			
		Griffith Roberts	15			
Blaencymon		Thomas Roberts	16		Farmer	
		John 20		18		
		John 20		15		
		Jane 20		16		
		Ann 20		10		
		Robert 20		8		
		John 20		6		
		Thomas 20		3		
		William 20		3		
Crofton		Robert Lewis	50		Farmer	
		Jane 20		25		
		David 20		20		
Synwille		Daniel Williams	35		Labr.	
		Catherine 20		15		
		Thomas 20		11		
TOTAL			10	14		

The 1841 census gives this family in Blaencymon Uchaf, Maestron, Llanycil - as Edwards.

The 1851 census for this farm gives Sydney JONES as a widow with 4 children at home. By 1861 only 3 children remain plus a house servant, Elin Jones 12, born Llanwchllyn as a daughter / this is a mistake I think - Sydney would have been 55 at her birth (and the other data does not suggest a daughter!) The gravestone in Llanycil churchyard (acknowledged by the family as their ancestor gives Thomas and Sydney of Blaencymon Uchaf as JONES. So by 1849 there had been a name change.

Why a name change?

In 1851 Jane Jones from Maentwrog was a house servant 23 at Lletty Rhys, Brithdir Isaf. Why do Jane Jones and Daniel Williams marry so

far from home? Perhaps Jane moved from Brithdir to Crug as a servant.

The 1851 at Crug were the following people:-

- Ebenezer Roberts 56, farmer Llanfairisgaer b.1795
 - Catherine " 50 Dolgellau b.1801
 - Eleanor " 10 Llanfairisgaer
- 7 servants.

Ebenezer Roberts of Llanfairisgaer married Catherine Jones of Dolgellau on 18 September 1835 by license in Dolgellau Parish Church with witnesses William Roberts and Anne Jones. Was Ebenezer a relation of Jane's mother Sydney Roberts?

Jane's mother Sydney Roberts baptised 27 October 1794 Dolgellau Farther John Roberts, inn keeper, Ship inn, mother Sydney Jones.

They had married by license 12 November 1788 Dolgellau. They had 14 children all baptised in Dolgellau but no Ebenezer! So was Catherine related to Jane's grandmother?

A lot of unanswered questions!