

Darganfod Hen
Dai Cymreig



Discovering Old
Welsh Houses

Pontwgan Mill

Tyn-y-Groes
Conwy
LL32 8UG



researched by
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2020

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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Building Description

Melin Pont Wgan, Caerhun

NPRN: 24685

Grid Reference: SH76647183

The name

Melin – mill

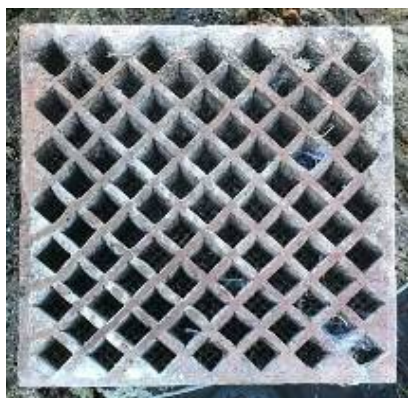
Pont – bridge

Wgan/Gwgan – this is believed to be a man's name (see p.5)

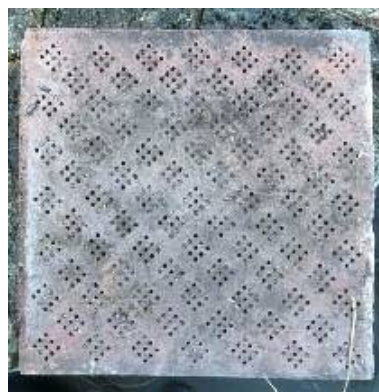
The area south of Conwy, on the west side of the river, was important for corn-growing and the rivers which cross it. This resulted in a long tradition of milling. Three mill buildings still survive - Melin Bulkeley, Melin Gwenddar and Melin Pont Wgan, but all are now private dwellings.¹

Melin Pont Wgan was constructed as a corn mill. The miller and his family would have lived in a nearby dwelling. The mill is of a type sometimes referred to as a 'bank mill' because it was built into the deep side of the river bank. It is constructed of stone and is three stories high. It had a large overshot wheel fed from a raised wooden 'pen trough' running from the millpond a short distance up the river Roe. An early bank mill could date from about the end of the 17th century to the early part of the 18th century.

The remains of another building at the site was where the corn was dried before milling. There appears to have been a raised floor rather like a hypocaust system. Heat from a fire would have been directed from underneath and through a platform of perforated tiles. People began to combine water-powered corn mills with corn drying kilns during the 18th and 19th centuries.



underside



upper side

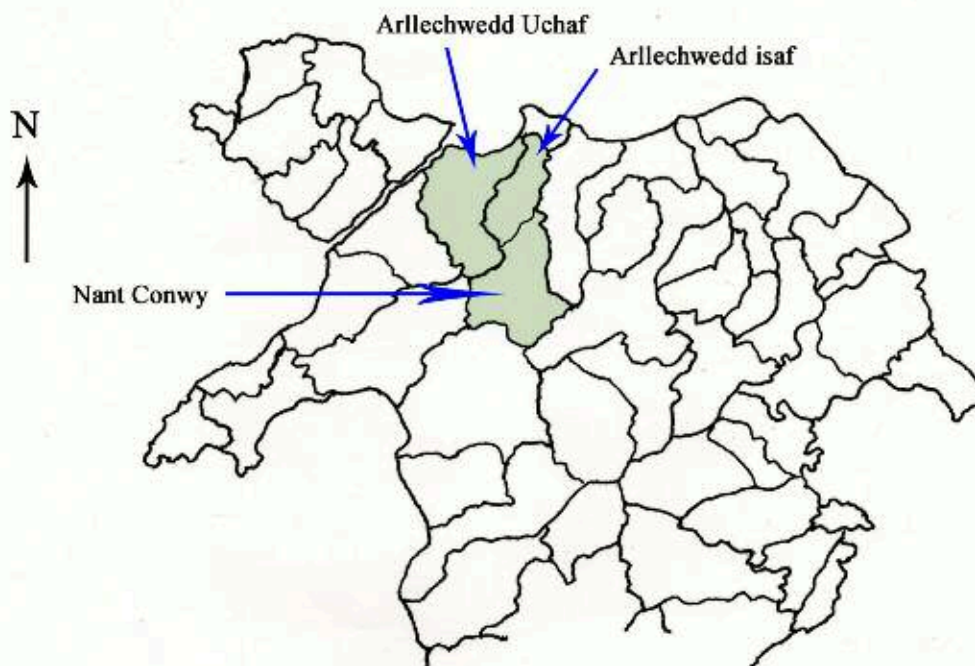
Perforated floor tiles found at the site.

It is difficult to date the original mill building because it was reconstructed in 1851 and converted into a residence in the 20th century. The earliest documentary evidence found so far of the existence of the mill is in the Vaynol estate land tax records in 1746. (see p.14) It was built on land which was part of the Maes y Castell estate.

1. GAT report – Creuddyn and Arllechwedd – Area 15 Rolling meadows west of Afon Conwy PRN 15809

Early Background History

The Cantref of Arllechwedd & its Commotes

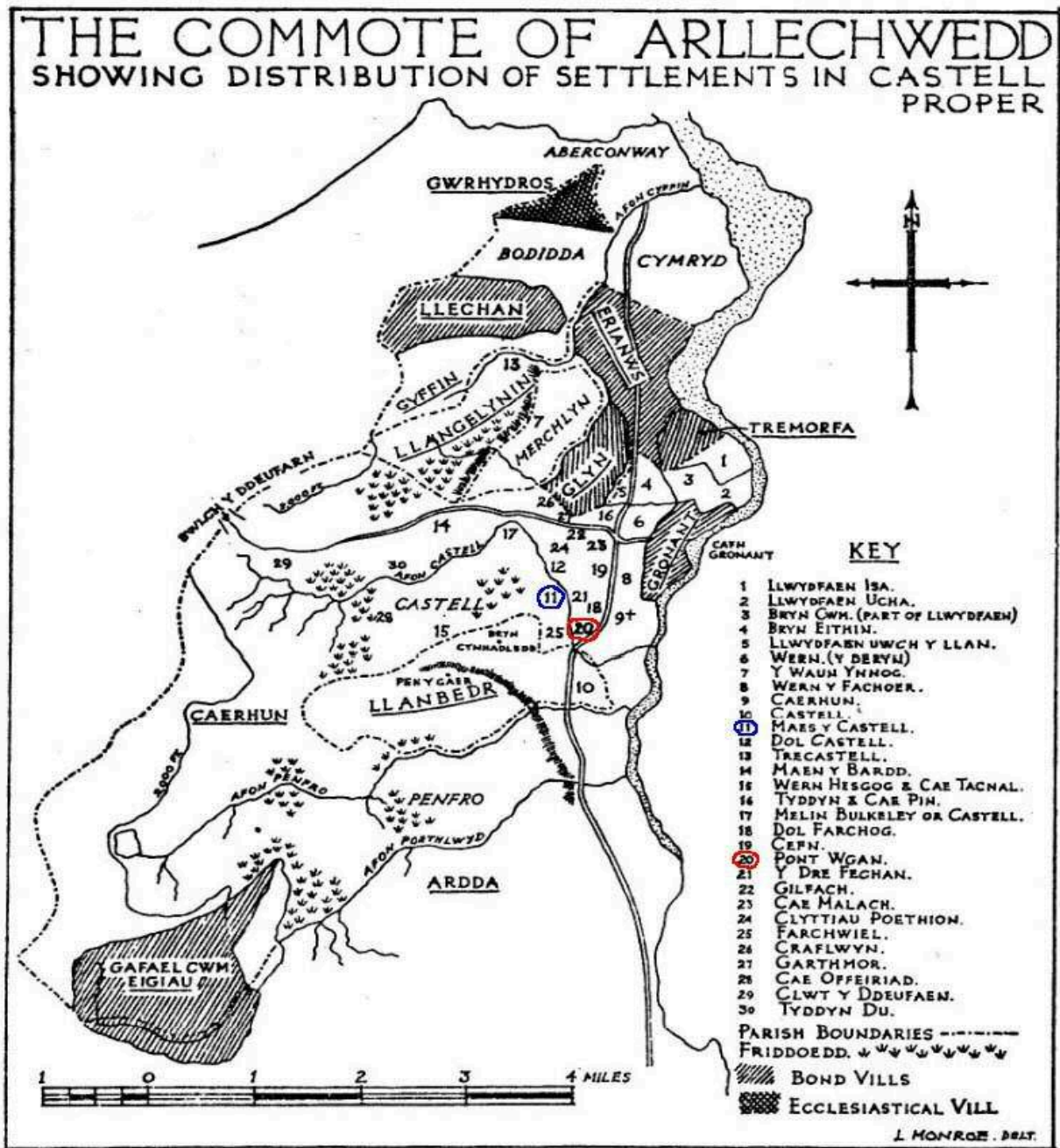


In the early middle ages, this region of Conwy was part of the Kingdom of Gwynedd held by the Welsh princes. It was the largest and most dominant of the native Welsh Principalities. Its borders varied over time. For administrative purposes, it was divided into cantrefs which were further subdivided into commotes. Pont Wgan was built on land which would have originally been in the cantref of Arllechwedd, commote of Arllechwedd Isaf and the free vill (township) of Castell. This was an unusually large township which had its nucleus around Maes y Castell. The royal maerdref (Reeve's house) of Arllechwedd Isaf is thought to have been in the township of Glyn and Gronant, where the ferry crossed the river at Tal y Cafn.

After the Edwardian conquest, most of the land held by the Principalities was retained as a royal fief and the territorial endowment of the heir to the throne i.e. the Prince of Wales. The remaining land, mostly along the English border, was divided into semi independent Marcher Lordships held by Anglo-Norman lords who owed allegiance to the Crown. After the Statute of Rhuddlan in 1284, the Principalities were divided up into the counties of Carnarvon, Anglesey, Cardigan, Carmarthen and Merioneth. Even though they were subject to English criminal law, they still remained as the King's own personal fief and Welsh Law continued to be used for civil cases.

A number of English families were encouraged to settle in Wales after the conquest. Amongst them were the Buckeleys and the Boldes who both came from Lancashire. A descendant of the Boldes – Bartholomew Bolde was a burgess of Conwy, and a minor official in Conwy and the neighbouring commote of Arllechwedd Isaf. Between 1420 and 1453, he invested in property in the commote. He acquired, through purchase, several hundred acres of small holdings, arable, meadow and pasture in the free township of Castell.

A surviving rental from the Bolde estate from the period 1420 to 1453, has enabled a partial reconstruction of the way in which the Welsh tribal land-tenure systems in this commote were replaced by holdings which were to form the basis of the great estates that dominated the region from the sixteenth century into the nineteenth.²



The Gafael in Bangor Manuscript³

N.B. Pont Wgan appears to have been placed in the wrong position. It should have been located between numbers 11 & 12.

2. Historic Landscape Characterisations – Creuddyn and Arllechwedd – Historical Themes GAT

3. T. Jones Pierce – The Gafael in Bangor – 1939 – Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion January 1st 1944 p.162

Amongst the list of tenants in Bolde's rental are:-

Dicws ap David Goch, who had holdings in various parts of Castell. One of the properties in the Gafael (family holding) of David Goch in this vill was held by **Gruffudd ap Gwgan**, and another of 5 acres by **Gwenllian vch Gwgan**. In the vill of Glyn, **Elen vch Gwgan** also held land.

Could Gwgan, be the person that the hamlet, Pont Wgan, was named after?

In another document from 1436, there is mention of a **Meredith ap Howell ap Gogan**, a free tenant of the vill of Castell in reference to a parcel of land called Yr Erwen Cochion.⁴

In an article published in the Parish Magazine for Caerhun, Llanbedr-y-cennin and Dolgarrog, it is claimed that Bartholomew Bolde staged an attack on Gwenllian's land at Pont Wgan, but local clansmen came to her aid.⁵ However, it is not made clear whether Gwenllian actually lost her holding to Bartholomew.

David Goch of Nant Conwy is believed to be a descendant of Nefydd Hardd, the founder of the 6th Noble Tribe of North Wales. Some accounts suggest that he was the illegitimate son of Prince Dafydd ap Gruffydd, brother of Llewelyn the Last, however this traditional version of the ancestry of Dafydd Goch is now disputed.⁶

Nefydd Hardd was descended from Heilig ap Glannog, who in the 10th century, held most of North Gwynedd east of Arfon and north of Ardudwy, including **Arllechwedd**; and Rhos, Rhufoniog and part of Dyffryn Clwyd east of the Clwyd river.

In the free trefi (townships) like Castell, the land was held by families in return for military services and a food rent, which was later commuted to monetary payments. The land was divided equally between male heirs including acknowledged illegitimate sons. The kindred held certain property in common, which could include a church and a mill.

In the trefi held by bond tenants, the land was shared out equally among the adult males. The unfree bondsmen provided manual labour in return for food renders. Bond townships belonged to the Crown. The bond vills in Arllechwedd isaf were Llechan, Eirianws, Tremorfa, Glyn and Gronant. Bond tenants were eventually freed by Henry VII in 1507. (see p.7)

Bartholomew Bolde of Conwy married Letitia, d/o John Pikemore and Janet Griffith, the widow of Gwilym ap Gruffudd of Penrhyn. They had just one daughter, Alice (aka Alison), who was the heiress of Bartholomew's estate. After Alice had inherited the estate, "the clansmen took their revenge by harassing her and generally making her life unpleasant. It would appear that Alice may have lived here in the locality, since it is recorded that fearing for her life and safety she took refuge in St. Peter's Church at Llanbedr-y-cennin on several occasions. The church, being a holy place, was secure from marauding tribesmen."⁷ In gratitude, in her will, Alice left lands called Cae Lleidr Uchaf and Cae Lleidr Isaf and Cae Alison to St. Peter's Church.

Alice married William Bulkeley a younger son of William Bulkeley and Ellen, who was the daughter of Janet Griffith and her first husband, Gwilym ap Gruffudd of Penrhyn.⁸ This was a planned strategic alliance because the marriage settlement was drawn up when they were both still

4. Bangor Archives – Baron Hill MSS no.2287

5. Parish Magazine for Caerhun, Llanbedr y cennin and Dolgarrog – The Troubles of Alison – Stan Wicklen

6. Appendix 1 - The Ancestry of Dafydd Goch

7. Stan Wicklen – *ibid.*

8. Appendix 2 – The Buckley and Bolde Families

very young children. This eventually led to the consolidation of the Bulkeley possessions in the commotes of Arllechwedd Isaf and Uchaf. When Bartholomew died in 1516, his estate was inherited by William and Alice. They continued purchasing land - in 1445 Llywelyn ap Kenrick ap Ithel released 8 acres of land in the township of Castell to William Bulkeley.⁹ The land was in two parcels – Dryll y Golwyth and Erw Gwynnion - in a place called Llwydfaen, which was the part of Castell next to the river. (see map p.4)

William and Alice had a son called Bartholomew who died in childhood. When William died his estate, which included the lands inherited from Bolde, passed to William's eldest surviving brother, Rowland Buckeley, who had also inherited his father's Beaumaris estate.¹⁰

A Welshman who also acquired land in the area, was Gruffydd ap Gwilym of Penrhyn and Cochwillan. In the late 14th century, he was probably the wealthiest man in North Wales. He took advantage of the introduction of English law in Wales to amass land through marriage. His three sons, Gwilym, Robin, and Rhys all joined Owain Glyndŵr's revolt against the English, but in 1405 all three brothers surrendered to the Crown. After his death in 1405, Gruffydd ap Gwilym's lands in Flintshire went to Rhys; and his lands in Gwynedd went to both Gwilym (who settled in Penrhyn) and Robin (who settled at Cochwillan).¹¹

As well as the secular land-divisions, by the later medieval period Arllechwedd Isaf was divided into the parishes of Gyffin, Llangelynin, **Caerhun** and Llanbedr y Cennin. Within the parish of Caerhun there were four hamlets – **Rhwng y Ddwy afon** (*between the two rivers*), Maen y Bardd, Penfro and Isaf afon.

Pont Wgan was in the township of Rhwng y Ddwy afon and the parish of Caerhun. Now it is considered to be part of Tyn y Groes.

9. Bangor Archives – Baron Hill MSS nos.2304-2305

10. Appendix 2 – The Bulkeley and Bolde families

11. Appendix 2 - The Williams Family of Penrhyn and Cochwillan.

16th Century

1507 – Henry VII freed the Welsh bondsmen.

At a time when serfdom had almost died out in England, the practice still continued in Wales. This long-held practice of the nobles having low status men as bondsmen (serfs) who were obliged to fight for them if necessary, was considered by Henry to be potentially dangerous. There was a chance that a nobleman could raise a private army and thus threaten the King, so he decided to free the bondsmen. As a consequence the noblemen no longer had sufficient men to work their land and so they were obliged to rent or lease the land to the newly freed men.

1509 – Henry VII died and was succeeded by his second son, Henry VIII.

1536-1543 – Henry VIII passed a series of laws that became known as the Acts of Union. As a result, Wales became part of the Kingdom of England and the legal system of England was extended into Wales, thereby creating a single State.

1553 21st August – William ap William ap Griffith ap Robyn (*a descendant of the Penrhyn and Cochwillan families who was the first in the family to adopt the surname 'Williams'*) released to his son Henry Williams (I) (*alias Henry ap William ap William or Henry Wynn*), the following lands - Tyddyn y Glyn, Tyddyn y Gwreng, Tyddyn y Groes and Cae William in the townships of Castell, Glyn and Gronant, also of Melin Penfro, also all his tenements lying between the Afon Penfro and the town of Conwy. If his son Henry had no issue, then the lands were to go to another of his sons - **Edward Williams**.¹²

Henry Williams (I) was the fifth son of William Williams of Cochwillan and his wife Lowry Salusbury. Edward Williams was the fourth son. He fought against the French at the siege of Boulogne in 1546; and was Captain of Cannon in 1588 when England supported Hungary against Turkey.

Henry Williams (I) eventually settled at Llangoed, Penmon, Anglesey. The lands in the township of Castell appear to have gone eventually to his brother, Edward, because by 1569 he was being referred to as '**Edward Williams of Maes y Castell**'.

1569-1570 – Edward Williams of Maes y Castell was appointed High Sheriff of Caernarvonshire.

As Edward Williams was being described as 'of Maes y Castell' by 1569, had he already built a house there? Was the house updated in 1582, perhaps around the time of his marriage to Grace?

He married Grace vch John Owen of Garthymedd, Abergele. A date stone displayed on the house bears the initials – EW and GW 1582, and a stag's head which was part of the Cochwillan family crest and the same as that of the ancient Iarddur family.

1587 – Edward's eldest brother, William Wynn Williams of Cochwillan died, predeceasing their father, William Williams (d.1589). The second brother, Robert died without issue; the third brother,

12. Bangor Archives – Baron Hill MSS no.2421

Thomas Williams, who had founded the family of Williams of Vaynol, also died before Edward c.1592.

Edward added a south chapel to Caerhun Church in 1591. A very weathered sandstone plaque commemorating this event is embedded above the chapel's south window. It bears the date 1591 and the initials of Edward and Grace and a stag's head. This is almost identical to the date stone on the house.

S.window of the south chapel, Caerhun Church showing Edward and Grace's plaque.



An ex situ long oak dedication board also survives inside the church. It bears the following inscription in raised letters:- EDWARDVS: WILL: JAMES: AR: ET: / GRACEA: UXOREI: Q HOC: OPUS: FIERI / FECERVNT: ANNO: DOMINI: 1591.

Edward was involved in several land transactions in the area: –

1575-1579 – Release of Tyddyn Bron hyddgen to Edward Williams.¹³

1577 – lease of 'certain interest in the township of Castel' (Tyddyn y Ddol) to Edward Williams.¹⁴

1579 – 168 acres of land to Edward Williams.¹⁵

1593 – Deed of mortgage on Tyddyn y Ddol Castell to Edward Williams by Katherine, widow of George Griffith of Caernarvon.¹⁶

1596 – Recovery of Tyddyn y Ddol Castell for the use of Edward Williams and Grace his wife.¹⁷

1600 – sale of lands¹⁸

The land on which Pontwgan Mill was eventually built was part of the Maes y Castell estate.

13. Bangor Archives Baron Hill MSS – nos. 2467-2469

14. *ibid* no. 2474

15. *ibid*.nos. 2477-2478

16. *ibid*. no. 2516

17. *ibid* no. 2518

18. *ibid*. no. 2533

17th Century

1600 12th December – Edward wrote his last will and testament. In it he stated that he wished to be buried in the new chapel adjoining the church of Caerhun “which I caused to be made.”

1601 – Edward Williams died. “Edward Williams was buryd the furst daie of November next followinge.”

Edward and his wife, Grace, had no surviving children. Practically all his lands and goods were bequeathed to Grace for the term of her natural life with reversions to his relatives of Cochwillan, Vaynol and Wig after her death.¹⁹

.....

1603 – Elizabeth I died and James I of England and VI of Scotland became King.

.....

Grace Williams appears to have remarried to Richard Gwyn of Glasinfryn who was the s/o Richard Gwynn, Archdeacon of Bangor. They may have married about 1609 because the Maes y Castell estate appears to have reverted to the Williams family. By remarrying, Grace would have had to forfeit her interest in the estate.

1609 10th July – A fine and recovery at the Great Sessions upon Y Plas ym Maes y Castell to **William Williams** of Vaynol (Thomas Williams & Edward's nephew) to be levied by Richard Gwynn and Grace his wife.²⁰

William Wyn Williams (eldest brother of Edward) had married Dorothy Griffith, 4th daughter of Sir William Griffith of Penrhyn. Their son and heir, William Williams, married Agnes Wynn d/o Sir John Wynn of Gwydir. They had a son, Owen Williams, who is believed to have been disinherited, and a daughter, **Ellin Williams**, who married her uncle, **Sir William Williams** 1st bart. of Vaynol, (see above). Agnes died and William Williams re-married to Barbara Lumley. They had a son, **Henry (Wyn) Williams (II)**.

As a result of the transaction above, dated 10th July 1609, William Williams of Vaynol made his second cousin, **Henry Williams (II)** of Cochwillan (s/o William Williams and Barbara Lumley) a tenant of the freehold of Maes y Castell.

Henry Williams' father had been rather litigious, and Henry was apparently involved in his father's quarrels from an early age. In 1587, he was accused of riot and forcible entry into lands in the tenure of Pirs Griffith of Penrhyn at the Great Sessions for Caernarvonshire.

1612 – William Williams, s/o William Wyn Williams, died. The Cochwillan estate passed to his son, Henry Williams (II) from his second marriage to Barbara Lumley.

Henry Williams (II) was very profligate.

Immediately after his father's death, he undertook to sell Cochwillan and lands in Caernarvonshire for £1,000 to affray his debts. By a process which is obscure, Cochwillan and the Caernarvonshire

19. Baron Hill MSS no.2535

20. *ibid.* no. 2541

property were purchased c.1620 by his cousin, John Williams (1582-1650) who acquired the Penrhyn estate about the same time.²¹ John Williams was made Dean of Westminster in 1620 and advanced rapidly in Royal favour to be appointed Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal by James I in 1621. In 1642, he was appointed Archbishop of York.

Henry must have retained the Maes y Castell estate because in 1630, he is described as 'of Maes y Castell'.

1630 10th April – William ap Robert ap Hugh surrendered a lease to Henry Williams (II) of Maes y Castell.²²

1633/34 18th January – Henry was granted rights in the local church. William ap Robert ap Hugh in the parish of Caerhun agreed “that he is ready to give all further security to Henry Williams (II) of Maes y Castell regarding the right and title to seats, sitting places, benches, and burying places (once belonging to William ap Robert and his ancestors) in the parish churches of Caerhun and Llanbedr (y Cennin)”²³

1634 3rd September – Fine and Recovery at the Caernarvon Great Sessions – The lands of Henry Williams of Maes y Castell in the commote of Issaph, tenements of Castell, Penfro, Glyn and Gronant and Llanbedr yn Cennin i.e. 24 messuages, 24 tenements, one mill, 34 gardens etc. for the use and behoof of Henry Williams and no other.²⁴

The location of the mill mentioned in the above document is not known, but it was probably the one known as Melin Penfro, which was mentioned in the document from 1553. (see p.7)

1652 - Henry Williams of Maes y Castell was appointed High Sheriff of Caernarfonshire. He married Jane Salusbury, d/o Thomas Salusbury of Denbigh Castle (3rd s/o Sir John Salusbury of Lleweni).

1658 – Henry Williams (II) died and was buried in Bangor Cathedral. He left a will in which he specified bequests to the Cathedral of Bangor, the church of Caerhun and Llanbedr yn Cennin, and to the poor of the same parishes. Also £300 to his sister, Elizabeth, widow of Edward Williams of Wig (Wegge), to be disposed of by her amongst her three daughters; £50 a piece to the three children of Thomas Ravenscroft of Pickhill, Flint who had married his half sister Margaret; and various sums to Robert Wynne of Caernarfon and his 'faithful friend' William Arthur of Maenol, Bangor. The chief legatee and executor was his great nephew, **Thomas Williams of Dinas** (s/o Sir Thomas Williams 2nd bart. of Vaynol), whose main work was to pay out the legatees and bequests out of the redemption money of lands in Dolbadarn and Llanberis mortgaged to Henry Williams for the sum of £1,1000 by Sir William Williams 3rd bart. of Vaynol, (Henry's great nephew and brother of Thomas). The will was proved in London on the 10/6/1659.²⁵ As part of the administration process, a very lengthy and detailed inventory of all his personal possessions was drawn up and valued.²⁶ It is not clear exactly what happened next to the Maes y Castell estate. His son Lumley does not appear to have inherited it. It may have gone briefly to his great nephew, **Sir William Williams** 3rd bart.

21. Dictionary of Welsh Biography - <https://biography.wales/article/s1-WILL-COC-1389>

22. Bangor Archives Baron Hill nos. 2582-2583

23. Bangor Archives – Baron Hill MSS nos. 2623

24. Bangor Archives – Baron Hill MSS nos. 2624-2625

25. *ibid.* nos. 2631-2632

26. Appendix 3 - Inventory of the Personal Possessions of Henry Williams (II)

1658 1st November – Sir William Williams 3rd bart. of Vaynol died shortly after Henry Williams. Maes y Castell seems to have passed to his brother, **Thomas Williams of Dinas**. He had married Jane Jones, daughter and co-heiress of Griffith Jones of Castell March in 1645. When Thomas died, Maes y Castell passed to his nephew Sir Griffith Williams of Vaynol, but Thomas' widow was allowed to 'have the use of' her husband's estate (Maes y Castell) for the period of her natural life.

Jane Williams eventually re-married to Thomas Bulkeley (1633-1708) of Dinas, who was the 4th son of Thomas Bulkeley of Baron Hill, Beaumaris and 1st Viscount of Cashel, Ireland. He and Jane definitely lived in Maes y Castell because Thomas wrote several letters about everyday matters to Sir Richard Wynn of Gwydir from there.

1661 November 12th – Letter from Thomas Bulkeley at Maes y Castell to Sir Richard Wynn of Gwydir.²⁷

1662 – Hearth Tax

In England and Wales, a tax on hearths was introduced on the 19th May 1662. Householders were required to pay a charge of 2s per annum for each hearth, with half of the payment due at Michaelmas and the other half at Lady Day. Exemptions were those in receipt of poor relief and anyone whose house was worth less than 20s a year. A revision of the Act in 1664 made the tax payable by all who had more than two chimneys. It was eventually abolished in 1689.

Maes y Castell - Thomas Bulkeley of Dinas was recorded as the occupier at the time. He paid for three hearths.

1663 4th October – Sir Griffith Williams 4th bart. of Vaynol (s/o Sir William Williams 3rd bart.) granted Thomas Bulkeley of Dinas, the 'use of the Maes y Castell estate for the term of his natural life' as part of the marriage settlement between him and Jane Williams.²⁸

A later rental record provides an explanation of the inheritance.

“Sir William Williams 6th bart. of Vaynol, by virtue of several conveyances from the late Sir Griffith Williams his father to the said Mr. Bulkeley for the term of his natural life and seven years after in the commote of Llechwedd Issa and parishes of Llangelynin, Llanwnda and Llandwrog.”²⁹

1663 – Sir Griffith Williams of Vaynol died. His estates passed to his eldest son, Sir Thomas Williams 5th bart. of Vaynol.

1665 October 12th – Letter from Thomas Buckeley at Maes y Castell to Sir Richard Wynn.

1666 October 1st - Letter from Thomas Buckeley at Maes y Castell to Sir Richard Wynn.

27. National Library of Wales – Wynn of Gwydir papers ref. NLW ref. MS 9067E/2470

28. Bangor Archives – Mostyn MSS no.1393

29. Caernarvon Archives Vaynol MSS no 3744

c.1670 – Sir Thomas Williams 5th bart. of Vaynol died unmarried. His brother Sir William Williams 6th bart. succeeded to the Vaynol estates.

1692 4th February - Thomas Bulkeley of Maes y Castell and M.P. for Beaumaris fought a duel in Hyde Park with Sir Bouchier Wrey, a friend of Sir William Williams of Vaynol 6th bart. There were six men engaged as principals and seconds. Five were M.Ps; two of the seconds were slightly wounded.

Sir William Williams 6th bart. married Ellen Bulkeley d/o Robert Buckeley 2nd Viscount of Beaumaris. They had no children and William also lived a very profligate lifestyle.

1695 June 25th – In a state of inebriation, William wrote his will and bequeathed his estate worth about £2,500 p.a. to Sir Bouchier Wrey of Tavistock for the period of his natural life and then to Wrey's sons for their lifetime, and then it was to revert to the Crown.

At this stage, **Maes y Castell**, was still in the holding of Thomas Buckeley.

1698 23rd December – Sir William Williams died aged about 28 years. This was a week after he had killed a man in a duel. Sir Bouchier Wrey also died that year. Both may have lost their lives in duels. The Vaynol estate passed to Wrey's sons.³⁰

The result was a conflict between the Wrey family and the Williams 'heirs at law' headed by Sir Arthur Owen 3rd bart., who took possession of Vaynol even before Williams' funeral. This created a situation where the corpse had to be taken to another house to await burial. After lengthy litigation, the Crown's right was confirmed in 1699.

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1699 – **Edward Lhuyd** (1660 - 1709) a botanist, geologist, antiquary, and philologist, requested information from every parish in Wales in the form of a questionnaire about the natural history and antiquities of each area. He also made extracts from manuscripts, copied inscriptions, and collected curiosities. The replies were published as a book in 1699 called "Parochialia".³¹

In Caerhun, the townships listed were Is yr avon, **Rhwyng y dhwy avon**, Maen y Bardh and Penvro. There is also a list of seven bridges in the parish.

At the top of this list is:-

Pont Wgan ar Avon Gastelh vilhdir odhiar I haber I Gonwy (Gwgan's bridge on the Castle river 1 mile from the estuary at Conwy.)

'Maes y Castell belongs to **Mr. Bulkley of Dinas.**'

This was Thomas Bulkeley, 4th s/o Thomas Bulkeley, 1st Viscount of Cashel of Baron Hill, who was married to Jane Williams.

.....

30. Caernarvon Archives ref. XM/4926/275

31. Archaeologia Cambrensis supplement part 1 April 1909 p.30

18th Century

There are several millers recorded in the Caerhun parish registers, but unfortunately the earliest records give no indication as to which mill in the area they were working at.

1695 June 6th – Hugh Thomas (miller) burial.

1701 July 13th - Ellen d/o Ellis Parry (miller) & Luce David baptism

1702 September 11th – Jonet Leonard w/o Robert John Morris (miller) burial

1704 August 13th – Robert s/o Ellis Parry (miller) and Luce David baptism

1708 - Thomas Bulkeley of Maes y Castell & Dinas died, without issue. Maes y Castell, passed back to the Vaynol estate, which by this time was being held by the Crown.

1720 6th & 7th April - King William III and Queen Anne granted the Vaynol estate (including Maes y Castell) to John Gore in Trust for John Smith of Tedworth.³²

John Smith was the 4th and only surviving son of John Smith of Tedworth (d.1690) and his wife Mary Wright d/o Sir Edmund Wright, Alderman of London.

He was elected the Speaker of the House of Commons in 1705 and held the post until 1708. He had also served twice as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He married twice. Firstly in 1674 to Ann Steward d/o Sir Nicholas Steward of Hartley Mauditt, Hants. She died in 1680. In 1683, he married Ann Strickland d/o Sir Thomas Strickland of Boyton Warwickshire.

John Smith 1656-1723



1723 – John Smith died. The Vaynol estate (including Maes y Castell) passed to his son, Captain William Smith.

32. Appendix 4 - The Assheton Smith Family

In 1744, there is a record of the following baptism but it is partially obscured. It appears to name a miller who lived at Pontwgan.

1744 July 4th - & Catherine daughters of Jas. (*James*) ap Thomas of Pontwgan – (miller) & Catherine Cadwaladr.

This is the first mention discovered so far of a miller at Pontwgan.

Moses Roberts (I) had become the tenant of Maes y Castell by 1745 and possibly earlier.³³

Was James ap Thomas initially employed as a miller by Moses Roberts or was he first employed by the previous holder of the lease of Maes y Castell?

In 1700, Edward Probert Thomas is described as of Maes y Castell when his son, John, was baptised in Caerhun Church. Nothing else has been found regarding this family but Thomas Probert Cadwaladr, (*possibly related to Edward and Catherine Cadwaladr*) who married Ellen Symond, is recorded as of Maes y Castell when he was buried two years earlier in 1698. He left five daughters. His widow re-married to Richard David in 1700 and the family continued to live in the house. The daughters were all described as of Maes y Castell when they married between the dates 1703-1721. The Thomas family appear to have left the house by 1739, because **Jane Roberts of Maes y Castell** married William Rowland of Ariannws.³⁴

It seems likely that Jane Roberts was related to Moses Roberts.

Moses Roberts was a yeoman farmer.

Yeomen

From the late 14th to 18th centuries, yeomen were farmers who owned land (freehold, leasehold or copyhold). Their wealth and the size of their landholding varied. Many yeomen were prosperous, and wealthy enough to employ servants and farm labourers. Some were as wealthy as the minor county or regional landed gentry and some even leased land to gentleman landowners. Some could be classed as gentlemen, but did not aspire to this status: it was cheaper to remain a yeoman. Often it was hard to distinguish minor landed gentry from the wealthier yeomen. A yeoman could be equally comfortable working on his farm, educating himself from books, or enjoying country sports such as shooting and hunting. By contrast members of the landed gentry and the aristocracy did not farm their land themselves, but let it to tenant farmers.

1745 26th April – William s/o Moses Roberts (I) and Grace Williams was baptised in Caerhun Church.

Unfortunately no reference has yet been found as to the identity of the person who had the mill constructed but it may have been built when the Thomas family were living at Maes y Castell or perhaps by the Roberts family.

The Vaynol estate Land Tax records from 1746 for Maes y Castell include **Pontwgan mill**. These are earliest recorded documents of the mill discovered so far.

33. Appendix 6 – The Roberts Family

34. Appendix 6 – Suggested pedigree of the Thomas Family

Land Tax

Township of Rhwyn y Ddwy Afon

1746 - 1748	Maes y Castell	tenant: Moses Roberts	£1. 11. 6 ³⁵
	Pontwgan Corn Mill	“	£0. 4. 8
1751	Maes y Castell	“	£1. 3. 7½
	Pontwgan Corn Mill	“	£0. 3. 6

Land Tax

Township of Rhwyn y Ddwy Afon

1760	Maes y Castell	tenant: Moses Roberts	£1. 11. 6
	Pontwgan Corn Mill	“	£0. 4. 8

1773 – Captain William Smith, owner of Vaynol & Maes y Castell died without issue on or about the 20th January.

1773 10th February – Probate was granted. William devolved all of his messuages, tenements and lands etc. to his nephew Thomas Assheton for the period of his natural life. Thomas later adopted the additional surname ' Smith'. Thomas' father was married to William's sister Harriet.

Thomas Assheton Smith (I) was married to Mary Clayton. They had a son b.1752 called Thomas Assheton Smith (II).

1773 9th April - Marriage settlement – When Thomas Assheton Smith (II) attained his majority, a marriage was arranged for him with Elizabeth Wynne d/o Watkin Wynne of Voelas.³⁶

1774 – Thomas Assheton Smith (I) died. His son succeeded to the Vaynol estate.

1775 – Moses Roberts (I), the tenant of Maes y Castell, died and left a will.³⁷ He left bequests to his daughter, Jane and also to her children; his wife Grace and his son William Roberts.

William Roberts (I) took over the tenancy of Maes y Castell & Pontwgan Corn Mill after his father's death.

1776 – Thomas Assheton Smith (II) and his wife Elizabeth had a son, also named Thomas Assheton Smith (III).

Land Tax

Township of Rhwyn y Ddwy Afon

1775-1776	Maes y Castell	tenant: William Roberts	£1. 11. 6
	Pontwgan Corn Mill	“	£0. 4. 8

The Assheton Smith family's main economic interest was in slate quarrying. From 1778, many of their farms were let on long leases with restrictive clauses which gave more security to the tenants and encourage better husbandry.

35. Caernarvon Archives – XQA/LT/ 3/4

36. Bangor Archives – ref. Deeds and Documents PFA/3/213 9th April 1773

37. Appendix 7 - Will of Moses Roberts 1775

The Mill is not specifically mentioned in the following rental, but it is in the Land Tax record a few years later.

1776-1779 – Vaynol Estate Rentals - Maes y Castell ³⁸

Tenant: William Roberts

7 acres @ 20/-	£7.0.0
12 acres @ 16/-	£9.12.0
11 acres @ 14/-	£7.14.0
14¼ acres @ 10/-	£7.2.6
15½ acres @ 7/-	£5.8.6
25 acres @ 5/-	£6.5.0

	£43.2.0

Land Tax

Township of Rhwyn y Ddwy Afon

1792 – 1793	Maes y Castell	£1. 11. 6
	Pontwgan Corn Mill	£0. 4. 8

proprietor: T.A.Assheton Smith (II) tenant: William Roberts

1793 - William Roberts (I) died and was buried in Caerhun churchyard on the 19th October. His wife, Jane Evans, was subsequently named as the tenant.

Land Tax

Township of Rhwyn y Ddwy Afon

1794-1796	Maes y Castell	£1. 11. 6
	Pontwgan Corn Mill	£0. 4. 8

proprietor: T.A.Assheton Smith (II) tenant: Jane Evans (widow of William Roberts (I))

By 1799, William and Jane's son, Moses Roberts (II) held the tenancy.

1799 – Rentals³⁹ Maes y Castell & Mill

8 acres 2 roods 25 perches: £38 half yearly rent £38 half yearly

Owner: Thomas Assheton Smith (II)

Tenant: Moses Roberts (II)

1799 Michaelmas – Rentals⁴⁰ Maes y Castell & Mill

8 acres 2 roods 25 perches: £38 half yearly rent £38 half yearly

Owner: Thomas Assheton Smith (II)

Tenant: Moses Roberts (II)

In spite of the Assheton Smiths granting long leases to some of their tenants, they also extended their land holdings by the enclosure of common land. This was in spite of fierce opposition from those tenants living at a subsistence level who supplemented their existence by grazing a few animals on such land and by collecting the wood, nuts or berries that could be found there. These tenants were simply evicted. This occurred following the law created by the Inclosure Act of 1773

38. Caernarvon Archives ref. Vaynol MSS no.4054

39. *ibid.* ref.3751

40. *ibid.* ref.3751

which enabled the enclosure of land and at the same time removed the right of commoners' access. The Assheton Smiths eventually became the 3rd largest landowner in North Wales.

19th Century

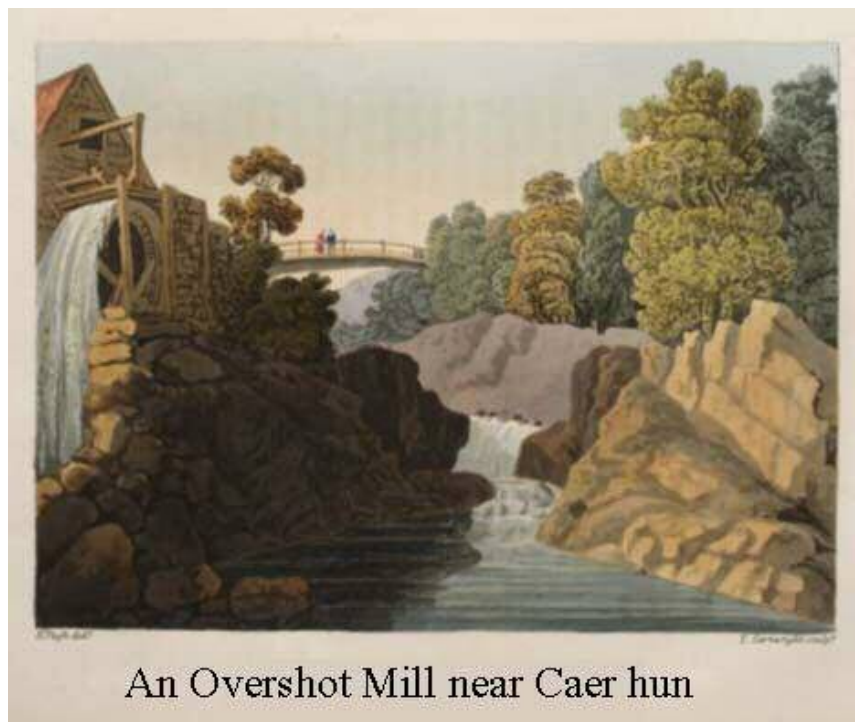
Edward Pugh of Ruthin (1763-1813), a Welsh-speaking artist and writer came across the mill during his walking tour of North Wales. He kept a diary about his travels and produced a number of paintings of the landscapes and people he encountered. He was accompanied by his faithful dog, Miss Wowski. The book, *Cambria Depicta*, was published after his death in 1816.⁴¹

“Taking leave of the Rev. Mr. Williams, we returned to Caer-hûn. At the request of Mrs. Griffith, I saw an overshot mill in the vicinity, turned by a stream that tumbles over a rude blue stone rock, which has been worn, by the eddying of the water, into a very singular forms. It certainly is very romantic; and the mill on the left, uplifted upon a precipice, greatly adds to the effect. The sides of the rocks exhibit a variety of shapes, which give to the whole an interest which is of value to a drawing. It was a favourite spot with Sir George Beaumont.”

N.B. Sir George Howland Beaumont 1753-1827 of Coleorton in Leicestershire was a British art patron and amateur painter. He played a crucial part in the creation of London's National Gallery by making the first bequest to the institution.

Mrs. Griffith would have been 'of Caerhun Hall'. Richard Fenton in his Tours of Wales 1804-1813 also mentions staying with Mr. and Mrs Griffith of Caerhun, and seeing Mrs. Griffith's 'Museum of relics of antiquities'.^{42 43}

Edward Pugh's painting of Melin Pont Wgan clearly shows the bridge and the overshot wheel. Also the position of the mill building well above the river level and backing onto the bank of the gorge.



An Overshot Mill near Caer hun

The painting by Edward Pugh of Melin Pont Wgan

41. *Cambria Depicta* – Edward Pugh of Ruthin - A Native Artist 1816 p.25

42. Richard Fenton – *Tours in Wales 1804-1813* edited by John Fisher 1917 pp.172-178

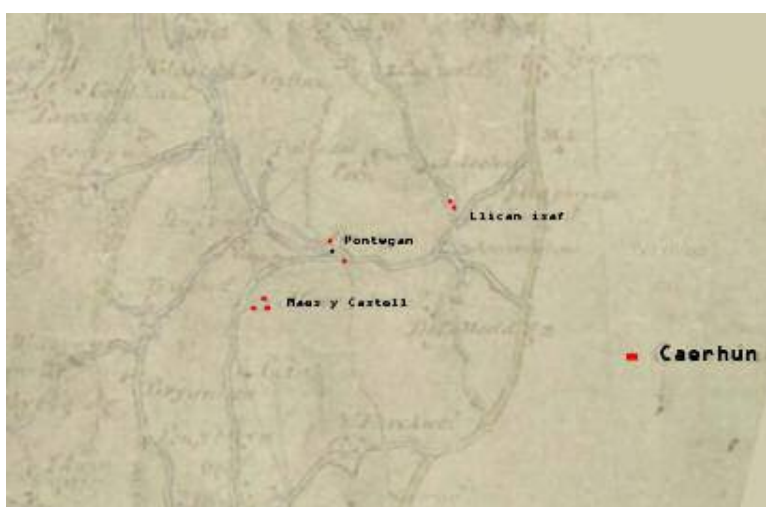
43. Appendix 8 - The Griffith and Davies families of Caerhun Hall

1813 – The terms of the entail to the inheritance of the Vaynol estate were changed to take account of a mortgage of £12,000 not being fully repaid.⁴⁴ Thomas Assheton Smith (III) was named as the heir. The final date for the full settlement of the debt was 1845.

1820 – Vaynol estate rentals⁴⁵

Maes y Castell & mill & Bron y Gader	£58
Hen Fachws, Llanbedr no.16	£ 8
tenant: Moses Roberts (II)
	£66

A hand drawn map produced in 1822 by Robert Dawson shows two cottages in the hamlet of Pontwgan and possibly also the mill, although that is not completely clear.



A map by Robert Dawson 1822

1827 17th October - Thomas Assheton Smith (III) married Matilda d/o William Webber of Binfield Lodge, Berks.

1828 – Thomas Assheton Smith (II) died. His estates which consisted of properties in Hampshire, Wiltshire, Cheshire and 7,000 acres in Caernarfonshire and £8,000 in Trust passed to his son Thomas Assheton Smith (III).

44. Bangor Archives – Deeds and Documents – op. cit.

45. Caernarfon Archives ref. no.3780



Thomas Assheton Smith (II) 1752-1828



Thomas Assheton Smith (III) 1776-1858

Thomas Assheton Smith (III)'s main interest was hunting. One pack of hounds which he purchased, cost him 1,000 guineas.

1830/31 Michaelmas⁴⁶ - Vaynol Estate Rentals
no.13 Maes y Castell & mill and Bronygadin excluding Gwerglodd Cappel
tenant: Moses Roberts (II)
£64.10 half yearly
allowance 10% £6.9s sum due £58.1s

1830 – Rentals⁴⁷
Maes y Castell & mill & Bron y Gader exclusive of Gweirglodd y Cappel
tenant: Moses Roberts (II) rent £129

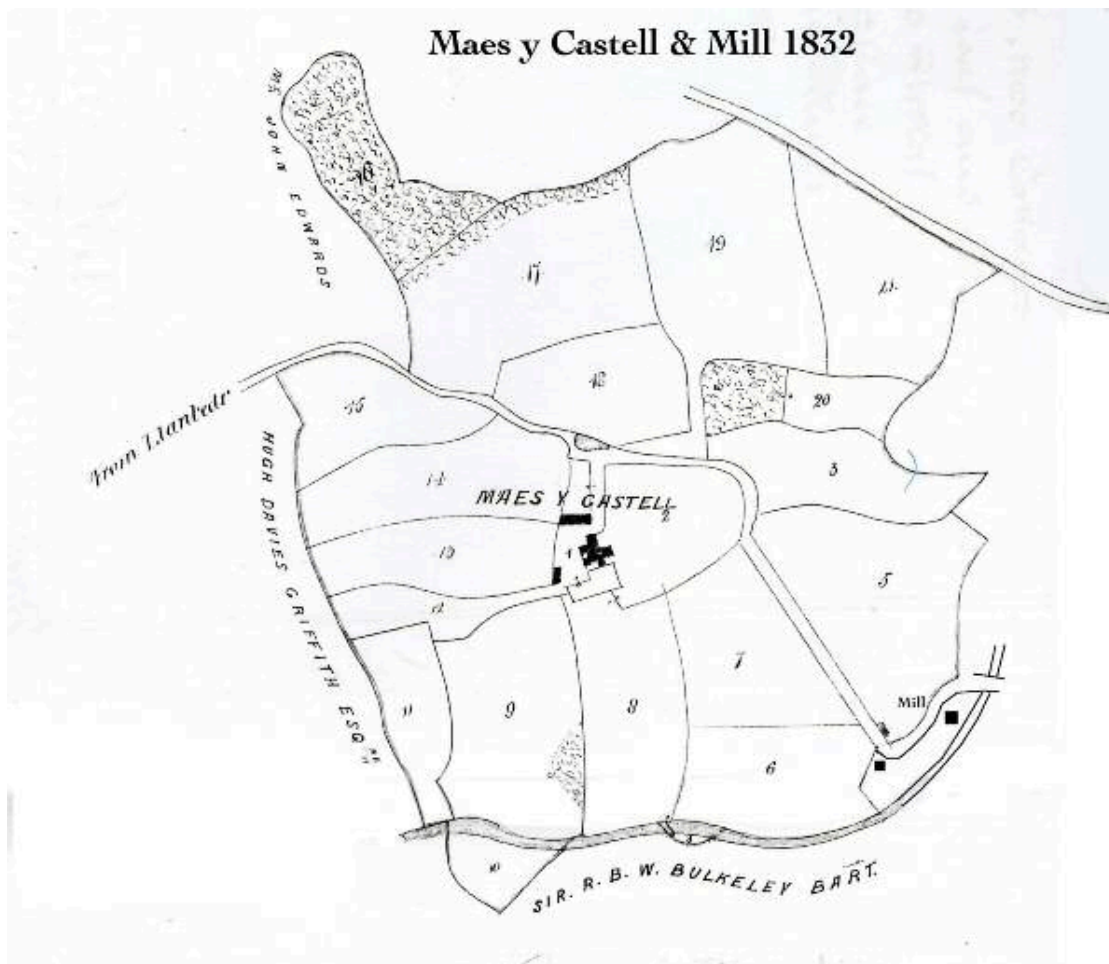
1832 ref.
Maes y Castell & Mill
tenant Moses Roberts (II)

1832 – Vaynol Estate Survey Map.⁴⁸ This shows the mill as part of the Maes y Castell estate.

46. *ibid.* ref. 3808

47. *ibid.* ref.3809

48. *ibid* ref.1643



Vaynol Rentals cont.

After 1832, the mill is no longer included in the rentals. *Was it perhaps no longer in use or had it been sold?*

1833 ref.3815

Maes y Castell & Bron y Gar – no mill

rental £129

tenant Moses Roberts

1835 ref. 1835

Maes y Castell & Bron y gar – no mill

entry 14 tenant Moses Roberts half yearly rent £64 2s arrears £96 2s allowance £6 9s sum due after allowance £58 1s arrears sum received £58 1s remaining £96 2s

1836 – Moses Roberts (II) died and was buried in Caerhun churchyard on the 24th August. His son, William Roberts (II) took over the tenancy.

1840 ref. 3834

Maes y Castell & Bronygadair – no mill

entry 14. tenant William Roberts (II) half yearly rent £64 10s sum received £64 10s

1836 – the Tithe Commutation Act

The payment of one tenth of local produce to the church had been established in Anglo Saxon England before the Norman conquest. This was originally in kind i.e. one tenth stook of corn etc. Over time, in some parishes, this was converted into cash payments. The Act in 1836 established this for all parishes but it required the accurate drawing of maps showing all the land in each parish. Most of the work was done in 1841. John Matthews, surveyor (1773-1848) did much of this work in North Wales. The survey which included Maes y Castell was completed in 1842.

The survey was concerned with land rather than buildings and so the mill is not actually shown on the Tithe Map, but the piece of land on which it stands appears to be still part of the Maes y Castell estate.

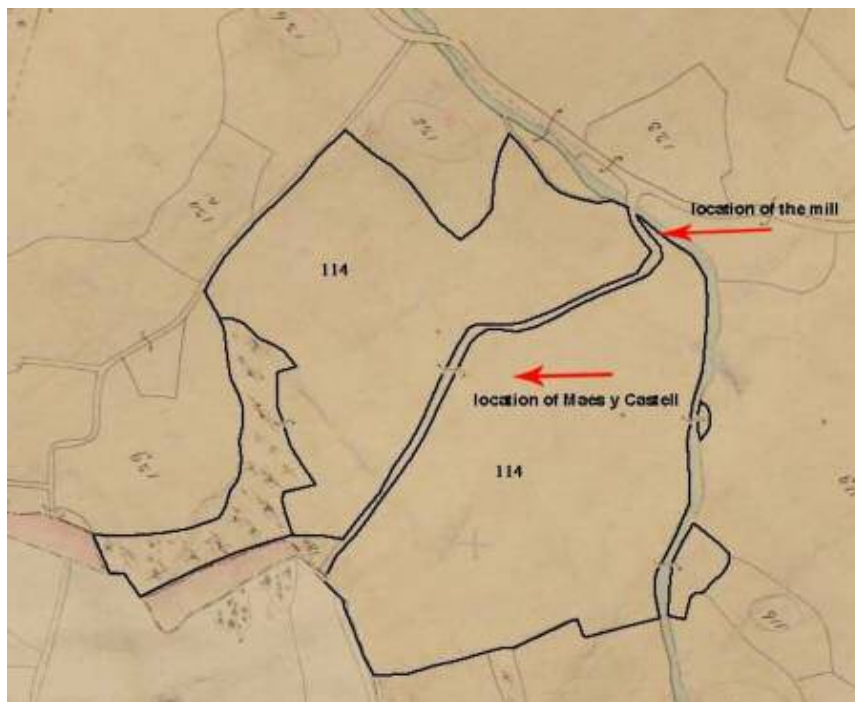
Tithe Schedule - 1846

Maes y Castell

Owner: Thomas Assheton Smith esq. (III)

Occupier: William Roberts (II)

			A	R	P	£	s	d
114	Maes y Castell	arable	85	2	8	13	15	-
114a	Werglodd	meadow						



The section of the Maes y Castell holding in which Melin Pont Wgan is situated.

National Census

The first national census took place in 1801 but it only counted houses - habited or uninhabited; the number of men and women but no names, or their occupations. The first one to include the names of people and properties was taken in 1841. The ages of adults in this census were rounded down.

In 1841, there were just two houses in the hamlet of Pontwgan.

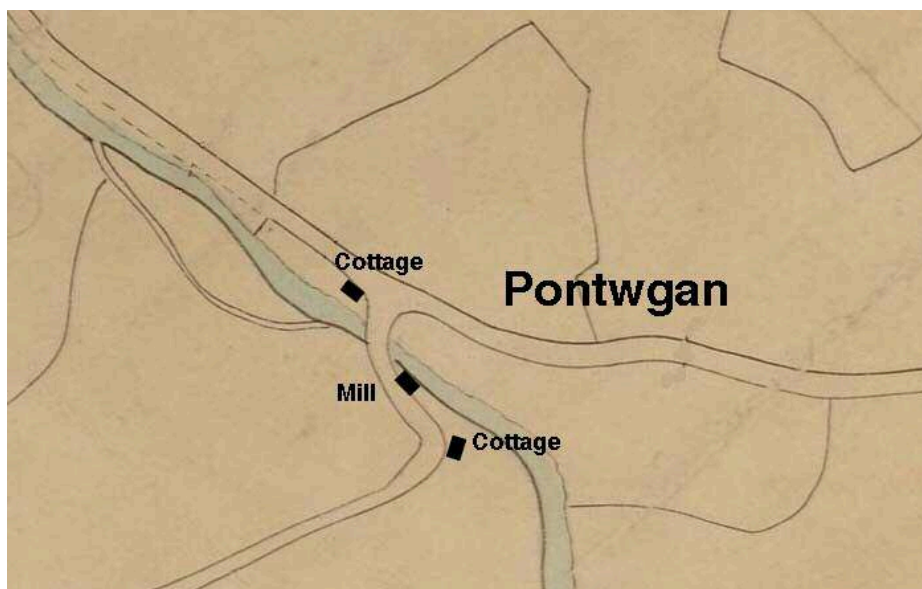
1841 census

Pontwgan, Rhwng y Ddwyafon (PRO ref. HO 107/1393/2 p.5)

Evan Hughes	20	ag. lab.	born in Carnarvonshire	yes
Jane Hughes	25			no
William Hughes	4mths			yes

Pontwgan

David Hughes	65	millar		yes
Margaret Hughes	25			yes



ref.3852

1848 Maes y Castell & Bron y Gader – *no mill*

entry 14 - tenant William Roberts (II) half yearly rent £64 10s

1848 - As Thomas Assheton Smith (III) had failed to completely repay the mortgage and interest on Maes y Castell, he agreed to put the property up for sale.

1849 - A newspaper advertising the auction, dated 20/2/1849, names the Maes y Castell estate which included Bryn Cynhadle and Tyddyn Robin Isaf (Lots 1, 2 &3) as a freehold property with 1,500 acres of excellent land.⁴⁹ William Jones, of Brynymor, Dwgyfylchi, was the highest bidder for the estate and was declared the purchaser at £5,990. The sale did not include the mill.

William Griffith of Llican isaf (see map p.19) appears to have purchased the mill at some point before

⁴⁹. North Wales Chronicle 20th February 1849.

the auction took place. In 1851, he rebuilt it and placed a date stone on the building.⁵⁰ (see the account p.25)

Date stone with the inscribed initials

W G
1851



According to a newspaper report dated 26/3/1844, William Griffith only held a lease on Llican Isaf, where he lived with his family. Elias Jones of Gorswen, who owned the property, had granted him a lease for the period of his life and for that of his wife in 1841.

By 1851, there was another miller in Pontwgan cottage.

1851 census

Pontwgan, Rhwyn Ddwy Afon (PRO ref. HO 107/2519 p.9)

Owen Jones	H	M	40	Miller	b. Llanrwst, Denbigh.
Elizabeth Jones	W	M	39		b. Caerhun, Caerns.
Anne Jones	dau	unm	19		b. “
Mary Jones	dau		11		b. “
William Jones	son		7		b. “

By 1861, a labourer had moved into Pontwgan cottage.

1861 census

Pontwgan cottage, Rhwng Ddwy afon (PRO ref. RG 9/4360 p.7)

Evan Hughes	H	M	40	labourer	b. Caerhun, Caerns.
Jane Hughes	W	M	48	labourer's wife	b. Llansanffraid, Denb.
William Hughes	son	unm	20	labourer	b. Caerhun, Caerns.
Anne Hughes	dau		13	daughter	b. “
Robert Hughes	son		11	son	b. “
Benjamin Hughes	son		8	“	b. “
Rowland Hughes	son		6	“	b. “
Catherine Jane Hughes	dau		3	daughter	b. “

William Griffith was still living at Llican Isaf and was recorded as a farmer and miller.

⁵⁰. Appendix 7 – The Griffith Family

1861 census

Llican isaf (PRO ref. RG 9/4360 pp.1&2)

William Griffith	H	M	51	farmer & miller	b. Gyffin, Caerns.
Catherine Griffith	W	M	35		b. Caerhun, Caerns.
William Griffith	son		11	scholar	b. “
Robert Griffith	son		9	“	b. “
Griffith Griffith	son		7	“	b. “
Jane Griffith	dau		5	“	b. “
Elizabeth Griffith	dau		3		b. “
Mary Griffith	dau		3		b. “
Elias Griffith	son		9mths		b. “
John Owen	serv.	unm	24	carter	b. Anglesey
John Thomas	serv.	unm	16	farm servant	b. Caerhun, Caerns.
Mary Roberts	serv.	unm	20	dairymaid	b. “
Jane Hesketh	serv.		14	housemaid	b. “

1867 12th January⁵¹ - William Griffith was involved in a dispute.

The Special Commission on Fisheries.

Claim of Mr. W.Griffith

In this case, Mr. William Jones, solicitor, Conway, watched the proceedings for the claimant, concerning a fishing mill dam on the River Roe. It was alleged that it facilitated the catching of salmon. The dam was six to eight feet high and Mr.Griffith denied the claim.

Mr. William Griffith sworn, said – I own a mill at Pont Wgan near Caerhun. I do not catch salmon near this dam, and no body else does so to my knowledge. The dam does not facilitate the catching of fish. I have never seen salmon at the dam; they were waiting under it. Some could get over before the making of the leap when there was heavy water. The salmon pass is generally dry in the latter end of may, and in June, July, and August. I have seen it sometimes dry for a month. No fish can come up when there is no water in the pass, at least I never saw any salmon there when the pass was dry.

In reply to a question put by Mr. Griffith, solicitor, Llanrwst:-

Mr. William Griffith said that he was quite certain no one took salmon below the mill by his orders.

Mr. William Griffith then continued – There is no means for salmon to get over my dam when the pass is dry. The dam was built 17 years ago, and we made a dam before the new mill was built. The new mill is larger than the old one, and consumes twice as much water. I used to get the water for the old mill by turning it round in the top, the other side. The fall is two yards. The present dam is about six feet high, and the old one was about three feet high. I added about four feet to the old dam when I built the new.

H.D.Griffith esq. of Caerhun was then examined, and he disposed as follows:- I reside at Caerhun, a distance of about 300 or 400 yards from the mill dam. I have known the place for 55 years before Mr. Griffith purchased it. The pool was then about 150 yards above it, and there was a ditch to let the water in from the river Roe. There were a few loose stones and sods put together to turn the water into the pool. The salmon were then able to get up to the mill, and they used to go there to spawn. When the new mill was erected, there was a pier made by Mr.William Griffith just above the fall. I should say it was ten feet high. There was no dam before the new mill was built; there was only a natural rock. I never heard of a salmon being above the present dam. I myself saw some jumping towards the present dam, but they could never get up. I never

51. North Wales Chronicle

heard that salmon were near the mill. Some are taken in the pool below the mill, and I used to catch a great quantity there, many years ago, myself, but I cannot say whether any are taken there now. I am quite certain that the making of the pier has prevented the salmon going up. When there is a good deal of water, salmon may get up the salmon pass, but not when the water is low.

Cross examined by the claimant – I did not say that salmon could not get up by the mill, but only that I never heard of salmon going up. I never catch salmon with a net since the new act was passed, and I have not been fishing for ten or twelve years. I cannot say whether or not my boys have been fishing there.

Mr. William Jones, solicitor, said that witnesses were ready to prove that salmon did pass over the salmon pass. If time was allowed he would bring witnesses to prove that there was in former times a dam where the present one is situated.

In reply to a question from one of the Commissioners, Mr. William Griffith said that in the dry months the fish managed to get down over the mill wheel. He never saw any killed by the wheel. He always did his best to preserve the salmon, and had obeyed the instructions of Mr. Fennel (Her Majesty's Commissioner for last year) in every instance.

The Commissioner remarked that Mr. Griffith was allowed to take any quantity of water from the river provided that sufficient water was left to allow the salmon to pass.

The hearing of the case was adjourned sine die, in order to enable the claimant to produce further evidence to prove his claim.

In 1871, William Griffith was still working as the miller at Pontwgan.

1871 census

Llican isaf (PRO ref. RG10/5740 p.2)

William Griffith	H	M	61	farmer & miller	b. Gyffin, Caerns.
				140 acres empl. 4 men	
Catherine Griffith	W	M	45	wife	b. Caerhun, Caerns.
William Griffith	son	unm	21	son	b. “
Griffith Griffith	son		16	solicitor's articled clerk	b. “
Jane Griffith	dau		15	daughter	b. “
Mary Griffith	dau		13	“	b. “
Elizabeth Griffith	dau		13	“	b. “
Ellin Griffith	dau		8	“	b. “
Catherine Griffith	dau		4	“	b. “
Thomas Hughes	serv.	unm	20	farm servant	b. “
Mary Davies	serv.	unm	18	general servant	b. Aber, Caerns.
Thomas Jones	serv.	M	37	labourer	b. Gyffin, Caerns.

By 1881, William was employing a miller to grind the corn, whilst he remained working the farm at Llican isaf.

1881 census

Pontwgan, Caerhun 1 (PRO ref. RG 11/5584 p.1)

Peter Roberts	H	M	49	employed miller	b. Llanefydd, Denbigh.
Elizabeth Roberts	W	M	47		b. Llanrhos, Caerns.
William Roberts	son	unm	23	taylor	b. Llangwystenin, Caerns.
Cathrin Roberts	dau		10	scholar	b. Caerhun, Caerns.

1881 census

Llican Isaf (PRO ref. RG 11/5584 p.2)

William Griffith	H	M	71	farmer	b. Caerhun, Caerns.
Catherine Griffith	W	M	55	wife	b. “
Jane Griffith	dau	unm	25	daughter	b. “
Mary Griffith	dau	unm	23	“	b. “
Ellen Griffith	dau		17	“	b. “
David Roberts	serv.	unm	29	general servant	b. Eglwysfach, Denbigh.

1886 – Jane Griffith, d/o William Griffith of Llican Isaf, married John Hughes Elias of Gorswen in Caerhun. William Jones of Brynymor, who owned Maes y Castell, died in 1870. The Maes y Castell estate passed to his son Elias Jones and after his death it went to the Elias family of Gorswen who were related through marriage.⁵²

1889 1st March – William Griffith died aged 80 years. He was buried in Gyffin churchyard. Peter Roberts continued to work at the mill.

1891 census

Pontwgan 1, Caerhun (PRO ref. RG 12/4671 p.1)

Peter Roberts	H	M	57	Miller	b. Henllan, Denbigh.	lang. spk. Welsh
Elizabeth Roberts	W	M	43		b. Llanrhos, Caerns.	“
Cathrine Roberts	dau	unm	20	dressmaker	b. Caerhun, Caerns.	“

1894 3rd June – Catherine Griffith widow of William Griffith died in her 70th year.

1898 4th February – repairs to the bridge.⁵³

Respecting the Wgan and Mill bridges, Caerhun, the surveyor, as directed, reported as follows:- Both are very old bridges, and are much of the type of the old bridges seen throughout Carnarvonshire, their worst features being that their parapet or fence wall are low. In the case of the Wgan Bridge the parapet walls are 68 yards long and 2 feet high. The parapet wall of the Mill Bridge on the east side of the road is 100 yards long, height 1 foot 6 inches to 2 feet 9 inches; on the west side 36 yards long and 2 feet high. The approaches to Mill bridge run almost parallel with the river, and form a very sharp bend with the bridge, which has been built nearly square across the river; whilst the place required either a skew bridge on the line of the road, or proper road curves to approach the bridge. Cyclists are apt to come to grief here because there is a declivity towards the bridge from the north, and anyone riding or driving a horse furiously in either direction would find it most difficult to turn the curves. It was resolved that it be recommended that the necessary work be carried out as regards Wgan Bridge at an estimated cost of £20.

N.B. Mill bridge, which is upstream from Pont Wgan and near where the millpond used to be, is now known as Pont y Ddol.

1898 October 28th - Peter Roberts miller Pont Wgan, Roe Wen nr. Conwy died October 28th aged 66 years after a brief illness.⁵⁴

52. Appendix 9 – The Elias Family of Gorswen

53. Carnarvonshire and Denbighshire Herald 4/2/1898

54. North Wales Times - 5/11/1898

1898 - His wife, Elizabeth, died about two weeks later on the 9th November aged 65 years. They were both buried in Caerhun churchyard.



The grave of Peter and Elizabeth Roberts.

20th Century

1900 – Griffith Griffith, 3rd son of William Griffith died aged 46 years. He was a solicitor in London but he was also described as 'of Llican Isaf'. *It is possible that he had purchased the property after the death of his parents, but it may have remained a leasehold property.* Griffith Griffith apparently carried to fruition the long-talked-about idea of a bridge over the River Conwy at Tal y Cafn and was Chairman of the Tal y Cafn Bridge Company.

1901 – Llican Isaf with 15 acres was sold at auction to Major General Gough of Caerhun Hall for £1,150.

The mill was probably still owned by the Griffith family and John Vaughan, the next miller, was their tenant. No evidence has been found to indicate that it was ever part of the Caerhun Hall estate.

1901 census

Pontwgan Mill (PRO ref. RG 13/5287 p.1)						lang. spk.
John Vaughan	H	M	52	Corn Miller	b. St.George, Denbigh.	both
Margaret Vaughan	W	M	39	wife at home	b. Capel Curig, Caerns.	“
John Philip Vaughan	son		13	at school	b. St.Asaph, Flints.	“
Robert Owen Vaughan	son		11	“	b. “	“

1901 July 5th – A Cycling Accident – On Sunday afternoon, while cycling with some companions from Carnarvon, Mr. J.Pritchard, solicitor's clerk of that town, met with an accident at Pontwgan Bridge, Roewen, near Conway. Pritchard was met at the bridge, which curves suddenly, by a conveyance driven by Captain Wall, and the bridge being too narrow to allow him to pass, he was precipitated into the river. On being got out it was found that he had sustained serious injuries to his face and body. He was taken by trap to Conway and his injuries attended to by Dr.D.P.Foulkes. He was afterwards enabled to travel home by train.⁵⁵

1902 January 1st – Indecency – John Vaughan of Pontwgan Mill, Caerhun was called upon to pay 5sh. and costs for indecent conduct.⁵⁶

1903 - Pontwgan sale at the Castle Hotel, Conway. incl. **Pontwgan flour mill.** Welsh Coast Pioneer 18th Sept. It was purchased by the Davies sisters of Maes y Castell – Anne Penelope, Grace Myfanwy and Mary Violet. Their parents were David Davies and Mary Jane Roberts d/o Moses Roberts and his wife Anne.

1910 13th April marriage at Bethlehem C.M.Chapel Colwyn Bay, Ezeziel Thomas, Penrhiwardwr Cottage, Tal y bont to Alice L.Vaughan, Pontwgan, Ty'nygroes. North Wales Weekly News 22nd April 1910

1911 census

Pontwgan, Tyn y Groes (PRO ref. Reg. District 632; reg. Sub-district 1; enumeration district 7; no. on schedule 7)						lang. spk.
John Vaughan	H	M	62	corn miller	b. St.George, Denbigh	Both
Margaret Vaughan	W	M	47		b. Capel Curig, Caerns.	“
John Philip Vaughan	son	unm	23	shop assistant	b. St.Asaph, Flints.	“

55. Carnarvonshire and Denbighshire Herald 5/7/1901

56. Carnarvonshire and Denbighshire Herald 10/1/1902

Robert Owen “ son unm 21 auxiliary postman b. “ “

The census also records that John and Margaret had been married for 28 years and had three children who were all still living.



The top storey of the mill at ground level⁵⁷



Mr. John Vaughan, miller at the lower level⁵⁸

The beam above the doorway where John Vaughan is standing, has since been relocated to above the living room fireplace.

57. E.M.Gardner Collection – Watermills of Anglesey and Caernarvonshire

58. *ibid.*



Pontwgan Mill – Benjamin Fisher (1859-1939)
 It is assumed that the original painting was done prior to 1929, because the Mill ceased working in that year. The artist is recorded living at Dol Crwm in Rowen in the 1891 census.

1929 – The mill ceased working.

1930 - John Vaughan died on the 31st October and was buried in Caerhun churchyard. He was 82 years old.

1946 – Margaret Vaughan, wife of John Vaughan died aged 85 years on the 26th January and was buried with her husband.

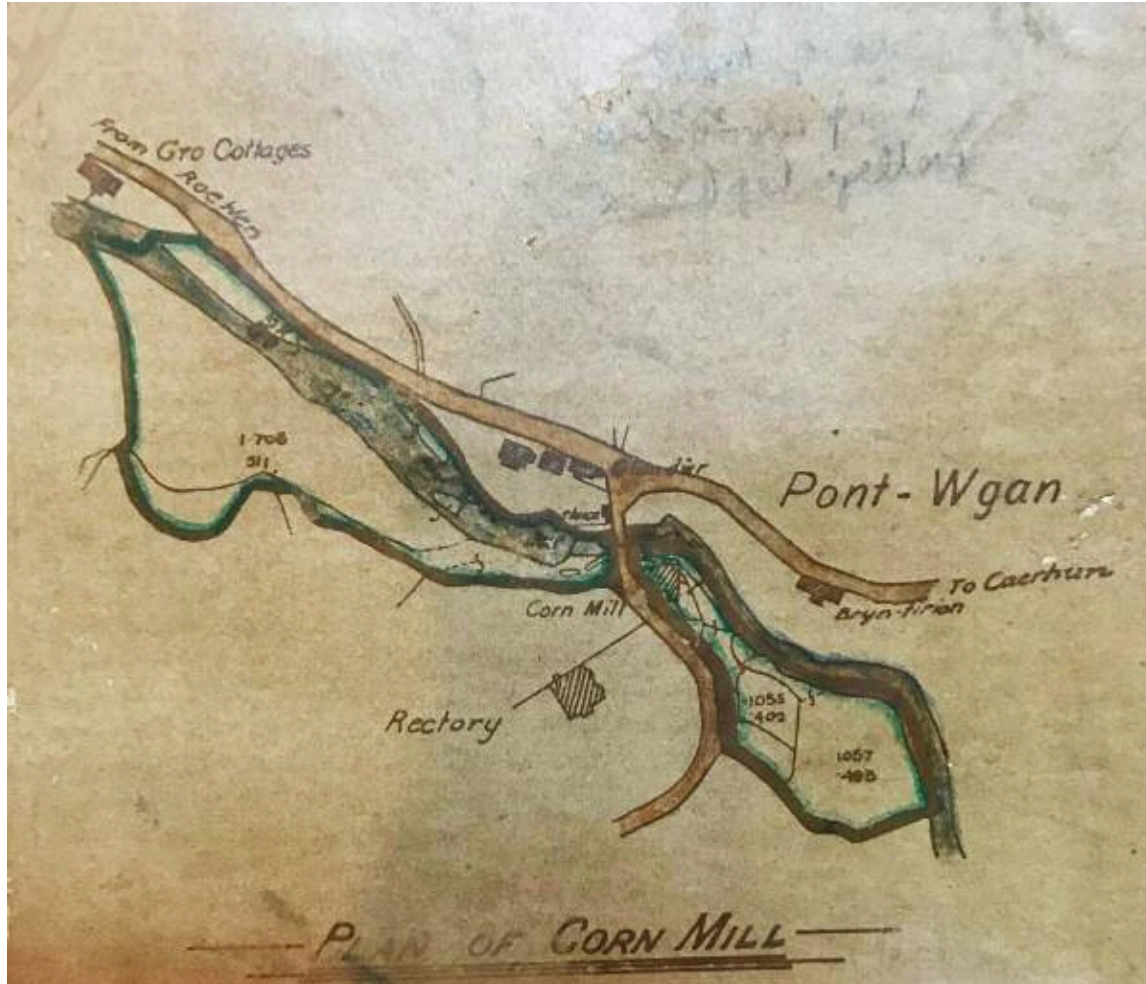
Caerhun Churchyard



1929 – Conveyances – The Mill was purchased by the Central Electricity Generating Board.

A map dated 1821 was included with the above conveyance, with the following annotation.

Plan No.2 of 22/11/1921 (referred to in 1929 Conveyance p.29) (see next page)



Map dated 1921

1965 – The Mill was purchased by Michael Ernest Meacher, an architect from Hertfordshire. He used part of the building as a holiday cottage. In 1939, he had married Joyce Johnson d/o Hermon Johnson a Methodist minister of 15, Silverbush Road, Wallasey. He was 24 years old and she was 25. Michael's father, was Ernest Meacher.

1980 – Purchased by Mike and Jenny Young.



1985 – Pontwgan Mill and bridge

Gill Jones, Richard Jones, Ann Morgan
2020

The Ancestry of Nefydd Hardd and Dafydd Goch

385	Cunedda progenitor of the House of Gwynedd		
	I		
415	Einion Yrth		
	I		
445	Owain Ddantgwyn		
	I		
480	Cynglas		
	I		
515	Meig		
	I		
550	Cyngen		
	I		
580	Cadwallon Crisban		
	I		
615	Idgwyn		
	I		
645	Einion		
	I		
680	Rhufon		
	I		
.....			
715	Meirion	720	Rychwyn Farfog
	I		I
745	Caradog, obit 798	750	Cynwas
	I		I
785	Hywel, obit 825	785	Caranog Glewddigar
	I		I
820	Caradog	815	Geraint
	I		I
855	Gwgan	850	Nefydd
	I		I
885	Gwaithfoed	880	Braint Hir
	I		
915	Glannog		
	I		
950	Heilig		

Nefydd Hardd was descended from Heilig ap Glannog, who in the 10th century, held most of North Gwynedd east of Arfon and north of Arduwy, including **Arlechwedd**; and Rhos, Rhufoniog and part of Dyffryn Clwyd east of the Clwyd river.

David Goch of Nant Conwy is believed to be a descendant of Nefydd Hardd, the founder of the 6th Noble Tribe of North Wales. Some accounts suggest that he was the illegitimate son of Prince Dafydd ap Gruffydd, brother of Llewelyn the Last, however this traditional version of the ancestry of Dafydd Goch is now disputed.

Traditional line

1100 Owain Gwynedd
I
1130 Iowerth
I
1165 Llewelyn Fawr
I
1195 Gruffydd
I
1230 Dafydd (brother of Llewelyn the last)

Alternate Line

1105 **Nefydd Hardd**
I
1140 Iorwerth (of Penmachno)
I
1170 Llewelyn
I
1200 Gruffydd
I
1230 Dafydd
I
1260 **Dafydd Goch of Penmachno**

The Bulkeley and the Bolde Families

Robert Bulkeley m. Jane Butler d/o Sir William Butler of Bewsey. Lord of
of Bulkeley Warrington

I

William Bulkeley

Robert Bulkeley m. Agnes
of Eaton Sheriff of Cheshire

I

Richard Bulkeley
of Cheadle

Sir William Stanley

m.

m.

Agnes Cheadle

d & co. hrs of Roger Cheadle

I

I

Richard Bulkeley
of Cheadle 'of Holcroft'

1. Gwilym ap Griffith

of Penrhyn

m.

m.

I

I

I

I

Alice Bostok

d/o Sir Ralph Bostok

I

Janet

m. 2. John Pikemore

I

I

William Bulkeley m. Ellin
of Cheadle d.1484

Letitia
m.

Constable of Beaumaris d.1484

Bartholomew Bolde

I

I

Rowland

5th son
of Beaumaris
& Cheadle

m.

Alice Beconsai

d/o William Beconsai of Lancashire

I

William m. **Alice**

eldest son 1448
no surviving heir

William's brother, Rowland, inherited his estate.

Sir Richard Bulkeley

knighted 1534 d.1548
chamberlain of North Wales

m.

Catherine Griffith

d/o Sir William Griffith of Penrhyn

I

Sir Richard Bulkeley 2nd Kt.
of Beaumaris & Cheadle

m.

1. Margaret Savage d/o Sir John Savage of Rock Savage

m. 2. Agnes

d/o Thomas Needham of Shenton

7 sons 5 dau. & 8 sons 2 dau

I

.....
Sir Richard Bulkeley

1st baron of Baron hill

erected Baronhill

b.c.1533 d. 28/6/1621

m.

1. Mary Burgh

d/o William Burgh

Lord Gainsborough

2. Catherine Davenport

I

.....
Sir Richard Bulkeley

bap.24/3/15800/1

d.25/1/1645

m.

Anne Wilford

d/o Sir Thomas Wilford
of Idlington

I

Thomas Bulkeley

1st Viscount of Cashel, Ireland 1644

bap.10/8/1585 d.by 1659

succeeded to Baron Hill

m.

Blanche Coytmore

d/o Robert Coytmore

I

.....
Richard Bulkeley

d.5/3/1639/40

predeceased his father

m.

- Hill

of Worcester

no issue

Robert Bulkeley

2nd Viscount Bulkeley

of Cashel d.18/10/1688

m.

Sarah Harvey

d/o Daniel Harvey
of Combe

bap.8/9/1636 d.18/6/1715

Penelope

m.

Sir Griffith Williams

of Vaynol 4th bart.

(see Appendix 3)

Thomas Bulkeley 4th son

of Dinas (see App. 3)

1633-1708 bur. Llanwnda

MP for Beaumaris

m.

Jane Williams

d/o Griffith Jones

of Castell March

widow of Thomas Williams

no issue

Williams Family of Penrhyn and Cochwillan

Gruffydd ap Gwilym m. Generis d&hrs of Madoc ap Grono of Penmynydd, Anglesey
of Penrhyn & Cochwillan
d.1405

I

Gwilym ap Gruffydd of Penrhyn & Penmynydd d.1431	Robin of Cochwillan	Rhys of Nant, Flint.	+ 2 daughters
--	------------------------	-------------------------	---------------

m.	m.
1. Morfydd of Penmynydd	1. Angharad d& hrs of Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Gronw of Llanllechid
2. Janet d/o Sir William Stanley of Hooten, Cheshire	2. Lowry d/o Gronw ap Jevan of Eifionydd
I	I

William Gruffydd of Penrhyn	Ellin	Gruffydd ap Robin
m.	m.	m.
1. Gwenllian	William Buckeley of Penrhyn	Mali (Malt) d/o Gruffydd Derwas of Merioneth
2. Alice Dalton		
I	I	I

William Gruffydd of Penrhyn 1445-1506	William Buckeley of Penrhyn he had no surviving heir his brother Rowland inherited the Penrhyn estate.	William ap Gruffydd of Cochwillan b.abt.1430
---	---	--

m.	m.	m.
Joan Troutbeck	Alice d/o Bartholomew Bolde	Angharad vch Dafydd
I	I	I
Sir William Gruffydd 1478-1531	(see Appendix 2)	
m.	I	I
1. Jane Stradling		
2. Jane Puleston		
I	I	I

*Dorothy see below	Bartholomew died young	William Williams of Cochwillan d.1589	m. Lowry Salusbury d/o Henry Salusbury esq. of Llanrhaiadr, Denbigh
-----------------------	---------------------------	--	---

I

William Wyn Williams of Cochwillan b.abt.1503	Robert d.1550	Thomas Williams of Vaynol will 1592	Cpt. Edward Williams of Maes y Castell d.aft.1601
m.		m.	m.
*Dorothy Griffith 4 th d/o Sir William Griffith of Penrhyn b.abt.1507		Jane Stanley d/o Sir Wm. Stanley of Hooten	Grace no issue
I		I	
8 sons & 3 daughters		I	

William Williams d.1612	Arthur of Meillionydd precentor of Bangor Cathedral d.1621	Edmund d.1601 6 th son	Sir William Williams 1 st bart. of Vaynol will 1625
m.	d.1621	m.	m. his niece
1. Agnes Wynn d/o John Wynn of Gwydir	m. Anne Lewis	Mary Wynn d/o Owen Wynn of Eglwysbach	Ellen Williams cont. below
I		I	
I		I	
I m.2. Barbara Lumley		I	
I	I	I	

Owen disinherited?	Ellen m. her uncle	Henry Williams of Cochwillan & Maes y Castell b.c.1570 d. 1658	Robert Williams m. Elizabeth I	John Williams (1582-1650) Archbishop of York unmarried of Penrhyn & Cochwillan
m.	m.	m.		
Dorothy	William Wms.	Jane Salusbury d/o Thomas Salusbury of Denbigh Castle, Lleweni family	Sir Griffith Williams 1 st bart. of Penrhyn & Cochwillan	
I	I	I		
I	I	I		
I	I	I		
Dorothy	Sir Thomas Williams 2 nd bart 1586-1636 of Vaynol	Lumley Williams of Ystymcolwyn d.1638	William	Barbara
m.	m.	m.		
Henry Needham	Katherine Wynne d/o Robert Wynne of Conway	Dorothy d/o Rhyd ap Thomas ap David of Istymcolwyn		
	I			

Sir William Williams 3 rd bart. of Vaynol d.1658	1. Thomas Williams of Maes y Castell m.1645
m.	
1. Margaret Jones d/o Griffith Jones of Castle March	Jane Jones m. 1665 d/o Griffith Jones of Castell March
I	2. Thomas Bulkeley of Dinas and Maes y Castell in 1699 d. 1708 (see Appendix 2)
I	
I	

.....
Sir Griffith Williams of Vaynol

4th bart.

d.1663

m.

Penelope Bulkeley d/o Thomas Buckeley 1st Viscount of Beaumaris

I

.....
Sir Thomas Williams

5th bart.

d. unmarried abt.1670

.....
Sir William Williams

6th bart.

died without issue 1696. His Vaynol estate was eventually acquired
by John Smith.(see Appendix 4)

m.

1. Ellen Bulkeley d/o Robert Buckeley 2nd Viscount of Beaumaris

The Assheton & Smith Families

John Smith
of Tedworth
d.1690

m.

Mary Wright d/o Sir Edmund Wright

I

<p>..... Thomas no issue</p>	<p>John 1656-1723 Speaker of the House of Commons 1705-8 m. m.1.1674 Ann Steward d/o Sir Nicholas Steward of Hartley Mauditt, Hants. d.1680 m.2.1683 Ann d/o Sir Thomas Strickland of Boyton, Warwickshire I</p>	<p>Thomas Assheton 1633-1684 of Ashley, Cheshire m. Lucy Leigh - 1692 I I I I I</p>
---	---	---

<p>..... Cpt. William Smith d.1769/70 no issue</p>	<p>Harriet Theodosia Smith - 1773 I</p>	<p>..... Thomas Assheton of Ashley, Chester 1678 – 1759</p>
---	---	---

In 1762, The Vaynol estate passed to > **Thomas Assheton Smith (I)** m.17/10/1827 Mary Clayton
1725-1774
He was the 3rd largest landowner in Gwynedd.

.....
Thomas Assheton Smith (II) m. Elizabeth Wynne
the Younger 2nd son d/o Watkin Wynne of Voelas
1752-1828 I

<p>..... Elizabeth Assheton Smith m.18188 William Buckler Astley of Everleigh, Wilts. I</p>	<p>Thomas Assheton Smith (III) m. Matilda d/o William Webber of 1776-1858 17/10/1827 Binfield Lodge, Berks. no issue – After his death, the Vaynol estate passed to Matilda. After her death, it was bequeathed to her husband's great nephew, George William of Duff, who added the names, Assheton Smith when he reached his majority.</p>	
---	---	--

.....
Mary Astley
1822-1874
m.
Robert George Duff
married Robert George Duff MP for Andover 1821;
Caernarvonshire 1832
High Sheriff of Wiltshire 1838

The Roberts Family of Maes y Castell

Moses Roberts m. Grace Williams
of Maes y Castell
yeoman
bur.20/3/1775
Will 1775
Administration Bond 1768

I

.....
William Jane John
bap.26/4/1745
bur.19/10/1793 bur.25/10/1752

m.
Jane Evans
bur.19/11/1808

I

.....
Mary Catherine Grace **Moses** Evan Jane William Jane John
bap. 13/6/1772 25/5/1774 31/7/1776 29/8/1781 27/3/1784 9/12/1786 13/7/1788 21/5/1792
bur. 21/9/1777 bur. 24/8/1836 1/4/1786 12/8/1789 12/8/1789 2/9/1834
6 yrs 60yrs 42yrs

m. m.
14/11/1798 24/12/1800
Owen Jones Catherine
bur.11/7/1839 63yrs

I

.....
William **William Roberts** John
bap.20/10/1801 b.abt.1804 bap.29/6/1807
bur. 26/1/1803 d.26/10/1857
bur.30/10/1857 Caerhun

54yrs
m.
Jane
b.abt.1801
d.8/3/1858 bur.12/8/1858

56yrs

I

.....
Esther Catherine Jane Mary Elizabeth Grace Eleanor Anne **Moses** Thomas
b.abt 1825 1827 1829 1832 1837 1840 1842 1844 1844 1847
d. 11/1/1862 29/5/1906 11/7/1857 18/9/1842 27/6/1897 25/5/1847
bur. 13/1/1862 4/10/1864 21/7/1857
35yrs 77yrs 28yrs 17yrs 3mths 53yrs 7mths

m.
Anne
d.11/9/1921 86yrs

I

Mary Jane Roberts

b.1879

m.1909

David Davies

I

William Roberts

b.abt.1881

purchased Maes y Castell 1907

d.16/3/1916 35yrs

m.

Mary Elinor

I

.....
**Anne Penelope
Davies**

1910-1980

**Grace Myfanwy
Davies**

1912-1998

**Mary Violet
Davies**

1914-1998

**William
Davies**

b.1917
d.27/4/1937
20yrs

.....
**William
Moses
Roberts**

b.1907

**Anne
Ellinor
Roberts**

b.1908

**Gwendoline
Roberts**

b.1911
d.6/5/1921
10yrs

The Thomas Family A suggested pedigree

1. Thomas Probert Cadwaladr
of Maes y Castell
bur. 17/2/1698

m.
Ellin Symond I
of Maes y Castell I
I
m.2. 4/8/1700 I
Richard David I
of Maes y Castell I
bur.3/6/1708 I
will 1708 I
I

Edward Probert Thomas
of Maes y Castell

m.
I
.....
John
bap. 1700

	Blanche Thomas	Anne Thomas	Margaret Thomas	Ellin Thomas	Mary Thomas	Jane Thomas
bap.				25/12/1689	25/3/1692	30/9/1694
 of Maes y Castell					
	m.1698	m.1703	m.1714	m.1721	m.1712	
	Edmund Parry	Richard Hugh Bodmund	Maurice Dafydd	John Parry	William Griffith clk	
	of Tal y bont	of Maes ?Meurig?				

Appendix 7

Moses Roberts Will 1775 (NLW ref. B/1775/46/W)


In the name of God Amen I Moses Roberts Maes y Castell in the parish of Caerhun County of Carnarvon and Diocese of Bangor being in bodily and sound and perfect mind, memory and understanding thanks be to Almighty God for the same. Doe make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and fform following, viz. first and Principally I recommend my soul unto the Hands of Almighty God hoping through the merits and intercession of my saviour Jesus Christ to enjoy everlasting happiness and my Body I commend to the Earth to be Decently Buried at the direction of my executors.

Item: I Give and Bequeath to my daughter Jane Roberts five pounds in money. And I also give and bequeath to my daughter Jane Robert's children the sum of ffour? pounds in money to be equally divided between them and I Give and Bequeath to my wife Grace Williams my Best two fether beds and cloathes that are in the house and a wensgot (*this may be a wenscott/winescott/wainscott which could be a panelled chest or a panelled chair*) that is in the chamber separate. And after that I doe make and ordain my dear wife Grace Williams and my son William Roberts to be sole Executors of my personal Estate, all charge to be be upon my Executors, ... wittness my hand and seal the 4th day of January 1774.

Wittness hereat



Thomas Parry miller

The mark of  Thomas Edward Cefn

The Griffith Family of Llican Isaf

William Griffith m. **Catherine ?Owen**
 b.c.1810 Gyffin b.abt.1826
 of Llican Isaf, Caerhun d.3/6/1894
 d.1889 bur. Gyffin

I

William	Robert	Griffith	Jane	Elizabeth	Mary	Elias	Ellin	Catherine
b.abt.1849/50	1852	1854	1856	1858	1858	1861	1863	1865
		d.1900 46yrs						
		solicitor of London	m.					
		& Llican Isaf	John Hughes Elias					
			of Gorswen, Caerhun					
		m.1884						
		Annie Elizabeth Hart						
		d/o Mr. H.Neville Hart of Harley Street						

The Elias Family of Gorswen

Edward Elias m. Elizabeth Parry
of Plas y Glyn, Llanfwrog of Gwredog Issa
1755-1872 1761-1844

Elias Jones m. Jane Evans (see App.)
of Gorswen b.Llwydfaen
d.13/12/1844 d.25/3/1796
83yrs 34yrs

I

I

.....
William Elias
of The Abbey, Llanrwst
1789-1870
81yrs

.....
William Jones **Ann Jones**
of Brynymor, of Gorswen
Dwygyfychi 1794-1855

I.....m.I
I

.....
William Elizabeth Ann Mary Jane
of The Abbey, Llanrwst

Edward Elias Thomas
of Gorswen
b.8/5/1822
d.2/1/1893 aged 70yrs

m.
Sarah Hughes
b.1822
d.25/7/1865 aged 43yrs
I

.....
Susannah Anne
d.2/8/1848

William
1849-1894
45yrs

Ann
1851-

John Hughes
1852-1896
43yrs
m.1886
Jane Griffith
of Llican Isaf, Caerhun
d.23/7/1903

Susan June
1854-

Edward Elias Sarah Isabel
1857-1878 1863-
21yrs
died in London of yellow fever
on his return from India