



DARGANFOD HEN DAI CYMREIG DISCOVERING OLD WELSH HOUSES



NODDWYR/PATRONS:

Syr Simon Jenkins, FSA, FRSL; Dr Eurwyn Wiliam, MA, PhD, FSA

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

CYLCHLYTHYR 51 Rhagfyr

EIN GWEFAN

<http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk>

yw prif sianel gyfathrebu'r Grŵp - defnyddiwch hi i weld mwy o fanylion am y digwyddiadau diweddar a'r rhai sydd i ddod, ac i edrych ar ein llyfrgell sy'n cynyddu'n gyson ac ar nodweddion eraill.

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

NEWSLETTER 51 December

OUR WEBSITE

<http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk>

Is the Groups main channel of communication please visit it to see details of recent and forthcoming events and to look at our growing library and other features.



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FROM THE CHAIR by Janice Dale

My apologies for not producing something for the September Newsletter – I had written it but forgotten to forward to Wally and Margaret. Being in Chamonix at deadline time and being hopeless with doing everything on my phone, I totally failed to retrieve the report. However there was plenty to read in the September Newsletter, and again a big thank you to Margaret and Wally for producing it.

Autumn, if not winter has arrived, but I have managed to snatch time in the garden between the rain. It will be all too soon that the weather will drive us indoors with shorter daylight and a downturn with the weather, but then it will give us more time to catch up on some research. I finally put to bed the work I did on Tai Teg at Derwen – a complicated farm involving at least 4 houses with interchangeable names. So, I am now free to carry on researching the remaining houses in the parish of Llandrillo – a piece of work I started many years ago, and hopefully will be able to get back to visiting archives again. You may have heard that the Hawarden

and Ruthin archives are to merge into a new purpose archive in Mold which should be up and running by 2027. This will inevitably mean a closure whilst documents are moved, but a move for the better. The autumn and winter are also a time when our zoom talks resume, and Martin has been busy putting together a programme of talks – something to look forward to on a dark winter night. Thank you Martin.

DOWHG – SURVEY RESULTS by Janice Dale

Earlier this year a questionnaire was sent to members [with an email address] asking to help your trustees plan for the future. We had 22 responses. A summary of the answers is given below:

How often do you visit the website?

The majority of answers were as expected, with most visiting the site occasionally or monthly, and it's reassuring to know that the website is used, considering all the hard work that goes into keeping it up to date.

What activities interest you?

This was a multi-choice question:

16 would like village/town/garden walks

10 would like visits to archives

Get-togethers, practical workshops, house visits and researching social history had between 1 and 3 answers. This surprised me a little - I was expecting more requests for house visits - but it's good to know that members are interested in seeing how houses fit into the wider community or area.

Training sessions?

15 would like lectures and workshops in looking at Social History

13 would like lectures and workshops in interpreting the landscapes in which our houses are located

1 asked for help with mentoring on their own research. This certainly gives us an idea for future zoom subjects and practical sessions.

Skills?

There were only 4 responses where members could offer to help carry on the work with DOWHG. One would lead lectures or workshops sessions and the other respondents had computer skills to offer.

1 respondent commented "I'm happy to assist someone if I'm available but I don't speak Welsh. I have IT skills". And, "I'm a teacher and would be interested in helping to organise something in the distant future with a school and the local community eg. an open day, festival etc".

Zoom talks?

9 joined the zoom talks regularly

5 joined the zoom talks occasionally

1 never joined the zoom talks

3 watched the zoom talks via the website

Can you help?

There were 2 with research experience, and a couple of comments about publicising the group locally and wider. We still need a volunteer to come forward to help with the website.

Other comments.

3 respondents live/work outside North Wales, so input is limited.

Age was mentioned twice, as being a limiting factor.

Also, "I tell all my friends that your group is fantastic and fascinating!" thank you for spreading the word.

And, a request for interpretation of surface marks, particularly tool marks, on timber and possibly also on stone. Hopefully we can find someone who could help with a zoom talk on this interesting subject

I would like to thank those who responded, it has given some ideas on future activities for the group

NEWS AND ARTICLES FROM THE BRANCHES

ANGLESEY BRANCH

Report by Clare Latham

Our Autumn programme built on our summer activities starting in September with a visit to Oriel Mon in Llangefni. Firstly, we were given a talk on the wonderful 'Mapping Anglesey' exhibition. This is a curated set of maps from Anglesey Archives and private collections, including rare 16th century manuscript maps through to 19th century maps showing how mapping techniques developed, and with this, the shape of Anglesey. We saw a map drawn by a local map maker we came across when visiting Penrhoslligwy Church in Mynydd Bodafon. As the maps developed over the centuries, we saw how places and place names developed. This exhibition is on until January 2025 and is well worth a visit.



We followed this up with a tour of the Kyffin Williams exhibition of his paintings of East Anglesey which linked to our summer walk around Llanddona, standing in Kyffin's footsteps where he painted many of the village's cottages. The exhibition also included a portrait of the last tenant of Hafoty, Henry Williams. Hafoty is the beautiful Hall House, maintained by Cadw, that we visited earlier in the year. A Place in the Heart: Kyffin and East Anglesey is on until February 2025.

Our October visit was a return to Anglesey Archives to learn how they store their historical documents and a talk on how to conduct a Parish Survey. We used the example of Penmynydd on Anglesey as our demonstrator parish as we are going to be visiting St Gredifael's church with its amazing Tudor connections and a group of currently unused Alms houses in the parish. We are also hoping to arrange a visit to the magnificent Plas Penmynydd at some point in 2025. The Archive staff team were very generous with their time and had pulled out many resources on these buildings to show our group and whet their appetite for our 2025 programme.

We are finishing off the year with a Christmas Social/Planning meeting on 19th December at Four Mile pub in Menai Bridge. We are going to discuss with the group the ideas we have had for next year and see what ideas they have for the programme as well as enjoy some Christmas cheer together. A very fitting way to end a super year of Anglesey DOWH activities!

CAERNARFONSHIRE BRANCH

Margaret Dunn, current secretary of the Caernarfonshire branch, has been unwell. We know all our members will join us in sending her our best wishes and in wishing both Margaret and Ray a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

CONWY BRANCH

Report by Gill Jones

Nine Branch members and one guest visited Brynmor in Penmaenmawr on the 13th November. It is a Grade II listed, two-storey late C16th gentry house with gable end chimneys. It has been uninhabited for quite a



Brynmor bressummer

number of years but the owners, who lived there when they were growing up, have recently been granted planning permission to renovate the property.

It was built on land owned by the Williams family of Cochwillan and was almost certainly built for a member of that family. When Gruffydd ap Gwilym of Penrhyn died in 1405, his lands were divided between his three sons – Gwilym, the eldest, received Penrhyn; Robyn received Cochwillan and Rhys was left property in Flintshire.

The Cochwillan estate passed eventually to Henry Williams of Maes y Castell, Caerhun. He squandered most of his money and after the death of his father in 1612, he sold Cochwillan and a number of other properties in Caernarfonshire, including Brynmor, in

order to pay off his debts. By a process which is obscure, these properties were purchased by Henry's cousin John Williams (1582-1650) who had been born at Parlwr Mawr in Conwy (demolished in 1950). At a later date, John also purchased the Penrhyn estate.

John Williams was the son of Edmund Williams of Conwy and Mary Wynn d/o Owen Wynn of Eglwysbach who was a brother of Robert Wynn of Plas Mawr, Conwy. Mary died when John was only 3 years old and so he went to live with his grandmother, Dorothy d/o Sir William Griffith of Penrhyn who first married William Wyn Williams of Cochwillan who died in 1557, and then Robert Wynn of Plas Mawr, Conwy.

John Williams became Dean of Westminster in 1620. He had a close relationship with James I and was present at his deathbed in 1625. An indenture dated 1625 notes that Brynmor was 'a possession of John Williams.' He did not get on well with Charles I and was removed from office, prevented from attending Parliament, fined and imprisoned in the Tower of London. Charles eventually released him because he thought that he could be useful to him. He was appointed Archbishop of York and Keeper of the Great Seal.

During the civil war, John returned to Conwy in order to organise the repair of Conwy Castle on behalf of the King. In 1646, he submitted to the Parliamentarians on condition that the deposited valuables being held secure by him in the castle were restored to their rightful owners.

He spent the last few years of his life at Gloddaeth with Lady Mary Mostyn who devoted herself to his care. After his death, his nephew, Griffith Williams inherited the Penrhyn and Cochwillan estates. He was knighted by both Oliver Cromwell and Charles II to become 1st bart of Penrhyn. He and his wife had at least 13 children. Sir Griffith Williams' fourth son, John Williams (b.1642/3), inherited Brynmor and lived in the property until he died in 1706. He was buried inside St.Mary's church, Conwy where there is a large memorial dedicated to him.



**Brynmor carved attic beams
(photograph: Eleanor Carpenter)**

Lord Newborough eventually acquired the property and his steward, Elias Jones (b.c.1761 - another descendant of the Cochwillan family) leased Brynmor from him. Elias's son, William Jones (b.1786), was finally able to purchase the freehold. Rental records from 1874 list 103 properties belonging to the Brynmor estate. This included Maes y Castell, the former home of Henry Williams (d.1658). William married Gaynor Lloyd Ffoulkes heiress of Cymryd isaf. Their descendant Dilys Glynne, former Conwy Branch member, lived at Cymryd Isaf from 1966 until she died in 2019. Brynmor remained in the possession of the Jones family until 1958 when it was acquired by the family of the current owners.

DENBIGHSHIRE BRANCH

Report by Jenny Lees

Our house visits and meetings were kindly hosted by the owners of *Bryn Penllyn* (below), situated above Llandrillo yn Edeirnion on the slopes of Edeirnion's *Cwm Pennant*, and of *Llwyn Lleiaf* - very near to Betws Gwerfil Goch but within Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr parish.



Visit to Bryn Penllyn

Along with nearby *Pant y Llyn* and *Cadwst*, *Bryn Penllyn* was listed in the 'Other Houses' section for Llandrillo parish in Edward Llwyd's 1699 *Parochialia*, and with its marked downslope siting, the dwelling *Bryn Penllyn* could have existed earlier. The amazing kaleidoscope of historical North Wales property ownership is fascinating, and we were surprised to find from the **1668 Will of Lewis Lloyd of Rhiwaedog** that he owned *Bryn Penllyn* (having bought it from a **Thomas Ellis**) as well as other property in the townships of Vaerdre Issa, Pennant, and Dynan in Llandrillo parish, plus estates stretching as far as Mallwyd parish, which included the '*capital messuage Dugod Mowthwy*'.

In **1741 Rhiwaedog Lloyd** relations continued to be involved with ownership of *Bryn Penllyn*, when a 'RELEASE [part of Lease and Release]' transaction was made by yeoman **Cadwalader Rowlands** of *y Vedw onllom* to '**Rev. Roger Lloyd, Hengwrt**, clerk'. This included not only the '*messuage, tenements and lands known as Bryn Penllyn*', but also a '*dairy house*' called *Havotti yn y Cwm bydew* and closes in *Llystyn*, all in Llandrillo parish.¹ We don't yet know whether any traces of the dairy house still exist in upland *Cwm Pydew*, but this record is of interest, as at that time cattle were often kept in the fields all year round, rather than housed indoors during the winter.

Bryn Penllyn still appeared in a **1774** property list for **William Lloyd** of *Rhiwaedog*, but by the **1843 Tithe Apportionment** it was owned by **Lord Ward**, with occupant **John Parry**. The recorded 1843 *State of cultivation* of each numbered 'field' is interesting, in that apart from one area of 'Wood', most *Bryn Penllyn* areas were listed '*Arable*', with no mention of pasture or meadow. But *Bryn Penllyn* was just one of many neighbouring farmsteads owned at the time by Lord Ward, and other nearby holdings then owned by him, such as *Cadwst*, are recorded on the *Tithe Apportionment* as providing large areas of grazing.

It seems that *Llwyn Lleiaf* (pictured on the next page from the rear to show its downslope siting suggestive of early origins) was also once one of a group of properties, this time within *Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr* parish, that were owned by a large landowner and could together have formed a valuable self-sufficient farming unit. In this case the landowners in the **1841 Tithe Apportionment** were '**John Lloyd Wynne Esquire and the Revd. Boulger**' - the former being owner of the huge *Coed Coch* estate which by 1873 had acquired an estimated

¹ 1741 Sept. 1: (Z/DS/12/861).

10,000 acres with properties widely spread across North Wales. (Interestingly, these included the important and magnificent Flintshire property of *Brithdir Mawr*, located in Cilcain).

Rather strangely, the farm *Llwyn lleiaf* was named *Llwyn Store* in the *Tithe Apportionment*! Examination of the tithe records shows that, apart from *Llwyn Store* (mostly *Arable*) and *Ty Cerrig* (97 acres), most of these holdings were quite small - as *Llwyn lleiaf* has a large barn, could the name 'Store' refer to it being used to store produce for all these farm holdings?

The other six *Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr* parish properties situated around *Llwyn lleiaf* with the same 1841 ownership were *Tir barwn bach*, *Cefn Ceirch bach*, *Hendre Llysan*, *Ty cerrig*, *Votty bryn glas* (probably now *Hafotty-llysan*) and an unnamed *Homestead* which (from looking at both tithe and modern maps) could have been *Llys Gain*?



Llwyn lleiaf

As well as continuing work on the house histories of *Pant y Llyn*, *Bryn Penllyn*, *Plas isaf* (Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd) and *Lleweni*, our DOWH histories of *Cadwst*, *Caenog*, *Hafod yr afr*, *Henblas* (Llandderfel) and *Henfaes isaf* (Cynwyd) are largely completed, but still awaiting finalised building reports and/or isotope dating results. But if anyone would like to see drafts of our research on these properties, please contact me at leesjenny@gmail.com.

In addition to the above visits, Branch members also greatly appreciated a talk at *Hafod-y calch*, Corwen, by DOWH member Pam Buttrey – now the subject of her article (below) in this Newsletter. Her intriguing research on the absent landowners of some Llandrillo properties stems from our house history research on *Cadwst Mawr*, and reveals lives far from the 'hunting, shooting and fishing' lifestyles of the land they purchased and rented out!

Branch members thought any December event would be too near Christmas, but a meeting will be arranged at *Hafod y calch*, Corwen early next year, followed by visits to any houses that members think would merit DOWH 'investigation'- their own or others who may have interested owners! Finally, enormous thanks to all who have let us look at their amazing historic homes – often saved from dereliction and restored with great personal effort!

ARTICLE by Pam Buttrey Thomas Durack – Dancing Master and Gentleman



Berwyn mountain above Rhyd y Gethin,
Pennant valley (Jenny Lees)

Durack is a surname largely found in County Down, Ireland. In 1776, William Durack, Dancing Master, '*late of Sheffield now at Wrexham, and sometime one of the principal dancers in the Opera House, London*', advertised his opening a school in Shrewsbury '*... for Teaching young Ladies and Gentlemen the art of an early address, and Dancing ... the Minuet, Cotillion, Allemande and Country Dances, the Hornpipe if desired, great care will be taken of the Morals of his Pupils*'.

A son, Thomas, was baptised in Wrexham that year, and Charlotte in 1779. His school was in Hope Street in 1789, the same year Laurence Durack, a dancing master in Wrexham,

married Elizabeth Bannister in Chester and settled there. William died in 1799. Thomas continued his father's work, being a 'professor of dancing' in Hope Street in 1829.

Charlotte remained single while Thomas married Elizabeth Beans, 31, at Wrexham in July 1806, both of Wrexham. Witnesses included Elizabeth's brother, Edward, a curate in Llangollen, and Brooke Cunliffe, about 16, a younger son of Sir Foster Cunliffe of Erbistock Hall. The Beans' family home was *Carrog issa*, near Glyndyfrdwy in Corwen parish where their widowed mother, Jennet Beans born 1747, probably lived, Edward and Elizabeth being her only surviving children.

In Flintshire, Whitford's parish register shows, on 3 November 1805, the baptism of Thomas, 'illegitimate son of Thomas Durack and Elizabeth Williams'. Young Thomas died 8 September 1806, and was buried at Denbigh, 'son of Thomas Durack dancing master and Elizabeth Williams, an infant'. Did the Duracks' relatives and others know?

Thomas and Elizabeth remained childless. In 1808, a widow mortgaged land in Bersham, borrowing £1,200 from him, Thomas expecting interest on it: the loan, now £1,700 was transferred to another lender in 1810. That year, he advertised his renting of 'a spacious room' in Chester as a dancing school for young ladies and gentlemen, with three sessions each Tuesday. He obtained game licences for *Stansty* near Gwersyllt in 1813, '*Brynellyn*' in 1815, both in Denbighshire and at *Rhyd y Gethin* in Llandrillo, Merionethshire in 1823, the year Edward Beans became rector of Llandderfel. In 1816, Durack and others set up the Wrexham Association for Detecting and Prosecuting Felons.

Edward Beans remained unmarried, making his will on 24 November 1827, and was buried at Corwen on 15 December. Directions to his trustees included a payment of £150, half of the purchase of a public house in Llandderfel. His mother inherited his belongings, money and properties in Corwen and Llandderfel for her lifetime. When she died, the trustees should pay Elizabeth, wife of 'Mr Thomas Durack, gentleman' the income from rents and profits 'for her sole and separate use . . . her husband the said Thomas Durack shall not in any way intermeddle therewith', and not be subject to Durack's 'control, debts or engagements'.



**Blaen y Pennant, near Rhyd y Gethin, Pennant valley
(Jenny Lees)**

Similar general instructions were often in wills, but Edward's instructions were specifically directed at Thomas, not restricting Elizabeth if she remarried after Thomas's death. All monies from Edward's lands were to be signed for by Elizabeth or the tenant, with receipts sent to his trustees. Elizabeth, on her death, was not to pass Edward's property to Thomas or his relatives, despite her 'Coveture': a married woman's property became her husband's. If Elizabeth left no will, the properties would go to Edward's cousin John Owens, with £600: if she left them to other than John Owens, £3,000 was to be paid to Owens.

Charlotte Durack died in April 1829 and was buried in Ruabon, where Thomas lived when he was soon granted administration of her effects, worth under £200. Elizabeth's mother, aged 84, died in July 1831 leaving no will, and was buried at Corwen.

Elizabeth made her will in March 1832 only quoting Edward's instructions regarding Thomas, with no bequests, but she added a codicil in March 1834 leaving her personal estates, goods, chattels, monies and effects 'in testimony of the kindness and friendship, which I have and bear towards Richard Venables Kyrke of Summer Hill, Gresford', sole executor and beneficiary.

About seventeen years younger than Elizabeth, Kyrke was a son of Richard Kirk who was heavily involved developing coal mining around Wrexham. Richard Kirk's will included money lent to his son James by Brooke

Cunliffe. Kyrke's marriage in 1820 produced three children: a widower, he remarried in 1832 and had more. Elizabeth Durack was buried at Corwen in August 1836.

In March 1837, Thomas sat on the Grand Jury at Merionethshire Assizes, with the county's elite. In April 1838, by order of Thomas Durack, an auction notice announced the sale of *Carrog issa's* farming implements and household contents, including 'a Quantity of Well-cured BACON and HAM'. In Corwen's 1841 tithe apportionment Richard Venables Kyrke owned *Carrog issa*, 159 acres, and *Tyn y Celyn*, 25 acres.

Llangollen's 1841 tithe apportionment listed Durack's ownership of *Pen r allt*, 46 acres. For Llandrillo in 1843, he owned *Rhyd y Gethin*, 244 acres, *Cadwst [bach]*, 23 acres and *Bryn bach*, 3 acres. Mr Bagley owned *Cadwst bach* in Llandrillo's poor rate list in 1827.

Thomas Durack made his will in May 1840, a gentleman 'late of Wrexham, but now of *Carrog issa*': George Bagley's three youngest children were sole beneficiaries. Bagley, born 1789, a married school master with at least 9 children born 1810-1832 was, in 1824, appointed to run Ruabon Grammar School, teaching boys 'reading, writing and account and, if requested . . . Latin'. He built at his own expense, in 1825, a kitchen and brewhouse with two rooms above, adjoining the school, costing about £200, allowing 84 boys to be educated.

Bagley's three children would receive their bequests at the age of twenty-one: William Henry probably born about 1827, Charlotte Emma in 1830 and Ellen Gertrude in 1832. The two sisters would get £500 each: William Henry inheriting Durack's estates, shares in 'any Mineral Adventure', the rest of his money and all his possessions. Their oldest brother Thomas, born 1810, a scholarship student at Queen's College, Cambridge, was sole executor.

Durack died in June 1842 aged 67, being buried at Ruabon. Thomas Bagley was ordained priest in 1843 when he proved the will, while John Foster Giles, a solicitor in Ledbury, Herefordshire, brought a suit in Chancery against Thomas Bagley and the three siblings. A similar chancery suit followed in 1845 prosecuted by Thomas Jones, a Ledbury solicitor, with a decree in Chancery, and an announcement in the *London Gazette* in April, requesting Durack's creditors to contact Jones' agent. Creditors were paid before the bequests. Ellen Gertrude died February 1847, aged 15, and William Henry soon after, the latter's probate granted to Mr Piper, a third solicitor in Ledbury, and George Bagley, who declared his son's effects as under £20. Early in 1848, Charlotte Emily died aged about 18, and their mother in 1849.

In September 1848, *Cadwst [bach]*, about 33 acres with 45 acres hill land and *Rhyd y Gethin*, 90 acres with 500 acres hill land, were auctioned, with details available, including from Mr Jones in Ledbury. They failed to sell: in May 1851, 'Sun Inn also known as *Pen'rallt*', in Trevor ucha, *Rhyd y Gethin* and *Cadwst [bach]*, were auctioned in Ruabon.

The 1846 government enquiry into Welsh education criticised Ruabon Grammar School, as it did most schools. Bagley, ill for some time, blamed lack of support from curates and a local new National school. In 1853, his school reorganised, he resigned under pressure, receiving a pension. (www.ruabon.com/school.html). George Bagley was admitted to North Wales Asylum in September 1855, dying there in December. Thomas Bagley died in 1858, soon after becoming a vicar in Portsmouth. Neither left a will.

FLINTSHIRE BRANCH

Report by Wally and Margaret Barr

Unfortunately, due to the sudden onset of health problems, we will not be able to take an active role in running the Flintshire branch for the foreseeable future. If, in our absence, you feel able to play an active role in organising events for the Flintshire branch do please let us know and we will be very happy to assist in whatever way we can. Please contact us through wallybarr@yahoo.co.uk or phone 01745 888622.

ARTICLE by Peter Masters
A Blast from the Past

On the 1st of August 1901 a large number of people assembled on the slopes of *Yr Eifl* [The Rivals] in the parish of Llanaelhaearn on the Llyn Peninsula. They had come to witness a spectacular “fireworks display” albeit with a difference. For several months workers at the Setts quarry under the supervision of the most experienced miner, Edward Davies, of the Welsh Granite Company, had been carving out a 75 feet long tunnel, into which were carefully stacked three and a half tons of gunpowder! Starting at 5 o'clock in the morning this part of the operation took over 9 hours. When all safety checks were complete the electric fuse was fired. The massive explosion bought down an estimated 50,000 tons of granite. This igneous rock is prepared into “setts” which were used to pave the streets of Liverpool, Manchester and many other towns both near and far away.



BEFORE the blast



AFTER the blast

A year later, 13 August 1902, two more tunnels were dug, one 90 feet in length the other 30 foot long at right angles to it. These were loaded with six tons five hundred weight and again fired by electric fuse. The resulting explosion bought down a mass of around 60,000 tons of granite .

Founded in 1855 Trefor quarry developed to be the world's biggest granite quarry, and by 1931 had produced 1,157,000 tons of setts. Such was the quality of the granite that this quarry produced, it has even been used to make Curling Stones, and in fact Trefor Granite was used for the Curling Stones of the 2002 Salt Lake City, Winter Olympics.

ARTICLE by Peter Masters
What the Dickens? A Ghost Story from 1887

It is not often that disembodied spirits are so communicative as "The Llanelhaearn Ghost" in the libel action heard recently at Carnarvon-shire Assizes. The spectre it seems, was not one, but two, and the fact that it was discovered to be a shadowy father and daughter suggests the appalling discovery that, like the vivacious insects of which the historic landlady denied that she had a "single one in the house," the nineteenth century spooks are all married and provided with large families.

The twofold ghost in question, it seems, was in the habit of frequenting the highway on cold, frosty nights, and on one occasion carries in one hand a blinking lantern that gave out blue and ghastly light; and in the other a paper resembling that to be found on the persons of collectors of insurance money. In character the spirit appears to have been mild and unaggressive, speaking only in a querulous tone of the wrongs that had been done it while on earth.

It did not curdle the blood of the traveller who encountered it by the clanking of chains, or by gruesome groaning, or sudden departure amid blue flame and an odour of sulphur. It kindly accompanied him on his journey, and communicated to him the story of its earthly wrongs. That interesting narrative in due time found its way into the newspapers and it was then discovered that the spook had uttered gross libels against a Calvinistic minister in the district. Unfortunately, the proprietor of the newspaper in which the tale has been printed could not, like HAMLET call spirits from the vasty deep.

In vain would he have subpoenaed the Llanaelhairn ghost or issued warrants for its apprehension. All the proprietor could do was to state that, in his opinion, the ghost's complaint was harmless one. Unfortunately, the jury could not be prevailed upon to see it altogether in that light; and ten pounds damages were awarded as solatium for the wounded feelings of the Calvinistic minister, whom the spook had maligned.

Henceforth, as in some establishments, the legend runs "No Irish need Apply, "the proprietor of that journal will issue notice to correspondents - "No communications received from the other world".

ZOOM LECTURE SERIES 2025

From our Research Co-ordinator Martin Cherry

All Zoom talks begin at 7pm

Wednesday 15 January 2025

Edward Parry and Martin Cherry

'The building that moved: Cwrt Plas yn Dre, Dolgellau and the enduring myth of Owain Glyn Dŵr's Parliament House'

Edward and Martin have both spoken to DOWH before but here they combine forces to present new research on the intriguing politics behind the removal of this important medieval house from Dolgellau to Newtown (Powys) in the late nineteenth century. They also examine the evidence to help 'reconstruct' what the original house really looked like - what is now at Newtown bears only a superficial resemblance of what existed at Dolgellau - and the identity of the builder (was it Baron Owen, murdered by the red bandits of Mawddwy in 1555?).

Wednesday 12 February 2025

Vic Tyler-Jones, Doctoral Researcher, University of Bangor (ISWE)

'A trajectory of marginality - the life of the squatter settlement on Ruabon Mountain'

Accounts of the lives of the poor in North East Wales in the nineteenth century have largely stopped short of those on the bottom rung of society. My thesis addresses a gap in the history of nineteenth century communities in the area. Its focus on the life of mountain dwellers analyses a colony of squatters that existed between c.1845 and c.1907 on Newtown Mountain near Ruabon.

Wednesday 12 March 2025

Jessica John, Independent consultant on cultural heritage in Wales

'The lost Farmsteads of Arduwy. Recording ruins and sharing the excitement'

Jess has led an archaeological and recording project on the lost farmsteads of Arduwy for Eryri National Park. She will share with us a number of significant discoveries that have been made over recent months.

Wednesday 9 April 2025

Duncan James, Architectural historian.

'The Early pioneers of the study of traditional buildings in Wales and England'

Duncan is a leading authority on traditional buildings in England and Wales. He is the author of many studies particularly on the houses and churches of Herefordshire and the Marcher counties. In this talk he will be looking at some of the leading figures of the nineteenth century but will focus on research in Wales in the twentieth and suggest where future directions of study might lead.

STOP PRESS!

Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour (1760-1820)

DOWH webmaster, Peter Masters, reports that there is an excellent website on the topic discussed at the recent Zoom talk given by Professor Mary-Ann Constantine, entitled *Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour (1760-1820)*. See <https://curioustravellers.ac.uk/en/>

The Curious Travellers project explores travel and tourism in Britain and Ireland in the late C18th and early C19th. It does so through the writings of the Flintshire naturalist and antiquarian Thomas Pennant (1726-1798), and of others who followed in his footsteps. Focused primarily on tours of Scotland and Wales, the project has been funded in two phases by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and is supported by numerous partners. It is a collaboration between The University of Wales Trinity St David, Glasgow University and the Natural History Museum.

Also, complementary to this, is Michael Freeman's substantial website, Sublime Wales - see: <https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/>. *This site contains classified extracts from over 1,500 published and manuscript accounts of tours of and guide books to Wales, 1700-1900. Author: Michael Freeman, curator of Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth, 1991-2012.*

Both Links are available on our website on the publications page.

Information Request re AGM 2025

The Trustees of DOWH are considering a Hybrid meeting for the AGM in June 2025. To set this up we need to have an idea of how many people would attend in person. The in-person meeting would probably be in Llandudno area with free car parking. It would be a Wednesday afternoon in June, starting @ 2pm with a Speaker afterwards, who may be in person or on Zoom.

To make it easy for you to give us your preferences a simple survey form has been prepared. Please take a couple of minutes to complete it for us. Click this link or copy it into your Browser – Edge, Chrome, Firefox etc: <https://form.jotform.com/243446201914047>

Thank You. Rosemary Brotherton, DOWH Treasurer

We wish
a very MERRY
CHRISTMAS
to all DOWH
members!

