

DYDDIO HEN DAI CYMREIG

DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES

PROSIECT DENDROCRONOLEG  
GOGLEDD ORLLEWIN CYMRU



NORTH WEST WALES  
DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

## THE SNOWDONIA DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

House Histories and Research

**GELLI ('r Cornwydydd),**

Llanfrothen, Gwynedd

A History of the House

16-05-2008

Research by Margaret Dunn ©

PLEASE NOTE ALL THE HOUSES IN THIS PROJECT ARE PRIVATE AND THERE IS NO ADMISSION TO ANY OF THE PROPERTIES

# SNOWDONIA DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

## GELLI ('r Cornwydydd),

Llanfrothen, Gwynedd

NGR SH 618 435

Not Listed

### HOUSE HISTORY

<b>Dendrochronology results:</b>	felling date
Mantel-beam	1564-69
Transverse beam	winter 1615/16
Rear principal rafter (mean of 3 samples)	winter 1615-16
4 <sup>th</sup> joist from front end chimney	winter 1662-63
5 <sup>th</sup> joist from front end chimney	winter 1662-63

Gelli (Gelli-cornwydydd), Llanfrothen, Gwynedd (NPRN 406470)

A two-unit cottage-farmhouse with end chimney and mural stair. The tree-ring dates show that the fireplace beam (1564-9) is earlier than the roof-trusses (1615-16). (RCAHMW Review 2006-07, p 58)

Merioneth, Llanfrothen, Gelli (Gelli –Cornwydydd) SH 618 435)

(a) Primary phase mantel-beam	felling date range	1564-9
(b) Phase 2 roof		winter 1615/16
(c) Ceiling joists		winter 1662/3

A two-unit cottage-farmhouse, with end chimney and mural stair. The tree-rings dates show that the fireplace beam is earlier than the truss, suggesting a building sequence not yet immediately apparent. The suggested phases are:

(1) cottage with end chimney, probably of crogloff type:

(2) modifications including new beams and centrally-placed truss with morticed collar and doorway into a chamber with lost corbelled-out fireplace.

The mural stair logically belongs to phase two but the 1663 date for the joist suggests either a repair or that the ceiling remained open to that date. Survey in NMRW.

(Vernacular Architecture, vol 38, 2007, List 193: Welsh Dendrochronology Project – Phase 11) p 136)

It is situated beside a small stream to the north of the main Croesor valley at around 20m above O.D., in a south-facing rocky hollow sheltered from the prevailing SW winds. The stream was a constant water source.

The east half of the cottage retains its original character with a large fireplace with wooden bressummer & pattern of backstones in the grate similar to those at Ffridd Isaf, Rhyd Ddu. The ground-floor fireplace is in the uphill east gable, away from the prevailing wind.

Spiral stone stair to L of fireplace, with enlarged gable end window, leads to attic storey with (phase 2) trusses & purlins and part of a post & panel partition.

The upstairs west gable-end chimney was removed after 1931 and a large window was inserted. The west half of the house has been altered and added to, probably in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to make a better-lighted art studio.

The earliest reference is in 1669 when it was part of the Parc estate in Croesor. In 2008 it remains part of that estate.

In 1742, 1743, 1772, 1805 and 1890, Evan Isaac & his descendants, of nearby Caeglas seem to own messuages and lands called **Y Gelli felan Uchaf and Y Gelli felan issa** along with Caeglas and Y Bwlch graeanog. These have not yet been identified, and at present seem unlikely to be this Gelli.

#### **OWNERS of the Parc estate:**

1500s -1699 Anwyl family of Parc

1564-69: dendro date of felling of mantel-beam  
Winter 1615-16: dendro date of felling of transverse beam and principal rafters  
1662-63: dendro date of felling of 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> joists from chimney end.

1623 Rental: not identified separately from Park.

1669 May 22 Marriage settlement in consideration of marriage between Lewis Anwyl and Catherine Griffith, spinster, elder daughter of William Griffith of Llyn, co C Esq., and of £2,000; touching mansion house of Parke, Ynisfawr, Ynisfach, Carreg Alltrem, y weirglodd fawr, **Gelli Cornwydydd**, Garthfoel, Llety Evan Rhayndre, Garth y Llwynor, Coed Ty, one fulling mill and one water cornmill, all parish of Llanfrothen; Hendrefechan, Carneddi, Gelli Wastad, all Nanmor, parish Beddgelert; etc. (Dolgellau Z/DJ/197)

1698 Aug 10 William Lewis Anwyl left the capital messuage & demesne lands at Parc & other messuages in Merioneth - mansion house of Parke, one water cornmill Melin y Park, one fulling mill, Pant Penrallt. Several messuages called Rhandy, Y weirglodd fawr, Lletty Twall, Ynisfawr, Ynisfach, Coed ty, Carreg Hylltrem, **Gelli Comydydd**, Garth y Llwynog, Garthvoyle all parish of Llanfrothen; Hendrefechan, Carneddi, Gelli Wastad, within township of Nanmor, parish ...; etc. (AND in Montgomeryshire) to Elizabeth, his wife for life as a dower. (Dolgellau Z/DM/9 & Anwyl Family p 44) She was living 1716.

1699-1734 Catherine Anwyl, (d 1726) Plas Newydd, daughter of Owen Anwyl married Sir Griffith Williams (d 1734)

1734- Sir Robert Williams

c1740-1746 Ann Williams married Sir Thomas Prendergast

1746-1758 Sir Tomas Prendergast **sold** the Parc estate to Sir Thomas Mostyn, 4<sup>th</sup> Bart.

1758-1796 Parc estate inherited by Sir Roger Mostyn, 5<sup>th</sup> Bart.

1796-1831 Parc inherited by Sir Thomas Mostyn, the 6<sup>th</sup> Bart; d 1831.

1831 The Parc estate passed to his sister Elizabeth who in 1794 had married Sir Edward Pryce Lloyd (1768-1854), Pengwern, created Baron Mostyn in 1831.

1832 July 11 Catalogue of sale of Park estate

**Gell yr Comwydudd**, a cottage & garden – no 21 on plan; let with Park to Edmund Jones.

1834-1942 Hugh Reveley Esq, Brynygwin bought Parc estate from Baron Mostyn.

1875 Park Estate Sale Catalogue (Dolgellau Z/F/138)

Parc Mrs Edmunds 832 acres

Includes field 21 Gell yr Comwydudd cottage & garden

1892 PARC Sale Catalogue (Dolgellau Z/F/11, and Z/F/128)

Vendor: Mrs Fanny Jane Jelf-Reveley.

Title shall commence with Indenture 6 July 1903

Lot 16 Carreg Hyllidrem (part) J P Jones

Garthfoel Evan Lloyd

Woollen Factory

**1038 Gelli house**

1932 May 24: Park Estate Sale Catalogue, NO plans. (Dolgellau Z/F/60)

Gelli cottage. House & garden. Contains living room and bedroom.

Let to Mr Frank J Penn-Smith £3 p.a. + rates.

1935 Dec 12 death of Francis John Penn Smith aged 73, Mining engineer & writer.  
(Llanfrothen MI G006)

1936 Oct 14: Parc & Croesor Estates (Dolgellau Z/F/62 & Z/F/63)

Lot 2 Parc, included Gelli cottage. Mrs C W Davies, lease for 14 years from  
25/3/1936 at £5 p.a. + rates.

1938 Rentals from Brondanw estate, 1920 onwards: P Park (Dolgellau ZM/3119)

22 Gelli leased to Mrs Frederick Davis, Coedmur, Bontddu, Dolgellau £5 + rates

1942 Jan 21: Park & Croesor Estates (Dolgellau Z/F/64)

Gelli cottage Mrs Aubrey W Long on 14 year lease from 25/3/1936 at £5 p.a.+ rates

1942 The Reveley family sold to Clough Williams-Ellis, of Plas Brondanw.

Rentals from Brondanw estate, 1920 onwards: P Park (Dolgellau ZM/3119)

22 Gelli: by 1943 leased to Mrs Aubrey Long £5 + rates

1938 tenant + 1941 properties owned :

Park etc, Coedty (Evan J Evans). Penrallt (Reps of Robert J Roberts), Croesor Fawr  
(Robert Roberts + N W Roberts), Croesor Uchaf (W G Owen + D Davis),  
Garreghylltrem, Beudy Newydd, **Gelli**, Gate House, Tan y bryn, Bwlchllainder,  
Fronwen, ¼ Brynhyfryd, 1/3 Caerffynnon, Moelwyn, Bryn Croesor, Ceunant y Parc.  
(Merioneth Archives Z/M/3119/4)

### **TENANTS [There may have been two families at Gelli at some periods]**

Early tenants not yet traced.

1763 Feb 5: burial of Humphrey John Hercules, Gelli yr Comwydydd, farmer.  
(Llanfrothen parish records (LF))

1770 Feb baptism of William, son of John Jones, Gelli, labourer & Jane (LF records)

**The FAMILY of SAMUEL PIERCE:** (mainly from Maredudd ap Rheinallt)  
**Samuel Pierce (I)** (will proved 1727) = Catherine vch Richard (will proved 1727)  
(of Beddgelert parish, summary attached) (of Beddgelert parish, summary attached)  
? Of **Hendrefechan, Nanmor** & had Jane, John, **Pierce**, Samuel, David & John.

Here lyeth the body of ? ELIN SAMUEL who was buried / the XXI day of Jun, Anno Dom. MDCXCV. [1695] / Samuel ap Samuel 56/ 1751. (Beddgelert Memorial inscriptions A087)

MAR. SAMUEL yn / forwyn ...roed / aeth or byd hwn ir / bywyd tragwynol / y 30 dydd o Dachw/edd .....2 / E. I. 32 / 1760. (Beddgelert Memorial inscriptions A087a)  
(Almost illegible in 2007)

**Pierce Samuel (I);** he died 15/5/1760, Gelli Goch Isaf, Llanfrothen = Elizabeth vch Hywel 1689-22/9/1765, Llanfrothen  
They had **Samuel**, Pierce, Jane, Hywel, Hywel, Thomas, John, Morris & Sioned.

**Samuel Pierce (II)** baptised Llanfrothen, 1713 = Lucraes Owen, she died 1781 at Gelli ('r Cornwydydd), pauper. Both on Gravestone MI B032 Llanfrothen.

**Pierce Samuel (II)**, 1739-1818, labourer, Gelli = Margaret Daniel (c1738-1830)  
Where was Margaret Daniel from? Did they build Vottu Garreg Fawr? (the Dendro chronology dates the felling of timbers to the 1760s.

*(1766 Jul baptism of Jane, daughter of Pierce Samuel & Margaret, Vottu Garreg Fawr) (LF records)*

On 22 May 1768/9 their son Daniel Pierce was baptised; were they still at Vottu?

On 2 Dec 1770, their son **Samuel Pierce (III)** was baptised; were they still at Vottu?

*He was later of Cefn Cyffin, Llanfrothen, died 1840 & in 1814 had **Pierce Samuel (III)** who was later of Cae Einion Alun, Maentrwog. Pierce Samuel (III) had **Samuel Pierce (IV)** in 1846/7, ancestors of Roy Pierce of Siop Pierce, Penrhyndeudraeth.*

By 1773 the family had moved to GELLI.

1773 baptism of John, son of Pierce Samuel & Margaret, GELLI (LF records)

1776 baptism of Griffith, son of Pierce Samuel & Margaret, GELLI (LF records)

1778 Jul baptism of Catherine, daughter of Pierce Samuel & Margaret, Gelli (LF records)

1781 Oct burial of Lucras Owen, Gelli, pauper (LF records)

gravestone: Samuel Pierce / Luckrece Owen / Also Pierce Samuel of Gelli died .... (Llanfrothen MI B032) These commemorate Pierce Samuel II and his parents. His mother was apparently living with them when she died.

1790 Mar burial of Gwen Hughes, Gelli (LF records)

1804 Jul 4 burial of Catherine ?Owen, Gelli, singlewoman (LF records) She may have been Pierce Samuel II's daughter, baptised in 1778.

1804 Jul 10 burial of William Jones, Gelli, singleman (LF records)

1818 March 31: In the Name of God, Amen. I **Pierce Samuel of Gelli** in the parish of Llanfrothen, in the county of Merioneth, Labourer, considering the inevitability of the mortal life, and being of sound mind and memory to make, ordain, publish and declare, This is my last will and Testament in manner and form following viz.

First, I give and bequest to my only daughter Jane Pierce, the sum of five shillings, and no more.

Secondly, I give and bequest to my oldest son, Daniel Pierce, the sum of five shillings and no more.

Thirdly, I give and bequest to my second son, Samuel Pierce, the sum of five shillings and no more.

Fourthly, I give and bequest to my third son, John Pierce, the sum of five shillings and no more.

Fifthly, I give and bequest to my fourth son, Griffith Pierce, the sum of five shillings and no more.

Sixthly and lastly, I do hereby nominate institute and appoint my beloved wife, Margaret Daniel, as Executrix of this my last will and testament, to whom I give, leave and bequeath all the rest and residue of my goods and personal estate, of what kind or nature soever. In witnees whereof I the said Pierce Samuel have to this my last will and testament put my hand and seal this thirty first day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eight.

The mark of Pierce Samuel X

Signed sealed published and declared by the said Testator Pierce Samuel as and for his last will and testament in the presence of us, who at his request, and in his presence, have subscribed our names as witnesses hereto, the day and year written above written Owen Jones Evan Roberts.

(Photocopy in possession of Mr Roy Pierce)

1818 Oct 8: A True and Perfect Inventory of Goods, Chatles and Chatteles of Pierce Samuel of Gelli in the Parish of Llanfrothen, and the Diocese of Bangor as deceased, and on the Eight Day of October in the year of our Lord 1818.

And afforsaid as folowing		£	s	d
First	3 cow, valued at	17	10	0
Also	A Rhick of Hay valued at	7	0	0
Also	House furnature in whole valued at	15	0	0
Also	Ware apparel at	2	0	0
Also	Money laid out for Interest, the sum of	50	0	0
Total		91	0	0

And appraised by Richard Roberts, Edmund Jones of Park

(Photocopy in possession of Mr Roy Pierce)

[Multiply £91 in 1820 by 41.7 to get the 1998 equivalent = £3,800]

1819: Llanfrothen. Pierce Samuel Will under £100.

The Last will and Testament of Pierce Samuel of Gelli, dated March 31, 1818.

On the fourteenth Day of November in the Year of our Lord 1818 the written will was insinuated proved approved and in common term of Law decreed noted and Administration granted to the within named Executrix Margaret Daniel she being first sworn in common form of Law and that the whole of the Goods Chatles and Credits of the said deceased do not amount in sum to one hundred Pounds, Before me, Wm Williams, Surrogate.

Probate granted 26 January 1819. Wm Wms, Trawsfynydd, Surrogate.

[address] Margaret Daniel Gelli Llanfrothen near Tanybwlech North Wales

(Photocopy in possession of Mr Roy Pierce)

1831 death of Griffith Pierce, Gelli, aged 55 (Ramoeth graveyard MI 040)

Probably the fourth son of Pierce Samuel II, baptised 1776, of Gelli. He may have lived at Gelli all his life.

It is not yet known when the family left Gelli.

By 1840 tithe computation, Samuel Pierce was the occupier of Cefncyffin, 31 acres, owned by William Ormsey Gore of Glyn. CHECK Census returns for 1841 onwards.

1832 July 11 Catalogue of sale of Park estate

**Gell yr Comwydudd**, a cottage & garden – no 21 on plan; let with Park to Edmund Jones.

1834-1942 Hugh Reveley Esq, Brynygwin bought Parc estate from Baron Mostyn.

1833 burial of Ann Parry, wife of Edward Griffith, aged 83 yrs. (Ramoth MI 117)

1835 death of Daniel Griffith, Gelli aged 11. (Ramoth graveyard MI 040)

1840 tithe commutation

Owner: Hugh Reverley Esq, (Brynygwin) Parc (1a) & Gelli (1b)

Tenant of both: John Edmunds

1841 census **Gelli**

David Roberts	25	Stonecutter	Born in Merionethshire
Catherine “	30		“
Robert “	3		“
Thomas “	1		“
Jane Roberts	15	farm servant	“

**Gelli**

William Owen	34	???	???
Elizabeth “	34		
John “	5		
Jane “	2		

1847 Nov 6: death of Elisabeth Edward, wife of Robert Roberts, Gelli Cornwydd, aged 67 yrs. (Ramoth MI 117)

1856 Oct 3: death of Robert Roberts aged 82 yrs. (Ramoth MI 117)

1851 census Gelli

Robert Roberts	Hd	W	75	Ag Lab	born	Clynnog, C
Edward Roberts	son	M	44	Shoemaker		Beddgelert
Ellin Roberts	d in law	M	47			Beddgelert
Catherine Griffith	serv	U	15	house servant		Dolbenmaen

1861 census schedule no 75 Gelly

Edward Roberts	Hd	M	55	shoemaker	born	Nantmor, M
Ellin “	wife	M	58			
Catherine Jones	serv		18	house servant		Llanfrothen
Samuel C??? Roberts	serv		15	servant		Dolbenmaen, C

1861 census schedule no 88 Gelly

Owen Evans	lodger	M	65	slate quarry Agent		Llanllyfni
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1864 death of Eleanor, wife of Edward Roberts, aged 61 (Ramoth graveyard MI 111)

1871 census schedule no 80 Gelli

Edward Roberts	Hd	widower	61	Shoemaker	born	Beddgelert, C
Sarah Thomas	serv		48	servant		Llanengan, C

1875 Park Estate Sale Catalogue (Dolgellau Z/F/138)

Parc Mrs Edmunds 832 acres  
Includes field 21 Gell yr Comwydudd cottage & garden

1881 census Gelli

John Bork	Hd	M	55	Slate quarry lab	born	Stafford, England
Margaret Bork	wife	M	45			Ireland
Margaret Bork	dau	U	22			Brecknock, Wales
Griffith Roberts	boarder	U	27	Slate miner		Llanbedr, C

1891 census schedule no 83 Gelli

Robert Evans	Hd	M	41	farmer & slate quarryman		Llanfrothen
Ellen Evans	wife	M	36			Llanycil
Owen Jones	son	U	11	scholar		Llanfrothen
Elizabeth Jones	dau	U	5			“
Anne Jones	dau	U	4			“
John E Jones	son	U	1			“

1892 PARC Sale Catalogue (Dolgellau Z/F/11, and Z/F/128)

Vendor: Mrs Fanny Jane Jelf-Reveley.

Title shall commence with Indenture 6 July 1903

Lot 16 Carreg Hyldrem (part) J P Jones  
Garthfoel Evan Lloyd  
Woollen Factory  
**1038 Gelli house**

1901 census schedule no 79 Gelli

Henry Owen	Hd	M	38	slate quarryman	born	Llanfrothen	W
Mary Owen	wife	M	28			“	W
Winnie	“	dau	S	12		Penrhyn	W
Henry	“	son		10		Llanfrothen	W
Griffith	“	son		9		“	W
Kate	“	dau		7		“	W

How long had Gelli been unoccupied before Mr Frank Penn Smith became the tenant?

Pre July 1931: tenant : Mr Penn-Smith

He had had time to transform Gelli and get the article published by July 1931.

1931 July article “ A cottage in the Welsh Hills” in Homes and Gardens, pages 78-79.  
“After a life of camping in the Australias and Africa he returned home to recuperate.  
.... He saw the possibilities of this **cottage which stood derelict** and condemned as unfit for human occupation. By an expenditure of £30 the forlorn interior has been transformed into a home of charm. Big windows now let in the light ...”



Mr Richard Hughes, the Welsh writer, (1<sup>st</sup> book c1929) was a friend of Penn-Smith. Mr & Mrs Hughes spent their honeymoon in 1932 at Parc & Mr Hughes visited Penn-Smith at Gelli. Mr Hughes had a lifelong lease of Parc. Their 1<sup>st</sup> son Robert was born in December 1932. Mrs Hughes lived at Park during World War II and had many evacuees living with her there. Mr Hughes died c 1972/6. See Richard Hughes A Biography by Richard Graves. (pers comm. Lleuki Papastavroy, R Hughes' daughter)

1932 May 24: Park Estate Sale Catalogue, NO plans. (Dolgellau Z/F/60)

Gelli cottage. House & garden. Contains living room and bedroom.

Let to Mr Frank J Penn-Smith £3 p.a. + rates.

1935 Dec 12 death of Francis John Penn Smith aged 73, Mining engineer & writer. (Llanfrothen MI G006)

1936 Oct 14: Parc & Croesor Estates (Dolgellau Z/F/62 & Z/F/63)

Lot 2 Parc, included Gelli cottage. **Mrs C W Davies**, lease for 14 years from 25/3/1936 at £5 p.a. + rates.

1938 Rentals from Brondanw estate, 1920 onwards: P Park (Dolgellau ZM/3119)

No 22 Gelli leased to **Mrs Frederick Davis**, Coedmur, Bontddu, Dolgellau £5 + rates

1942 Jan 21: Parc & Croesor Estates (Dolgellau Z/F/64)

Gelli cottage: **Mrs Aubrey W Long** on 14 year lease from 25/3/1936 at £5 p.a.+ rates

1942 The Reveley family sold to Clough Williams-Ellis, of Plas Brondanw.

(Mrs Aubrey Long was a friend of Mr Penn-Smith)

Rentals from Brondanw estate, 1920 onwards: P Park (Dolgellau ZM/3119)

No 22 Gelli: by 1943 leased to Mrs Aubrey Long £5 + rates

Mrs Aubrey Long leased Gelli.

Not known when Mrs L G Hughes started to live at Gelli.

c1949 death of Mrs Louisa Grace Hughes, Richard Hughes' mother, who had lived at Gelli. Richard Hughes' daughter Leuki & his son visited Gelli to holiday with their grandmother. Mr Brookes and other carried Mrs L G Hughes from Gelli to her burial on a gate. (pers comm. Lleuki Papastavroy)

1953: Mr Jeremy Brookes leased Gelli and visited from London for holidays, and sub leased the cottage on short leases. Then he retired to live at Gelli with his wife, he wrote "Jampot Smith" in 1960, recently republished by Welsh Library Classics. He died in 1994.

2008: Mrs Elinor Brookes, a well-know artist continues to live at Gelli.

**CHECK:** Llanfrothen church / chapel records & Memorial inscriptions; Local memories; Estate deeds.

#### **Contacts:**

Mr & Mrs Roy Pierce, Bryn Arwel, Minffordd. 770585.

Mrs Leuki Papastavroy, Carreg y Ro, Ynys, Talsarnau, 780594.

Mr Jack Jones, formerly of The Ring, Garreg.

Iorwerth ? Coed Ty; 2<sup>nd</sup> bungalow on L

Researched by Margaret Dunn

16 May 2008