



DARGANFOD HEN DAI CYMREIG DISCOVERING OLD WELSH HOUSES



NODDWYR/PATRONS:

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Dathlu Treftadaeth Cymru drwy astudio tai traddodiadol a bywydau'r bobl fu'n byw ynddynt.

CYLCHLYTHYR 47 Rhagfyr

EIN GWEFAN

<http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk>

yw prif sianel gyfathrebu'r Grŵp - defnyddiwch hi i weld mwy o fanylion am y digwyddiadau diweddar a'r rhai sydd i ddod, ac i edrych ar ein llyfrgell sy'n cynyddu'n gyson ac ar nodweddion eraill.

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

NEWSLETTER 47 December

OUR WEBSITE

<http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk>

Is the Groups main channel of communication please visit it to see details of recent and forthcoming events and to look at our growing library and other features.



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FROM THE CHAIR by Janice Dale

The nights are drawing in and its definitely getting colder, and without the distraction of gardening, it is time to snuggle down in front of the fire and it's the ideal time to pick up on researching a house history or browsing the DOWHG website and reading some of the reports there. Talking of the website, is there anyone who would like to be involved in maintaining the website? Peter does a marvellous job of doing this at present, but we do need to be mindful on the subject of succession. Please do let me or Peter know if you are interested. We also need branch organisers, currently Conwy, Anglesey and Merioneth don't have one, so again if anyone would like to find out more of what is involved for this role, do please feel free to contact me.

Back in September I went to a talk given by Liz Milman entitled 'From Sheep to Sugar'. An odd title - it turned out to be about a project that had looked at the Welsh wool trade making cloth for sugar plantation slaves. Liz has contributed an article for this newsletter which explains more this (see page 3). This industry is largely under-researched, and talking to her I suggested that some of our members may have come across mention

of pandys involved in the production of cloth – if you have come across anything of interest do let me know, as there is more work to be done in this interesting area.

In October I gave a talk to the Llangollen Museum. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of people who turned up, there must have been at least 40 people there. I guess this is something that I may have to do more often now that people are prepared to go out and socialise again.

Finally, by the time this NL goes out it will be getting close to Christmas, so may I wish you a Happy Christmas and New Year.

FROM THE SECRETARY by Alison Montgomery

Are you a branch leader (or thinking about becoming one) who would like more opportunity to speak to other people in similar roles? Or a DOWHG member who would like to speak with others and find out what's happening in other branches? Or are you a member who would like to hear about other people's research, or share your own, or get advice?

Maybe you've found a resource, or discovered a work-around, that you think other people would be interested in? You have something that's a bit of a work in progress and you'd love to share it informally before delivering it outside the group? Or you've hit a roadblock...?

Or you're a beginner who'd love to start doing research but needs some advice on where to start?

We know how popular our online talks are, and they're not going anywhere! However, we wondered if there would be any interest in adding to these, with something slightly different (but still online). Our talks (and, for trustees and officers, our meetings) are great but they usually need to follow a set agenda and often have a tight schedule. So, would there be any interest if we added some other things too, things that give us the opportunity to meet other members across DOWH, share our own work, or even pick people's brains? Or even just have a chat over a cuppa?

We'd love to hear what you think. Is there any interest in DOWH having, for example:

- occasional informal online get-togethers with no set programme, where people can just log in with a cup of tea to have a chat, talking about what they're working on, or what they need help with, or unexpected things that they've discovered
- the chance for members to present their own research (including work in progress)
- a series of online "how tos", where individual members could explain how they went about a project, or how to deal with a particular source or online resource
- online "house history surgeries" – bring a problem and our resident expert (or the collective brain) will try to come up with a solution
- for volunteers and branch leaders (or anyone interested in getting involved), the chance to meet up with each other every so often online and put a face to the name
- something else entirely...

If this is something that you think could be of interest, we'd love to hear from you. You will **not** be expected to organise them, or even to come along.

Please throw some ideas at me! secretary@discoveringgoldwelshouses.co.uk (or have a chat with your branch leader)

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Alison

Links with Old Welsh Houses by Liz Millman

Over a short time in 1716, more than five and a half miles of a hand spun and handwoven cloth called 'Welsh Plains', was ordered by a London merchant to supply the Royal African Company, for them to prepare in the colours preferred by the West African market. Taken as part of the required goods on the Guineamen, the slave ships that regularly sailed to West Africa, this cloth was bartered and exchanged for human cargo, enslaved men and women, as well as children, who would be trafficked to the plantations of English and Welsh landowners to work in the most awful conditions.



Pandy Mill, Dolgellau

Imagining five and a half mile of cloth in lengths of 80 yards, about 120 pieces, is difficult. Where was it woven? Who collected and spun the woollen thread? Who were the weavers? Where was it woven? Where were the fulling processes needed carried out? Who led the packhorses across Wales to market?

These questions intrigued 'the Learning Links International CIC' team of community researchers.

Professor Chris Evans provided some answers in his excellent book 'Slave Wales: The Welsh and Atlantic Slavery' but acknowledged that a great deal more research was needed to understand how in Montgomeryshire in particular, acknowledged by travellers of the time, it was

recorded that many households were producing cloth 'for the poor Negroes in the West Indies.'

The Bangor based 'Learning Links International' team successfully approached the National Heritage Lottery Fund and in 2019 we were able to recruit community researchers, and together with support from Chris Evans and local groups of the Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers, we were able to explore more about the production and supply of this cloth. Time went quickly and although we were able to raise awareness about this unexpected Welsh export which supplied the growing slavery enterprises of Liverpool, our research left us with more questions that we started with!

How does this relate to readers with an interest in 'Discovering Old Welsh Houses? Around 1800, weavers started to be brought together to manage production in 'factories'. The Newtown Textile Museum is housed in one of the many well-lit, textile factories in the town. However, the increase in Welsh Plains production was undertaken in the years before this, it seems that weaving went on in the houses of the farming families, rented from the landowning families, or as is often suggested, in lean-to sheds. Neither of these would have been ideal for the weavers or their families.



Spinning

The project stalled in 2020 when Covid hit, but the NLHF report was written, the film telling the story was completed and the research notes were placed online – see www.welshplains.cymru – however Zoom gave an opportunity for discussions to carry on and the story was shared widely in press and on social media. The story was also picked up by creative artists, authors and others, but there is much more to do to really understand the importance of the production of woollen cloth across Wales before the heyday of the Welsh Woollen Mills and the production of the well-known tapestries and blankets.

We would be delighted to hear from anyone interested to explore this local history of cloth production in the small communities across Wales. This cloth was also used for local purposes, as well as Army uniforms. Welsh house, field and street names often give clues that link back to fulling mills or perhaps tenter fields. The Brethyn Online Research Groups meets on Zoom most months and has created interest from across the Atlantic, as Welsh Plains became a much sought-after cloth for clothing enslaved workers in the Southern States.

If you are interested to explore more – contact Liz Millman lizmillman@yahoo.co.uk

Liz Millman
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Secretary: North Wales Jamaica Society
Co-ordinator: Jamaica Wales Alliance
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Note from the Chair -For a bit of background, I can suggest the following and if anyone can add any information about any Pandy or the cloth industry, do please get in touch.

Janice

Welsh Wool, Slavery, and the Built Environment
<https://rcahmw.gov.uk/welsh-wool-slavery-and-the-built-environment/>

Merioneth Woollen Industry 1750-1820. Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorian 1939
<https://journals.library.wales/view/1386666/1411229/192#?xywh=-1660%2C255%2C5733%2C2871>

NEWS AND ARTICLES FROM THE BRANCHES

ANGLESEY BRANCH Report by Sue Hurst

In early October a group of 10 members and guests visited Brynddu, a 1690 house in Llanfechell, once the home of William Bulkeley the diarist and the centre of the Brynddu estate. Robin Grove-White, the owner, gave an introductory talk about the history of the house and then he and his wife Helen showed us around the house, both upstairs and down. There were many corridors and rooms upstairs, some of them having higher ceilings than the original main body of the house on the ground floor. We then visited the walled garden, which is still cultivated, and was probably built about the same time as the house, with Helen Grove-White as our guide. The afternoon finished with plentiful tea, coffee and cakes. Our thanks go to Robin and Helen for their time and hospitality.



Brynddu, Llanfechell

In early November a group of 15 members and guests visited Gronant, which lies off the A5025 between Llanfachraeth and Llanfaethlu. The oldest part of the house has been dated to the 1530s, but some people, including the owner Catherine Cunnah, think it is older. A Snowdonia style house, the only one on Anglesey, was built to the side of the original house and the two were joined together by a Georgian building. Catherine spoke about the house and then we were able to explore and see the wall paintings in the upstairs rooms. Catherine then took us on a tour of the outside of the buildings and again the afternoon finished with tea, coffee and cakes. Many thanks to Catherine for her time, hospitality and answering numerous questions posed by the visitors.

In December there will be a house history workshop at the Archives in Llangefni. The archivist, Amanda Sweet, will use Gronant as an example of the kind of documents and information available to those wishing to research their house history. At the time of writing only a couple of places are available.

CAERNARFONSHIRE BRANCH

Margaret Dunn, current secretary of the Caernarfonshire branch, has recently been unwell. We know all our members will join us in sending her our best wishes for an early recovery and in wishing both Margaret and Ray a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

CONWY BRANCH **Report by Gill Jones**

Six Branch members attended a meeting on the 17th October. It was decided that future meetings would take place if and when any Branch member requests one or has an idea for a visit or topic to discuss. Otherwise we may arrange a meeting every three months to see if our situation is likely to change. In the meantime, some house history research is likely to continue.

ARTICLE by Ray Castle **News from Aberconwy House**

Aberconwy House (NT) in Conwy town was closed by Covid in 2000 and its furniture returned to St Fagans. The ground floor re-opened as a National Trust bookshop on the 21st October 2023. Opening hours are Thursday – Saturday 10 - 4. They are asking for donations of books and puzzles.

CADW plan to open a local history museum on the upper floor. We're hoping that the Conwy branch of DOWH may be able to get involved.

The other Conwy properties which were closed by Covid are the Telford suspension bridge which now remains open but without any charge because they have no staff locally to manage it. The other building is the Telford bridge toll house. This is boarded up and generally in a very sad state.

Other news ...

Bodlondeb was the HQ of Conwy County Borough Council but following the opening of their Colwyn Bay HQ and some of their employees still working from home, it is under utilised. Conwy CBC have been denying that they will sell the building, but it now appears that it is to be sold in the near future. Perhaps it will become a hotel?

Local cemeteries and the booklets published by Gwynedd Family History Association are a rich source of information for those writing social histories. St Agnes Cemetery in Conwy was given by Lady Erskine (of Bodlondeb) to St Marys Church in the mid 19th century when the main church graveyard became full. It has been neglected for the last 50 years or so and was until recently engulfed in brambles to the point of being inaccessible. In the last few years a local group of volunteers (known as 'The Friends of St Agnes Cemetery') has cleared the undergrowth and the grounds are slowly improving. There are graves of important locals within the cemetery together with several war graves. The middle graveyard was gifted to the church by Albert Wood (also of Bodlondeb) in the 1920's. The third section is owned and maintained by Conwy CBC.

DENBIGHSHIRE BRANCH

Report by Jenny Lees

Following our June 2023 dendrochronology and building assessment of *Cadwst*, *Caenog*, *Hafod yr afr* and *Henblas*, DOWH members have been working together with our research lead Martin Cherry and the occupants of these properties on our DOWH house histories; these are now also informed by the exciting results so far of our assessments (see the research update under Stop Press, page 15) and will hopefully be ready for publication in early 2024.

DOWH's *Cynwyd Scrapbook Five* should be completed by the end of November, after which we can hopefully find time to catch up on our Parishes Project research for pre-1750 dwellings! Our September meeting at *Hafod y calch* Corwen to discuss research findings for this was very productive, and more such meetings will be arranged for the New Year.

October sadly saw the death of one of our oldest long-term Denbigh branch members, Bronwen Williams, formerly of *Cae Mawr*, Cynwyd, whom many members will remember joining us at Bryn *Berllan*, home of her daughter and DOWH researcher Anwen Lloyd - and bringing delicious home baked cakes to our meetings, a tradition now continued by Anwen!

Our pending visits will include one to *Cadwst*, Llandrillo, at 2pm on Thursday 7th December, but please contact me at leesjenny@gmail.com if interested, as numbers will be limited.

ARTICLE by Jenny Lees

From Strata Marcella to Caenog – with diversions on the way!

Our DOWH assessment of the present house of *Caenog* has not only dendrodated its oldest parts to **1550-52**, but also revealed what would have been a high-status property at the time, so now the search is on to find who could have built it! It lies within *Escyngainog*, a part of Gwyddelwern parish previously owned by the Cistercians of **Strata Marcella** abbey, and in **1525**, earlier than the 1536-9 suppression of the monasteries, the abbey had already made a lease of 99 years to **Robert ap Rhys ap Maredudd** of 'all messuages, lands, tenements etc. in the commotes of Penllyn and Edeirnion, called Tyr y Mynach and Heskyn gainog.'¹



Plas Iolyn, site of the home of Robert ap Rhys (Jenny Lees 2010)

Robert, third son of **Rhys Fawr** who supported Henry Tudor at the 1485 battle of Bosworth, became not only chancellor and vicar-general of the diocese of St Asaph, but also personal chaplain to Henry VIII's Cardinal Wolsey, acting as Wolsey's agent in North Wales. Acquiring great wealth through numerous 'benefices', letters from Robert to Henry VIII suggest these included much land in Llanfor parish,² and Robert lived at *Plas Iolyn*, near Pentrefoelas, in what bards including Tudur Aled and Lewis Môn praised as enormous and hospitable luxury - commenting also on their host's knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin.

Despite his pre-Reformation religious status, Robert had not only a wife, **Mared**, daughter of **Rhys** (or Rhydderch) **Llwyd** of *Gydros*, Llanfor (described as his 'concubine' by adversaries in a Chancery case!), but also twelve sons, one of whom founded the **Price** family of *Rhiwlas*, and four daughters! Although Robert could not have built *Caenog* himself as he had died by **1535**,³ it could have been financed by whoever had either inherited or purchased his 1525 lease. One possibility was his daughter **Catherine Llwyd**,⁴ said to have married **William Salesbury** or *Salisbury* (c. 1520 – c. 1584), the leading Welsh scholar of the Renaissance and principal translator of the 1567 Welsh New Testament.⁵

There may have been a connection with the Salesburys of *Rug* who did own *Caenog* land by **1653**, as William Salesbury was great-grandson of **Sir Thomas 'Hen' Salusbury** of *Lleweni*, from whom the *Rug* branch was also descended.⁶ (Robert ap Rhys's dominance was heavily

challenged by the Salusbury 'dynasty', but with little success before his death!) Although **William Salesbury** lived at Llanrwst, he was a proclaimed Protestant said to have had to spend most of Queen Mary's reign (**1553–1558**) in hiding. (Could any of this time have been at his father in law's former property of *Caenog*, with its unusually boarded roof?).

The above is just one strand of our search to find who might have been *Caenog's* owners and/or tenants in **1550-52!** Other candidates include the family of '**William Wynn** of *Hescyn gaenog*', descended from 5th *Baron of Glyndyfrdwy Gruffydd Vychan*; ⁷ the *commote* of Glyndyfrdwy then included the parish of Gwyddelwern. Another possibility is the ancestors of **William Vaughan** of *Caenog*, as the C18th poet who composed his **1732** elegy said Willam was great-grandson of **William ap Hywel Fychan** of Llan-llyn [Glan llyn].



**Gydros, above Cwm Pennaner
(Jenny Lees 2022)**

When our DOWH history of *Caenog* is published we may have untangled this complicated but exciting web of relationships between gentry, church, monasteries and English kings! But meanwhile, readers are very welcome to contact leesjenny@gmail.com with any comments, criticisms - or requests for full provisional drafts of our progress with the history so far!

References

1. J. Conway Davies, 'The records of the abbey of Ystrad Marchell', in Montgomery Collections, 51 (1949-1950), pp. 3-22.
2. <https://biography.wales/article/s-PRIC-RHI-1475>
3. Glanmor Williams, 'The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation', pp. 322-7.
4. <https://www.geni.com/people/Catherine-verch-Robert/600000000978669274?through=6000000002102454004>
5. <https://www.geni.com/people/William-Salusbury-Scholar/600000000978718368?through=600000000978669274>
6. <https://biography.wales/article/s-SALU-RUG-1525>
7. 'History of Powys Fadog', Vol VI, p.4.

FLINTSHIRE BRANCH

Report by Wally and Margaret Barr

In October nine of us met at Gladstone's Library, Hawarden, to hear a talk by Margaret Barr on House History research, especially that completed by DOWH members in Flintshire. Unfortunately, our planned November visit to a moated house near Nannerch, Plas Yw, had to be postponed because the surrounding area was completely waterlogged. We will now visit Plas Yw in the Springtime, always assuming the incessant rain has stopped by then ...

On December 14th the Flintshire and Denbighshire branches will meet together for a Christmas lunch at the Faenol Fawr in Bodelwyddan. We are to eat in the Tudor Room, which boasts a splendid oak-carved fire surround of the late 16th century. Any members or friends of members who would like to join us at the lunch are very welcome to book their place through Wally: wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk or phone 01745 888622.

REPORT by Gina Skyner
Talk to Flintshire Historical Society



Margaret Barr, Flintshire Branch Joint Secretary, gave a very successful talk to members of the Flintshire Historical Society on November 25th. at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Mold. The talk was entitled 'An Approach to Researching the History of Old Houses with special reference to Flintshire'.

Margaret took us through the various processes involved, using appropriate maps and photographs, with reference to a number of particular properties, all of which was thoroughly enjoyed by members. Margaret also spoke of the work of the Discovering Old Welsh Houses Group and provided pamphlets for the members to explore afterwards.

A number of interesting questions were answered, followed by refreshments.

Many members came to Margaret afterwards expressing thanks and congratulations on a very interesting talk.

Gina Skyner

Talk to Flintshire Historical Society

ARTICLE by Margaret Barr
The Old Cottage Revisited

If you look at the British Listed Buildings website for Wales you will see that Monmouthshire has 2,428 listed buildings, the third highest in Wales after Powys at 5,497 and Gwynedd at 4,175. I want to take you to the Monmouthshire parish of Llantilio Crossenny. It is situated almost mid-way between Abergavenny and Monmouth on the B4233 road. In the hamlet of Treadam there is a beautiful cottage. It is a 2* listed building and these are the reasons given ...

'Rare and remarkably unaltered C16 cottage retaining original detail of very high quality, including original mullion windows and fine centre partition truss with well-preserved post and panel partition.' (britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/300015761-the-old-cottage-llantilio-crossenny).

This is the cottage I lived in until I was 3½ years old, when we moved up to North Wales. Being so young I have limited recollections of my time there, but we always drive past if we are in the vicinity.

At the beginning of September 2023, we were staying in Monmouth with my brother and his partner. We went to Treadam on our way back from a day out and stopped and spoke to a neighbour. The owner of the cottage was out but we left our contact details as the neighbour said the



The Old Cottage
(sketch by Arthur Jacob; 1950)

lady would be sorry to have missed us. That evening we had a phone call from the owner and arrangements were made for us to visit the old cottage the next morning.

It was a beautiful morning and we were made very welcome with coffee and biscuits. It was the first time my brother and I had been inside the cottage since 1957! But amazingly I did have memories that proved to be correct – for instance the small parlour and the room next to it separated by a post and panel partition. This larger room had been a kitchen in our time and my mother had cooked on the open fire. My father's recollection was:

"We had to fetch our drinking water from a well down the road. And for all other purposes we used rainwater, which we collected in a large tank".

Richards, LI (2008) *Richards' Rambles* (my father's autobiography).

They didn't have electricity either until just before they left for North Wales. Originally it was one building, as demonstrated in the plan shown here.



Plan of the Old Cottage
(From Fox, C and Lord Raglan (1953) *Monmouthshire Houses Part II*. National Museum of Wales, Cardiff)

At a later stage it was divided into two dwellings which necessitated making another doorway and adding a staircase. The second staircase is no longer there and access to the upstairs is by the original stone stairs. In my parents' time they used the newer staircase and kept apples (from the orchard) over winter on the old stone staircase! Upstairs is an intriguing area by the gable window, which was added at a later date. It is not enclosed like a crog loft, but looks as though it could have been used for an additional sleeping space.

The visit was particularly poignant for my brother as he had been born in the bedroom upstairs in 1953 (whereas I had been born in Abergavenny hospital in 1954).

MERIONETH BRANCH

Further plans for branch events are not available at present.

ARTICLE by Peter Masters

A Cautionary Tale

Whilst helping with an enquiry about some family history we came across an interesting conundrum. A forebear, Evan Evans, was believed to have held lands in Ffestiniog and a search of the Welsh tithe maps online: <https://places.library.wales/home> led to said Evan Evans renting a Field no. 40 in the parish of Maentwrog. Merioneth.

Parish of Ffestiniog in the County of Merioneth

P.C.—London: Printed and Published by Authority, by Shaw and Sons, 1875 1/4, Patern-Row.

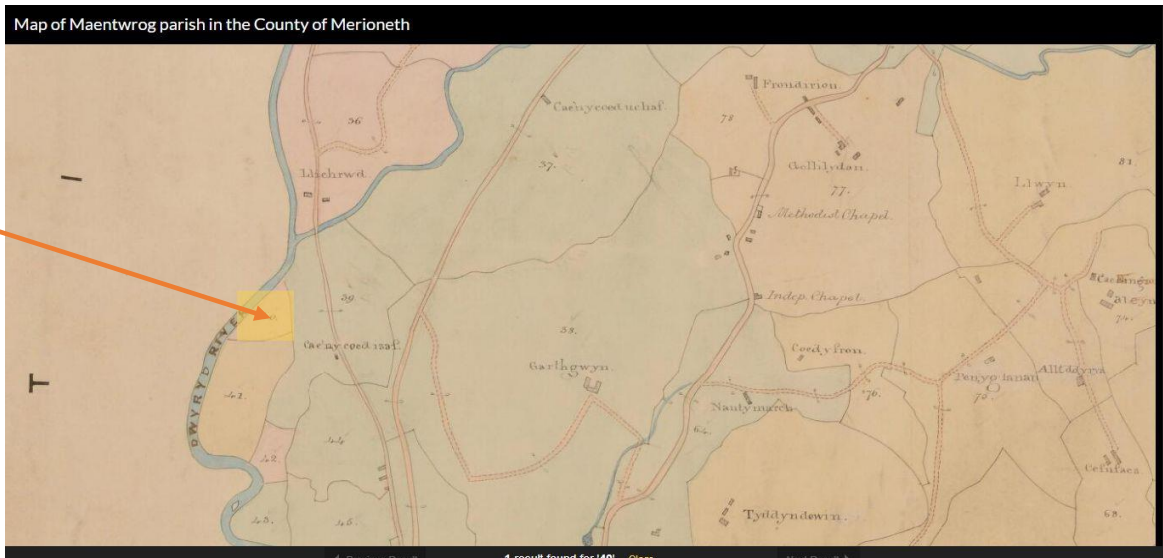
LANDOWNER.	OCCUPIER.	Number of Acres, Roods, & Poles.	NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF LANDS AND TENEMENTS.	STATE OF CULTIVATION.	QUANTITIES OF GRAIN, &c.				REMARKS.
					Wheat.	Oats.	Barley.	Other.	
Bankes George Esq The Trustees Bankes and Sir Robert Peel Earl of Pembroke	John Parry	46	Haycock, offroad		53	2		16 3	Wheat
	John Evans	51	Dun & Cae		176	4	3 2		Wheat & Oats
	John Lloyd		Dun & Cae						Wheat & Oats
	William Samuel		Tyddyn Gwyn		60	2 39	3 8		Wheat & Oats
	John Roberts	40	Tyddyn Gwyn						Wheat & Oats
	Evan Evans	29	Tyddyn Gwyn		53	1 27	1 47 6		Wheat & Oats
	John Parry	29	Tyddyn Gwyn		51	3			Wheat & Oats
	Richard Company	29	Tyddyn Gwyn		579	27			Wheat & Oats
	Evan Evans	104	Tyddyn Gwyn		45	2 23			Wheat & Oats
	John Parry	103	Tyddyn Gwyn		302	2 8			Wheat & Oats
Cryan George Esq	In hand	53	Wheat & Oats		99	3 17	3 3		Wheat & Oats
	John Penrhyn	56	Wheat & Oats		135	3 3	1 7		Wheat & Oats
	William Powell	99	Wheat & Oats		20	1 10			Wheat & Oats
Creswell Trustees of	Antwylaw Roberts	23	Wheat & Oats		130	1 36	1 2 4		Wheat & Oats
	Margaret Andrews	72	Wheat & Oats		166	4 2	3 10		Wheat & Oats

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Tithe Apportionment for Maentwrog, Merioneth 9th May 1840

The Tithe Apportionment for Maentwrog, Merioneth, 09 May 1840 shows:

Landowner no. 12 [William John Banks] Owner. Field no. 40 Dol y Moch, part of Tyddyn y Merched. Occupier Evan Evans. 5 Acres 1 Rod 12 Poles val: 2s 6d.



Tyddyn y Merched farm

This is a field with no buildings, as shown in the later O.S map overlay. W.J Banks held 12 parcels [although not attributed to him in the website index]. A look at the schedule shows he was the landowner of all land listed as owner no. 12.

Map of Maentwrog parish in the County of Merioneth

	19	Part of Llwyniteg	14 2 0		
	20	Part of Llanneith	22 1 14		
	21	Part of Llwyniteg	7 2 21		
	22	Part of Llanneith	2 2 0		
	23	Part of Llwyniteg	5 2 32		
			8 3 21		
			123 3 26	1 5 2	FOA.1
William Lloyd	29	Gwynn y Llan	12 1 30	5	FOA.1
Meredith Williams	33	Tyddyn y Merched	22 2 25	16	FOA.1
Evan Evans	40	Part of Dolymoch	5 1 12	2 6	
John Owens and Ellis Jones	35	Gellidymwll	124 3 7	5 6	FOA.1
John Morris	36	Llanneith	40 2 27		
	42	Part of Dolymoch	3 2 9		
			44 2 36	1 14	FOA.1
	3	Hafod fawr uchaf	16 2 14	1 14	R.23140
	9	Gallt	63 3 12	1 12	FOA.1
	10	Gynfal fawr	79 1 8	1 17	

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Tithe Apportion for Ffestiniog, Merioneth 8th Feb 1843

Tyddyn y Merched is a farm to the east of Dol y Moch towards Ffestiniog, SH 69535 41194, which seems to have several tenants according to the tithe list but all are owned by No.12, W.J Banks?

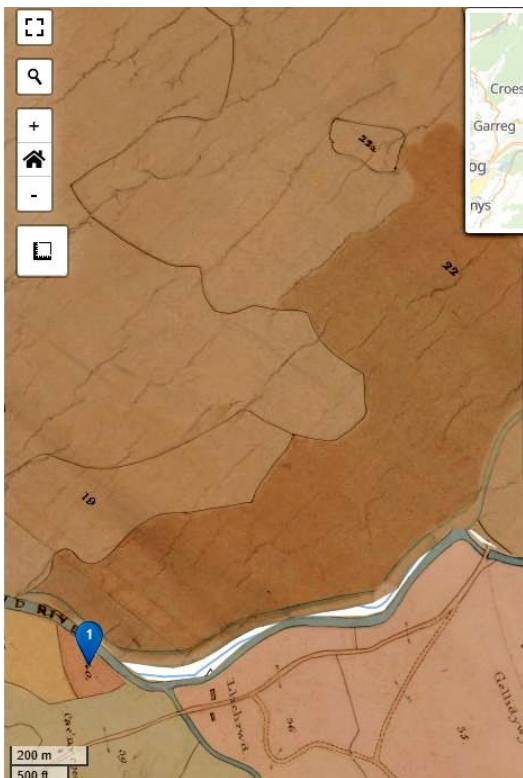
So far so good but ... BUT ... This didn't sit right because other searches show something different!



Tithe map for Ffestiniog, Merioneth(1843) Field no.22

The Tithe Apportion for Ffestiniog, Merioneth 08 Feb 1843 shows the Landowners: 1. George Banks. 2. Rev Edward Banks [his father?], & the Right Honourable Earl of Falmouth, Field no.22. Dol y Moch occupier Evan Evans, 479 Acres 0 Rods 27 Poles val: £9.

The 1843 tithe list shows Evan Evans' plot as being in Ffestiniog Parish, whereas the other 1840 link takes you to the same [similar] entry on the website, but the Tithe sheet is labelled Maentwrog Parish.



Tithe map for Ffestiniog, Merioneth (1843) Field no.40, the toe of field no. 22

Is this a rare example of overlapping boundaries, or a change in Parish boundaries with different surveys a few years apart and with a change of ownership? How many other 'Double Entries' are there in the Tithe List? Clearly the Maentwrog-Ffestiong Tithes need to be treated with caution.

A point of interest for the eagle-eyed. The first entry gives the field size as 5 Acres whereas the second later entry states 495 Acres! This cannot be a transcription error, 4.95 instead of 5, because this is all pre-decimalisation and the handwritten entry shows a staggering increase in the size of the field by 490 Acres although the same map is used for both tithe assessments.

The map entries for the parishes have been orientated to make them readable.

But by judicious use of the computer, patience, screen grabs and stitching, the answer is revealed. There are two entries for the same holding, field no. 40 being the toe of the larger holding 22 but the other side of the river and hence a different Parish.

The moral here is, can you believe what you see; are your sources sound? And do not take anything for granted. Check, check and crosscheck whenever possible.

ZOOM LECTURE SERIES 2023-4

From our Research Co-ordinator Martin Cherry

Wednesday 6 December at 7 pm (note that this is the first Wednesday of the month)

Helen Williams-Ellis worked as a TV producer and director, overseeing programmes with a focus on Welsh subjects. She then did her doctorate on the life and image of the early modern gentlewoman Catrin of Berain. She is on the Advisory Board of the Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates based at Bangor University.

Sex, Power, Marriage: Katheryn of Berain and her Four Husbands

Katheryn of Berain was married four times. Why did she marry – whom did she marry – and how did she become known as the 'Mother of Wales'?

Wednesday 10 January at 7 pm

Danny Mccaroll (FLSW) has formally retired from the Department of Geography, Swansea University, but remains a part of the research team. He was coordinator of the EU-funded 'Millennium Project', which reconstructed the climate of Europe over the last one thousand years.

Welsh Houses and the climate of the past

The main interests of the Swansea tree-ring team are in using the chemistry of oak timbers to date old houses, and then using the results to reconstruct the climate of the past. In this lecture, Professor McCarrroll will discuss how past changes in climate may have impacted on the population of Wales and how those impacts are reflected in some old Welsh houses.

Wednesday 14 February at 7 pm

Scott Lloyd is Research Manager at the Royal Commission for the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales and one of the key players in the prize-winning Deep Mapping Estate Archives Project.

More than just a map: The Ordnance Survey County survey large-scale mapping

The Ordnance Survey County survey was an enormous undertaking and the maps it produced are a valuable record of the nineteenth century landscape. But how did they gather the information that is shown on the maps, especially for boundaries and antiquities?

Wednesday 13 March at 7 pm

Judith Alfrey is Head of Heritage Regeneration and Conservation at Cadw and a trustee of the Vernacular Architecture Group.

From listing to local heritage: finding value in historic buildings

Listing often seems a top-down process, and in many ways it is. But every listed building is someone's local heritage. More and more, those responsible for designation are working with local communities to capture what local distinctiveness means to them.

Wednesday 10 April at 7pm

Martin Cherry DOWH trustee

After Glyndŵr: Building in an age of anarchy

Over the last decade or so, a substantial number of buildings in Wales have been securely tree-ring dated to the fifteenth century, several of them built during or within a few years of the Glyndŵr wars. Others – houses, courts, shops and churches – can be dated by analogy to around the same period. At a time of acute political uncertainty, who built them – and why? (The subject of the talk might be adapted if there are any exciting new research results to announce.)

Wednesday 8 May at 7 pm

Dr Jenny Day Research Fellow, University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth

"The fair court of St Bernard": the poets' view of the Cistercian abbeys of Wales.

The medieval poets can tell us a lot about buildings and the life that went on in them. Dr Jenny Day is an expert in this field and working on a book on poetry relating to Valle Crucis Abbey. Her talk will look at the architecture at Valle Crucis and other houses, and about the broader material culture relating to burials, worship and feasting.

Wednesday 19 June at 7.15 pm after the AGM (note this is the third Wednesday of the month)

This lecture will follow Discovering Old Welsh Houses AGM scheduled for 6.15 pm.

Robin Grove-White is Professor Emeritus of Environment and Society at Lancaster University and Chair of the Advisory Board, Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates, Bangor University.

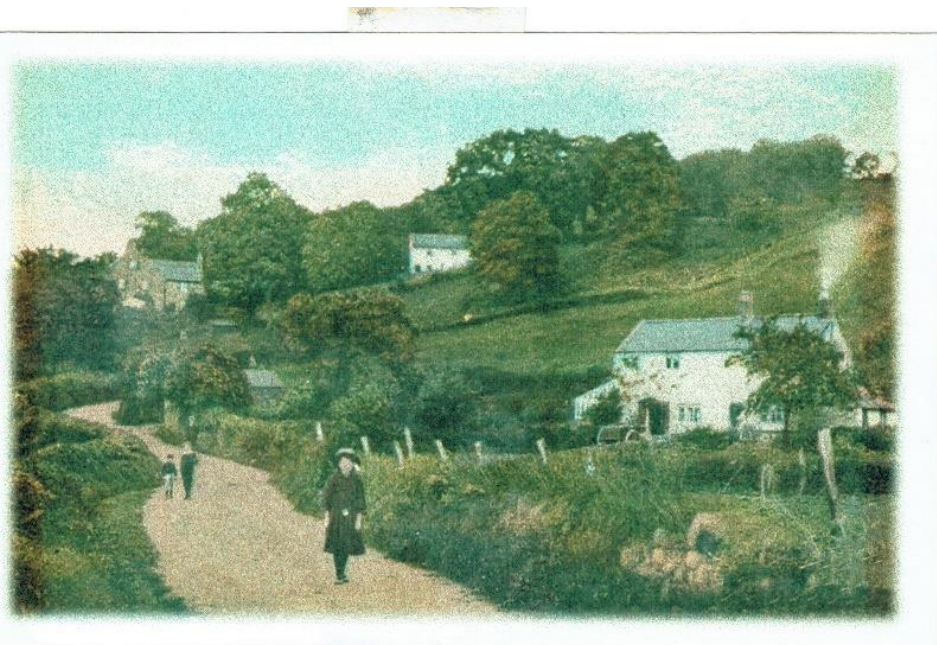
My Dad the Communist Landowner and Other Anglesey Tales (provisional title)

FEATURE ARTICLE: DIARY OF A RENOVATION

By Angie Sutton-Vane and Glyn Davies (angelasuttonvane@outlook.com)

The renovation of Plas yn Bwl House: Part Three

My first two entries concentrated on the long eighteen-month application process for listed building and planning consent but, of course, the history and occupants of Plas yn Bwl are an inextricable and parallel part of the story, so I've shared some of my early house history research attempts below.

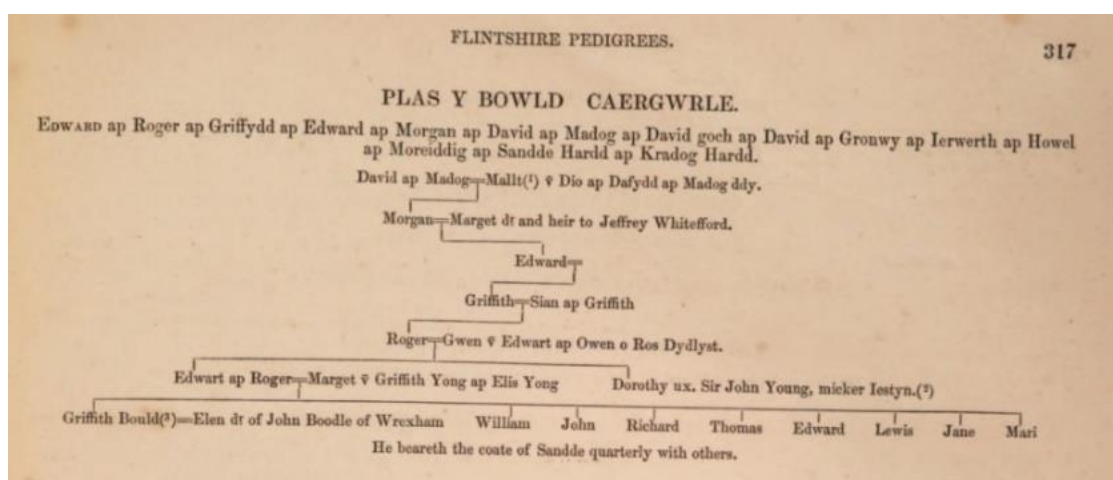


An early (recoloured) photograph of Bryn Yorkin Lane Plas yn Bwl at the top left, c. early 1900s. Source unknown – shared on Facebook)

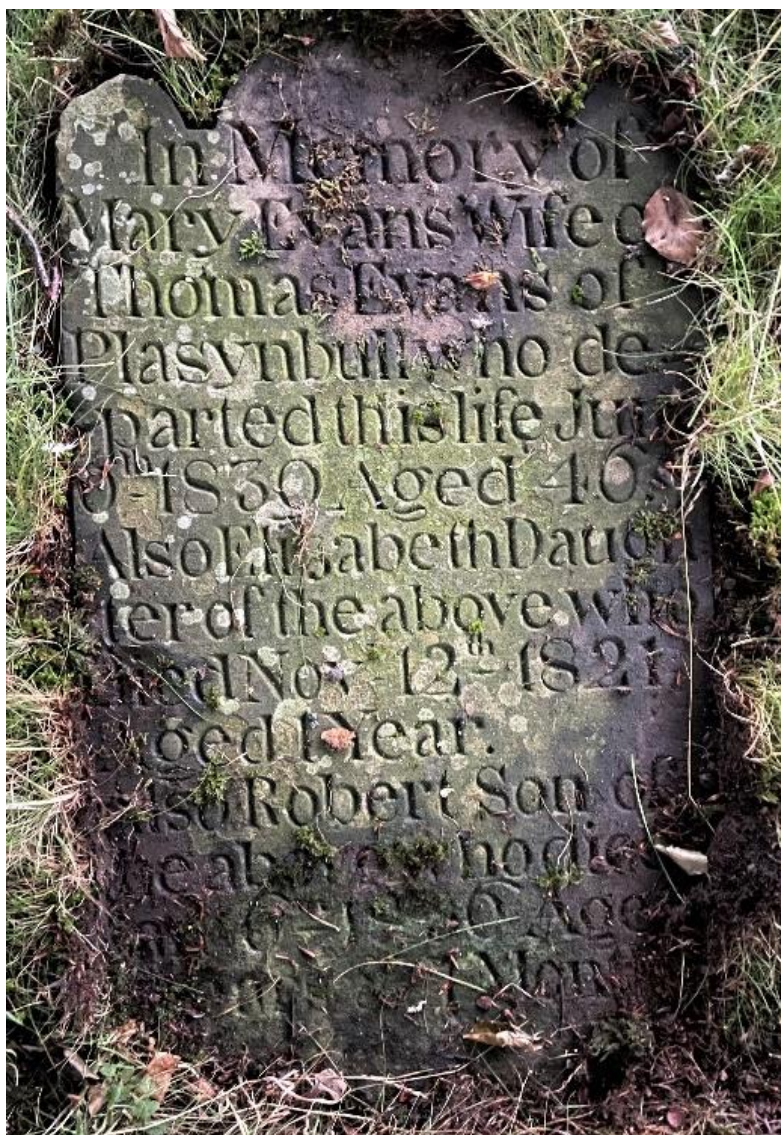
Following my historian's instinct of always starting with what I know to be true, I began with the British Listed Buildings website entry (link given at end of this article), and I was immediately mired in complexities. The entry doesn't attribute its research: I managed to trace some of the references to the early 15th century Boldes, for example, Sir Richard Bolde, who were believed to have built the house; I also ascertained that members of the Bolde family were undoubtedly in the region, active around Deeside, Chester and a number of castles during the 15th century with connections to the Earls of Derby – they were, in other words, very much a part of the Marcher Lordship circuit. But I haven't been able to expand on

the listing's particular reference to the Bolde's purchase of land to the west of Caergwrle Castle or indeed pin the medieval Boldes directly to the village or to the house.

Much later, by 1586 or 1613, an entry appearing in Heraldic Visitations for Flintshire reveals that, by then, the Griffiths (Brymbo line) were living at 'Plas y Bowld, Caergwrle', and it is apparent that, through marriage of the female line of the Boldes, the house had passed to them.



The pedigree for Plas y Bowld taken from p.317, Vol. II – The three counties of North Wales; Heraldic Visitations, c.1586 or 1613.



The second puzzle was the name Bolde versus Bwl – if the house was built and owned by the Boldes why was it called Bwl which is not Welsh for Bolde: the listing suggested the name of Bolde died out, becoming Bull but nor does bwl normally mean bull in Welsh, and I stand to be corrected here. Although it's quite possible the house name has simply mutated from Bowld (another spelling) to Bwl over the centuries, it became evident the listing was incorrect – the Bolde family did not die out but remained right up to the 19th century back in Lancashire and I've failed as yet to trace the referenced Bull family.

One final puzzle was an entry for the Boldes in the online database published by Family Search taken from the works by Peter Batrum which traces them back to Welsh origins with Sir Bruce Bold's father (c. 1170) being Iarddur ab Egri who descended from Morien "Mynog" ap March of Anglesey. This is a considerable and puzzling leap from the Boldes described by the listing as prosperous English settlers and as an ancient, pre-Norman conquest family from Lancashire.

Having learned from my above early explorations that in the quest for what is known it's better to start at the end and work backwards, I've put aside the medieval research for the time being and census information is certainly proving useful. I can say more later, but any comments or advice around medieval records gratefully received!

A gravestone in Hope church yard for Mary Evans, wife of Thomas Evans of "Plasynbull" who died in 1830. Also their daughter, Elizabeth, who died in 1821 aged one year and their son, Robert (Photo by Angie)

House entry on British Listed Buildings: <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/300000029-plas-yn-bwl-hope>

STOP PRESS!

BREAKING NEWS FROM THE OXFORD DENDROCHRONOLOGY LAB

By Martin Cherry & Jenny Lees

Members may be aware that DOWH received generous grants from both the Woodtiger Fund and the Vernacular Architecture Group to tree-ring date a number of houses in the old commote of Edeirnon. We now have the results for two of these – the others did not date using conventional ring-width measurement



**Caenog, Gwyddelwern Denbighshire.
Farmhouse from the yard**

and will be sent off to Swansea University for oxygen-isotope analysis.

The results we have are exciting. One – Caenog, a farmhouse near Gwyddelwern (now Denbighshire) – has a precise date for the primary phase of 1550. In the Middle Ages its site belonged to Strata Marcella Abbey and was leased in 1525 for 99 years to Robert ap Rhys, vicar-general of the diocese of St Asaph and one of Cardinal Wolsey's henchmen in North-east Wales. He had died by 1535 and we are not yet sure to whom it passed, quite possibly to one of his daughters: albeit a clergyman he had twelve or more children!

Whoever it was, the house is of exceptionally high quality and possesses a very rare feature. It was originally timber-framed and floored throughout.

The photograph shows the roof over the chamber with its pronounced decorative pegs and clean-cut trefoil to the cusp of the truss and with rebated boarding between the rafters – an original feature.

Boarded roofs are occasionally found in churches but only very rarely in houses (they were quickly superseded by plaster ceilings as at Plas Mawr in Conwy, although there is no evidence of that here). Whoever built it was out to make an impression. Later phases, also of high quality, failed to date.



**Caenog
Roof over principal chamber with rebated boards between the
rafters, a very rare feature
Tree-ring dated to 1550**

The other house – Hafod yr Afr near Cynwyd also now in Denbighshire – is a cruck-framed open hall house with a rather wide date range that places it towards the middle of the sixteenth century (probably 1533-63). The roof timbers are very clean



– it may have been an open hall house heated by a proper fireplace (rather than an open hearth) but it is more likely that it was floored over almost as soon as it was built.

While open halls were being built into the seventeenth century, they were beginning to fall out of fashion from the middle of the sixteenth and there are other examples of owners sensing the changing fashion of the times and altering their plans while they were still building the house or very shortly afterwards. It seems that they couldn't be bothered to finish the cusping (the lower left-hand cusp is unfinished) – no point wasting time and money if it was going to be covered over!

Hafod yr Afr, Cynwyd
The open hall survives under the corrugated iron roof

There is more work to be done on the histories of these houses (and the house histories will go onto our website in due course). We will announce the dates of the other houses directly we get results from the Swansea laboratory. The tree-ring samples were extracted by Ross Cook and analysed by Martin Bridge of the Oxford Dendro Lab.



Hafod yr Afr, Cynwyd, Denbighshire
The principal hall truss tree-ring
dated to c.1533-63

Martin Cherry and Jenny Lees
November 2023

AND FINALLY ...

... AN OLD HOUSES WORD SEARCH!

Find all the listed words in the grid that relate to old houses, reading in straight lines, up, down, or diagonally, either backwards or forwards. No prizes – just for fun!

ARCH, BATTEN, BAY, BOX-FRAME, BRACE, BRESSUMER, CRUCK, DAIS, DAUB, DOOR, DOWH, HEARTH, MOAT, RAFTER, ROOF, ROOM, SOLAR, TENON, TIE BEAM, TRUSS.



We wish
a very MERRY
CHRISTMAS
to all our readers!

