



Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig

Discovering Old Welsh Houses

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Please note that these reports are being updated as part of an ongoing programme of revision. Older reports sometimes refer to the old names of the Group. Between 2005 and 2012 also known as The Snowdonia Dendrochronology Project, then the N W Wales Dendrochronology Project and then the Dating Old Welsh Houses Group.

New reports will be added from time to time. Keep an eye on our website for updates.



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NORTH WEST WALES DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES

CWM FARM

Avis Reynolds. Summer 2012

Cwm Cynfal, Maentwrog parish, Merioneth. (Gwynedd)

NGR SH733 412

HOUSE HISTORY: Summary

Cwm farm is situated at the end of a track at the head of the Cynfal Valley, just below the waterfalls of Rhaeadr y Cwm. It is enclosed on three sides by steep slopes, but the area around the house is flat with fields. There is a clapper bridge over the river to get to some of the mountain pastures.

The house was originally a hall house with a central fire. The house is situated near the river Cynfal.

Dendro dating gives a date of 1523 when the timber was felled. The first inhabitants we know of were there in 1590, that is 67 years later. Owen ap Hughe was there then, and later his son Hughe ap Owen ap Hughe. Then there were many occupants, Morgan, Edwards, Ephraim, Williams, Humphreys, Lewis and Davies, before the present owner Dennis Basford. All the older occupants appear to have married locally. Often there were servants, milkmaids, farm servants, servants of all work. There was a lodger there for some years who was a copper and lead miner. He must have worked at the quarry by the waterfall (on Cwm land) or at one of the quarries lower down the valley.

The fields around the house have retained their names from the 16th century. Y Crofft, a small field by the house and river, according to legend has graves in it. Other fields have the names of Murie Gwynion, Y Ddol, Cae Adwy'r Ddol, Cwm Wenallt, Y Ffrith Wen.

There is also another legend regarding a house situated up the mountainside called Hafod yr Offeiread, (Summer dwelling of the priest). Legend claims that the priest lived during the winter months at Cwm and at Hafod yr Offeiriad, now a ruin, in the summer.

John Meirion Davies, who lived in Cwm as a child during the second half of the 20th century wrote a booklet called 'Y Ty tu draw y Cymoedd' where he writes about the house, his childhood and the valley.

Many of the graves in Llan Ffestiniog churchyard are connected with Cwm.

The above is a history of fact and legend at Cwm Farm.



A report commissioned by The North West Wales Dendrochronology Project in partnership with The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW).

HOUSE HISTORY: Detail.

1523 a single tree was felled in the Summer. This accounts for all the timbers dated by Dendrochronology except for one felled in the winter of 1567/8. (See Dr. M. C Bridge FSA and Dr. Miles FSA of Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory).

1567/8 The above second tree was felled.

1590 Owen ap Hughe (Information from 'Y Cwm tu draw i'r Cymoedd' by John Meirion Davies. Information from Llawsgrif Elwis 316 in the National Library of Wales. Verified at Archives, Dolgellau) Agreement between 'Owen ap Hughe of Ffestiniog and Elin his wife, late wife of Humphrey ap hughe Lewis' and 'Morgan Vaughan of Brynheulog and Ffowc Vaughan of the same'. 'Covenant for the assurance of a messuage called Blaen Com Kynvelli in the township of Maentwrog and Ffestiniog'. (Messuage - House and ground). (Verified at Dolgellau Archives).

1618 Hughe ap Own ap Hughe(son) Further agreement in regard to 'Tythin Cwm Kynvelli'. 'Hughe ap Owen ap Hughe, Ffestiniog' and 'Richard Pierce of Dolwyddelan' in regard to 'the assurance of a messuage called Tyddin Cwm Cynval and land known as 'Murie Gwynion, Y Ddol, Y Crofft, Cae Adwy'r Ddol, Cwm Wenallt, Y Ffrith Wen'. (Information from Llawsgrif Elwes 505 in the National Library of Wales).

1623 Rental?

1756 Evan and Catherine Morgan, of Blaen y Cwm. An infant died. Was buried May 5th. (Parish Register, Ffestiniog).

1757 Daughter Catherine, of Evan and Catherine Morgan was baptized on May 5th. Information from 'Y Cwm tu draw I'r Cymoedd'.

1798 Land Tax Assessment for owner & tenant

Joseph Ephraim earlier of Blaen y Cwm (see 1804)

1802 Peirce Edwards of Cwm marries Gwen. Gwen born 1803. From 'Teilu Bryncyfergid - family' by Robin Price, Preston. The names of some of some of the children are Edward - one year, Morris two years, Jane five years, Joseph eight years, Sarah eleven years.

1804 Grave 464 Llan Ffestiniog. Joseph Ephraim age 82 earlier of Blaen y Cwm dies. Also a Morris Joseph died 1844 aged 27 and Dorothy Morris his wife died in 1853 aged 63. Not sure what their connection is? Did they live at Cwm?

1805 Will of Joseph Ephraim. Cwm. (must be the son of the Joseph Ephraim who died in 1804). Wife Catherine Jones. Sons John, eldest, Joseph, deceased and Cadwalader. Daughters Margaret, Mary and youngest Jane. Grandchildren Gwen Griffith, Edward Joseph (Father died) and Gwen Evan. Will from Bangor Archives.

This may well be the will of the 1804 Joseph Ephraim.

1811 Marriage Bond 137. Cadwaladr Williams, yeoman, Llanfrothen, Mer. marries Anne Jones, spinster of Ffestiniog.

1833 Gravestone 090, Llan Cemetery. Cadwalader Williams Blaen y Cwm and Anne Jondes, (possibly Jones). No photo yet

1834 Anne Jones (Cadwalader) dies. 56years old. Old Cemetery Llan Ffestionog. No photo of grave till brambles removed.

1841 Census.

Peirce Edwards. 34 and wife Gwen, aged 38.

Children Sarah aged 11, Joseph aged 8, Jane aged 5, Morris aged 2 and Edward, aged 1.

Also an Anne David, age 20, who might have been the servant or maid. All born in the county.

1851 (census)

Peirce Edwards, 43, farmer of 232 acres,

Gwen Edwards. Wife, 47,

Children Sarah, 20, Joseph, 18, Jane 15, Edward 10, Pierce 8,

and Edward Morris, Lodger, 57, a miner.

1859 Joseph and Catherine Ephraim's daughter Gwen of Cwm seven weeks old dies. Old cemetery. Llan Fastening. Grave 21. Photo.

1861 Census.

Joseph Ephraim, head, aged 29, farmer from Ffestiniog,

Catherine Ephraim, wife, aged 30, from Maentwrog,

children Sarah, aged 3, and Gwen aged 1.

Also Evan Lewis aged 18, shepherd, Catherine Roberts aged 19, Dairymaid.

Edward Morris, lodger, aged 67 minor of copper and lead, from Maentwrog.

1861 In Tyrpeg y Bont (Bont Newydd) lived Joseph and Catrin Ephraim with son and two daughters. They came from Cwm farm. Information from 'Rhamant Bro 'Gaeaf, Rhif 6, 1988.

1868 Peirce Edwards dies age 61 years, originally from Cwm. Was living in Trawsfynydd. Grave 953 in Llan Cemetery. Photo.

1871 Census.

William Humphrey, Head, 57, Farmer of Ffestiniog.

Jane Humphrey, wife, 57. Ffestiniog.

John Humphrey, son, 27, quarrymen,

Ann Humphrey, Dau, 20, Domestic Servant

Robert Humphrey, Son, 14, Servant of all work

Elizabeth Humphrey Dau9

Ann J. Pierce, Grand dau, 3 months.

1881 Census.

William Humphreys, head, aged 66, farmer, of Ffestiniog

Jane Humphreys, wife, aged 63, of Ffestiniog

Robert Humphreys, son, aged 23,

Elizabeth Humphreys, dau aged 18, general servant.

1885 Grave H 109 Ffestiniog cemetery. Jane Humphreys aged 67 dies. Wife of William Humphreys. Photo.

1887 Ellis Lewis born at Cwm. Calculated from his gravestone number J076 in Ffestiniog cemetery.

1891 census

Robert W. Humphreys, head aged 43. farmer, Welsh.

Jane Humphreys, wife, aged 45, from Maentwrog. Welsh.

Hugh Roberts, servant, single, 18, farm labourer, from Ffestiniog. Welsh.

1892 Gwen Edwards, wife of Peirce Edwards dies. Grave 953. Photo
Same grave as husband.

1893 William Humphreys dies. Llan Ffestiniog old cemetery. Age78. Grave 005

1901 Census. Cwm Farm

Robert W. Humphreys, Head, aged 43. Farmer. Ffestiniog, Welsh.
Wife, Jane Humphreys. Aged 45. Maentwrog. Welsh.
Hugh Humphreys, Servant. Single. 22. Farm labourer. Ffestiniog. Welsh.

1911 Census. Cwm Farm

Robert W. Humphreys. Head. Aged 53. Ffestiniog. Welsh
Jane Humphreys. Wife. Aged 54, married 17 years. Maentwrog. Welsh.
Hugh Roberts. Servant. Aged 32. Single. Ffestiniog.

1915 John and Elizabeth Lewis go to live at Cwm from Hafod Offeiriad. Information from Y Cwm tu draw y Cymoedd.

1919 Thomas Lewis (Pengwern Sale Catalogue) 'is now in the occupation of Mr. Thomas Lewis' The field names of Cwm farm remain the same as they were when Cwm was first occupied.

1928 Grave N031. Elizabeth Lewis of Cwm dies. 73 years. New cemetery. Photo.

1928 Beti ,Daughter of Griffith Lewis Davies, died aged 5 weeks,
Grave N32. Photo. Same grave as parents. Llan Ffestiniog.

1930 John Lewis dies. Age 73 Grave N031. Same as his wife Elizabeth.

1930 Jane Humphreys dies. Wife of William Humphreys. Cwm. Age 67 Photo. Grave 0005, Old cemetery

1946 Lizzie Lewis of Cwm dies 63 years. Grave N031. Daughter of John and Elizabeth Lewis.

1948 Ellen and Griffith Davies go to live in Cwm. Peniel Chapel Register.

1948 John Meirion Davies born. Baptised in Babell chapel, Cwm Cynfal.

1951 Maggie Lewis moves to Pen y Bryn, Llan Ffestiniog. Peniel Chapel Register.

1951 Margaret J. Lewis dies. Cwm. Daughter of John and Elizabeth Lewis. Age 59. Grave M006

1966 John Meirion leaves Cwm farm. Peniel Chapel Register.

1967 Grave J076. Ellis Lewis, Y Cwm dies aged 80. Peniel Chapel Register.

1977 Ellen Davies, Llwyn Teg,(originally from Cwm) Age 74.
Grave N032. Photo of grave. Husband Griffith Lewis Davies.
Their daughter Beti 5 weeks died in 1928.

1981 A Kate Lewis leaves Cwm to live on Pen y Bryn, Llan Ffestiniog. Peniel Chapel Register.

1983 Griffith Lewis Davies died. Husband of Ellen. Aged 76. Grave N032. Llan Ffestiniog cemetery.

John Meirion Davies, son of Griffith Lewis Davies was born at Cwm. The writer of 'Y Cwm tu draw y Cymoedd' but now lives on Anglesey.

Wife, Ceinwen, from Blaenau Ffestiniog. Born 1948. Peniel Chapel Register.

1980s – present: The present owner is Dennis Basford. He has lived in Cwm since the 1980's.

Avis Reynolds. Summer 2012