



Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig

Discovering Old Welsh Houses

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Sygun Fawr

Beddgelert
Gwynedd

House History

A Part History of the House & its Families

Author: Margaret Dunn

Updated 21-01-2006

Written in the language chosen by the volunteers and researchers & including information so far discovered

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



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SYGUN FAWR: A History of the House & its Families
BEDDGELERT, Gwynedd **update 21-1-06**

NGR SH 599 484

NOT Listed

Sub-medieval Snowdonia type farmhouse with c1860 front wing added at right angle. Sketch plan of proposed alterations.

Gable end chimney; remains of stone stair plus small window; a few timbers (mid 1900s fire)

RCAHMW Beddgelert Parish Box:

Snowdonian gable chimney A-type considerably altered with C18 alterations.

Interior of old wing gutted in fire circa 1974.

Stair recess found in subsequent rebuilding. Also a vaulted stone recess with a blocked slit in the 1st floor on the opposite side of the chimney block. A narrow shaft (apparently) led from the floor of the recess into a lower fireplace. At first floor level there is a roughly corbelled chimney stack at this gable. The ground floor fireplace bressummer has a single ogee stop. There are C17 poems praising the house; the core of house C17.

The added front wing is known to have been built for an engineer called Sorrell (NO: SEARELL) from Sark, Channel Islands, circa 1780 [ex info M Wilson, owner 1974. (A J P 31-12-1974)

Plan & elevation 1969 (for Mrs Howitt). Ground plan.

OWNERS

(See C Gresham, Nanmor Deudraeth, JMHS, 1978, p113-4 & J E Griffith's Pedigrees p 220)

Collwyn ap Tangno to Hwlkin llwyd Robert ap Gruffydd ap Gruffydd

15th century family who settled here was descended from Gruffydd ap Rhirid of Treflys, the brother of Ieuan Llwyd, who was ancestor of Rhys Goch Eryri (of Hafod Garegog)

mid 1500s **Rhys ap Thomas ap Robert of Sygun** = Jane verch William ap Robert of Beddgelert **Gruffydd**

Robert

[Gruffydd]in Pedigrees p220)

[Robert]

Gruffydd ap Robert ap Griffith ap Rhys of Sygun = **Lowry**, daughter of Morris ap William, Penamnen. She later remarried (Ped 117)

They had 2nd Morris Griffith, (1641-1698), Llanbeblig/Caernarfon = Jane Vaughan (1641- 1720)

1st son: **Robert ap Gruffydd = Katherine**, daughter of Evan Lloyd, of Rhiwgoch, Trawsfynydd (Ped 180) 1626 RG & K date on cupboard formerly (in 1899) in Sygun Fawr. He may have built the house, much of which survives on a site characteristic of an earlier type of dwelling.

1666 Acquittance from Robert Griffith of Syggy to Mr Maurice Williams Esq. (Hafod garegog) for the payment of £5 7s to the use of Evan Lloyd gent. (NLW, Dolfriog 77)

1670 will of Robert Griffith, Gent., Sygun.

Richard Lloyd Trawsfynydd on part of *Margaret* Lloyd, widow of the late Robert Griffith, Sygun, with Evan Lloyd, Trawsfynydd (father) & Morrice Griffith, Bangor (brother in law) – 17 Dec 1670. Evan Hughes clerk & Rees Griffith. (TCGriffith1 p14.)

Robert Griffith & Catherine had 1st **Gruffydd Roberts**, Rhiwgoch = Jane Glynne, heiress of Dinam, Llandrillo & had children

and 2nd Evan Roberts of Dinas = Catherine verch William Griffith, Crichle, Beaumaris and had children. (TCGriffith 2 [121])

Son of Gruffydd Roberts & Jane: **Gruffydd Roberts of Sygun** (1699 cywydd by John Prichard) = Magdalen Lloyd heiress of Blaen y ddol; he moved there; became High Sheriff of Merioneth 1729. She lived 1704-1734/5. [?He died 1766 aged 105 years.]

SYGUN LET TO TENANTS.

Their children: 1st son John Roberts, (1723- 1774) moved to Treborth Uchaf, Bangor;

2nd son David Roberts of Blaen y ddol was HSM in 1784.

also Griffith (osp); Robert (osp); Elizabeth & Humphrey;

John Robert's sister **Frances Elizabeth Ann Roberts** had inherited Sygun, by 1807 ; died 1835; she married Dr Robert Morris of Pwllheli who died 1828 aged 73. They had no children.

1803 They owned / lived at Sygun (Gestiana, 1892, Alltud Eifion, p 186-7)

In 1828 Sygun was left to **Dr Robert Morris'** godson, **David White Griffith** of Bodegroes (1816-1878). (Ped 239)

1839 Tithe schedule Owner David White Griffith: Sygun Fawr David Williams 216 acres

Ty Hen – tenant John Jones 77 acres

Llwyn yr hwch- tenant John Roberts 253 acres

Hafodydd brithion – tenant Anne Jones 195 acres plus sheepwalk 574 acres

1840 David White Griffith raised a loan of £3,000 from Lord Redesdale on the security of the whole Sygun estate., and a further £1,000 loan from Charles Wing, joint lessee of the Sygun Copper Mine. Henry McKellar became manager of the mine, took over this £1,000 loan advancing with it a further £250. By 1848 D W Griffith owed McKellar £1,890.

In 1849 McKellar took over all the profits from the estate with which he paid part of the interest due to Lord Redesdale each year, adding the balance from his own pocket.

D W Griffith was loath to lose his property but in 1853 he was forced to make a deed of conveyance for the whole of the Sygun estate to **Henry McKellar**, subject to the existing first mortgage, for a purchase price of £2,403, the sum by which Griffith was now indebted to him. McKellar continued to pay interest to Lord Redesdale until 1859.

In 1860 McKellar's brother redeemed the mortgage for him.

1861-2 Henry McKellar was made High Sheriff of Caernarvonshire, and died on 5 October 1862, Leaving the estate to his wife Ann.

1886 She died and willed the estate to her son in law, **Samuel Wix** of Tunbridge Wells, then aged 71 years. (C Gresham, 1978, Nanmor Deudraeth p 113-14)

1889 Mr Wix started selling off the farms separately to local buyers:

1889 Sygun Fawr & Tanllwyn to William Jones late of Buarthau

Ty Hen & Cae Moch to ?

1889 Hafodydd Brithion to I O I Priestley

1899 Llwyn yr Hwch to Evans, Hafod y llan

TENANTS

1713 will of David Rowland, yeoman. It was noted that he was without pay for **raising stone walls in Tan rhiw and Sygun**. (TCGriffith1 p24)

LAND TAX ASSESSMENT not seen

John ap Robert Griffith, Hafod y Porth d 1769 = in 1707 Tryphema Jones d 1762
They had 10 children including **John Jones, Sygun** & Hafod y Porth died 1782 = in 1742 Alice
Ellis, Glasdraian (1722-1807) & had 8 children. see [121] & [174] (TCGriffith 2 [18] & [174])
Alice Jones (?-
Elinor Jones (1743 B –
Ellis Jones (1754B-
Tryphema Jones (1748B-
Ann Jones (1749B-
Girl (1752B-
Jane Jones (1755B-
1758 Mar 3 baptism of John, son of John Jones, Sygun & Alice (Beddgelert BT)

1762 Dec 15 burial of Richard Ellis, Sygun, young man (Beddgelert BT)
1763 May 26 baptism of Jane, daughter of Owen Thomas, Sygun, mason, & Jonet. (Beddgelert
BT)

1764 Nov 25 baptism of Jane, daughter of Ellis Williams, Sygun, labourer, & Martha. (Beddgelert
BT)

1778 Jun 7 baptism of David, son of William David, Sygun Fawr (joiner) & Catherine (Beddgelert
BT)

1780 Jan 2 baptism of Catherine, daughter of William David, Sygun, (joiner) & Catherine.
(Beddgelert BT)

1782 Feb 17 baptism of Thomas, son of William David, Sygun, (joiner) & Catherine (Beddgelert
BT)

1782 will of John Williams, Bwlchmwyalchen names William David, Sygun Fawr. (TCGriffith1
p43)

1784 Nov 23 baptism of William, son of William David, Sygun, (joiner) & Catherine (Beddgelert
BT)

1785 Aug 7 baptism of Gaunor, daughter of William David, Sygun Fawr, (joiner) & Catherine.
(Beddgelert BT)

1787 May 27 baptism of Griffith, son of William David, Sygun Fawr, (joiner) & Catherine
(Beddgelert BT)

1794 May 27 baptism of Henry, son of William David, Sygun Fawr, (joiner) & Catherine
(Beddgelert BT)

1796 Jun 3 baptism of Margaret, daughter of William David, Sygun fawr joiner, & Alice
(Beddgelert BT)

1808 Nov 27: baptism of David, son of William David, Sygun Fawr, & Alice. (Beddgelert BT)

1774 Valuation of estate by John Jones Hafod y Poeth & **Thomas Griffith, Sygun.**

1780 will of Martha Prichard, widow, Craflwyn. Estate valuation by **Thomas Griffith. Sygun
Fawr** & another. (TCGriffith1 p42)

1784 March 7: death of Thomas Griffith late of Sygun Fawr aged 61 years. (Beddgelert
Memorial Inscription No 161)

1784 Mar 11 burial of Thomas Griffith, Sygun, farmer. (Beddgelert BT)

1784 will of **Thomas Griffith, Rhos Sygun or Sygun Fawr**, co Merioneth; Widow Gaunor Evans.
Estate worth £158 7s 6d. (TCGriffith1 p44)

1784 death of **clockmaker living at Sygun.** (D E Jenkins, Beddgelert Its Facts Fairies & Folklore,
1899 p 200-202)

1806 will of Gaynor Evans, widow, Ty Hen. ? rent of Rhos Sygun. (TCGriffith 1 p51)

1810 July 13: death of *Grace* Evans wife of Thomas Griffith aged 88 years. (Beddgelert Memorial Inscription No 161) CHECK gravestone

1818 Oct 24: death of Catherine, daughter of Thos Griffith, late of Sygun Fawr. (Beddgelert Memorial Inscription No A 158)

In 1800 Thomas Jones Roberts, Sygun Fawr & Cae Ysgob (1771-1824) married Sioned Griffith, (1780-1840) daughter of Gruffith Sion Dafydd, Ty Isaf & Llwyn Celyn, Llanberis They had 6 children, none were "of Sygun". (TCGriffith 2 [166]) Maybe they lived in Llanberis.

1801 Nov 29 baptism of Catherine, daughter of John Jones, Sygun Fawr, weaver, & Catherine. (Beddgelert BT)

1803 Mar 14 baptism of Elizabeth, daughter of John Jones, Sygun & Catherine. (Beddgelert BT)

1807 May 24 baptism of Mary, daughter of John Williams, Sygun Fawr & Gaenor. (Beddgelert BT)

1812 Oct 25 baptism of Owen, son of Howel Williams, Sygun Fawr & Margaret (Beddgelert BT)

1812 Nov 9 burial of Owen, son of Howel Williams (Beddgelert BT)

1826 tenant **David Williams** (will of Robert Morris)

1839 Tithe Commutation schedule: David White Griffith owned Sygun Mawr (216 acres) + Ty Hen (77 acres) and sheepwalk of Hafodydd Brithion & Llwyn yr hwch tenant of Sygen Fawr David Williams, 216 acres.

1841 census Sygun Fawr

David Williams	aged 60, joiner,	born in county Merioneth
Margaret Williams	aged 55,	born in county Merioneth
*Dorothy Williams	aged 20,	born in county Merioneth
Gaynor Williams	aged 15,	born in county Merioneth

1840-1856 tenant (?of which building) was Mr John Lobb, manager of the copper mines. (D E Jenkins, Beddgelert Its Facts Fairies & Folklore 1899 p 200-202)

1841-1865 Allan Searell developed the copper workings on Mynydd Sygun

1850 Dec 2: death of Robert, aged 9 months, son of Owen & Dorothy Roberts, Sygun Fawr. (Beddgelert Memorial Inscription A 135) Had *Dorothy Williams married & become Dorothy Roberts?

Gainor (1781LP-?) [daughter of Griffith Prys, Tyddyn Mawr (1724-1803) & his 2nd wife Margaret Evan (1750-1802)] married **John Jones, Sygun, Beddgelert** & had children (TCGriffith 2 [2])

1851 census schedule no 62 Sygun Uchaf

John Williams	26 years, farmer 50 acres,	born in Beddgelert, Caernarfonshire
Gaenor	29 years, wife	Beddgelert, Merionethshire (is she the Gaynor of 1841)
David Williams	1 year, son,	born in Beddgelert, Merionethshire
Gwen Williams	house servant unmarried 21 years,	born in Beddgelert Merionethshire

1858 Oct-Nov: Allen Searell to H Mckellar re-roofing Hafodydd Brithion cowhouse (UWB Searell Ms 7 p25-33)

1860 Searell thought of adding a part to Sygun Fawr & repairing the old house for c £160. Sept-commenced clearing foundations. **“Walls of old house at Sygun in a falling state and could only be made safe with butments. The walls are all now secured and all the floors joists and ceiling are in, the windows are making; am in hopes to have the floors laid by the end of this week and get into the old part by the end of November next.”** ... **“Old fashioned chimney; the house has not been occupied for some years, but there has been a fire in it occasionally. The families that have lived in it used to burn peat generally, but sometimes ferns, heath or wood occasionally.”** (UWB Searell Ms 7 p139, 149, 150, 159).

1861 census schedule no 64 Sygun Ucha

Allan Searell aged 56, slate Quarry proprietor,
Julia Mann Searell, aged 59, wife,
Julianna aged 25, daughter,
Marry Mann Searell aged 23, daughter
Thomas Searell aged 20, son

born in Shorton, Devon
born Paignton, Devon
born Shotton Devon
born Shotton / Staverton, Devon
born Talsarn, Llandwrog, Caernarfonshire

1861 Commenced the road through Sygun bach ... will insure a permanent cart road to your mine. (UWB Searell Ms 7 p 175)

Tanyllwyn & Cae du, part of Sygun Fawr. (UWB, Searell Ms 7 p149)

1865 Oct 25 Death of Allen Searell; duties devolved to his son Thomas. (UWB, Searell Ms 11)

1871 census schedule no 6 Sygun Fawr

Julia M Searell, widow, aged 69, annuitant,
William S Searell nephew aged 39, widower, estate agent & quarry manager,
Marry A Searell, granddaughter aged 11, scholar,
Julia I Searell granddaughter, aged 8, scholar,
Julianna Searell daughter, aged 35, imbecile,
Annie Searell daughter, aged 25

born Paignton, Devon
born Hawlon, Devon
born Bangor, Caernarfonshire
born Llanbeblig, Caernarfonshire
born Hawlon, Devon
born Beddgelert, Caernarfonshire

William Skinner Searell, Sygun Fawr, born 31/3/1831. His father was Philip M Searell, brother to Allen Searell. (GAS, XM 7911.1-2)

1881 census schedule no 16 Sygun Fawr

Ann Searell, aged 34, unmarried, dressmaker

born Beddgelert, Caernarfonshire

Julianna Searell aged 46, sister, unmarried, imbecile from birth. Born Devonshire

1891 census schedule no 65 Sygun Fawr

William Jones, aged 56, farmer & traveller

born Beddgelert, Merionethshire (**Buarthau**) E/W

Ann Searell Jones, wife aged 44

born Beddgelert, Merionethshire English/Welsh

Allen Searell Jones son aged 4

born Beddgelert, Merionethshire Welsh

Julia M A S Jones, daughter aged 2

“ “ “ “

William Searell Jones son aged 9 mth

“ “ “ “

1899 tenant Mr William Jones (D E Jenkins, Beddgelert Its Facts Fairies & Folklore 1899 p 200)

He was husband of Mr Searell's daughter. Their son Allen Searell Jones, had a motorcycle shop in Caernarfon & raced in the Isle of Man TT Races; he was married but with no children & he retired to Waunfawr,

1901 schedule no 20 Sygun Fawr			
William Jones HM Ann	66	farmer, traveller merchant born Beddgelert C both	
Searrell Jones wife M Alen	55		“ “
“ “ son S	14	letter carrier	““
Julia M Ann S “ dau S	12	school	““
William Searrell Jones son	10	school	““
Catherine Thomas	82	dress maker	““

1903 William Jones, Sygun Fawr (UWB Searrell Ms 7)

1910 Sygun Fawr land (17 acres & sheepwalk (131 acres)

Owner & Occupier **Alun S Jones** of Sygun Fawr (GAS, XLT/2 Income Tax Returns)

1907 The Copper mine was no longer financially viable and the plant was dispersed ? to Australia, The bridge was left.

Several tenants including: Mr Cape, Mrs Fisher, played the violin, widow of the Bishop of Bangor, & Mr & Mrs Vaughan-Tempest.

RECENT OWNERS

1948 Paul Orkney Work bought Sygun Fawr and started a climbing hostel; the house was in poor repair having been occupied by several tenants.

1953 Tom Askin bought tenancy of land, although Paul Orkney Work objected. P O-W lived at Sygun Fawr; after his divorce his wife sold it

c1956 to Mrs Arnett, whose daughter was Val Chapman. Mr Chapman, an artist, went away. Tom Askin did not get on well with Mrs Arnett & Val Chapman; had problems at Sygun Fawr hotel – drunken brawls.

1956 Mr & Mrs Chapman bought Sygun Fawr and opened a Guest House.

1961 They sold to Mrs Nancy Howitt; the Guest house was licensed. The old out houses at the back of the house were built up 2 stories. Now called Sygun Fawr Contry House Hotel.

1973 Mr & Mrs Norman Wilson bought the property.

1989 They were joined by their daughter, Christine & her husband Stuart Crick.

Extra accommodation was added at rear of house.

The Wilsons kept the tenancy of the land; had 20 sheep.

c1996 Land was still let to Mr Geoffrey Till.

1990s Mr & Mrs Wilson sold Sygun Fawr to Chris Jennings.

1774 will of Griffith Roberts, **Ty Hen**, Beddgelert, Merioneth (TCGriffith 1 p39)

Researched by Margaret Dunn _____