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Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig **Discovering Old Welsh Houses**

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RHOS, (Tŷ'n y Rhos)

Minffordd, Penrhyndeudraeth
Gwynedd



House History

A Part History of the House & its Families

Author: Nan Griffiths,

11 February 2012

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

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NORTH WEST WALES DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES

RHOS, (Tŷ'n y Rhos),

Nan Griffiths, 11 February 2012
Minffordd, Penrhyndeudraeth, Gwynedd LL48 6HP.

Llanfrothen Parish, bordering on Llanfihangel-y-traethau, Meirionnydd.

Summary.

Rhos is situated close to what was for centuries the main pathway across Traeth Mawr (a four mile wide flood plain) between the counties of Meirionnydd and Caernarfon. In the 15th century the pre-existing building was a wine house and until the early 19th century was an important inn welcoming travellers to stay while they waited for favourable weather before attempting the hazardous crossing across the sands. The earliest dendrochronology dating is 1573. Behind the main "guest house" there stood a crogloff cottage where the inn-keeper's family lived.

In the 18th century there was a flourishing ship-building business in Rhos and a brewery, and members of the family acted as guides, leading people across the treacherous sands. Travellers suffered frequent accidents and even loss of life. The famous evangelist Howell Harris reputedly preached in Rhos and John Wesley was a frequent visitor.

Rhos seems to have been originally associated with the Gwydir family, whose descendants owned the Park estate in Llanfrothen. In the 18th century it was incorporated into the huge Mostyn estate before becoming a part of the local Castell Deudraeth estate in 1835.

With the opening of the Cob (sea embankment) in 1812, Rhos as an inn, became redundant and the building was adapted for farming. The old crogloff cottage was demolished in the late 19th century and replaced by a new building.

In the Castell Deudraeth Sale of 1922 it was bought by the tenant, Ann Davies, and although it was for a period owned by industrial companies, it was finally restored to the same family when the author of this report, who currently lives there, bought the property in 1996. To date ten generations of the same family have lived in Rhos.

Nan Griffiths, 11 February 2012

HOUSE HISTORY

Rhos is situated near the main pathway which was used for centuries to cross Traeth Mawr (a flood plain) between the counties of Meirionnydd and Caernarfon. Around this area, known as "Pentra", a number of small establishments - such as taverns - grew to provide sustenance for travellers. Rhos was initially a wine house,



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).

then an inn which accommodated travellers while they waited for favourable weather and tides before undertaking the hazardous four mile crossing on horseback, on foot or by boat.

The dwelling is situated on a slight elevation a few yards from the old pathway leading to Traeth Mawr and what was once the sea shore. The building faces westward and is therefore open to harsh weather and the prevailing winds. It is built of stone and rubble in the style of a Snowdonia house. It was almost certainly whitewashed to help with weatherproofing and to ensure that it was easily visible to travellers on land and sea.

Ty'n-y-rhos c.1450 - 1800

The inn consisted of at least two inhabited buildings as well as other buildings including a brewery, a stable, pig sties and barracks - most of which have been demolished. The main building is typical of a 16th century (c.) house in Meirionnydd. It has an end chimney, direct entry and a cross passage with the remains of a post and panel partition. Evidence of a wide low mullion window was found in Y Gegin (the old kitchen) when renovating the house. There is also a substantial fireplace in the first floor chamber (now covered) and the remains of a cruck can be seen in the Siambar, (the service room) below. The chimney, now covered to retain heat, is an excellent example of its kind.

The house has been dated by dendrochronology to 1573. Important changes in landowning patterns occurred following the Act of Union of 1536 as land was gradually concentrated in the hands of a few dominant families such as Gwydir, Clennau and Mostyn. Consequently there was prolific house building in Meirionnydd during the 16th c.

Access to the upstairs chamber was by a flight of stone steps outside. The stone lintel can be seen outside and the doorway was revealed inside during re-plastering. There was also a ladder stair from Y Gegin and a beam had been adapted to accommodate it. There were no partitions in the dormitory upstairs; travellers slept in wainscot beds. The gwanas (large iron pegs on which to hang clothes and other items) can still be seen above a bedroom doorway upstairs - a most unsuitable place today for a row of pegs!

Behind the main building there stood a crogloff cottage where the inn-keeper's family lived. The two buildings were probably independent, following the unit system of Parc and nearby Plas Newydd but on a much smaller scale. The cottage consisted of one room with a loft. The remains of the fireplace and chimney have been retained and the large inglenook now houses the central heating system. Unfortunately, it was not possible to date this bressemer by dendrochronology.

Documentary Evidence

According to the first written record of the dwelling, Ty'n-y-rhos was a wine house. In his panegyric to his family, written some time after 1580, Sir John Wynn of Gwydir, relates an anecdote concerning his quarrelsome ancestor, Ieuan ap Robert, in 1462:

“As Ieuan ap Robert was on his way going thither passing by Tŷ-yn-y Rhos,
being a wine house standing in Penrhyndeudraeth.....”

John Gwynfor Jones (ed.) The History of the Gwydir Family and Memoirs (HGF) by Sir John Wynn, (Gomer, 1990) p.39.

Editor's note, p.141, 39.36

Tŷ-yn-Rhos: or Tŷ-yn-y-Rhos in Minffordd, Merioneth: an old inn now called 'Rhos'. Until recently 'Brewery y Rhos' had been carved on an adjoining cowshed. F. Edwards, *'Penrhyndeudraeth' JMHR*, i (no. 3), 1951, 197-8; HGF (1878), p.62.

This is Sir John's description of a wine house:

“The fashion was in those days that the gentlemen and their retinues met commonly every day to shoot matches and to try masteries. There was no gentleman of worth in the country but had a wine-cellar of his own where wine was sold to his profit. Thither came his friends to meet him and there spent the day in shooting, wrestling, throwing the sledge and other acts of activity and drinking very moderately withal, not according to the healthing and gluttonous manner of our days. “ *ibid.* p.36

The next available record which mentions Ty'n-y-rhos is dated 12 May 1519:

“Release by Ieuan ap Einion ap Rees ap Madock Llŵch of Llanfrothen to Richard Pencoyd clericus and Lewis ap Ieuan ap Dio of Hendre Hoedlew, Tyddyn y Ficer, Henbant, Tŷ yn y Garth, Ty yn y rhos, Cae Merched

Ieuan Fychan, Tai Newydd, some vigirates in Gelli Dywyll and Dol Llywelyn Goch (some being in Llanfihangel-y-traethau (Llfr.)”

A cleric of the name of Richard Pencoyd was presented to a portion of the benefice of Aberdaron...

A portion of the above lands were once owned by Thomas ap Griffith ap David ap Llywelyn.

Porth-yr-aur, 3694, Bangor University

The Relessor

Ieuan ap Einion was a wealthy and powerful presence in Ardudwy and there are many references to him in the *Brogyntyn* Mss. 1.24, The National Library of Wales (NLW).

Ieuan ap Rees ap Ieuan ap Einion, his grandson, is listed in the *Merioneth Tithe Deeds* of 1504. *Brogyntyn* 1-24, (NLW). William ap Robert ap Ieuan ap Einion, another grandson, was appointed Deputy for the Crown in Traeth Mawr in 1565.

See *Havens and Creeks, Welsh Port Books, 1550-1603*. EA Lewis (1927) p310.

The Lessors

The name of Richard Pencoyd also appears in legal documents of the period.

Richard Pencoyd became vicar of Aberdaron on 14/9/1514. His patron was the King. “He was collated (i.e. appointed to a benefice) to a portion vacated through the death of John Sandy”. (*From information in St. Hywyn's Church, Aberdaron.*) See also Arthur Ivor Price *The Diocese of Bangor in the 16th century. 1512-1646*. (Jarvis & Foster)

He was referred to as Dom. Richard Pencoyt. He resigned in 1536 or 1537.

This nomenclature is unusual in Wales, although place names were sometimes incorporated in bardic names e.g. Dafydd Nanmor. Pencoe was a township in Eifionydd and Richard Pencoyt and his family seem also to have connections in Ardudwy:

9 Feb 1519 the gift of an estate. *Tan-y-bwlch* Z/DV/168 Meirionnydd County Record Office (MCRO.) (Indecipherable)

12 Feb. 1519 - the gift of an estate. *Tan-y-bwlch* Z/DV/169 (MCRO.)

Llecheithior & Brynbras. *Tan-y-bwlch* Z/DV/269 (MCRO)

1504 A Rice (Rhys) Pencoyd Mag. was Rector of Ffestiniog

1572 Thomas Owen de Pencoyt was deacon in the parishes of Ffestiniog and Maentwrog.

The clergy, during this turbulent period, was not popular with the common people who often refused to pay tithes or burial fees. Many were destitute, without a living. Why did he receive the above gifts? Why did he resign in 1527? Was he a Recusant? Pencoe was a Recusant stronghold in the 16th c. See Colin A Gresham, *Eifionydd*, (UWP, 1973) pp 277-280.

See also A.H. Dodd *The History of Caernarvonshire 1284-1900.*, (Caernarvonshire Historical Society, 1968) and Glanmor Williams *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation*. (1962, UWP).

Reference to the second lessor Lewis ap Ieuan ap David (Dio) can be seen in a quitclaim of 6 June 1587. Z/DV/302. (MCRO)

According to other documents Lewis ap Ieuan came from Llanaber: Z/DV/301 (MCRO), Z/DV/307, (MCRO) 31 Jan 1588, see also 2 Feb 1603 Z/DV/310 (MCRO).

The Properties Released:

Some of the properties released have disappeared but those which still exist or whose location are known are within a three mile radius of Ty'n-y-rhos.

Hendre Hoedliw was a farm near Ty'n-y-rhos. Since at least 1834 it has also been known as Tŷ Obry (*Ty Obry house deeds*). It is listed in Wynnstay, Mostyn and Porth yr Aur papers as Hendre Hoedliw. *Melville Richards Archive Place-name Data Base (MR)*

Tyddyn y ficer Could it be associated with Rev. Richard Coetmor? .

The remains of Tŷ yn y garth still exist on the Minffordd Quarry site, in what was Garth Plas Newydd. It was often mentioned in Llyfr Siop Penmorfa (*Bangor MS.82*).

Cae Merched Ieuan Fychan is a small holding in Penrhyndeudraeth but the name has been abbreviated to Cae Merched.

Gelli Dywyll - In Maentwrog. A Robert Wynne lived there in 1623; by 1632 it was owned by the Mostyn estate. (MR) A new house stands on the old site.

Henbant Maes Henbant is the name of a field on Tŷ Obry farm.

The Witnesses:

Mareddydd ap Ieuan ap Robert (the founder of the Wynn family who laid the foundations of the Gwydir estate.)
John Wynn ap Mareddydd ap Ieuan ap Robert (grandfather of Sir John Wynn of Gwydir. He inherited his father's lands in Llanfrothen.)

Rees ap Ieuan (John) ap Mareddydd

John ap Wynn ap Mareddydd,

John ap Mareddydd ap Matto

John Foxwist (an attorney from a Cheshire family who settled in Caernarfon)

Porth yr Aur 3654, Bangor

Most of the witnesses were connected to the Gwydir family see *HGF*.

The tentatively established succession in the ownership of Ty'n y rhos after 1519 is as follows: Ieuan ap Einion ap Rhys ap Madog Llwh (Llwh later became Clough) of the 1519 document – William ap Robert ap Ieuan ap Einion (the Traeth Mawr Crown Deputy 1565) – Robert William, Rhos (Crown Rental 1623) – William ap Robert (Hearth Tax 1662). Apart from the Hearth Tax no documentary evidence of the ownership of Ty'n y rhos has been obtained until the Land Tax of 1798 when it was owned by the Mostyn estate. It can be assumed that it continued in the possession of the Gwydir descendants via the Park, Llanfrothen estate and possibly the Clennau, Penmorfa estate.

16th Century Documents

1565 William ap Robert ap Ieuan ap Einion, the grandson of Ieuan ap Einion who released Ty'n-y-rhos in 1519, is appointed deputy for the Crown in Traeth Mawr.

E A Lewis *Havens and Creeks, Welsh Port Books, 1550-1603*. (1927) p310.

1623 Robert William, Rhos, Llanfrothen, (who could well be the son of William ap Robert above) paid 1p. due to Ardudwy Crown Rental. Since his property was an inn and this was his only property, he was probably the owner, not the tenant. *JMHRs 2009 p. 376*.

1662 A William ap Robert paid tax for one hearth in Penrhyndeudraeth. He could be the son of Robert William who paid the Crown Rental in 1623 above and Rhos the therefore the “hearth in Penrhyndeudraeth.”

An item in the Brogyntyn ms. below may refer to Ty'n-y-rhos, since Ellis ap Morris of Clennau was related to the Gwydir family.

1536 Conveyance by Llywelyn ap Ieuan ap Morris to Morris ap Ellis ap Morris of a tenement Ty'n y Roo in Llfr. *Brogyntyn MS 1,24 No.75 1536*. (NLW).

Ty'n-y-rhos or Rhos was frequently assigned to Llfr. parish in the 18th c. The boundary between the parishes of Llanfrothen (Llfr.) and Llfr. is at the bottom of the orchard.

(The spelling Ty'n y Roo has been checked in the original ms. by NLW staff.)

In 1516 Morris ap John, the eldest son of John ap Mareddydd of Gwydir had entailed the Clennau estate to his son Elise ap Morris, the father of Morris ap Ellis above, together with other property in Ardudwy.

Eifionydd. pp102-104.

“In the first half of the 16th c. Elise ap Morus (d1571) and his son Maurice of Clennau had built up and consolidated an estate around Penmorfa and had acquired tenements in Llfr. and Llfr.” Ibid. p.665. Ty'n y Roo could be among them.

There were close links between the Gwydir and Mostyn families e.g. Mary, Sir John Wynn's eldest daughter, married Sir Roger Mostyn (1560-1642) and the property could have been transferred in a marriage settlement. However, it is more likely that it became part of the small Park estate which Elise's brother, Robert, of Clennau founded. Ibid p.104. There is no mention of Rhos in Lewis Anwyl's marriage contract of 1669 nor in any of the Parc and Clennau papers.

1573 Rhos dendrochronology dating – two years after the death of Elise ap Morris.

Plas Newydd

The remains of the former mansion of Plas Newydd, which was established in the 17th c., are situated close to Rhos. It was the home of a cadet branch of the Anwyl family of Park who traced their descent from John ap Mareddydd of Gwydir. In its heyday the family furnished Meirionnydd with several MPs and High Sheriffs. Lewis Anwyl (d. 1605) married Elizabeth, daughter of Moris ap Evan ap John ap Mareddydd of Wern, Penmorfa. Owen Anwyl (1654-1695) built Plas Newydd, on the site of an earlier house, about 1677 and lived there. Park and Plas Newydd were further connected in 1697 by the marriage of Catherine Anwyl (d.1734) the heiress of Owen Anwyl of Plas Newydd to the heir of Park.

A public footpath connects the two places which necessitated the building of a bridge over the path when the Cambrian Railway was built in 1867 and it was likely that the brewery at Rhos was used by Plas Newydd. In its heyday Plas Newydd was the largest estate in the area and was a huge industrial complex in the 18th c. According to a local historian the family spent the summers in Park, Llanfrothen and the winters in Plas Newydd. Oral tradition links Rhos and Plas Newydd – it was claimed that a tunnel connected the two houses and that Rhos was a wine house for Plas Newydd.

The fortunes of the Anwyl family of Park and Plas Newydd suffered drastically the 18th c.

In 1738 Robert Williams of Park was forced to mortgage his lands to a Pierce Galiard. (*Tan y bwlch* Z/DM/9 MCRO). There is a field on Plas Newydd land called Cae'r Galiard (the Galiard's Field) so we may assume that Plas Newydd and Rhos were included in the transaction.

Ann Williams (d.1770) of the Anwyl family, inherited the Marl estate in Conwy. She was known for her profligacy and soon spent her own fortune as well as that of Sir Thomas Pendergast of Ireland whom she married in 1732. Following the death of her husband in Sept 1760 Ann immediately married his cousin Terence Pendergast but Park had to be sold in 1761 to pay their debts. (Williams family of Marl. Dictionary of Welsh Biography, 1959).

On 25 July 1746 Sir Thomas Pendergast and Dame Ann, his wife and only sister and heir of Robert Williams were fined and their land in the parishes of Llfr. and Lltr. were given to Sir Thomas Mostyn and Robert Davies Esq., *Bryn y gwin*. Z/DJ/201 MCRO.

In 1748 Sir Thomas Pendergast sold Park to Williams Wynne III of Wern who had gone into considerable debt to buy extensive land. Eifionydd p.122

1758 Parc comes into the possession of Sir Roger Mostyn 5th Bart

26 Jan 1761 Marriage Settlement Ann Pendergast-Williams and Terence Pendergast of ...Parc estates including Plas Newydd, "of which Dame Ann is seized."

18/12/1771 The Park estate is mentioned in the Marriage Settlement of Williams Wynne IV who married Jane Williams of Peniarth.

Due to his debts, much of Williams Wynne's property in Meirionnydd was transferred to Sir George Warren in a Lease and Release of 23 July 1777. Eifionydd p.123

According to local historian Ioan Brothen in his unpublished Hanes Plwyf Llanfrothen John Jones (1906) p.34 (MCRO), Williams Wynn, Y Wern, sold Parc to Sir Richard Pryce Lloyd, Pengwern in 1796. When the last Mostyn baronet died in 1831 he left his estates to his daughter Elizabeth who had married Sir Edward Pryce Lloyd. Sir Edward was elevated to the peerage in the same year.

1798 Land Tax

Rhos is included with Plas Newydd in the Land Tax of 1798 and both properties were owned by Sir Edward Price Lloyd Bart. The occupier was John Jones and the tax due was £3.12.00.

In 1832, following the death of Sir Richard Pryce Lloyd in the previous year, the Parc estate, including Plas Newydd and Rhos, was put on the market.

11/7/1832 Mostyn Catalogue of Sale:

Rhos, is included in the Sale schedule of 1832 and is clearly a farm.

Rhos - "Tenement, comprising House, Barn, Stable and Cow-house, in holding of Widow Pritchard". 15 acres. Access to common land. Z/DJ/246(MCRO)

The sale of Parc to Hugh John Revelrey, Bryn-y-gwin, eventually went through in March 1834. Z/DJ/246 1 (MCRO). Plas Newydd and Rhos, however, were not included in the sale since it was Sir Edward Pryce Lloyd who paid the Tithe in 1840.

1840 Tithe Commutation No 13. Rhos. Sir R H Edward Pryce Lloyd - (i.e. Baron Mostyn) who also owned Plas Newydd. The Rhos tenant was John Evans who lived with his wife and one daughter in the cottage; another daughter, her husband and their six children lived in the main house. Census 1841).

The estate was put on the market by Sir RH Edward Pryce Lloyd in 1848 but was not sold. Eventually, on 6/10/1853, Lord Mostyn completed the sale to David Williams, a local solicitor who bought many properties in the Penrhyndeudraeth and Porthmadog area and established the Castell Deudraeth estate. Rhos remained in the ownership of the Castell Deudraeth estate until 1922.

The Inhabitants

Non-family Residents

We have evidence that at least two gentlemen, who were not members of the family, lived permanently in Rhos. Both had family connections with the Gwydir and Parc families.

Griffith Wynne, Rhos, gent. 16?? - 1706

was a farmer and attorney who practised in the Penmorfa area: 29/3/1683, X/Poole/2600; 19/8/1697, X/Poole/2604. He may have been an agent for the Gwydir estate (T. Ceiri Griffith, verbatim). He was referred to in legal documents as Griffith Wynne Rhos.

His wife Jane, vch Dafydd was the daughter of Penamnen, Dolwyddelan. A Jane David died in Rhos, May 1717 (Llfr).

He witnessed the will of John Jones of Clennau 22/5/1669, *Brynygwin* Z/DJ/197 MCRO. There was more than one Griffith Wynne in the area at this time, including one of Clennau.

Griffith Wynne, Rhos's will is dated 22/3/1703 and at that time his mother, Jane Jones, was alive and living in Rhos. The inventory of 24/4/1704 (B/1706/45) includes an interesting list of the animals he kept at Rhos - cows and "calfs", goslings etc.

John Jones, Rhos, gent. 1688 – 1755.

was a wealthy landowner from Cricieth. He inherited Ynysgain Uchaf and Muriau Poethion, Cricieth. See *Eifionydd* p.122-123.

In 1714 he married Catherine Rowlands, Parc, Llfr, the daughter of Rowland William, Ynysfor. See *Griffith Pedigrees* p. 215. Ynysfor at this period was owned by Parc. After Catherine's death in Feb 1723 (Llfr), possibly on the birth of her fourth child who also died as a baby, John Jones lived in Rhos, as a widower, until his death 30 years later. His children were probably brought up by their maternal grandparents. This connection strengthens the possibility that Rhos was owned by the Park estate. His burial was recorded: John Jones, yeoman "late of Rhos" was buried on 26/12/1755. Llfr.)

His will W(1) 1754/131 743 was witnessed and signed by David Evan, Rhos.

The Rhos Family

The history of the family that still lives in Rhos can be traced back to the marriage of Elen vch Richard and Evan ap Richard on 18/11/1679 (Llfr.) (This was only seventeen years after William ap Robert paid the Hearth Tax of 1662.)

The men were mostly mariners, who until about 1810 plied their trade on and beyond Traeth Mawr. A huge amount of woollen goods and oak was exported and wine and lime imported. The women brewed ale, ran the farm and the inn, guided travellers across the sands and worked as herbalists and midwives. Elizabethan coins dated 1585 and 1587 were amongst those found in the garden. There was also a thriving shipbuilding business. All in all, Rhos was an important and prosperous homestead in the 18c. David Evan (1706-1777), owned a sloop and a boat, was literate and married a "gentleman's" daughter of Cefnfaes, Gelli Lydan. Unusually, the language of his gravestone in Llfr. is English: "Here/hope of a joyful resurrection of ye remains/ of David Evans, late live/ at Rhos, Mariner/ was buried ye 16th of/ .../1777 aged seventy" Travellers such as John Wesley often stayed in Rhos.

Some indication of the plan of the two buildings and the value of the contents can be gleaned from the wills below:

David Evan Rhos, Mariner was buried 30/8/1777 and there is an inventory of his possessions (B/1778/133) totalling £43.20.00. Two boats are listed, also "1 loft", the upper chamber, the lower chamber and "all the middle floor". MI BO55.

(The “loft” probably refers to the upper floor of the croglofft cottage.

The inventory to the will of his widow, Ann Llwyd, two years later 7/3/1779 includes a similar list but the value of the contents of the loft has gone down, there is £11.11.00 cash and “part share of a sloop” worth £30. The total is £51.16.00.

The will of Ann Llwyd dated 17/12/1778, (B/1779/110W)

Money and items of furniture are bequeathed to her daughters Elisabeth, Eleanor, Margaret and Ann's grandson David Williams. The residue goes to her son David Evan who was buried seven years later, on 15/10/1785. (Llfr.) She died on 2/1/1779. (Llfr.)

As well as wills and parish records there are references to the inn at Rhos in a number of documents:

1771 “Payed ye daughter of Rose for 6 Bottles of Brandy and 6 due to for oats

9/6.” Brondanw Estate Account Book. See Bob Owen, *Diwydiannau Coll* (Gwasg y Brython 1943)

p.109.

Small items for daily use and medicines could be bought in a shop in Penmorfa either directly or by employing the services of a messenger.

1793 Ellin Jones, Rhos bought sewing materials, sugar, tobacco, spices and pharmaceutical items as did:

1793 Beti Evans Rhos

1794 Beti Jones Rhos

Llyfr Siop Penmorfa (Penmorfa Shop Account Book) (Bangor 82)

12/8/1785 Alehouse Recognizance Quarter Session Rolls. Rhos:

John Jones and William Jones	£10 each
Owen Jones and William Jones	£10 each

(Although the women were the brewers, the men held the licence.)

Rhos is not included in the Quarter Session's list of Ardudwy taverns in 1784-1792. Z/QS/T (MCRO).

The mariner John Jones, above, came to live in Rhos when he married David Evan's daughter Elisabeth on 16/8/1744 (Llfr). His death in 1811 perhaps precipitated the closure of the inn.

The date 1768 is carved on the small oak dresser from the old croglofft cottage together with the initial R and 21.

1789-1790 Highway Tax at the rate of 3d in the pound: 3 John Jones, Rhos
from Lloffion Bob Owen, *Y Genedl Gymreig* 25/10/1931.

Rhos 1810 - 2012

On 17/8/1811 the Cob (causeway), crossing Traeth Mawr and joining the counties of Meirionnydd and Caernarfon by road and eventually by rail, was officially opened. This development was devastating for Rhos and indeed for all the inhabitants of “Pentra” who relied on the industry provided by Traeth Mawr for their livelihood. It was the end of the old way of life. The shipbuilding, the inn and the services the estuary provided were now redundant and Rhos was converted into a small farm. The brewery became a cowshed, and a barn was built nearby. The stone steps leading up to the communal dormitory were demolished and Y Bwtri (buttery) was built on the site.

The mariners of Rhos were, for one generation, replaced by farmers when Marged Dafydd (David Evan and Ann Llwyd's daughter) and her family moved back from the upland farm of Dolbelydr, Gelli Lydan, some time before 1820. The men of the Rhos family eventually returned to seafaring, working on some of the large sailing ships of Porthmadog.

The local historian and solicitor Edward Breese states in a letter that Rhos

“was a public house up to 40 years ago. Before the embankment was made, the ford across the Glaslyn was near it”. Edward Breese, Letters, Box no.141-120, (CCRO).

Alterations to the structure of the house.

Following the abandonment of the inn further “renovations” were made to the building during the 19th century. As late as 1858 the rents for Rhos Cottage and Rhos House were paid separately and they were listed as separate dwellings in the all the Census returns until 1891; clearly the cottage was an independent building and not an annexe.

1868 Highway Tax No 77 Gwen Evans (who lived in the cottage) and Ellis Roberts (her brother-in-law, who lived with his family in the house) Part of Rhos £2.8.00 Bangor 5040.

1861 The old post and panel partition between Siambar and y Gegin was replaced by a new partition made from the hull of a sailing ship of Canadian redwood. together with a new staircase, replacing the ladder. (The date was inscribed on the new partition).Possibly a new opening from the main building to the smaller cottage was made at this time, incorporating a piece of rail as a lintel. (The Ffestiniog Railway was established in 1832, but before that wagons were pulled along railway tracks by horses.)

In 1869 Minffordd Quarry was opened. Until May 2011 the only access to the quarry was through the farm yard and along the old embankment which was built in the 18th c. to gain land from Traeth Mawr.

By 1890 the old cottage had been demolished and replaced by the new annexe consisting of a large sitting room and pantry with two bedrooms above.

12/3/1890 Castell Deudraeth Rentals No.34, paid as one dwelling by Ellis Roberts.

1891 Census The dwelling is listed as Rhos (not as previously Rhos Cottage and Rhos House)

An auction of the Castell Deudraeth Estate was held in Penrhyndeudraeth on 11-12 January 1922. Most of the properties in the sale were bought by the tenants and Rhos was bought by Mrs Ann Davies, tenant. Z/F/55 (MCRO) The fields are listed by name and according to the sale catalogue:

“Rhos Farm” comprised just over 13 acres and is described as “a convenient holding” . It was “subject to a right of way to the Garth Quarry through yard and field”(s). “The house contains Parlour, Kitchen, Dairy, lean-to Pantry, 2 Bedrooms, spacious Parlour, 2 Bedrooms”. The out buildings “include Cow Shed, 4-ties, loft over” (this was the old brewery), “Piggery, open Hay Shed”.

A few major changes were made by Mrs Davies following the sale. The roof was raised substantially but the old roof timbers were retained below the new ones. The upper floor was partitioned into bedrooms and larger windows were installed in the older part of the house. No substantial or structural work has been carried out since this time.

On 1/6/1965 the house and the land was bought by the Electricity Generating Company to allow the company to erect a pylon in a nearby field to carry electricity from the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station.

On 19/6/1984 the house and land was sold by the Central Electricity Generating Board to Wimpey Asphalt Ltd., the owners of the nearby quarry.

Following this sale the house and garden were severely neglected and the house was rapidly becoming a ruin. There was a hole in the roof and most of the fittings were stolen and doors burnt by squatters. It was rumoured that the place was about to be demolished to improve access to the quarry. An urgent appeal was made to CADW who eventually listed the house and pig sties. (The quarry had already demolished the old brewery.)

Following a sustained effort by family members over many years the sale of the house and garden was agreed on 28/8/1996 between Tarmac Asphalt Ltd., Tarmac Minerals Ltd and Merfyn and Nan Griffiths. They, over a period of two years, made the house habitable, without changing the original structure. Traditional lime plaster was used throughout the interior and the exterior walls were pointed with lime. The “old” front door in the new part was replaced with a similar window to match the existing one and a new back door replaced a window in the Pantry beneath the wide lintel that was revealed when the old plaster was removed. Y Bwtri was re-roofed using old slates; the previous slates were held in place by oak pegs. A large inglenook and brick oven was revealed when the 19th c. range was removed. Some of the original 18th c. oak furniture was restored to the house.

There are many unanswered questions about the owners of Ty'-y-rhos over the centuries and much research remains to be done. The house keeps its mystery, as it should perhaps. Rhos now is permanently occupied by a member of the old family who compiled this report.

Nan Griffiths
4 May 2012

Appendix:

Abbreviations:

c. century
Llfr. Llanfrothen
Lltr. Llanfihangel-y-traethau
NLW National Library of Wales
MCRO Merioneth County Record Office
CCRO Caernarfon County Record Office
MR Melville Richards Archive Place-name Database.
JMHRs Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society.

A simple family tree

Ellen vch Richard Evan ap Richard
d.9.9.1708 m. 18.11.1679 Llfr. d. May 1717 Llfr.

David Evan (mariner) Ann Lloyd, Cefnfaes
b.1706 d.30.9.1777 Llfr. b. 12.1.1703 Mtg.,d.12.1.1779 Llfr.

Elisabeth David* m. 16/8/1774 Lltr John Jones, sailor, Lltr
b. 22.5.1740 b.1748 d.1811 Llfr.

Margaret David* m.19/4/1771 Llfr. William David
b.1749 d.13.8.1834

Jane Williams m.13/2/1799 Ff, John Evans
2.4.1773 Ff. d.17/6/1862 b.1776 d.11/8/1849

Ann Evans m.21/4/1827 Llfr. Ellis Roberts
b.25/12/1801 Mtr d. 1886 b.13/7/1802 d.25/10/1879

Margaret Roberts Huw Edwards
b.1829 d.19/6/1865 b.1829 d. 29.8.1866

Ann Edwards David Davies
b.18/10/1861 d.2/3/1947 b.14/2/1854 d. 6.9.1914

