



# DARGANFOD HEN DAI CYMREIG DISCOVERING OLD WELSH HOUSES



NODDWYR/PATRONS

Syr/Sir Simon Jenkins, FSA, FRSL; Dr Eurwyn Wiliam, MA, PhD

Dathlu Treftadaeth Cymru drwy astudio tai  
traddodiadol a bywydau'r bobl oedd yn byw ynddyn nhw.

Celebrating Welsh Heritage through the study of traditional  
houses and the lives of the people who lived in them.

**CYLCHLYTHYR 44 Mawrth 2023**

**NEWSLETTER 44 March 2023**

**GWEFAN:** <http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk> yw prif sianel cyfathrebu'r Grŵp. Ewch i'r wefan i weld ein llyfrgell sy'n tyfu a nodweddion eraill. Fel arfer mae'n cynnwys manylion digwyddiadau diweddar a digwyddiadau sydd ar y gweill. Cyhoeddir fersiynau Cymraeg a Saesneg y Cylchlythyr hwn ar wahân ond fonfôn i ddwy fersiwn i bob aelod

**OUR WEBSITE** <http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk> is the Group's main channel of communication. Please visit it to look at our growing library and other features. Normally it contains details of recent and forthcoming events. The Welsh and English versions of this Newsletter are printed separately but both are circulated to all members

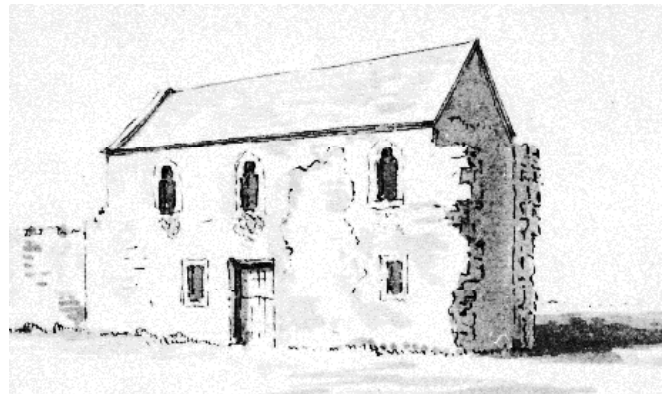
## FROM THE CHAIR by Janice Dale

How quickly the years fly by and we are now in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of producing the Newsletter - thanks to all the editors over those years. We now find ourselves in need of editor and officers. This year we are seeing a number of long standing members retiring from roles they have held for many years. These important roles, will, we hope, soon be in new hands and our thanks go out to all those retirees who have contributed so much over the years; Terry Williams NL editor; Ann Morgan and Gill Jones Conwy Branch Co-ordinators, Sue Hurst the Anglesey Co-ordinator, Peter Masters the Caernarfonshire Co-ordinator and of course Margaret Dunn who is stepping down as secretary from the AGM in June - our deepest thanks to all these members. Margaret, Peter and Gill are going to remain as trustees with Peter still maintaining his role of Webmaster.

On a brighter note spring is here, or was, although as I write this it is chucking it down with snow and blowing a gale, but it is so heartening to see lighter evenings, and no doubt we will all be tempted to get out and start on the garden, but it also gives us encouragement to get out and look for houses that can be added to our Parish Project - so keep your eyes peeled everyone.



There are some exciting projects on the horizon, apart from the next phase of the ongoing series of volunteer-generated house histories and the tree-ring dating in the Vale of Clwyd, managed by the Ruthin Local History Society in association with DOWHG. We are looking forward to the start of a project to look at the vernacular houses of Edeirnion, the tenure, and typicality of surviving building types, with help from Swansea University to use isotope testing. All this is possible following a grant from the Wood Tiger charity and we hope that further funding from the VAG will be successful and add funds to this project - thanks to Martin for doing this application. And following a meeting with Shaun of ISWE, Bangor University have three projects - all of which we would like to become involved with: the ongoing project on 'Deep Mapping' estate archives (if it attracts further funding), a prospective project with GAT on the medieval site at Bodychen on Anglesey and developing thinking on an ambitious project concerning the use of trees and woodland on historic estates - all of which we would like to become involved with. So, exciting times ahead.



Above and below left *Llys Bodychen* in 1770 and today

### Membership

Fiona Gale and branch secretaries will be contacting branch members with incorrect or overdue subscriptions or with Gift Aid queries. She can be contacted by email on [membership@discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk](mailto:membership@discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk). 1<sup>st</sup> April is the annual subscription date.

### COVID-19

Members may wear masks at any meetings. Notice will be given in the website under Events should hosts or organisers request that masks be worn.

### Gwynedd Family History Society Resources Centre

This is located in the same building as the Caernarfon Library, Pavilion Hill, Caernarfon LL55 1AS. Google maps link - <https://goo.gl/maps/jP7NhCJW1esBhJ8X8>. The centre is open to GFHS members and visitors on every third Saturday afternoon between 2 and 5 p.m. Experienced volunteers are there to offer help and general advice on researching family trees. For more information please see <https://www.chtgwyneddfhs.cymru/en/resources>.

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY DOWH Lecture Series Spring 2023.

All talks will be held on the second Wednesday in each month and will all start at 7 p.m. They will be given in English. Reminders and Zoom invites will be sent by email to all members nearer the time. Please note your microphone will be muted when you enter. Please leave it muted until the end of the talk, when there will be an opportunity for questions. It is also helpful if you would turn your video off as this helps the quality of the presentation.

### Wednesday 19 April 2023 Meinir Moncrieffe, Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates, University of Bangor. "Where I mean to make my utmost court": The Early Modern Development of Image and Status at Gwydir.

Sir John Wynn (1553-1627) of Gwydir straddled the divide between Welsh and English cultural ideals. For the Uchelwyr demonstrating status was a constant balancing act between the Welsh tradition of associating generations of prestigious occupancy, and the Renaissance vocabulary of architectural display and embellishment.

Gwydir Castle was a country house built with the intent of displaying such status whilst functioning as a comfortable family home, seat of operations, and arena of hospitality. The house was, as for many such landed gentry families, an ancestral proclamation to be handed down the ages with each head of the household putting his mark on the building. As a result, country houses like all dwellings are subject to change and modernisation, this can lead to problems when interpreting the surviving architecture. This paper relies on family correspondences, eyewitness accounts and traditional praise poetry to bring the seat of Sir John's estate at Gwydir to life.

### Wednesday 10 May 2023 Dr Sadie Jarrett, Career Development Fellow in Early Modern History, The Queen's College, University of Oxford. 'A splendid woman of great wisdom': Gentlewomen in early modern Wales

Early modern gentlewomen often exist in the archives of landed estates only as names on marriage settlements. Wales, like other early modern European societies, was intensely patriarchal. Women were subordinate to the male head of the household, which might be their son or younger brother. I find, however, that gentlewomen understood how to navigate the restrictions of Welsh society to their advantage. In this talk, I will examine the role of gentlewomen as wives and widows and their importance to the family houses and estates. I will reconstruct the experiences of gentlewomen in early modern Wales and demonstrate that they were crucial to the success of a Welsh gentry family.

### Wednesday 21 June 2023 The annual lecture that follows this year's Discovering Old Welsh Houses AGM will be given at 7 pm and will be given in English via Zoom by Dr Eurwyn Wiliam, Patron of Discovering Old Welsh Houses, President of the Cambrian Archaeological Society and former Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and Director of Collections at the National Museum of Wales. 'Three giants: Iorwerth Peate, Cyril Fox and Peter Smith, and the study of vernacular architecture in Wales'

'Vernacular architecture studies did not develop so early in Wales as they did in England, but the contributions of three men who worked in the field in Wales have become recognised as of international significance. All three are each

associated in particular with one book, Peate with The Welsh House, Fox with Monmouthshire Houses and Smith with Houses of the Welsh Countryside. But which of the three can we say made the greatest impact?

The AGM starts at 6.30 p.m. AGM papers will be circulated to members beforehand. Please sign in and leave at end of the AGM. Then please sign in again for the Annual Lecture.

## NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

### Group Officers

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## CONWY BRANCH

The Conwy Branch Report was received too late for inclusion here and appears below under stop press.

### Glossary of terms used in land deeds and other legal documents (Part Two concluding) by Gill Jones

#### Final Concords (or Feet of Fines)

These were a means of officially recording the transfer of land. They were the end result of a fictitious dispute in the Court of Common Pleas between a querent or plaintiff and the deforciant or current owner. The conveyance took the form of the record of a fictitious lawsuit, compromised or terminated by the acknowledgment of the existing owner (known as the deforciant or tenant, depending on the original writ used to levy the fine) that the land in question was the rightful property of the claimant (the plaintiff or querent). In reality, the deforciant had already agreed to sell the land, and the plaintiff to buy it: the suit was, in other words, a collusive action between the two parties.

#### Deed to Lead Uses

This refers to a deed made before a fine or common recovery. The purpose of such a deed is to show the object of the fine. A deed to lead the uses of a fine or recovery is not a conveyance in and of itself. It has no individual or immediate operation on the estate. The deed, when the fine is levied, will operate as a part of the same assurance. Under the deed to lead use, no estate will pass until the fine is levied or recovery is suffered.

#### Common Recovery

Purpose - Transfer of real property (freehold or copyhold land) by judgement of a court. The main purpose was to bar entails, remainders and reversions. Like a final concord, a common recovery looks impressive and important, but does not really provide much useful information. It was the product of a 'collusive action' - a fake legal procedure in the courts. The court was usually the Court of Common Pleas, but manorial courts could also deal with common recoveries. Common recoveries were used to break entails (conditions stipulated in wills or settlements which limited the descent of freehold land to certain individuals) and transfer land. Once the common recovery had been achieved ('suffered' in legal language), the land reverted to fee simple. This enabled it to be sold to somebody else, mortgaged, or settled in a new way. Common recoveries were abolished by the Fines and Recoveries Act 1833. After that date, a simple deed of disentailment was all that was required to break an entail.

#### Deed of Covenant

When a large estate was broken into smaller landholdings and sold off piece by piece, a question arose as to who should retain the older title deeds relating to the whole estate, which were needed in order to prove title. The solution usually adopted was that the seller retained the original deed bundle, but made a covenant (agreement) with the purchaser. Should there ever be a need to prove title, the seller would produce copies of the title deeds for the lawyers to look at, and would also keep the originals safe and be able to produce them if required.

### **Grant or Conveyance**

Purpose: Sale of real property (land or buildings) from one party to another, for a monetary consideration. Up to the 1830s there were a number of methods which could be used to transfer land. Final Concords and common recoveries were abolished by the Fines and Recoveries Act of 1833. The Conveyance by Release Act of 1841 replaced the lease and release with just a statutory release. Then in 1845 the Real Property Act abolished releases and feoffments, allowing freehold land to be conveyed by a simple grant only. By the later nineteenth century, this deed was generally referred to as a conveyance.

### **Fee Farm**

This is a type of tenure, where land is held of another in perpetuity at a yearly rent, without fealty, homage, or other services than such as are specially comprised in the feoffment.

### **Mortgaged Land**

A mortgage is a temporary transfer of property in order to secure a loan of money. The person who owns the land is the 'mortgagor'. The person lending the money is the 'mortgagee'. Although the wording of some mortgage deeds might suggest that the mortgagee took possession of the property until the money was repaid, this was not usually the case in reality. In the seventeenth century it was established in law that the mortgagor would remain living in the property or administering the mortgaged estate. It was normally only if the mortgagor failed to pay the annual interest that the mortgagee could begin to take action to recover the debt. It was also accepted that the mortgagor retained a right to redeem the property whenever he paid the money, even after the period of time when the mortgagee had foreclosed and begun to take possession. This was called the mortgagor's 'equity of redemption' and shows that a mortgage was primarily a way of raising money (for the mortgagor) and investing money at interest (for the mortgagee), rather than a means of gaining possession of land.

### **Appurtenances**

The rights and duties attached to a piece of land.

### **Messuages**

Dwelling houses; messuages with appurtenances - the houses, all the outbuildings associated with it, and also its curtilage (gardens and orchards) and the 'close' or land it is built on.

### **Tenement**

Originally referred to tenancy and therefore to any rented accommodation.

### **People and their jobs/titles**

#### **Tenants at will**

These were men who had no tenancy rights at all. They had nothing in writing and could be evicted without any notice at the will of the Lord of the Manor.

#### **Free tenants**

These were men who could own their own land or lease it from the Lord of the Manor or directly from the Crown. They also had legal rights at the King's Court and owed no service to the Lord of the Manor although they would have to attend the manor court. Their rents were generally less than the 'at will' tenants.

#### **Burgess**

An inhabitant of a town or borough with full rights of citizenship. i.e. a freeman

### **Yeoman farmers**

They were substantial tenant farmers between the 16th and 19th centuries. In social status they were one step down from the Gentry but above Husbandmen. The amount of land owned and the wealth of the yeomen farmers varied from place to place but yeomen would not normally have less than 100 acres. Many were prosperous and employed servants or labourers. Some mixed with the minor gentry and even rented land to gentlemen landowners. Often it was hard to distinguish minor gentry from the wealthier yeomen farmers. The main difference was that gentlemen farmers did not labour with their hands.

### **The Reeve:**

This was a tax collector who would collect revenue (the fee farm) for the king and also uphold the king's prerogatives. The reeve would have been appointed by the king or the county sheriff and existed before 1155. (possibly England only)

### **The Sheriff**

From 'Shire-Reeve'. The chief administrative and judicial officer of a shire. He collected taxes and forwarded them on to the Exchequer, and was also responsible for making sure that the King's table was well stocked.

### **The Bailiff**

This was a new name for the reeve which appears in a charter of 1255. The burgesses were allowed to appoint two bailiffs.

### **The Coroner**

This officer first appears in 1230. The coroner had a wider remit than today. His duties included enquiring about murder, rape, treasure trove, wrecks, deaths in prison, outlaws and deodands (a person or object instrumental in killing someone)

### **The Mayor**

This was a new officer appointed in 1284 who was superior to the bailiffs and became the focus of the town's administration. He was elected for a year from the burgesses at Michaelmas (29 September). He presided over the Borough Court, and may have had his own exchequer.

### **The Recorder**

Established in 1399, this officer was a man of law involved in the Borough Court.

### **The Justices of the Peace**

From 1399 six JPs were required to be appointed for each borough. One was to be the mayor; another was the recorder, and the remaining four were appointed by the mayor. They were involved in the Borough Court.

### **The Aldermen**

From 1449 seven aldermen were to be appointed for each borough and would act as new Justices of the Peace for the Court of Quarter Sessions. From their number was elected the mayor. Other officers included **chamberlains** who collected money from corporation property and used it for public works; **bridgemasters** who collected money and used it for the maintenance of bridges; **town clerks**; and the **mayor's sergeant**, who would have served writs or court summons.

**Armiger** - person entitled to bear heraldic arms.

### **Commissioner of Array**

The issuing of commissions of array was a medieval method of raising troops, originally introduced during the reign of Edward I, by which the King could grant the lords-lieutenant of counties powers to raise military forces in times of emergency. **Steward** The chief servant of a landed estate.

### **Seneschal**

Senior steward

### **Charter of Incorporation**

This conferred the right of self governance on a Lordship and the right to elect its own officers. The Lord was also able to grant privileges to the Burgesses ie. freedom from servile dues.

**Servile dues** - in addition to duties on the landlord's demesne and public roads there were other rents and fines

**Toll** - general names for a tax

**Stallage** - money paid on trading booths or stalls at markets and fairs

**Pannage** - tax levied for the right to let pigs forage in the woods

**Payage** - tax levied for pasturage

**Murage** - a tax paid for a feudal landowner to a Lord in lieu of service

**Postage** - cost of sending commercial or private mail via messengers

**Passage** - a tax levied for passage or way lease

## References

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections>

several online legal and other dictionaries.

## ANGLESEY BRANCH

### Summer program by Sue Hurst

Tues May 23	Llangadwaladr church with Andrew D.
June, no date yet,	Plas Berw
Sat July 15, prov.,	Plas Penmynydd
Tues Sept 12	Hafoty/Castell Aberlleiniog



## CAERNARFONSHIRE BRANCH

### Branch Report by Margaret Dunn

Unfortunately, our Christmas Social with two illustrated mini-talks, and our January house visit had to be cancelled. However, in January an interesting afternoon on Zoom was led by Jane Parry-Evans on Exploring the Houses Database and was well attended by members from Anglesey and Conwy as well as Caernarfonshire.

In February, ten Caernarfonshire members strayed over the border into

Merioneth to visit Rhos. It was a fascinating visit, seeing and hearing about the architecture and house history researched by Nan Griffiths when she lived here. Many thanks to the new owners for their hospitality; they clearly already love the place. Later in March we look forward to a repeat of an autumn house visit which was oversubscribed.



Two views of Rhos House

### Detectives at Work by Margaret Dunn

#### 1. I-SPY while driving

Do you ever get opportunities to glance around while driving (safely) around North Wales? While doing so recently one of our members noticed an amazing timber framed building under-going some building work. Fortunately, he was able to let us know the location and the house has been traced back to at least 1577/78, and another unrecognized house will soon be researched for



Tyddyn Mawr - a fresh Merioneth house

posterity. So do let us know of any houses you see, especially while the leaves are off the trees.

## 2. Looking through Estate Agents images.

Do you ever sit at home and look through Estate Agents adverts and claims about houses from the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries? Over the years our members have spotted cruck timbers in bedrooms and other key features. Not long ago a member spotted mural stairs in a Snowdonia plan house and arranged to visit and we had found yet another unknown house for the Parishes Project. So again, do let the secretary have details of any such houses of interest.

## Zoom Recordings by Peter Masters



One of the benefits of the Covid situation has been the opportunity to meet friends and family via video calling with the likes of Skype, FaceTime, and WhatsApp and whilst many of these facilities have been available for a long time, they have not provided the flexibility to host more than a few family members or friends. A new kid on the block, Zoom, has given the opportunity for organisations like ours to arrange meetings online, not only for the benefit of committee meetings but also to be able to bring a series of monthly talks directly into the comfort of your own home and to share that with multiple members simultaneously, in many cases in excess of 50 people. Another of the

benefits of Zoom has been the ability to record the talks as they have been given. We have had over a dozen talks which comprise a wide range of interests from mediaeval wall paintings, shops and shopkeepers to dendrochronology and many other topics between. These talks comprise in excess of 20 hours of recordings with an average of 53 minutes per Video.

After some minor editing and trimming these recorded talks have been uploaded to YouTube where they are now available via an exclusive link from our website for our members to view. They can be found in the membership section /Zoom Talks page

## GEORGE OWEN (c. 1552 - 1613) *The Description of Wales* by Tom David

This Section is about Caernarvonshire: notes on gentlemen, their seats and their wives, as printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1823 (reproduced at the end). It complements the notes prepared by Gill Jones for Denbighshire and Flintshire in Newsletter NL 42. This portion has been collated by Tom David. Maybe others might collate other portions for future newsletters. This table compares Owen's list with J.E. Griffith *Pedigrees*. In some cases it is hard to reconcile the two sources of information. Owen's text seems to be dated 1602, but contains information from a few years earlier.

<i>Generosi.</i>	<i>Mansiones.</i>	<i>Uxores.</i>	<i>Griffith Ped. page</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Piers Griffith.	Penrhyn.	Fil. Thos. Moston, militis.	185	Penrhyn, Llandegai. Margaret, d. of Sir Thomas Mostyn.
Wm. Morice, miles.	Cynnoney.	Fil. John Lake de Chirck.	218	Clenennau. Sir William Maurice's first wife was Margaret, d. of John Wyn Lacon of Llangollen (? = John Lake) but she had died in 1571/2.
Wm. Thomas, miles.	Carnarvon.	Fil. Wm. Morice, militis.	202	Aber / Coed Helen. Gaynor, d. of Sir William Maurice.
Richard Gwynn.	Carnarvon.	Fil. Wm. Griffiths.	?25	?Hirdrefaig. Sir Richard Wynn/Gwynn married (1) Elin, d. of Wm Griffith of Caernarfon. ?HSC 1593.
John Glyn.	Gwyder.	Fil. Wm Gerard, militis.	281	Presumably John Wynn, created Bt 1611. He married Sidney, d. of Sir Wm. Gerrard.
Wm. Williams.	Cockwillan.	Soror Dni Lumney.	186	Cochwillan. M (2) Barbara, d. of George Lumley.

John Griffiths.	Carnarvon.	Fil. Ric'i Thomas.	?125	?Plas Mawr Caernarfon. ?MPC. See <a href="https://biography.wales/article/s-GRIF-JOH-1548">https://biography.wales/article/s-GRIF-JOH-1548</a> . That man married Margaret, daughter of Rhys Thomas of Coed Helen.
Roland Pulston.	Ditto.	Fil. Roland Griffiths.	?275	A Rowland Puleston of Caernarfon was HSC 1574.
Thomas Bodville.	Bodville.	Fil. Thomas Glynn Llanliffon.	171	Thomas Bodvel HSC 1609 married (2) Lowry, d. of Thomas Glynne of Glynllifon.
Robert Mandryn.	Mandryn.	Fil. Griffin Jo. Griff.	242	Robert Madryn HSC 1604-5 married (2) Mary, d. of Griffith John Griffith, Cefnamwlch.
Robert Wynbrinker.	Brinker.	Fil. Moris ap Elis.	251	Bryncir. Robert Wynn HSC 1594 married Ann, d. of Morris ap Eliza, Clenennau.
Robert Vychan.	Enisnethe.	Fil. Hy. ap Robert Vychan.	?179	?Talhenbont / Plas Hen ('Enisnethe' does not look much like any place-names near there, or indeed anywhere in the county, as far as I can see). A Robert Vaughan (d.1599) of that place married Margaret, d. of Henry ap Robert Vaughan ap Gruffydd ap Howel ap Madog.
Robert Wynn.	Conway.	∫ Fil. Wm. Cerard, militis ∫ Fil. Dymocke de Wellington.	360	Plas Mawr. Robert Wynne married (1) Dorothy, d. of Sir Wm. Griffith of Penrhyn; (2) Dorothy, d. of Edward Dymocke of Wellington.
Edw. Holland.	Ditto.	Judith Johnson.	341	Edward Holland (d. 1601) married Judith, d. of Richard Johnson of Beaumaris.
G ap Jo. Griffith.	Llyn.	Fil. Rich. Bulkeley, militis.	169	Cefnamwlch. Griffith John Griffith (d. 1599) married Catherine, d. of Sir Richard Bulkeley of Beaumaris.
Hugo Gwin Pennarth.	Pennarth.	Fil. Owen ap Hugh.	273	Hugh Gwyn HSC 1599-1600 married Jane, d. of Owen ap Hugh of Bodeon.
Wm Thos. Wynn.	Vaynol.	Fil. Wm. Wms. de Cockwillan.	190	Sir William Williams (unstable surname) married (1) Ellen, d. of William Williams of Cochwillan.
Wm. Glynn.	Glynlyffon.		172	Sir William Glynne married twice.
Wm. Glyn, Serjeant.	Llear.	Fil. Jo. Wynn ap Robert.	270	Lleuar. William Glynne (living 1588) married Lowry, d. of John Wynne ap Robert of Maesog and Bachwen.
Thomas Vychan.	Pantglass.	∫ Fil. Maurici Gwyder. ∫ Fil. .... Fowler.	44	Pant Glas, Ysbyty Ifan. Griffith shows only one marriage, to Margaret, d. of William Fowler.
John Hookes.	Conway.	Fil. Gr. Vychan Corsyedol.	279, 293	Griffith has a William Hookes who married Margaret, d. of Richard Vaughan or John Griffith Vaughan of Corsyedol, and a John Hookes who married Margaret, daughter of Griffith Vaughan of Corsyedol, but the two trees do not seem to be consistent.
Robert ap Richard.	Ditto.	Gaynor Hookes.	?293	The only Gaynor on Griffith's Hookes tree married a Robert Salusbury (no further details).
Hugo Stodart.	Deganway.	Jane fil. Hugonis Holland.	341	A Hugh Stodart of Conway married Jane, d. of Hugh Gwyn Holland, and Jane's brother Hugh married a daughter of Hugh Stodart of Deganwy.
Edw. Williams.	Llechwedisa.		?340	There are two Williamses of Llechwedd Issa (Caerhun, Llangelynin, and Llanbedr-y-Cennin-but is there a house of this name?) on Griffith's tree, but of later dates.
Evan ap Hugh ap Mad.	Llanaelhayarn.	Fil. Robti Pritchard.	?175	Elernion is one of the principal houses of Llanaelhaearn, and Griffith shows a Hugh ap Madog on that tree, but without children.
John Stodart.	Boditha.	Elizab. fil. Lud. Lloyd.	?	Bodidda, Henryd does not appear in Griffith's index. Another house may be meant.
Hugo Bodwrthan.	Bodwrthan.	Fil. Gr. Gwinn de Llanwroit.	168	Hugh Bodwrdda married Elizabeth, d. of Griffith Wynn of Berthddu, Creuddyn.
Griff. Hughes.	Keven Llanvair.	Fil. Ric'i Gwin de Mesoglan.	224	Griffith Hughes of Cefn Llanfair married Jane, d. of Rhys Wynn of Maesoglan, Llangeinwen.



Wm. Vychan.	Llwyn dyris niegwyl.	Anne Vychan.	279, ?231	Neigwl Plas, Llandegwning and Llwyndyrus, Abererch belonged to William Vaughan of Corsygedol, who married Ann, d. of Richard Vaughan of Talhenbont. See Gresham <i>TCHS</i> 37, 40-41.
Hugo Roland.	Boltrern.	Anne Madryn.		I can't identify Boltrern.
John Wyn.	Penleck.	Fil. Wm. Glynn Llaer.	272	John Wynn of Penllech married (1) Jane, d. of William Glynne of Lleuar.
Robt. Wyn.	Sarthan.	Katherine fil. Rice Wynn.	249	Robert Wynn of Saethon, Llangian married Catherine, d. of Rhys Wynn of Maesoglan.
Robt. Owen.	Bodsilin.	Fil. Wil. Coytmore.	136	Robert Owen of Bodsilin, Caerns (formerly Bodscalyn) married (2) Lowry, d. of William Coetmor.
Thos. Wyn ap Edmund.	Dwygysychi.			A Thomas Wyn ap Edmund bought Tythyn Bryn y Bettws, t. Castell in 1575 (GAS XD/19/160).
Evan Carreg.	Carreg.	Fil. Jo. ap Hugh Prichard.	181, 168	Evan Carreg married Elin, d. of John Wyn ap Hugh ap Richard of Bodwrdda.
Robert Pure.	Penrhyn.	Fil. Rich. Bulkeley, milit.	42, 372	Robert Pugh of Penrhyn, Creuddyn married Jane, d. of Sir Richard Bulkeley of Beaumaris.
Richard Griffith.	Castelmarch.	Margaretta Hch Thomas.	191	Sir William Jones seems to have owned Castellmarch around 1600. Not clear who Richard Griffith and Margaret ach Thomas were. Perhaps another house is meant.
Meredith Thomas.	Dyphryn.	Fil. Rich. Madryn.	?243	If this is Nyffryn, Llandudwen, a Meredydd ap Thomas married (3) Margaret, d. of David Lloyd ap Hugh ap John Madryn, but the date may be quite wrong.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433081131462andview=1upandseq=634andskin=2021andsize=125>

## CARNARVONSHIRE.

*Hundreds, 10.—Castles, 5.—Parish Churches, 68.—Fairs in the Year, 18.  
Chief Lordship, 1.—Ynis Henllyss.*

*Market Towns, 3.—Carnarvon, Conway, Pulkeley.*

*Ports and Havens, 10.—Pulkely, Carnarvon, Conway, Bardsey, Traeth-Maur, Sludwalls, Abersoch, Portvillan, Kernig Gwyrinion, Aber Cyver.*

*Chief Mountains and Hills, 6.—Snowden Hill, Moelly'a Habett, Rivill, Yr Yra Hills, Carnwadrin, Mynyddriw.*

*Chief Rivers, 9.—Conway, Saint, Garway, Gwely, Mawr, Llyfon, Llyfni, Kirck.*

*Bishop's See, Bangor.—Monasteries, 2.—Bardsey and Conway.*

*Priory, 1.—Bodkeleers.—Frieries and Nunneries, None.*

John Wyn.  
Robt. Wyn.  
Robt. Owen.  
Thos. Wyn ap Edmund.  
Evan Carreg.  
Robert Pure.  
Richard Griffith.  
Meredith Thomas.

Penleck.  
Sarthan.  
Bodsilin.  
Dwygysychi.  
Carreg.  
Penrhyn.  
Castelmarch.  
Dyphryn.

Fil. Wm. Glynn Llaer.  
Katherine fil. Rice Wynn.  
Fil. Will Coytmore.  
  
Fil. Jo. ap. Hugh Prichard.  
Fil. Rich. Bulkeley, milit.  
Margaretta Hch Thomas.  
Fil. Rich. Madryn.

**PATRIA.**—*The Soil.* The greatest part of the shire is mountainous, the rest in-different good ground.—*The People.* Tall and personable for so many; the country well governed, and little or no theft.

**Towns.**—Carnarvon, a fine little town, and good.—Conway, little inferior to Carnarvon.

**Carnarvonshire** containeth square miles, 327.

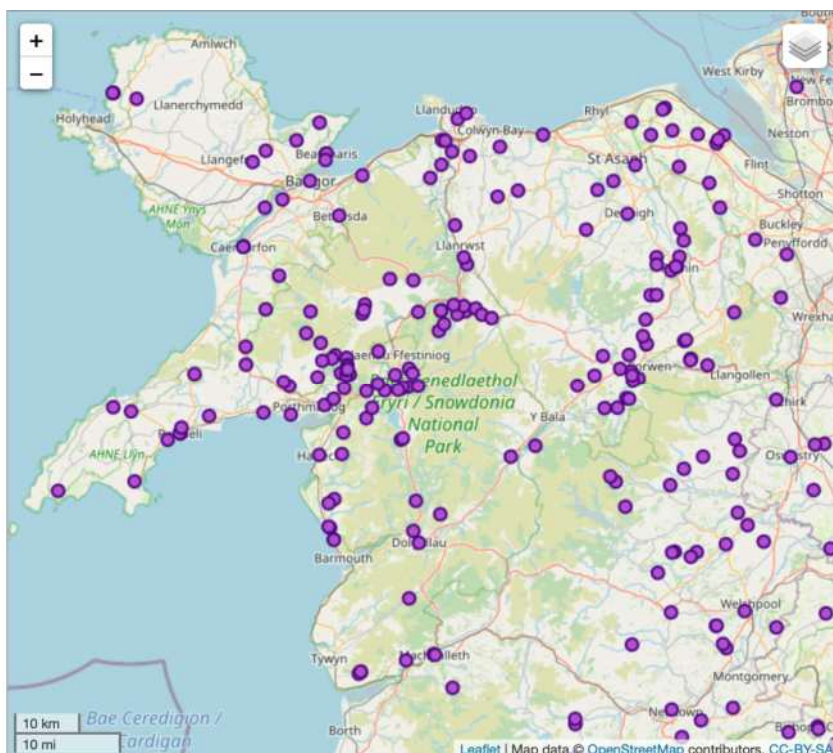
<i>Generosi.</i>	<i>Mansiones.</i>	<i>Uxores.</i>
Piers Griffith. Wm. Morice, miles. Wm. Thomas, miles.	Penrhyn. Cynoney. Carnarvon.	Fil. Thos. Moston, militis. Fil. Johu Lake de Chirek. Fil. Wm. Morice, militis.

**PART II.] Account of Carnarvonshire and Merionethshire in 1602. 599**

<i>Generosi.</i>	<i>Mansiones.</i>	<i>Uxores.</i>
Wm. Glynn. Wm. Glyn, Serjeant. Thomas Vychan. John Hookes. Robert ap Richard. Hugo Stodart. Edw. Williams. Evan ap Hugh ap Mad. John Stodart. Hugo Bodwrthana. Griff. Hughes. Wm. Vychan. Hugo Roland.	Glyalyffon. Llear. Pantglass. Conway. Ditto. Degarway. Lleowedisal. Llanaethayarn. Beditha. Bodwrthan. Keven Llanvair. Llwyn dyris niegwyl. Beltrera.	Fil. Jo. Wynn ap Robert. { Fil. Maurici Gwyder. { Fil. .... Fowler. Fil. Gr. Vychan Corsyedol. Gaynor Hookes. Jane fil. Hugonis Holland.  Fil. Robti Pritchard. Elizab. fil. Lud. Lloyd. Fil. Gr. Guain de Llanwroit. Fil. Ric'i Gwin de Mesoglan. Anne Vychan. Anne Madryn.

Richard Gwynn. John Glyn. Wm. Williams. John Griffiths. Roland Pulston. Thomas Bodville. Robert Mandryn. Robert Wynbrinker. Robert Vychan.  Robert Wynn.  Edw. Holland. G ap Jo. Griffith. Hugo Gwin Pennarth. Wm. Thos. Wynn.	Carnarvon. Gwyder. Cockwillan. Carnarvon. Ditto. Bodville. Mandryn. Brinker. Enisnethe.  Conway.  Ditto. Llyn. Pennarth. Vaynol.	Fil. Wm. Griffiths. Fil. Wm. Gerard, militis. Soror Dni Lumney. Fil. Ric'i Thomas. Fil. Roland Griffiths. Fil. Thomas Glynn Llanlliffon. Fil. Griffin Jo. Griff. Fil. Morris ap Elis. Fil. Hy. ap Robert Vychan. { Fil. Wm. Cerard, militis. { Fil. Dymocke de Wellington. Judith Johnson. Fil. Rich. Bulkeley, militis. Fil. Owen ap Hugh. Fil. Wm. Wms. de Cockwillan.
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## Discovering Old Welsh Houses and Research - taking stock and looking forward by Martin Cherry



Distribution of tree-ring dated buildings in North Wales. © Archaeology Data Service and Vernacular Architecture Group, updated 2021

Now that the Covid pandemic is well behind us, members are getting out and about again-visiting houses, attending local meetings and getting back in the swim of using libraries and archives. This is a good moment to take stock of where we are and where we might go in the future. It never fails to amaze me how much the group has achieved - or rather individual members, beaver away on house histories and providing access and support for specialists when we commission them to provide building or tree-ring dating reports. These reports - all 392 of them(!) - are on the Group's website (recently upgraded and enhanced by Peter Masters <https://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk>), easily accessible and a fantastic mine of information and interpretation. While Covid kept us indoors, we were able to develop our 'houses database'. Made possible with a generous grant from the Marc Fitch Fund, this is a management tool that allows us to see precisely which houses have been visited over the years, when and by whom, and alerts us to any assessments made on those visits that give us a solid basis for deciding whether or not to follow-up with further calls and action. There are currently around one thousand buildings on the database. The data has been input and finessed by Jane Parry-Evans based on information furnished largely by Margaret Dunn, who 'discovered' and visited most of them! Over time, new houses will be added, including new discoveries emerging from the parishes project. This project has made headway, faster in some areas than others, and several lists of houses that were in existence in c.1750 have been created by members according to a template devised by John Townsend. Some parishes have mustered totals of one or two hundred, so pruning these down to those that survive in something like their early form and then visiting on a selective basis, is a challenge as doors are being opened to us again. Plenty to do!

North Wales is a large area and research reflects in part the availability and enthusiasm of volunteers in the localities. Our lead publication, *Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia*, grew out of such a geographically focused project - the 'N W Wales Dendrochronology Project' - although it did spread the net wider to take in new discoveries in other parts of the region. This activity is reflected on the map below that shows the concentration of tree-ring dates secured as part of that project in the Blaenau, Beddgelert and Penmachno areas. There are comparable tree-ring dating clusters in the swathe of territory reaching from east of Bala to north of Ruthin, the lower Conwy Valley and north Flintshire. These tree-ring dates largely emerged from the 3-year N E Wales Dendro-Project, which was made possible by generous grants from a number of public and private bodies, underpinned by active research by our volunteers, largely in the form of house histories. Many have been commissioned by DOWH (and its predecessors), hence the concentrations in the

Blaenau/Penmachno and the Cynwyd/Corwen/Ruthin areas reflecting the Snowdonia Houses (N W Wales) and the N E Wales projects for which we were able to secure considerable external funding.

Other pockets of research activity exist, too. One exciting project has grown out of such activity, centred on the Corwen/Cynwyd area in what is now South Denbighshire - take a look at the Denbighshire Branch 'Cynwyd Scrapbooks' on our web site (<https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page13.html>). What was once the lordship of Edeirnion occupies the fertile middle stretch of the Dee Valley and adjacent uplands. Its status within the former territory of the Welsh princes in North Wales was unique in that the 'Barons of Edeirnion' retained their special jurisdiction from the fourteenth until well into the sixteenth centuries. It was one of the power bases of Owain Glyndŵr. There are some amazing houses here that *look* to be fifteenth century but, as Professor Carr observed in his work on the medieval gentry in North Wales, the barons were very conservative and were reluctant to jettison partible inheritance at a time when English succession practices prevailed during the early Tudor period. So, maybe they're not as old as they look. Only scientific tree-ring dating will get to



Two recently tree-ring dated buildings (commissioned by DOWH) make significant contributions to the chronology of medieval buildings in North Wales. The roof over Tŷ Gwyn (left), near Bryneglwys, Denbighshire, with its oddly shaped king-post looks late but dates from 1447 (the principal cruck trusses came from a tree that was already 250 years old when it was felled): it may have been part of the estate of the Iâl (Yale) family - a barn at the neighbouring farm, originally the house, has an identical king-post. Rhydywernen (right), not far away in Cwm Main, is an early Tudor yeoman's farmhouse: the original cruck-framed building was dated to 1531 and we asked our specialists to re-visit a year or two later and were able to confirm that the original open hall received its inserted floor in around 1595-8

the truth of the matter but many of the structural timbers are fast grown, which means that they are not normally amenable to conventional tree-ring width analysis. Consequently, we are immensely grateful to The Woodtiger Fund for providing a substantial grant to take advantage of the innovative new method of stable isotope tree-ring dating, being pioneered at Swansea University: isotopes *love* wide tree rings! Watch this space! One other encouraging development to note is that others are working in the field, too: a recent project to date houses in and around Ruthin (independent of DOWH but with which we are associated) has identified some very early buildings, dating to the post-Glyndŵr reconstruction of the town in the mid-fifteenth century, and the second phase of this project is extending into the Vale of Clwyd.

## DENBIGHSHIRE BRANCH

### Branch report by Jenny Lees

Following a rewarding autumn of branch 'field' visits, our time from December to February has been devoted to mostly 'armchair' Parishes Project research before resuming house visits in March. In December we concentrated on *Dyffryn Clwyd*, as DOWH was working in partnership with the Ruthin Dendrochronology project to identify suitable rural houses, and from Christmas we have prioritised finding pre 1750 houses in Edeirnion, in view of DOWH's newly funded 'Edeirnion' project. Starting with house names from *Parochialia* (1699), we researched sites including Coflein, <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/wales> and <https://historicplacenames.rcahmw.gov.uk/> before looking for current online references to similarly named dwellings. It was very encouraging to find 19 of around 20 *Llandderfel* parish houses with names from *Parochialia* still extant (some originally in *Llanfor* parish), but only 6 of them (including one 'derelict') were already identified on our DOWH database. So now our exciting but perhaps challenging task will be discovering whether any others retain significant historic features, and among those not yet on the database, our online search has revealed 3

advertised as holiday lets; 5 with contact details as farms; 1 on sale completely modernised, and 6 private houses. This is of course just one of numerous parishes our branch is researching, but I think these *Llandderfel* findings exemplify the existence of relatively 'undocumented' areas falling between our present DOWH county divisions - and explains why Denbighshire branch previously 'adopted' this parish far from Dolgellau, but 'on our doorstep'!

### **Eight hundred years of Llangar parish history Part One: 1160 - 1660** by Jenny Lees

In his elegy following the **1160** deaths of Madog ap Maredudd (last Welsh Prince to rule the whole of ancient Powys) and his son Llewelyn, the poet Cynddelw described a battle at Cynwyd - part of the ancient parish of Llangar in Edeirnion: 'When we were summoned to Cynwyd Gadfor .... Our counsel was offered ... Fine warriors each with broken shield ... Over the pasture land were we scattered'.<sup>1</sup>



Llangar church - view across the confluence of Dyfrdwy and Alwen from Hafod y calch

Having read several books from our DOWH 'Cynwyd Scrapbook' series, a visitor to my home of *Hafod y calch* once exclaimed: "How can there be so much history from such a small place!"

Well, perhaps because in the later Middle Ages Cynwyd seems to have become Edeirnion's commotal centre and may have been the original *maerdref* of Owain Brogyntyn, the illegitimate but recognised son of Madog ap Maredudd granted lands in Edeirnion and Dinmael. Following inheritance by Owain's sons Bleddyn, Gruffudd and Iorwerth, Iorwerth gained *Llangar* and part of *Gwyddelwern* parish, then his son Gruffudd became Baron of Cymer and son Elise Baron of Llangar, a separate *township* within *Llangar* parish. Although such baronies were very small, the rights of *pennaeth* or 'Welsh barony' granted to these Edeirnion barons gave them considerable independence, power, and their own *commote* court, thought to have been somewhere at Cynwyd.<sup>2</sup>

Part One of this article considers what evidence we have so far, from documentary sources or dendrochronology (tree ring dating of actual timbers), of *Llangar* parish dwellings existing by **1660**. The oldest *Llangar* house dendrodated so far is the magnificent **1435** cruck and aisle-truss hall house of *Plas uchaf*, once called *Plas o Kymmer* or *Cymer* and owned by the Barons of Cymer before they moved to *Gwerclas* in around **1600**. Our DOWH house history, downloadable from [https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20023\\_HH\\_32\\_Plas\\_Uchaf.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20023_HH_32_Plas_Uchaf.pdf) illustrates *Plas uchaf's* architectural history and relates with references the lives of the Barons from **1282**, including their propitious marriages

<sup>1</sup> Translation from the original Welsh poem by Gruffydd Aled Williams, 'The literary tradition to c.1560', in J. Beverley Smith and L. Beverley Smith edited, *History of Merioneth, Vol.2: The Middle Ages*, 2001, pp.527-8.

<sup>2</sup> A. D. Carr and J. Beverley Smith, 'Edeirnion and Mawddwy', in *History of Merioneth* op.cit.,pp.139-147.

with prominent families across North Wales such as *Cors y gedol* and *Nannau*, as well as with relations from *Branas uchaf*, *Crogen*, *Cryniarth* and *Hendwr*.<sup>3</sup>

Cynwyd resident Betty Booth originally 'alerted' me to *Henfaes isaf*, which she and her relatives had been carefully restoring since 1961, and our 2021 DOWH visit proved very exciting as the timbers of this originally cruck-framed late medieval hall-house are exceptionally well preserved! We have promising evidence of a dwelling there from as early as 1470: '1. Margaret verch Grono ap David ap Plethyn. 2. Jevan ap Madog ap David. Lease of a tenement at Henvae; 4 years, renewable, rent 12d. Given at Kynwyt Vawr on the Vigil of St. Michael the Archangel, 1470'.<sup>4</sup> Our full DOWH house history is still pending publication, as *Henfaes isaf* timbers were too 'fast grown' to dendrodate, so we are awaiting the hopeful results of isotope analysis - but a shortened version is available on:

[https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Publications/Cynwyd\\_Scrapbook-4.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Publications/Cynwyd_Scrapbook-4.pdf)



Oak post-and-panel dais partition at Henfaes isaf (Image courtesy of Moyra James)

Interestingly, as court hearings sometimes moved between gentry dwellings, two *Henfaes isaf* fields were once named *Cae'r ustus ucha* and *Cae'r ustus isaf* - upper and lower fields of the magistrate or judge; also note that *Henfaes isaf* once lay in *Gwyddelwern* parish, which contained the *townships* of *Cynwyd Fawr*, *Cynwyd Fechan* and *Bodheulog* until transfer to *Llangar* parish in 1854.

Next of the dendro-dated mid C16<sup>th</sup> *Llangar* houses already having DOWH house histories on <https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page17.html> are *Ty'n Llwyn*, with a timber felling date of winter **1537-8**, and *Brynberllan*, dated c. **1553** and with generous and decorative use of timber suggesting an original building of some status. Its early 'plank and muntin' screen partition bears the initials 'H.W', and though *Llangar* Parish Records do not extend back beyond 1614, the possible ancestry of Thomas Evans of *Bryn y Berlen* can be traced back through the parish records to an Evan Llywelyn of **1674**; a name possibly connected with families of the Edeirnon Barons. (See also pp.22-28 of [https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Publications/Cynwyd\\_Scrapbook-3.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Publications/Cynwyd_Scrapbook-3.pdf)).

*Plas isaf*, although parts of the earliest house there may no longer exist, was of high status when *Gentleman* Robert Wynne Pyers of *Plas Issa* was 'buried in church' at *Llangar* in **1642-3**. Robert was another descendant of Owain Brogyntyn, being great-grandson of Gruffudd ap Robert ap Gruffudd of powerful *Maesmôr* in Dinmael, who married his relation Lowri, daughter of 10<sup>th</sup> Baron of Cymer William ap Gruffudd. (More of *Plas isaf's* fascinating history in *Cynwyd Scrapbook Three*, pp.48-50).

<sup>3</sup> See also Jenny Lees, 'A Quest for Cymer in Edeirnon and its Barons. Part I: c.1200-c.1700', *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society* (JMHRs), Vol. XV111 (II), 2019, pp.129-40.

<sup>4</sup> Bangor University Archives (GB 222 MN/193).



Plas isaf viewed from near the stream of Nant rhyd y saeson (Jenny Lees 2016)

Our DOWH 'Parishes Project' of identifying pre-1750 houses includes those already demolished - at least the histories of them and their occupants will be preserved through research, if not the actual houses, and their wills and inventories can be of considerable interest. Many are viewable online at: <https://www.library.wales/catalogues-searching/catalogues/specialist-catalogues/wills> , and one formerly important *Llangar* dwelling was *Glanalwen*; lying in *Cymer* township just across the *Alwen* from *Hafod y calch* and once a small estate of some significance. William ap Ieuan, grandfather of Humffrey ap Elisau 'of *Glan Alwen* in *Llangar* and *Maerddu* in *Gwyddelwern*', was described as 'seated at *Llangar*',<sup>5</sup> and in the Civil War Humffrey's son became Captain William Humffreys in the King's army, selling the *Glan Alwen* estate in the **1640s** to Edmund Meyrick of *Ucheldre*,<sup>6</sup> brother of his wife Dorothy. After Griffith ap Dafydd ap Ieuan was buried in **1643** at *Llangar* as 'of *Rhwng y Ddwy Afon*', an old name for *Glan Alwen*, his Davies family were associated with *Glan Alwen* for the next three centuries, with David Davies being one of two freeholders qualified to serve on *Cymer*'s juries in **1743**. Although *Glanalwen*'s domestic buildings were sadly demolished in C20<sup>th</sup>, its former impressive farm buildings still stand, and are pictured in *Cynwyd Scrapbook Three* (pp. 37-41).



Arms of the Hughes Lloyd family of *Gwerclas* on façade of the present 1767 house (Jenny Lees)

Although only parts of the pre-1767 house at *Gwerclas* remain,<sup>7</sup> several fascinating sources tell us of life there from c. **1600** onwards. It was among the baronial courts providing hospitality to the bards in exchange for entertainment and acclamation, and 'Noddwyr Beirdd ym Meirion' (Glenys Davies, 1974) includes over seven pages of C16-17<sup>th</sup> Welsh poems devoted to *Gwerclas* and its inhabitants. Bardic references to the dwelling as *Gwerclys* or a *llys* (court) match the **1614** burial record of Alice, wife of Baron Hugh ap William of *Gwerlleise*; fully referenced history is available from:

[https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20110\\_HH\\_27\\_Gwerclas-2019.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20110_HH_27_Gwerclas-2019.pdf)

[https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20004\\_HH\\_24\\_Ucheldref.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20004_HH_24_Ucheldref.pdf)

Bardic poems can of course contain an element of adulation, but in his invaluable Memorandum Book (**1662-1674**) we have the words of Humffrey Hughes II of *Gwerclas* himself. He recorded not only the births, deaths and marriages of his

<sup>5</sup> Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry.

<sup>6</sup> House history: [https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20004\\_HH\\_24\\_Ucheldref.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20004_HH_24_Ucheldref.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Building report: [https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/ABR/den%20110\\_ABR\\_26\\_Gwerclas.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/ABR/den%20110_ABR_26_Gwerclas.pdf)

extended family, including the amazing **17 children** with his first wife Magdalen from *Bryntangor*, but also detailed information on crops grown and wages paid on *Gwerclas* estate.<sup>8</sup> Humffrey (listed as of *Querkle -Gwerclas!*) had also served in the Civil Wars as a Royalist and Commissioner of Array; resulting not only in 'compounding'- loss of a sixth of the value of his estates, but also the sad **1644** death of his eldest son Richard 'in the King`s service'.

Sometimes documentary evidence can lead us to wonder if a later house still contains concealed parts of an earlier one, as might be the case with Llangar`s still existing *The Old Rectory*. Trefor O. Jones, including in his book a list of Rectors of *Llangar* church from 1537-1838, suggests they could have lived at a *Llangar Rectory (Rheithordy Llangar)* originally built in **1500**,<sup>9</sup> and the Dean`s report<sup>10</sup> described in **1730** the thatched home of Rector Edward Samuel as having an *outkitchen* and *outparlour*, and 'for want of larger windows', having the appearance of 'the *condemn`d hole*'!

Another important *township* in *Llangar* was *Gwnodl* or *Gwnodle*, with 16 taxed tenants already by **1293**<sup>11</sup> and including at various times *Gwnodl Fawr*, *Gwnodl Bach*, *Blaengwnodl Ucha*, *Blaengwnodl Isaf*, *Siamber Wen*, *Ty`n y wern Gwnodl* and *Bron Gyddio* (now *Fronguddio*). At one time *Gwnodle* belonged as part of the Lordship of Glyndyfrdwy to Ieuan, said to be living in **1389** and second son of Gwion Llwyd, Baron of *Hendwr* in Llandrillo parish. Ieuan`s great-great grandson John and his wife Jane, daughter of Robert Wynn of *Maesmor*, are believed to have been involved in the building of *Cynwyd*`s magnificent **1612** bridge, and though it is not certain which *Gwnodl* is referred to in the earliest *Llangar Parish Records*, another *Cynwyd Scrapbook Three* article (pp.31-6) tracks the high status marriages, births and deaths of its Wynn (or Wynne) and Watkins families to the Lloyd family, whose celebrated bard Peter Llwyd or Lloyd (1765 -1842) we know inhabited *Gwnodl fawr*.



Siamber Wen Bach to the left and Siamber Wen on the right (Jenny Lees)

*Maerdu Mawr*. Although *Siamber Wen* does not have remaining timbers suitable for dendrodating, during refurbishment its owner found a blocked off area beside a chimney breast with remains of an extraordinarily narrow spiral staircase embedded in the wall!

(See history [https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/mer%20059\\_HH\\_41\\_Gwernbraichdwr.pdf](https://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/mer%20059_HH_41_Gwernbraichdwr.pdf))

Also in the former *township* of *Gwnodle* is *Siamber Wen*, lying on the former drove route from *Mynydd Mynyddlod* to the taverns of *Cynwyd*. In **1622** the prosperous drover Thomas Lloyd, by then 'of *Mylton* in *Kent*' but born in *Llandderfel*, obtained a mortgage from William Salesbury of *Rug* for property 'in the tenure of Robert Salesbury, gent' including 'Y *Siamber* in *Botteulog*'.

Another *Cynwyd Scrapbook Three* article (pp.9-13) traces y *Siamber wenn*, 'in the tenure of Elise ap Morgan' in **1615**, forward past the **1661** burial of Catherine Lewes of *Chamber Wenne* to the family and descendants of Gabriel Humffreys (will **1677**), who seems

to have been connected with the prestigious Humffreys family of

<sup>8</sup> For a partial transcription see Merfyn Wyn Tomos, 'A Memorandum Book (1662-74) of Humffrey Hughes, Gwerclas', *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*, Vol. XVII, 2014, Part I, pp.1-25.

<sup>9</sup> Trefor O. Jones, 1975, '*O Ferwyn i Fynyddlod*', p.15. (No reference is given for the building date of 1500).

<sup>10</sup> 'A report of the Deanery of Penllyn and Edeirnion' by the Reverend John Wynn, 1730, abstracted from the original manuscript by G. M. Griffiths in *The Merioneth Miscellany*, 1955,

<sup>11</sup> 'Taxed tenants in townships 1293' (PRO, E179/24), cited in *History of Merioneth* op.cit., p.223.





Finally, we know that other still extant Llangar houses are on or near sites dating from before 1660, including *Hafod yr afr*, *Penlan fawr* and *Moel lladdfa*, and others may come to light during renovation or when DOWH is contacted with information about them - and please feel free do so! In contrast to many other parts of Wales, no early Baronial court records remain for *Llangar* as they are said to have been burnt in C18th by Hugh Hughes of *Gwerclas* following a dispute with neighbours,<sup>12</sup> but DOWH's new Edeirnion project may allow further dendrodating. We may never know where exactly the earliest Edeirnion Barons lived before occupying present *Plas uchaf* - no surviving pre-1400 Llangar dwellings have yet been identified, and we know that during the Owain Glyndwr rebellion of 1400-1415 Henry, English Prince of Wales, reported his retaliatory destruction of the "fine and populous country" of Edeirnion, but other possible causes have also been considered.<sup>13</sup> In Part Two of this article, covering **post 1660** developments, I will draw on fascinating additional sources including Churchwardens' reports; handwritten letters from *Gwerclas* by Baroness Margaret Lloyd, and estate records covering most of Llangar's dwellings and their occupants - as well as *Llangar* parish records, property transactions and some fascinating probate items from wills. And I too am amazed that so much 'history' has emerged from the area covered by my 1949 map below! Jenny Lees has email address [leesjenny@gmail.com](mailto:leesjenny@gmail.com)

## FLINTSHIRE BRANCH

Branch report for spring Newsletter 2023 by Wally and Margaret Barr



Our meal in the Faenol Fawr



Lloyd Armorial of 1597 over the Faenol Fawr fireplace

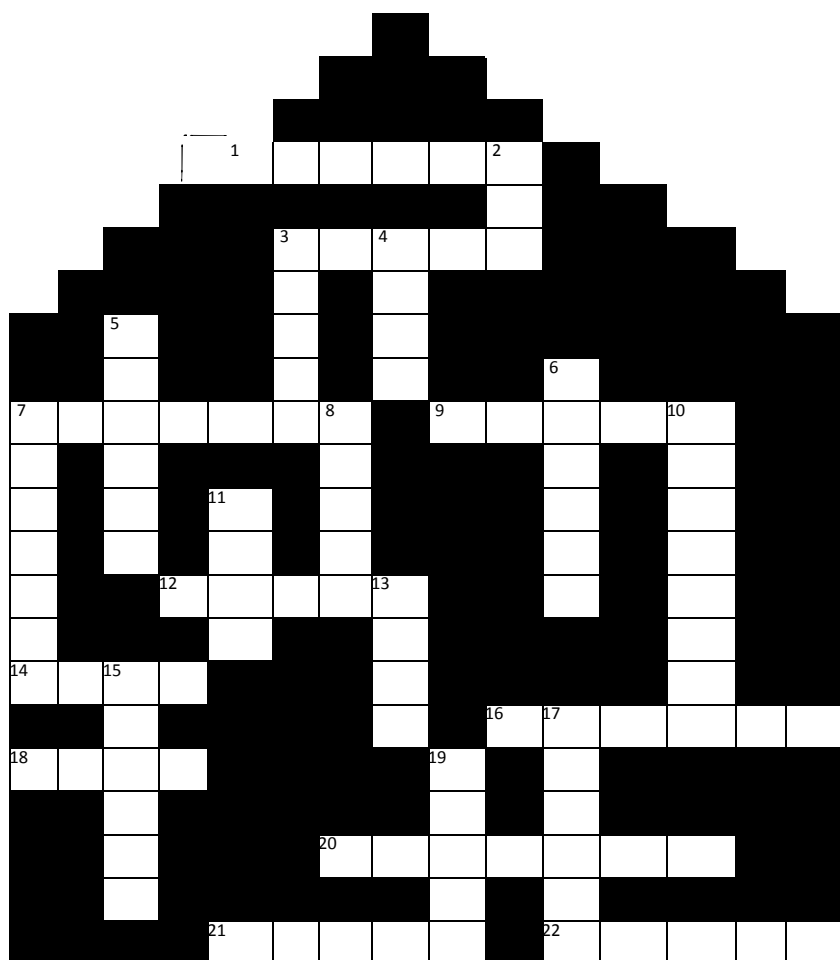
<sup>12</sup> Gwallter Mechain in Burke's Landed Gentry, 1846, p.608, referenced in A.D.Carr, 'The Barons of Edeyrnion, 1282-1485, Part One', *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*, Vol.4, 1963, pp.187-93.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Suggett, 'Crucks in Wales', in Nat Alcock, P.S.Barnwell and Martin Cherry ed. (2019), pp.298-9

In early December 2022 thirteen members and friends from the Flintshire and Denbighshire branches met at the Faenol Fawr Hotel, Bodelwyddan, for a Christmas meal. We ate in a beautiful 16<sup>th</sup> century room and had an excellent meal. This venue is highly recommended.

In January this year, eight of us met at The Old Post Office in Llanasa, courtesy of the owner, Jean Jones. This is a lovely 17<sup>th</sup> century house on which Jean has completed an extensive history which is now on the DOWH website. Our February meeting will be held in the Community Room, Caerwys, where we will be discussing the DOWH database. Future meetings will include a joint visit and talk with the Denbighshire branch to Nantclwyd y Dre in Ruthin (Monday March 20th at 2pm), and visits to Colomendy in Afonwen (Tuesday April 25th at 2pm) and Brithdir Mawr, Cilcain (Thursday May 25th at 2pm). Full details are given on the website. Please book with Wally Barr, email: [flintshire-branch2@discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk](mailto:flintshire-branch2@discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk); phone: 01745 888622.

### Discovering Old Houses Cryptic Crossword composed by Wally and Margaret Barr



All the answers relate to houses - answers are given below

#### Across

- 1 A very good setter, though lime mortar is better (6)
- 3,15d Widow welcomes new beginning to see outside at the end (5,6)
- 7,9 Sounds like this criminal (in winter clothing) could hold up a house (7,5)
- 9 See 7 across
- 12 See 19 down
- 14 Look inside - do whatever - to reveal familiar housing association (4)
- 16 Coming in fourth at chess keeps the rain out! (6)
- 18,5d Resistance to sideways movement is provided when we birds can fly around (4,6)
- 20,17d Disturb thatcher and learn to make a fireplace in the middle of the floor (7,6)
- 21,22 Do re-use. How? To make a home for a widow (5,5)

#### Down

- 2,4 About time to include initially boastful economic analysis uniting truss supporters (3,4)
- 3 See 11 down
- 4 See 2 down
- 5 See 18 across
- 6 Reported that you'll find a precious gem in this supporter! (6)
- 7 See 11 down

- 8 For openers look into much ado or something (5)
- 10 Supporter provides letter specifically for the monarch (4,4)
- 11,7,3 Found at the end of a house this staircase is strictly for the birds (4-7,5)
- 13 When Brexit removes the first of basic rights the way out is clear (4)
- 15 See 3 across
- 17 See 20 across
- 19,12a Mix maroon and other hues to make an old place to live (5,5)

### Book review by Jean Jones

#### An Epic Tudor Journey - John Leland's Itinerary of Northern Wales by Derek Williams (2008) (ISBN: 978-1-84524-121-6)

*John Leland, King Henry VIII's Antiquary, made his journey across northern Wales - without maps - in one of the summers between 1536-39. His notebook gave details of towns, villages, churches, castles as well as rivers, lakes and coastal*

features. He was given hospitality at houses belonging to families who had supported Henry VII, who became the first Tudor monarch. His route from the English Border to Llyn followed the valleys and coastal lowlands. He avoided the mountains and the remote valleys where the King's Writ did not run. Much of the detailed information he collected was used soon afterwards to produce the first maps of Wales by Christopher Saxton and Humphrey Llwyd.

The above summary is taken directly from the book. The Preface also says John Leland was given a royal commission in 1533 to search the libraries (monastic and cathedral) for manuscripts of historical interest. He was engaged in refitting the King's libraries to receive monastic books. Fortunately, he was also interested in the contemporary geography, towns, villages, farming, woodland, castles and especially rivers and coastal features.

After the 'dissolution' of the monasteries in 1536 he also started to travel in search of history and topography with the intention of producing a map of England and Wales. He kept detailed notes of his journeys but with no exact dates. He travelled on horseback, about ten miles a day, and must have had a travelling companion with the help of local guides. His journey started at the Shropshire border where he entered Maelor Saesneg (a land of Manor Houses and Moats) and continued westwards to Llyn. His finest description is of Denbigh town, which at the time was undergoing rapid development. Even though he did not venture into Snowdonia he recorded many of the lakes in a neat geographical context. His notes are based on observation and careful enquiry (from local landowners) and give a marvellous account of northern Wales at the end of the Middle Ages.

After leaving Bangor on Dee he progressed over the River, visiting many houses and churches on the way. The book gives descriptions of all houses visited. Leland mentions Valle Crucis but only to give its position. From there he made his way following the River Alun to Moldsdale lordship and on across northern Wales. He may have ended his journey at Penrhyndeudraeth. At the time there were no practical maps to help him.

John Leland started to write up his notes and presented them to the King in January 1546. Unfortunately, his health declined and he died in 1552. His manuscripts were copied by the antiquary John Stow in 1576 and eventually were given to the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

This was a fascinating book mentioning many familiar old houses and names of families, most still in existence today. [Editor's note: Interested readers may access this work online at, e.g. [http://www.tpwilliams.co.uk/leland/leland\\_2010.pdf](http://www.tpwilliams.co.uk/leland/leland_2010.pdf)]

## Stop Press

### Can you help ?

Janice Dale writes 'We have been discussing vineyards in North Wales today here at Rhug. Can you put in a bit in the newsletter to ask if any member has any knowledge of vineyards at any time in North Wales ?'

Janice's e-mail is [JaniceDale@Rhug.co.uk](mailto:JaniceDale@Rhug.co.uk)

## Conwy Branch Report

### House Visit - Two Effigies - Gruffydd ap Dafydd Goch and Hywel Coetmor by Gill Jones

A group of stalwart branch members braved the wintery weather on the 11<sup>th</sup> March to visit two churches. The first was St. Michael's old Church in Betws y Coed where there is an effigy of Gruffydd ap Dafydd Goch (c.1385). He was moved in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and slightly trimmed to fit in an arched niche to the right of the altar. Next we went across to St. Gryst's Church in Llanrwst where Gruffydd's grandson, Hywel Coetmor (c.1440) takes his place amongst the Wynns of Gwydir in their own side chapel. Both were experienced fighting men.

Gruffydd was one of the most important people in the area but his ancestry is a matter of some debate. Lewys Dwnn, the Welsh poet and genealogist, claimed that he was an illegitimate son of Prince Dafydd ap Gruffydd, brother of Llewelyn the Last. Others claim that he was descended from Nefydd Hardd of Penmachno, founder of the 6<sup>th</sup> Noble Tribe of north Wales.

The two effigies derive from a distinct North Wales school of sculpture, which began with heavy coffin slabs carved with crosses, circles and foliage patterns in the early C13<sup>th</sup>, and evolved into more three-dimensional effigies of priests and knights by the mid 1300s.

After the conquest of Wales by Edward I, the English Crown was fighting very costly wars in other countries. Men like Gruffydd ap Dafydd Goch were required to render military service. He may have fought at Crecy or Poitiers but there is no existing evidence to confirm that he actually went to France but many local squires did take part in the campaigns. His

grandson, Hywel Coetmor, is believed to have fought at Agincourt but he also took part in Owain Glyndwr's rising with his brother Rhys Gethin.

There is a booklet which Tony Scharer and I put together for the visit to see the effigies which gives more information about the two men and about life in Nant Conwy. A digital version is available to view on the Discovering Old Welsh Houses website. Click on [Newsletters>Booklets](#) to access it; or copy and paste the following:-

<https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/cat/index.html?catalog=TwoKnights>



Left, Top Centre: Gruffydd ap Dafydd Goch. Right, Bottom Centre: Hywel

**Tom David writes**

I think I have a conjecture for the strange name 'Enisnethe' in my piece about George Owen: I wonder if it might be 'Evionethe', as read from someone's bad handwriting? Owen puts 'Llyn' instead of 'Cefnamwlch', and Talhenbont might have been thought to be the chief place in the commote of Eifionydd in the same way.

<p><b>Across</b>  <b>1 CEMENT</b>; 3,15d  <b>GABLE WINDOW</b>; 7,9  <b>SCARFED CRUCK</b>; 14  <b>DOWN</b>; 16  <b>THATCH</b>; 18,5d  <b>WIND BRACES</b>; 20,17d  <b>CENTRAL HEARTH</b>; 21,22  <b>DOWER HOUSE</b>  <b>Down</b>  <b>2,4 TIE BEAM</b>; 6  <b>PURLIN</b>; 8  <b>DOORS</b>; 10  <b>KING POST</b>; 11,7,3  <b>CROW-STEPPED GABLE</b>; 13  <b>EXIT</b>; 19,12a  <b>MANOR HOUSE</b></p>
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MARC FITCH