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# GRŴP DARGANFOD HEN DAI CYMREIG DISCOVERING OLD WELSH HOUSES GROUP

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

## CYLCHLYTHYR 15

*Rhagfyr 2015*

Mae'n gweithgarwch yn mynd o nerth i nerth ac rwyn hynod ddiolchgar i bawb am eu cymorth a'u brwdfrydedd a fu'n fodd o wneud y chwe blynedd diwethaf mor llwyddiannus. Yn dilyn y Cylchlythyr hwn, byddaf yn ysgrifennu ychydig o eiriau ar gyfer pob cyhoeddiad, gan amlygu'r meysydd a allai fod o ddiddordeb.

Bu ein cyfrol *Darganfod Tai Hanesyddol Eryri* yn llwyddiant mawr ac fe wnaeth gyfraniad pwysig i'n sefyllfa ariannol.. Mae defnyddio 'Darganfod' yn y teitl wedi gwneud i ni benderfynu newid ein henw, ac felly o Ionawr 1af ymlaen byddwn yn 'Grŵp Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig' gan y teimlwn fod hyn yn adlewyrchu ein diddordeb ehangach ym mhob agwedd o dai hanesyddol, megis pwy a drigai ynddynt, a sut y maent wedi cyfrannu at fywyd Cymreig.

Yn y Gwanwyn, gobeithiwn ymgeisio am gymorth sylweddol o arian grant a fydd yn ein galluogi i wneud mwy o waith ar hyd arfordir Gogledd Cymru ac yng Ngogledd Ddwyrain Cymru, a hefyd ddeall yn well y mynydd o wybodaeth yr ydym wedi ei gasglu yng ngwrs ein gwaith.

Rwyn gobeithio y cawn i gyd Flwyddyn Newydd hapus a heddychlon.

*Richard Cuthbertson, Cadeirydd*



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

## NEWSLETTER 15

*December 2015*

Our work goes from strength to strength and I would like to thank everyone for their help and enthusiasm which have made the last six years so successful. From this Newsletter on, I will be writing a few lines for each issue which will highlight areas which may be of interest.

Our book *Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia* has been a great success and has made an important contribution to our finances. The use of 'Discovering' in its title led on to our decision to change our name, so from January 1st 2016 we will become the 'Discovering Old Welsh Houses Group' as we feel this reflects our wider interest in all aspects of old houses, who lived in them, and how they have contributed to Welsh life.

In the Spring we hope to apply for a substantial grant aid which would help us do more work along the North Wales coast and in North East Wales, and also to get a better understanding of the mountain of information which we have accumulated in the course of our work.

I hope we all have a happy and peaceful New Year.

*Richard Cuthbertson, Chairman*



< Coed y Ffynnon

^ Penmachno

## DIGWYDDIADAU GRŴP GWANWYN 2016

Archebwch yn gynnar gan roi enwau'r cysylltwyr. Fe anfonir y manylion llawn i'r rhai sydd wedi archebu.

**Sadwrn 30 Ionawr:** 'Can Archaeology Alter Ideas?' Ymweliad safle a sgwrs yn Saesneg gan WT (Bill) Jones, arweinydd y tîm archeolegol, a Dr Ian Brooks, archeolegydd safle a chofnodydd adeiladau. Ym Mhlas Tirion, Llanrwst, am 1.30yp. Uchafswm 20. (Archebwch gyda M. Dunn [brynbeddi@gmail.com](mailto:brynbeddi@gmail.com): 01766 890550.)

**Sadwrn 20 Chwefror:** 'The House in the Landscape: Artists' views of Welsh Buildings.' Sgwrs ddarluniadol yn Saesneg gan Jeremy Yates, Llywydd yr Academi Frenhinol Gymreig, Arlunydd a Thiwtor, yn Neuadd Gymunedol Capel Curig am 1.30yp. Uchafswm 25 (Archebwch gyda Wally: [wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk) 01745 888622.) **Sadwrn 12 Mawrth:** Teithiau cerdded byr i Gefn y Fan a Chesail Gyfarch, safleoedd tai o ddechrau'r 15 ganrif. Cyfarfod ym mhentref Bryncir, ger Porthmadog am 2yp. Uchafswm 20. (Archebwch gyda Wally: [wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk) 01745 888622.) Gwelwch hefyd fanylion ymweliad Cangen Môn/Arfon gerllaw ar fore'r un diwrnod, a bydd croeso i holl aelodau'r Grŵp (archebwch ar wahân).

**DIGWYDDIADAU CANGEN:** i'w harchebu â chyswllt cangen, fel arfer am £2.

### CANGEN YNYS MÔN / ARFON

Cyswllt: Peter Masters: [datingoldwelshhouses@gmail.com](mailto:datingoldwelshhouses@gmail.com) 01758 750322. **Ionawr** Dim cyfarfod. **Iau 11 Chwefror** (i'w gadarnhau). Cyfarfod yn Archifdy Caernarfon ar gyfer dysgu am gronfa ddata newydd y Grŵp. **Sadwrn 12 Mawrth** (i'w gadarnhau). Yn y bore, ymweld â thŷ Gilfach, Cwm Pennant (Gradd II ar y system unedau). Gellir yn hawdd gyfuno'r ymweliad hwn â chyfarfod pnawn y Grŵp ar yr un diwrnod.

### CANGEN CONWY

Cyswllt: Tony Scharer: [tonyscharer@gmail.com](mailto:tonyscharer@gmail.com) 01745 813027. **Llun 18 Ionawr** 'Cadw Tŷ a Diweddarau' 9.30 – 12.30, lleoliad: Cartref Ann Morgan (i'w gadarnhau). **Chwefror** i'w gadarnhau: Ymweliad â thŷ. **Mawrth** i'w gadarnhau: gweithdy ar Bensaerniaeth Frodorol gyda Peter Thompson, yn dechrau am 9.30 yn Archifdy Conwy; yna am 1.30yp yn Nhŷ Aberconwy.

### CANGEN SIR DDINBYCH

Cyswllt: Janice Dale: [jadale22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jadale22@hotmail.co.uk) 01450 440427. Cytunwyd na fyddem yn cwrdd yn Ionawr, ond ar **Iau 11 Chwefror**, bydd cyfarfod gyda'r nos ym Mryn Berllan. **Mercher 2 Mawrth** cyfarfod yn y pnawn yng Nghoed y Foel, Derwen yng nghwmni Peter Thompson ar gyfer edrych ar arweddion pensaernïol. **Iau 7 Ebrill**, cyfarfod yn yr hwyr yn Ucheldre, pynciau i'w penderfynu.

### CANGEN MEIRIONNYDD

Cyswllt: John Townsend: [john@thetownsend.org.uk](mailto:john@thetownsend.org.uk) 01341 430262. **Llun 18 Ionawr** o 10.0yb tan 12.30 yp yn yr Ystafell Gymuned, Llyfrgell/Archifdy Dolgellau, LL40 2YF: 'Cwrs ar gyfer 'Dechreuwy'r yn Ymchwilio i Hanes Tai' ac o 1.30 yp hyd 4.30 yp: 'Ymarfer yr hyn a Ddysgir' yn yr Archifau (fe all y bydd angen talu am y digwyddiad hwn). **Iau 18 Chwefror** o 2.00yp hyd 3.30yp yn y Stafell Gymunedol, Llyfrgell/Archid y Dolgellau: 'Abaty Cymer a Siarter 1209 a gafwyd gan

## 2016 SPRING GROUP EVENTS

Book early with the contacts named. Full details will be sent to those who have booked.

**Sat 30<sup>th</sup> Jan:** 'Can Archaeology Alter Ideas?' Site visit and talks in English by WT (Bill) Jones, archaeology team leader, and Dr Ian Brooks, site archaeologist and building recorder. At Plas Tirion, Llanrwst, at 1.30 p.m. Max 20. (Book with M. Dunn [brynbeddi@gmail.com](mailto:brynbeddi@gmail.com): 01766 890550.)

**Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Feb:** 'The House in the Landscape: Artists' views of Welsh Buildings.' Illustrated talk in English by Jeremy Yates, President of the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art, Artist and Tutor, in Capel Curig Community Hall at 1.30 p.m. Max 25. (Book with Wally: [wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk) 01745 888622.)

**Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Mar:** Short walks to Cefn y Fan and Gesail Gyfarch, sites of early 1400s houses. Meet at Bryncir village, near Porthmadog at 2 pm. Max 20. (Book with Wally: [wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk) 01745 888622.) See also the details of the Anglesey/Caernarfon Branch visit nearby in the morning the same day, to which all Group members will be welcome (book separately).

**BRANCH EVENTS:** book with branch contacts, usually @ £2.

### ANGLESEY-CAERNARFONSHIRE BRANCH

Rep: Peter Masters: [datingoldwelshhouses@gmail.com](mailto:datingoldwelshhouses@gmail.com) 01758 750322. **Jan** No meeting. **Thu 11<sup>th</sup> Feb** (tbc) meeting at Caernarfon Record Office to learn about the Group's new database. **Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Mar** Morning (tbc): house visit to Gilfach, Cwm Pennant (Grade II, on unit system). The Group meeting in the afternoon of the same day can easily be combined with this visit.

### CONWY BRANCH

Contact: Tony Scharer: [tonyscharer@gmail.com](mailto:tonyscharer@gmail.com) 01745 813027. **Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Jan** 'Housekeeping and Update' 9.30 - 12.30, venue: Ann Morgan's home (tbc). **Feb** tbc: House visit. **Mar** tbc: Vernacular Architecture workshop with Peter Thompson, starting at 9.30 at Conwy Record Office; then 1.30 p.m. in Aberconwy House.

### DENBIGHSHIRE BRANCH

Contact: Janice Dale: [jadale22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jadale22@hotmail.co.uk) 01450 440427. Agreed we would not have a meeting in January, but on **Thu 11<sup>th</sup> Feb** we will have an evening meeting at Bryn Berllan. **Wed 2<sup>nd</sup> Mar**, afternoon meeting at Coed y Foel, Derwen with Peter Thompson to look at architectural features. **Thu 7<sup>th</sup> Apr**, evening meeting at Ucheldre, topics to be decided.

### MERIONETH BRANCH

Contact: John Townsend: [john@thetownsend.org.uk](mailto:john@thetownsend.org.uk) 01341 430262. **Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Jan** from 10am to 12.30pm in the Community Room, Dolgellau Library/Archives, Bala Rd, Dolgellau, LL40 2YF: 'Beginners' Course in Researching House Histories' and 1.30pm to 4.30pm: 'Putting the Learning into Practice' in the Archives (there may be a charge for this event). **Thu 18<sup>th</sup> Feb** from 2.00pm to 3.30pm in the Community Room, Dolgellau Library/Archives: 'Cymer

Llywelyn Fawr'. Siaradwraig Nia Rowlands. **Mawrth 15 Mawrth** o 2.00p hyd 4.00p ymweld â Rhos (Tŷ'n y Rhos), Minffordd, Penrhyndeudraeth, LL48 6HP drwy ganiatâd caredig Nan Griffiths.

#### NEWYDDION DIWEDDARAF

**Partneriaeth Conwy:** Yn affodur ni fedrwyd dyddio coed Cysulog, Maerdy. Rydym yn aros am ganlyniadau cais i Gronfa Cymuned Gwynt y Môr er mwyn gallu gwneud gwaith pellach yng ngogledd Conwy.



Gwernbraichdŵr

**Dendrocronoleg ym Meirionnydd:** Fel canlyniad i dderbyn nawdd gan Gronfa Marc Fitch, Cronfa Gymunedol Magnox a Chymdeithas Hynafiaethau Cymru, bydd mwy o ddendrocronoleg yn digwydd yn Labordy Dendrocronoleg Rhydychen yn gynnar yn Ionawr 2016. Rydym yn disgwyl derbyn canlyniadau Gwernbraichdŵr.

Mae **Taith Astudio 2016** i Faldwyn, bellach yn llawn, ynghyd â rhestr aros.

**Seminarau i ddod: Sefydliad Ymchwil Ystadau Cymru (SYWC/ISWE), Bangor:**

**Dydd Iau 28 Ionawr:** Ystâd trwy lygaid y tenant: Rhug yn y

50au a'r 60au [YN GYMRAEG] (Megan Tomas). **Iau 11 Chwefror:** 'Swydd i ddyn addysgedig, o gefndir amaethyddol a chyda fflach artistig': Rheoli Ystâd Gymreig – Myfyrdodau Asiant Tir (Richard Thomas, Asiant Tir – Ystadau Mostyn a Tim Bowie, Rheolwr Ystad – Bodorgan). Gwahoddir unrhyw aelod o GDHDC/DOWHG sy'n awyddus i dderbyn cylchlythyrau, SYWC/ISWE ayyb, yn y dyfodol, i eostio [iswe@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:iswe@bangor.ac.uk).

**Grant Cylchlythyr / Nawdd:** Rydym yn ddiolchgar i Gronfa Gymunedol Parc Cenedlaethol Eryri am gymorth ariannol i'r Cylchlythyr hwn ac i Donald Insall Associates am ei noddi.

**LLAWER O DDIOLCH** i Gangen Meirionnydd am eu cyfraniad i'r argraffiad hwn o'r cylchlythyr.

**NODYN I'CH HATGOFFA:** mae'r holl dai y sonnir amdanynt yn y cylchlythyr hwn yn eiddo preifat.

**AR BOB CYFRIF YMWELWCH Â'N GWEFAN** ar gyfer gweld adroddiadau blog o'r holl ddigwyddiadau diweddar: gweler <http://datingoldwelshhouses.co.uk/>.

Abbey and the 1209 Charter granted by Llywelyn the Great'. Speaker Nia Rowlands. **Tue 15<sup>th</sup> Mar** from 2.00pm to 4.00pm visit to Rhos, (Tŷ'n y Rhos), Minffordd, Penrhyndeudraeth, LL48 6HP by kind permission of Nan Griffiths.

#### NEWS UPDATE

**Conwy Partnership:** Unfortunately the timbers at Cysulog, Maerdy, did not date. We await the results of an application to Gwynt y Môr Community Fund to enable further work in north Conwy to proceed.



Cysulog

**Dendrochronology in Merioneth:** Thanks to grants from the Marc Fitch Fund, the Magnox Community Fund and the Cambrian Archaeological Association, further dendrochronology will be undertaken by the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory in early January 2016. We await the results from Gwernbraichdŵr.

The **2016 Study Tour** to Montgomeryshire is now fully booked, with a waiting list.

**Forthcoming Seminars: Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates (ISWE), Bangor:**

**Thu 28<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Ystâd trwy lygaid y tenant: Rhug yn y '50au a

'60au [IN WELSH] (Megan Tomas). **Thu 11<sup>th</sup> Feb:** 'A post for an educated man, with an agricultural background and an artistic streak': Managing a Welsh Estate – Land Agent Reflections (Richard Thomas, Land Agent – Mostyn Estates and Tim Bowie, Estate Manager – Bodorgan). Any DOWHG members wanting to sign up for future ISWE newsletters etc. are invited to email [iswe@bangor.ac.uk](mailto:iswe@bangor.ac.uk).

**Newsletter Grant / Sponsorship:** We thank the Snowdonia National Park Community Fund for grant-aiding this Newsletter and Donald Insall Associates for sponsoring it.

**MANY THANKS** to the Merioneth Branch for their contribution to this issue of the newsletter.

**REMINDER:** all the houses mentioned in this newsletter are private property.

**DO VISIT** <http://datingoldwelshhouses.co.uk/> to see blog accounts of all recent events and to look at our growing library.

**OS YDYCH Â DIDDORDEB MEWN HEN DAI** a ddim eto yn aelod, pam na wnewch chi ystyried ymuno â'r Grŵp? Yr Ysgrifenyddes Aelodaeth yw Ms Zoë Henderson [zoehenderson123@btinternet.com](mailto:zoehenderson123@btinternet.com) 01824 704404.

Am wybodaeth bellach cysyllter â Margaret Dunn, Ysgrifennydd [brynbedd1@gmail.com](mailto:brynbedd1@gmail.com) 01766 890550.

### GŴYL CONWY – CODI YSGUBOR

I unrhyw un a fynychodd Wyl Conwy ddiwedd Hydref, fe welwyd fod yr ysgubor y soniwyd amdani yn y cylchlythyr diwethaf, yn cael ei chodi. Roedd y strwythur o larwydd dyffryn Conwy yn y dull traddodiadol, ac roedd yn rhyfeddol o hawdd i'w godi gan ychydig o wirfoddolwyr y noson flaenorol. Llawer o ddiolch i SPAB/CAAH (Cymdeithas Amddiffyn Adeiladau Hynafol) a ganiataodd arddangosfa fechan gan GDHDC/DOWHG ar eu stondin. Dangoswyd cryn ddiddordeb yn y crefftau a welwyd – o do llechi â phegiau derw, i fangorwaith (gan gynnig hwyl fawr i'r plant yn bresennol), a'r defnydd o ddeunyddiau naturiol ar gyfer cynnal a chadw hen adeiladau.



Ysgubor Conwy/ Conwy barn



Plas Tirion, Llanrwst

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN OLD HOUSES** and are not already a member, why not consider joining the Group? The Membership Secretary is Ms Zoë Henderson [zoehenderson123@btinternet.com](mailto:zoehenderson123@btinternet.com) 01824 704404.

For further information contact Margaret Dunn, Secretary [brynbedd1@gmail.com](mailto:brynbedd1@gmail.com) 01766 890550.

### CONWY FEAST – BARN RAISING

Anyone visiting Conwy Feast at the end of October may have seen that the barn raising, mentioned in the last newsletter, did take place. The structure was made from local Conwy valley larch in the traditional way, and erected, surprisingly easily, by a few volunteers the night before. Many thanks to SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) who allowed DOWHG a small display on their stand. There was a lot of interest in the crafts displayed – from traditional oak-pegged slating, to wattle and daub walls (great fun for the children present), and the use of natural materials to repair and maintain old buildings.

## An Ode to Trees



A house. A house my kingdom for a house.  
Atop the hill beside the stream,  
I stand perchance to dream.  
But wait what's this I see? What stands before?  
A Tree?  
What secrets lie beneath its bough?  
And how, can what's within concealed,  
ever be revealed?

With drill and auger we explore the Bole.  
And take sample from the hole.  
Where within the girth we find, many rings  
beneath its mantle.  
One for the heart and some for the sap  
some for the decades and the seasons and  
one for the bark to bind them.

Crown, King and Dragon posts reside  
with Crucks and Purlins deep inside  
and with the rafter, uphold a roof  
for ever after.

So by magic and wizardry  
these arboreal secrets are revealed to me  
thanks to Dendrochronology.

©Peter Masters 2014

## BYDDWCH YN BAROD! MARCIAU, SYMBOLAU AC OLION LLOSG AR ADEILADAU TRADDODIADOL

Pan fyddwn yn ymweld â hen dai Cymreig, mae'n hawdd iawn peidio â sylwi ar yr amrywiol symbolau a graffiti niferus sydd yno, ar ein hadeiladau brodorol. Mae'r erthygl fer hon yn edrych ar y rhain ac yn tynnu ein sylw at y gwaith a fu ar rhai olion llosg diweddar, olion mwyaf cyffredin dyn.

Gall marciau ar goed ac ar gerrig adeiladau ddatlennu llawer am eu stori a'n helpu ni i ddehongli ac ychwanegu lliw at eu datblygiad. Wrth i ni grwydro o amgylch rhai o'n hadeiladau hynafol, bydd llawer ohonom yn sylwi ar wahanol fathau o farciau. Mae rhai o'r rhain, fel marciau seiri, yn eithaf uniongyrchol a ddim ond yn perfformio pwrpas hynod ymarferol o alluogi cymalau adeiladu to neu fframiau coed gael eu paratoi a'u hailgasglu ar y safle, drwy ddynodi dau hanner cymal arbennig. Mae marciau offer hefyd yn glïwr arall o safbwynt paratoi ac adeiladu. Mae'r bwyell ochrol a cham, yn gadael sgolpiau nodweddiadol ar y coed gorffenedig, tra bod marciau llif yn datgelu dull arall o leihau coed yn rannau sgwâr. Mae'r marciau hyn yn dystiolaeth ddefnyddiol o ddangos sut yr adeiladwyd yr adeilad.

Mae marciau eraill, fodd bynnag, yn fwy enigmatig, os nad yn gyfan gwbl astrus. Yn ychwanegol at farciau endoredig a wnaed gan seiri coed a seiri meini, ceir ystod o farciau arysgrifedig neu wedi eu rhychu, yn aml yn ysgafn iawn, mewn nifer o adeiladau eglwysig a seciwlar, o'r cyfnod canoloesol ymlaen. Defnyddir ystod o ddyfeisiau a symbolau, o fotifau geometrig a lluniau, i lythrennu 'rwnig' syml. Nid ydym bob amser yn deall eu pwrpas, ond yn gyffredinol teimlwn y bwriedid iddynt atal grymoedd maleisus rhag dod i fewn i'r adeilad. Mae'r marciau amddiffyn defodol hyn, neu marciau gwrthfelltithiol i fod yn dechnegol (o'r Groeg: "i gadw drwg draw"), yn digwydd yn eang iawn; eto mewn nifer o adeiladau ni welir unrhyw farc o gwbl. Defnyddio fflachlamp yw'r ffordd orau o'u darganfod a'u harchwilio, a thafu'r golau o'r ochr (gweler y llun yng Nghylchlythyr 14).



^ > Marciau gwrthfelltithiol ar drawst yng Nghae'n y Coed, Meirionnydd

Yn ychwanegol at y symbolau hyn, gadawyd arteffactau yn aml mewn ceudodau yn y wal ac mewn simneiau i'r un diben. Yn gyffredin ymysg y rhain mae sgidiau, cathod wedi eu sychu, poteli witshis (yn dal troeth), dilladau ac eitemau eraill.

Weithiau mae'r gwahaniaeth rhwng natur ymarferol y rhifau sy'n cynorthwyo'r adeiladu a'r marciau gwrthfelltithiol yn aneglur. Roedd y seiri coed a'r seiri meini weithiau yn defnyddio marciau adeiladol eithaf cymhleth yn hytrach na rhifau Rhufeinig neu Arabaidd syml, sydd fel arfer yn rhan o'r

## ON YOUR MARKS! SYMBOLS, GRAFFITI AND BURN MARKS ON TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS

When we visit old Welsh houses, it is easy to overlook the various symbols and graffiti that may be found, often in considerable numbers, in our vernacular buildings. This brief article looks at these and draws attention to some recent work on burn marks, the most common of man's marks.

Marks on the timber – and stone – of buildings can reveal much about their story and help us interpret and add colour to their development. As we wander round our ancient buildings, many of us will have noticed different forms of markings. Some of these, like carpenters' marks, are quite straightforward and merely perform the very practical purpose of enabling the joints of roof construction or timber framing to be pre-fabricated and re-assembled on site by signifying the two halves of a particular joint. Tooling marks are another clue to preparation and construction. The side axe and adze leave characteristic scalloping on the finished timber, while saw marks reveal another method by which the timber was reduced to square section. These marks are useful evidence that tell us how the building was constructed.

Other marks, though, are more enigmatic, if not completely baffling. In addition to incised marks made by carpenters and masons, there is a range of inscribed or scored marks, often very faint, found in many buildings from the medieval period onwards, both ecclesiastical and secular. A range of devices and symbols is used, from geometric motifs and pictures to simple 'runic' lettering. Their purpose is not always clear, but it is generally felt that they were intended to ward off malevolent forces from entering the building. These ritual protection marks, or apotropaic marks to be technical (from the Greek: "to ward off evil"), occur very widely; yet in many buildings there are no marks at all. They are best found and examined with a torch, shone from the side (see the picture in Newsletter 14).



< ^ Apotropaic marks on beam at Cae'n y Coed, Meirionnydd

In addition to these symbols, physical artefacts were often deposited into wall cavities and chimneys for the same purpose. Common among these are shoes, dried cats, witch bottles (holding urine), garments and other items.

The distinction between the practical nature of numerals to aid construction and apotropaic marks is sometimes blurred. Carpenters and masons sometimes used quite elaborate constructional marks rather than the simple Roman or Arabic numerals that are the usual stock in trade. And apotropaic marks were often made with the tools craftsmen

grefft. Ac fel arfer gwnaed y marciau gwrthfelltithiol gydag offer a ddefnyddiai'r seiri i osod allan eu gwaith. Yn aml gwnaed enghreifftiau megis yr olwyn argraffu hollbresennol neu'r hecsaffoil drwy ddefnyddio cwmpawd saer. Defnyddid cylchau yn aml ond gyda rhywfaint o amrywiaeth yn y raddfa. Roedd rhai marciau, megis dyddiadau cerrig neu lythrennau cyntaf y perchenogion (yn aml uwchben drws neu le tân) wedi eu cerfio'n broffesiynol. Eto, roedd marciau eraill wedi eu gwneud â llaw rydd. Gwelir yn aml sgriffiadau yn ffurfio'r llythrennau V, M neu W sy'n gysylltiedig â'r Forwyn Fair – ar adeg pan oedd ymlyniad agored iddi hi yn sawru o Babyddiaeth Rufeinig a oedd yn anghyfreithlon. I'r rhai sydd heb weld marciau fel hyn o'r blaen gallant yn hawdd feddwl taw dim ond sgriblan â chylllell ydynt – a hwyrach taw dyna oeddynt weithiau – ond maent gymaint ar led fel mae'n rhaid fod rhyw arwyddocâd diwylliannol iddynt.



*Egryn, Meirionnydd*

Y marciau mwyaf cyffredin, fodd bynnag, yw'r marciau llog, a gwelwyd hwy gan lawer a fu'n archwilio adeiladau rhai cannoedd o flynyddoedd o ran oed. Gall y llogsiadau fod yn rhai sengl, ar wahân neu mewn grwpiau; weithiau fe'u ceir yn un clwstwr. Fel arfer fe'u ceir ar goed strwythurol megis ar linteli lleoedd tân a drysau ond hefyd ar sgriniau a choed to. Yn aml fe'u gwelir mewn adeiladau amaethyddol. Credir taw eu bwriad oedd i helpu i warchod yr adeiladau neu eu deiliaid rhag ysbrydion drwg, gwyrachod neu eu cyfeillion ac fe'u defnyddid amlaf ar fannau mynediad penodol i'r tŷ (gan gynnwys y lle tân!) neu ar bwyntiau allweddol lle roedd pobl yn symud o gwmpas y tŷ, megis o un llawr i'r llall.



*^ > Marciau llog nodweddiadol ger y drws yn sgrîn llofft yn Llwyndu, Meirionnydd*

Dyma farciau a wnaethpwyd gan fflam noeth. Fel arfer mae'r marc ar ffurf gellygen neu ddeigrin ond o wahanol faint. Un

used to set out their work. Examples such as the ubiquitous daisy wheel or hexafoil were often made with the use of a carpenter's compass. Circles were often used but with some variation in scale. Some marks, such as date stones or the initials of owners (often over doorways or fireplaces) were professionally carved. Other markings, however, were made freehand. Scratch markings are commonly found forming the letters V, M or W that are associated with the Virgin Mary – at a time when open adherence to her smacked of Roman Catholicism which was illegal. To those not seeing these marks before, they may look to be no more than mere doodling with a knife – and perhaps on occasions that is all they were – but they are so widespread that there must be some cultural significance to them.



*Olwyn argraffu wedi ei cherfio ar sgrîn neuadd yn Egryn / Daisy wheel carved on hall screen at Egryn*

The most common of marks to be found, however, are burn marks, seen by many people who have explored buildings that are more than a few hundred years old. The burns can occur singly, in isolation or in groups; sometimes they occur in clusters. They are usually placed on structural timbers such as fireplace lintels and doorways but also on screens and roof timbers. Often they appear in agricultural buildings. It is thought they may have been intended to help protect the building or its occupants from evil spirits, witches or their familiars and are used most often at specific points of entry into the house (including the fireplace!) or at key points where people moved around the house, such as from one floor to another.



*< ^ Typical burn marks beside door in loft screen at Llwyndu, Meirionnydd*

eglurhad yw fod y marciau hyn wedi eu gwneud gan gamddefnydd diofal o oleuadau neu ganhwyllau brwyn a oedd yn llosgi yn rhy agos at y coed. Ond mae lleoliad amrywiol ac uchder nifer o'r marciau yn gwneud hyn yn annhebygol. Yn fwy diweddar, mae ymchwil gan John Dean a Nick Hill ('Burn marks on buildings: accidental or deliberate?', *Vernacular Architecture* 45 (2014), 1-15; gweler <http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1179/0305547714Z.00000000021>) wedi cwestiynu'r farn hon. Cyflwynodd yr awduron dystiolaeth o nifer o dreialon i ail-wneud y marciau hyn, gyda chanhwyllau a golau brwynwellt, er mwyn profi eu bod wedi cael eu gwneud yn fwriadol. Fe gymer tua 5 munud i gynhyrchu marc llosg nodweddiadol ac mae dyfnder rhai o'r llosgiadau yn dangos fod y broses wedi ei haildroddi i gynhyrchu rhai o'r enghreifftiau dyfnaf a ddarganfyddwn.



*Marciau llosg wedi eu gwneud bron ar lefel y llawr yn Neuadd Bodidris, Sir Ddinbych / Burn marks made at almost floor level at Bodidris Hall, Denbighshire.*

Mae'n rhaid i ni ddychmygu na chawsont eu gosod heb reswm, a bod iddynt rhyw gymhelliad diwylliannol neu ofergoelus. Rydym yn bell o ddeall yn bendant eu hystyr ac mae angen astudiaeth fwy systematig. Gwnaeth ymchwil Dean a Hill ddangos fod y marciau llosg hyn yn gyffredin ar draws Ewrop a cheir enghreifftiau yn yr UDA. Mae angen dod o hyd i enghreifftiau wedi eu dyddio ond mae'n ymddangos fod yr ystod dyddio yn ymestyn o'r 16 ganrif i'r 18 ganrif. Mae hyn yn cyfateb i'r cyfnod a elwir yn 'Chwilen Gwrachod Ewropeaidd', cyfnod pan erliidiwyd yn galed y gwrachod gan awdurdodau ledled Ewrop. Dyma gyfnod o ymwybyddiaeth ddwysach o weithgaredd tybiedig dewiniaeth a ddatblygodd mewn rhai mannau yn 'ofn mawr' neu'n gyflwr o hysteria torfol, fel a ddigwyddodd yn nhrefalon drwgenwog gwrachod Salem ym Massachusetts yn 1690au – y cyfnod mwyaf tebygol y gwnaethpwyd y nifer mwyaf o farciau llosg yng Nghymru a Lloegr hefyd. Wrth gwrs cysylltiad damcaniaethol yw hwn ond rydym yn ceisio deall pam y mae marciau llosg mor eang a beth oedd eu diben. Buasai'n ddiddorol iawn darganfod mynychter yr arwyddion hyn o weithgarwch yn yr ardal yr ydym yn ymchwilio ynddi, fel cymhariaeth ag ardaloedd eraill ym Mhrydain.

Cadwch eich llygaid ar agor!

Mae marciau llosg yn gyffredin iawn ac i'w gweld mewn nifer o adeiladau y bu GDHDC yn ymweld â hwy ac y byddant yn ymweld â hwy yn y dyfodol. Mae arwyddion gwrthfelltithiol

These are marks made by a naked flame. The mark is typically pear or tear shaped but of different sizes. One explanation is that these marks were made by the inadvertent misuse of rush lights or candles that were allowed to burn too closely to the timber. The varied location and height of many marks makes this unlikely. More recently, research carried out by John Dean and Nick Hill ('Burn marks on buildings: accidental or deliberate?', *Vernacular Architecture* 45 (2014), 1-15; see <http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1179/0305547714Z.00000000021>) has questioned this view. The authors produced evidence from various trials to replicate these marks, both by candle and rush light, to prove that they were made deliberately. It takes some 5 minutes to produce a typical burn mark and the depth of some burns shows that the process was repeated to produce some of the deeper examples that we find.



*Marciau llosg dwfn o'r 13eg ganrif ar drawst simnai yng Nghastell Stokesay, Swydd Amwythig / Deep burn marks on 13th C mantel at Stokesay Castle, Shropshire*

We must imagine they were not placed without reason, and do have some cultural or superstitious motivation. Our understanding is far from conclusive and a more systematic study is required. Dean and Hill's research found that these burn marks are prevalent across Europe and there are examples in the USA. Dated examples are required but the date range seems to extend from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This corresponds to the period of what is termed the 'European Witch Craze', a period of great persecution of witches by authorities throughout Europe. This was a period of heightened awareness of the supposed activity of witchcraft that developed in some places into a 'great fear' or state of mass hysteria, as with the infamous witch trials at Salem in Massachusetts in the 1690s – the most likely period of mark-making in Wales and England, too. Of course this is a speculative connection but we are seeking to understand why burn marks are so extensive and what their purpose was. It would very interesting to discover the prevalence of these visible signs of activity in the area we are researching as a comparison to other parts of Britain.

Keep an eye out!

Burn marks are very common and appear in many buildings the DOWHG has visited and will be visiting in future. Apotropaic signs are more elusive but worth looking for and noting or, better still, recording. It should be remembered,

yn anoddach i ddod o hyd iddynt ond yn werth chwilio amdanynt, a gwell fyth dylid cofio eu cyfnodi. Fodd bynnag ceir sawl adeilad sy'n ymddangos o fod heb unrhyw farc o gwbl ac mae hyn yn ddiddorol ynddo'i hun a buasai'n weithgarwch defnyddiol pe gallem ni, fel grŵp, ddechrau cofnodi'r arwyddion hyn o weithgaredd diwylliannol y gorffennol. Mae hyn yn golygu nodi lle y dwedodd perchenogion iddynt ddarganfod gwrthrychau fel pe baent wedi cael eu bwrw heibio – hwyrach fod rheswm dros hyn hefyd. Os ydych â diddordeb cysylltwch fi ar yr ebost isod. Mae'r Grŵp Pensaerniaeth Frodorol yn darparu canllawiau ar gyfer cofnodi marciau llosg.

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however, that there are many buildings that appear to have no markings at all, which is interesting in itself. It would be a useful activity if we as a group could begin to record these signs of a past culture activity. This includes noting down where owners say they found apparently discarded objects – maybe there was a reason for this too. For those that might be interested please contact me. The Vernacular Architecture Group has provided guidelines for recording burn marks.

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Marciau gwrthfelltithiol wedi eu crafu'n ysgafn i drawst llawr yn llofft Bron y Foel

Faint scratched apotropaic marks on floor beam in loft, Bron y Foel

#### RHUDDIN A GWYNNIN

Roedd rhai o'r crefftwyr a gododd y tai hanesyddol yr ydym ar hyn o bryd yn eu hastudio mor anystyriol o anghenion

dendrogronolegwyr y dyfodol fel eu bod wedi tynnu'r gwynnin (y cylchoedd allanol o dan y rhisgl) o'r pren a ddefnyddid ganddynt. Dim ond pan fo'r cylch allanol yn bresennol y gallwn ddod o hyd i'r union ddyddiad y cwmpwyd y goeden.

Beth oedd y rheswm am hyn?

Dengys y llun un o'r rhesymau'n eithaf amlwg, er bod rhuddin y boncyff arbennig hwn (sy'n helyg mae'n debyg yn hytrach na derw) hefyd yn ymddangos yn anaddas ar gyfer defnydd strwythurol.



#### HEARTWOOD AND SAPWOOD

Some of the craftsmen who built the ancient houses that we study were so inconsiderate of the needs of future dendrochronologists as to remove the sapwood (the outer rings, beneath the bark) from the timber they used. It is only when the outermost ring is present that an exact felling-date can be found.

Why did they do this?

The picture shows one of the reasons rather clearly, though the heartwood of this particular log (which is probably willow rather than oak) seems to be unsuitable for structural use as well.



MARC FITCH FUND

