



DARGANFOD HEN DAI CYMREIG DISCOVERING OLD WELSH HOUSES



NODDWYR/PATRONS

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

Dathlu Treftadaeth Cymru drwy astudio tai
traddodiadol a bywydau'r bobl oedd yn byw ynddyn nhw.

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

CYLCHLYTHYR 36 Mawrth 2021

NEWSLETTER 36 March 2021

GWEFAN: <http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk> yw prif sianel cyfathrebu'r Grŵp. Ewch i'r wefan i weld ein llyfrgell sy'n tyfu a nodweddion eraill. Fel arfer mae'n cynnwys manylion digwyddiadau diweddar a digwyddiadau sydd ar y gweill. Cyhoeddir fersiynau Cymraeg a Saesneg y Cylchlythyr hwn ar wahân ond anfonir y ddwy fersiwn i bob aelod

OUR WEBSITE <http://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk> is the Group's main channel of communication. Please visit it to look at our growing library and other features. Normally it contains details of recent and forthcoming events. The Welsh and English versions of this Newsletter are printed separately but both are circulated to all members



Peter Thompson

PETER THOMPSON 1952-2021 by Martin Cherry
Peter Thompson, who died suddenly on the morning of 6th January, will be sorely missed by family and friends. Peter was one of those rare people who it always a pleasure to have around. He combined a mischievous sense of humour with a seriousness of purpose and deep knowledge of historic buildings. His expertise - a careful documentary historian and perceptive building recorder - is a great loss to the Discovering Old Welsh Houses group. He made important contributions to the North-West Wales Tree-ring Dating Project (that culminated in the publication of *Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia*, 2014) and, more recently, significantly expanded our knowledge of cruck-framed buildings in the region. He was a key player in organising two major conferences for the Vernacular Architecture Group (in 2005 and 2018), introducing (and bowling over) 80 delegates from all over the United Kingdom and beyond, to the delights of the traditional buildings of North Wales. At the time of his death, he was working on a project on the houses of Ardudwy and was

due to divulge some of his most recent findings to members via a Zoom presentation in the spring. It is hoped that enough of his papers and drawings survive still to bring this venture to fruition.

Born in South Africa, Peter worked in a South London planning department from where, via a series of odd jobs and adventures, he ended up in North Wales. Here he and Paula, his wife, bought a run-down house north of Barmouth overlooking Cardigan Bay, and carefully conserved and converted it into a high quality and popular small hotel. This had once been a high-status gentry house for which he was as pleased as punch to secure an accurate tree-ring date (1581) that helped him pin down the identity of the builder. His practical skills meant that he understood how buildings were put together. A glutton for learning - he had degrees from Aberystwyth, Leicester and the Ironbridge Institute - proved a good basis upon which to handle documents of all kinds, and his knowledge of Welsh enabled him to grapple with the tricky evidence of bardic poetry. Yet he carried his learning lightly, a personal quality that made him such an easy partner to work with and such a good teacher in training sessions. During house recording sessions, after some conviviality he would proceed quietly, observing details (that sometimes seemed invisible to others), resisting the temptation of coming too rapidly to conclusions; then he would start drawing the plan and sections, then measure up. At some point, the building came into focus and the remainder of the day would be spent in active, sometimes uproarious discussion and occasionally even with an interpretation agreed. It was amazing he did so much while keeping on top of a demanding business. From time to time, trips might need to be curtailed to attend to a leaking pipe or recalcitrant pump, or more prosaically, to cook the evening meal for guests. Whatever might intervene - and something normally did - field days with Peter would always be tremendous fun and highly instructive.

COLIN HARRINGTON 1940-2020 by Richard Cuthbertson

At Christmas we heard that Colin Harrington had died after a long period of poor health. I first met Colin in 1973. He owned a remote and ruined cottage in Llanberis at the bottom of the Telegraph pass, on the footpath over to Rhyd Ddu. Working in London he came up at weekends and holidays, made a very sympathetic job of its renovation and lived there like a Spartan. Our paths crossed again when he bought the mysterious house known as Gronant in the middle of Anglesey, uncovering fine wall paintings (very rare on Anglesey) and other interesting features. In his later life he became deeply involved in setting up the Nature Reserve at Sychnant, just on the Conwy side of the Pass. He was a shy, kind soul and struggled with many demons in his life, but he made a real contribution to conservation in North Wales and that will be his legacy.



Colin Harrington

FROM THE CHAIR by Richard Cuthbertson

Here we are in a New Year and tonight, the last night in January, the day did seem to draw out at last. We have drifts of snowdrops and even a few rogue daffodils, but the wind is bitter and I am sure we are not done with Winter yet.

I hope you have enjoyed our little series of Zoom talks; they seem to have been a great success and we will certainly keep them going. It is terrific to see everyone relaxed in their own home with a cup of tea or a glass of wine. No long, cold, dark journeys anywhere - wonderful !

Zoe is stepping down from her role as Membership Secretary after eight successful years, which have seen the membership rise from 40 to over 200. At the same time she has undertaken challenging repairs at her own house and started a very responsible new job. Maybe we can persuade her to give us a talk on time management! We are so grateful for all she has done and very happy that she will continue as a most valued Trustee. Her role now passes to Fiona Gale, who is already helping us in many ways; we know she will be a worthy successor.

Very sadly, we have lost one of our most knowledgeable Trustees when Peter Thompson passed away suddenly early in January. His friend Martin Cherry writes a fine tribute to him in this Newsletter and our sympathies go to all his Family and friends. I have also recorded the loss of our valued friend Colin Harrington above.

I wish you all well and I firmly believe that 2021 will be a good year for us as we have exciting projects in the pipeline which I think will appeal to all our members.

NEWS UPDATE FROM THE SECRETARY by Margaret Dunn

It was such a shock to hear of the sudden death of Peter Thompson and that of Colin Harrington. We send our sincere condolences to their families. We hope that you are all keeping well and finding plenty to keep you busy. Thankfully, we are now gradually receiving our vaccines, but with the spread of new variants, it seems we shall not be able to meet face to face for quite some time. We do not anticipate undertaking further tree ring dating until after summer 2021 at the earliest. However, it is good to meet on Zoom as well as continuing with online research, socially distanced walks etc. Do let your branch secretaries know if you need ideas or help with choosing what to do next.

Zoom meetings

These popular Wednesday monthly meetings start at 7.15 p.m. and members are requested to join at 7.00 p.m. It is now hoped to include discussion after the talks. Joining details are circulated each month by Peter Masters.

March 10th "The Fifth Dimension Project - Images and Poetry of North Wales Houses". Janice Dale, DOWH trustee, Denbighshire branch secretary and coordinator of this Tesco grant-aided Community Project.

April 14th "From Wales to Birmingham, from Birmingham to Wales - The Journey". Gina Maddison, DOWH member, part time lecturer at Grwp Llandrillo Menai and author.

May 19th "A history of the people who lived at Plas Penmynydd". Richard Cuthbertson, DOWH Chairman.

June 16th 6.15 p.m. AGM (papers to be circulated beforehand); **7.00 p.m. Annual Public Lecture: Old Welsh Houses - New Insights from Dendro-chronology** by Dr Martin Cherry, former Research Director at English Heritage, trustee of Vernacular Architecture Group and DOWH trustee.

July 21st "Discovering Old Welsh Houses - Past, Present and Future" Margaret Dunn, DOWH founder and secretary. There will be no meeting in August. Please contact the Secretary if you are willing to offer a talk.

Key points from the 9th February Trustees' meeting

The Trustees, officials and branch secretaries held an informative and useful zoom meeting on 9th February. The branch secretaries have a copy of the minutes. During the pandemic DOWH continues with as many activities as possible and we look forward to being able to meet up again when it is safe to do so. We are delighted to see many members at the monthly zoom talks and to read in the newsletters what members are doing. We would like these short newsletter articles to cover the very wide range of members' interests even if only vaguely related to houses. Perhaps you could share something? If so, your branch secretary would be pleased to help.

The **DOWH Houses Management Spreadsheet Project** is progressing well; we are collating and checking the records on all houses so far visited which will aid in prioritising future research and activities after the pandemic.

The **DOWH's Parishes Project** is developing at varying rates in each branch; do please contact your branch secretary to receive the formatted sheet and news about which parishes near you still require checking. When completed, this information will be added to the Houses Management spreadsheet.

House History Research continues wherever members and branch secretaries select houses. The DOWH **Executive** meet each month and the **Trustees** every 3 months; please let your branch secretaries have your ideas and comments to pass on.

One Member's House History Experience

"Thank you both for an amazing experience with Terfyn house history. Your expertise has been invaluable and I have really enjoyed the process. I expect you are both familiar by now with the feeling that 'more could be done' and of not having complete closure? I really did not think there was so much to be discovered - and that it would take so long! Thank you both once again for all your hard work and patience with me! I am going to look at my grandmother's old house now, as the roof beams were jutting down in the bedrooms. Very little is known about this small area, so there is a lot to do and I will keep you informed. I may turn my attention to learning how to use Zoom soon, as this seems to be the only way of keeping us going! Gina Skyner"

Why not have a go? Contact your branch secretary for help.

New membership secretary

As of early March 2021, Fiona Gale is taking over from Zoe as Membership Secretary. We want to thank Zoe Henderson who has carried out the role for almost ten

years, keeping track of where we all are, when we have paid and sending out information to us all about activities and events. This has been particularly important over the last year when we haven't been able to meet in person but have been able to enjoy online talks. Thank you so much Zoe, not an easy act to follow. Fiona Gale can be contacted by email at membership@discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk and phone 07718625606 or 01824 520231. Hopefully there won't be too many teething problems with the changeover period which might go on for a little while.

DOWH Treasurer

We are delighted to report that Rosemary Brotherton, Conwy branch, has offered to become our next treasurer on the resignation of John Townsend at the end of this financial year. There will probably be a short period of joint working. We are immensely grateful to John for his hard work over the last eight years and we are glad that he will remain an active trustee with other roles.

News from British History Online

Please pass the following on to fellow parish-project workers and others.

"As we enter a new lockdown period (January 2021), we've decided to make all transcribed content on BHO freely available to individual users. This move repeats a similar freeing up of 200 volumes of BHO Premium Content in 2020. This material will remain available until 30 April 2021 in the first instance."

More details at

<https://blog.history.ac.uk/2020/03/british-history-online-makes-all-research-content-free-to-individual-users/>

The National Archives

has reinstated free access to digital records, allowing registered users to order and download up to ten items at a time, to a maximum of 100 items over 30 days. Registration is free on The National Archives website and you will need to be logged in to be able to download documents.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

CONWY BRANCH

Report to March 2021 by Ann Morgan

Due to the recurrence of Covid19 and the second Wales lockdown there has been no formal activity to report. Members of the Group have been pursuing local or personal interests - village history, ancestry research and Scouting history in Conwy - as well as accessing online lectures and talks. The local archives being closed, most

members are using online services and sharing information by email and telephone.



Fig.1 Romano-British seal box

SEALS by Ann Morgan

For about 7,000 years, seals have been used by 'royal' families, officials and merchants as security devices. Seals were important as was the post of 'Keeper of the Great seal' of England. Church officials also used seals. Later business men and companies used embossed seals on company paper. These were recorded in the *Register of Sealings*.

Throughout history many civilisations have used seals - Sumerians, Chinese, Mohenjodarians, Middle Easterners from e.g. Egypt and Bahrain, more recently the Romans and up to the present day use of red wax on parcels and letters.

Materials used to make seals could be clay, ivory, bone, metal, jade or intaglio carved stone, set in rings, wood, ceramic, paper, wax, gold, silver and lead. The Dilmun seals of Bahrain were round, button-shaped bone or ivory seals, whilst Mohenjodaro and Harappa (India and Pakistan) had cylindrical seals used to 'roller out' the design on wet clay.

Seals are often found during archaeological excavations

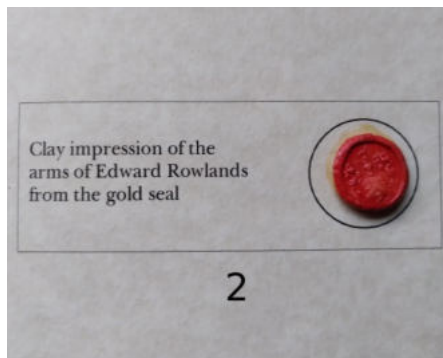


Fig.2 Edward Rowlands' seal Penarth Fawr

such as the Llandygai, Bangor, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust dig - here a Romano-British seal box was found - a Roman device, but decorated with a blue enamel Celtic design (Fig 1). Margaret Dunn's dig at Penarth Fawr (built about 1460) unearthed a gold seal mount set with a carnelian intaglio carved with the armorial of Edward Rowlands of Anglesey, from the C18th (Fig 2).

During our researches into documents and wills, Gill Jones and I asked to see an early C17th document. Such documents are often produced on vellum i.e. scraped calf

skin (vitulinum) or parchment. Today such materials feel stiff and brittle but often the script is in very good condition and legible. The particular document we asked for was a letter-patent of 1602 and it had a large clay slab attached to a 2cm-wide strip of parchment.

The seal was of an irregular shape but I noticed odd details, a ruff (Elizabethan lace collar) and a farthingale (Elizabethan dress). The more I studied the clay lump it gradually became clear that I could see the head of Elizabeth 1st, her arms holding the orb and sceptre. Perhaps the light falling at a particular angle revealed the details. We were charmed by the discovery and recorded the details in

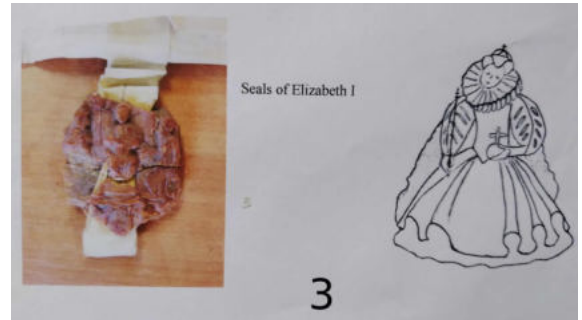


Fig.3 Elizabeth 1st seal

our study of Cwm Howard, Creuddyn, Llandudno. Gill Jones sketched the outline (Fig 3).

We also came across other seals of the more traditional



Fig.4 Henry VIII seal

type - one of Henry VIII (Fig 4) and another of Robert Dudley's dated to 1574 (Fig 5). Most later wax seals were red or brown but we came across a dark green wax seal (Fig 6) when we were researching the history of Penrhyn Old Hall, Creuddyn.

Meanwhile, fellow researchers, I hope you enjoy this brief introduction to the topic of seals. Keep a lookout -

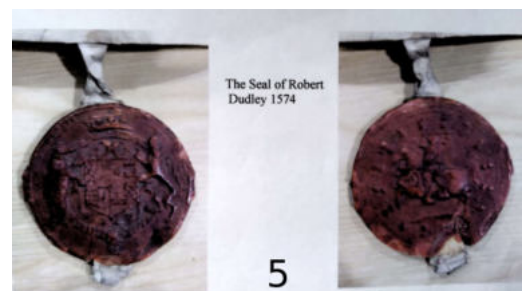


Fig.5 Robert Dudley's seal

there must be more interesting seals out there buried in some dusty archive. We hope that soon we can all return to our researches.



Fig.6 Dark green wax seal Penrhyn Old Hall

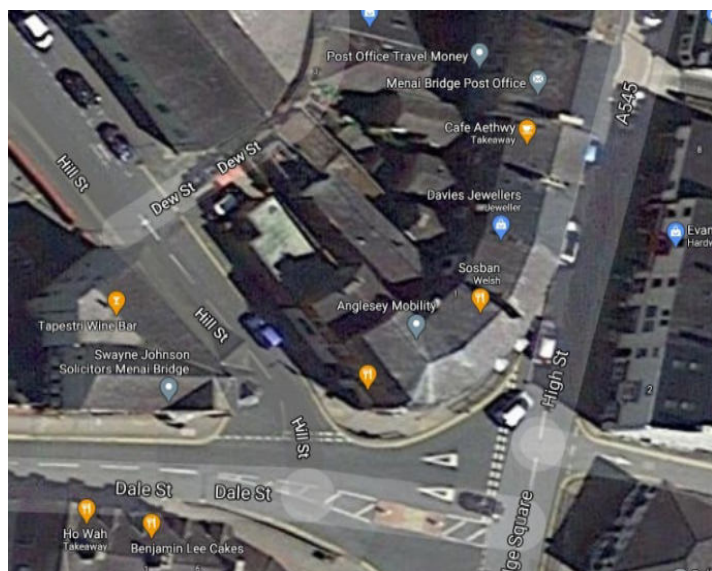
ANGLESEY BRANCH Report to March 2021

Due to the recurrence of Covid19 and the second Wales lockdown there has been no formal activity to report.

A Menai Bridge street name by Jane Cherrett

In the last Newsletter Peter Masters wrote about the family history of Henblas and Llethr Ddu. We hope members will be encouraged to venture into this field by Jane's account of her researches into the mysteries of the connections between the famous Anglesey Dew family and the town of Menai Bridge. She has yet to reach back to our nominal 1700 threshold date but perhaps it is time for that threshold to change. Ed.

Just before lockdown last March, I started looking into street names in Menai Bridge. One in particular, Dew street,



Location map Dew St, top left. Google Maps

is just off the Square, where Hill Street meets Dale Street. In 1896, one of the first edicts of the Menai Bridge Urban

District Council was to make several street names official and Dew Street was included.

Today, it is of little interest. It is unmade, has two derelict, boarded up cottages on its short length and is a dead end. It has the rears of several High Street shops opening onto it. At one time, large double doors (still there) formed the entrance/exit for Roberts Paints, who used the former Luxor cinema building as their warehouse.

In 1977, the Town Council agreed that all streets should have bilingual signage. Dew St's Welsh name is *Stryd y Gwlith*. This suggests that Dew was taken to mean atmospheric moisture forming on cold surfaces. I have been unable, so far, to get an answer to my question 'why Dew and why Gwlith'? However, my researches have taken me into the world of the Dew family, a very influential family of the late 19th and early 20th Century.

Samuel Dew, a noted solicitor, a deacon of Capel Mawr, (Calvinistic Methodists), and friend of Richard Davies M.P., lived at Brynteg House on Telford Road. He was involved in arguments and disputes with the Established Church authorities regarding the education of non-conformist children.

Then there is John Henry Dew, a professional bass singer, performing in Eisteddfodau and at the Crystal Palace, London. His family kept an ironmongery and leather shop on Beaumaris Road, Menai Bridge.

The Dews who really caught my interest were William and later his son William Arthur. They were auctioneers and land valuers. Their property sales included the sale of Broom Hall, near Pwllheli. In 1898, the Dews conducted the sale, in the Bulkeley Hotel, Beaumaris, of Glyn Garth estate. This estate, comprising 'a magnificent marine residence with lawns sweeping down to the Menai Strait', became for some time the Bishop of Bangor's Palace.

In 1905, the Dews were engaged in selling the contents of Anglesey Castle [Plas Newydd] after the Vth Marquess [the legendary 'Dancing Marquess'] had bankrupted the



Dew St today. Google Maps

estate. Sales took place at the property throughout that year. Some 17,000 items were listed in eight catalogues.

The wider Dew family prospered mightily. However the origin of Dew Street for me, remains a mystery, although I am still hopeful of tying down the provenance of Dew

Street to that family. [If anyone has information, Jane's email is jmcherrett@aol.com Ed.]



Gwyndy Inn, painting from about 1900

Anglesey's coaching road - romance and ruins by Richard Cuthbertson

Living in Anglesey one cannot help but feel surrounded by the past, and particularly its mystery and romance. Sometimes this crowds in at particular places and one of these, for me, is the old coach road at Glan yr Afon, right in the centre of the Island. It winds through this small village in a series of sharp turns forced upon it by outcrops of bare rock formed a thousand million years ago and ancient swampy areas neglected by agriculture. Surely on these bluffs the Druids met and after them, two great saints of Anglesey, St. Cybi and St. Seiriol. They walked towards each other from the Holy Island in the far west and Penmon in the Far East of Anglesey, the rising Sun browning the back of St. Seiriol and tinging the broad chest of St. Cybi. Oh, to have eavesdropped their discourse, the responsibility of leading their flocks in love and righteousness lying heavy on

conversed over, both gaining heart from the efforts of the other. These were real people, gazing 1500 years ago on views more crowded with trees but otherwise close to what we see today.

A few yards further and the ivy-clad ruins of Gwyndy come into view on our left. This great Coaching Inn stands gaunt and abandoned, a place of Owls and Rooks and dereliction. There may have been a building here in the 16th century, and the present Inn dates from the early C18th but the Royal Commissioners could find nothing of note; how could that be? The lists of its guests include the famous of three centuries and even in 1797 J. M. W. Turner stayed here and sketched and drew.

A hundred yards further on west and still on the left is a well-restored house, now an Artist's studio, but now go back 300 yards and turn to the west to see, after another 300 yards, the desolate, stark ruin of Llys Bodychen in a field away on your right hand side. This must once have been a very fine house indeed, certainly C15th and possibly C14th in origin. In 1871 it still had its roof and windows. Now it is nearly obliterated, but look closely and doorways and windows emerge, with the finest stonework I know of



The scanty ruins of Llys Bodychen today

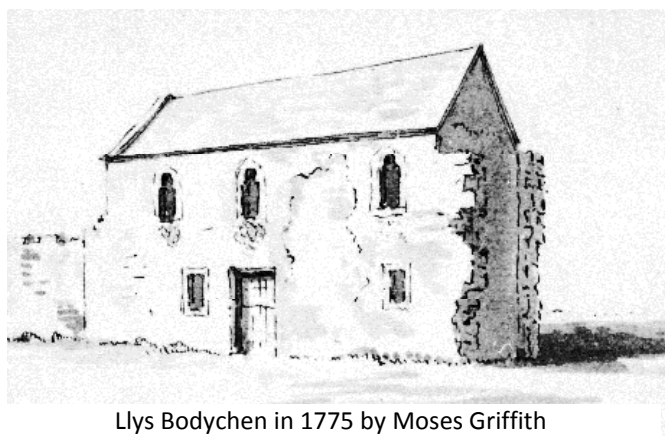
in Anglesey - of Inca quality! Even the garden can be made out as low mounds. These buildings show, with the utmost clarity, why the work you all do within the *Discovering Old Welsh Houses* Groups is so very valuable.

CAERNARFONSHIRE BRANCH

Report to March 2021 by Peter Masters

Due to the recurrence of Covid19 and the second Wales lockdown there has been no formal activity to report.

How many people who have visited Bangor Cathedral have seen this lady? by Peter Masters



Llys Bodychen in 1775 by Moses Griffith

their shoulders. Then the long walk home, St. Cybi squinting in the setting sun and St. Seiriol's back becoming browner. Doubtless they would mull over the matters that they

She is Eva, now hidden behind a screen in the bookshop in a corner of this religious house. Her pedigree is long and impressive. She and her brother were co-inheritors of Gruffydd ab David ab Tudor ab Madog ab Iarddur of Penrhyn and Cwchwillan [sic], who was in turn the son and heir of Iarddur, of Penrhyn and Cwchwillan, Lord of Llechwedd Uchaf and Creuddyn, and "Grand Forester of Snowdon." Her family were landowners on Anglesey in various townships, (Twrgarw, Penhwnllys) and in Caernarvonshire (Bodfeio). They also held lands in Englefield.

When Eva married Gwilym ap Griffith ap Heilyn in c.1340, it was almost certainly this marriage which brought Cochwillan into her husband's Penrhyn lands, together with



The Eva slab in Bangor Cathedral

a share of her family's lands in Anglesey. By her brother Gwilym ap Griffith's will, dated 1375, her son, Griffith ap Gwilym [d.1405] inherited further lands in Anglesey and Caernarvonshire. Her grandson, Gwilym ap Griffith, is described as 'of Penmynydd' in 1400 and 1403, and his will, dated 1430, was signed there. Although there may have been a house at Cochwillan in the C13th, the present building is no earlier than 1450 and was probably built before 1480 by Gwilym ap Gruffydd, Sheriff of Caernarvonshire from 1485.

Some interesting scandal (see Note 1): Jane of Cochwillan born c.1512, died aged just 13. She was married to Edward Griffith of Penrhyn, born c.1511 [himself a teenager]. In 1527 Edward sought permission to marry Jane's sister Agnes. They married in 1529 but a year later she returned home! Following King Henry VIII's example, he sought to separate from or divorce Agnes and marry Jane Puleston [his cousin]. But it seems that soon after, he left

Jane to return to live with Agnes! Nevertheless, he later returned to Jane and they had three children - Jane, Elin, and Katherine.

Edward died of 'the flux' in Dublin on 11 March 1540. There then began a long dispute between his younger brother Rhys Griffith - who claimed the estates as the male heir - and John Puleston [Senior or Junior?], Edward Griffith's father-in-law [or brother-in-law] acting for his daughter [or sister] Jane and her three children (Jane, Catherine, and Ellen). John Puleston asked Thomas Cromwell for the wardship of the children and offered him '£40 for his good offices'.

Rhys Griffith complained that while he was in Ireland 'on the king's service', his sister-in-law and her father had ransacked Penrhyn, leaving 'nothing but the bare walls'.

Cochwillan was later the home of John Williams (1582-1650), Archbishop of York. Most of its history is linked to the Penrhyn Estate, in whose ownership it remains.

Notes

(1). There are differing accounts for these events depending upon which Documents/Family History you read!

Extracts from: Dictionary of Welsh Biography; Dwnn, Visitations, ii, 130-1;

Extracts from the Penrhyn Castle Papers.

Account of the Families of Penrhyn and Cochwillan' in Williams, Observations on the Snowdon Mountains (1802), 163-7; Rec. Caern., 13.

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/research/title_759856_en.html



Cochwillan

MERIONETH BRANCH

Report to March 2021 by Martin Cherry

Due to the recurrence of Covid19 and the second Wales lockdown there has been no formal activity to report.

The farm, estate and families of EGRYN, near Barmouth by Margaret Dunn

I became interested in the farmhouse of Egryn in the late 1990s, when the owner, Rodney Bryne, allowed Eryl Rothwell Hughes and I to squeeze among the amazing roof

timbers. Around 2000 it was left to the National Trust and it was realized that very little was known about its history or that of the Tudur family who had lived there. So I started to investigate.

No one knew where the Tudur family had come from, or when they had arrived at Egryn. I knew little about the area from the time of the Welsh Princes forward and began making notes of all the dated references to Meirionnydd and Ardudwy I could find, in the hope that eventually I might be able to work out when and from whence the Tudur family ancestors came to Egryn. This led to researching the English-Welsh interaction leading up to the Edwardian conquest of Wales in the 1280s and the likelihood of one Urien ap Tegwared, an important local leader from near Abergele, settling in the Harlech area before 1292.



Egryn Hall

Freestone from quarries at “Egrin” was used in the building of Harlech Castle, and later in many of the early churches over a wide district. Problems of climate change affected this area, along with the whole region; with no supermarkets to go to for supplies, many people, crops and animals periodically succumbed to and died of plague or famine. Using the detailed research of many earlier researchers, compilers and translators of rentals, extents and other records it is amazing that the probable background of the Egryn ancestors and several generations of the Tudur family have been traced back to Urien.

In 1420 the Tudurs owned around six farm holdings in Ardudwy and later, praise poetry and elegies were written in their honour. Around 1700 the Egryn heiress married the son and heir of Caerberllan, near Castell y Bere, bringing together these two extensive estates. The house history of most of the holdings on both estates has been compiled, and this includes farm holdings on Anglesey, where one owner with mental health problems was looked after. The history of the owners of both estates has been documented up to the year 2000. Currently, over 350 typed pages of closely referenced notes are being revised to form a series of articles, or possibly a book, which might be of assistance to anyone studying families or houses in Ardudwy.



Egryn timbers *M.Dunn*

DENBIGHSHIRE BRANCH

Report to March 2021 by Janice Dale

Janice writes “For obvious reasons there is very little to report. In connection with the Parish Project, I have been working with one member to mark on OS maps the parishes in our branch. I have finished Llandrillo, and will look at Corwen next. I have recently emailed members on my branch list, to ask about progress on Parish Project and to ask about ideas for this year, but so far responses have been few, one reply just saying thank you !”.

Ty Nant, Branas, Llandrillo by Janice Dale

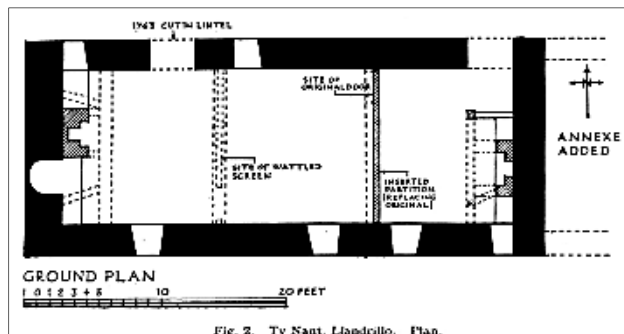


Ty Nant December 2020 *Janice Dale*

After reading Martin Cherry’s Merioneth Branch News and seeing John Townsend standing in the ruins of Hafotty Llanegryn, I was reminded of the ruins of Ty Nant, Branas, a house I hadn’t visited since 1994. So off I went to see how it had fared. As was to be expected, the condition had deteriorated, with the remaining roof timbers now totally collapsed. However, luckily W. J. Hemp reported on this house in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* Vol. 101. 1 January 1950

Back in the 1950s, although the slates had disappeared, roof timbers and fire hoods were easily visible. A date of 1763 was cut into the lintel of the main door on the north

side, though the author was of the opinion that this date relates to a reconstruction and that original construction



belonged to the earlier part of the 17th century. It was possible that this later date referred to the time when the building was subdivided into 2 cottages and an extension to the east end added.



2. Ty Nant, Llandrillo. View from SE.

Ty Nant circa 1950 W.Hemp

The original house had internal measurements of 36 x 12 ft [10.8 x 3.6m], consisting of 3 bays with the west and central bays forming a hall and with a floor over the eastern bay. Hemp thought the oak trusses were of an unusual design, with the main trusses rising 2 ft above the tie beam and then tapering to the ridge [i.e. like the top of a cruck, but without the upright]. There were fireplaces on the face of each gable wall, but with the flue disappearing into the walls at first floor height.

Anne Boleyn and North Wales by Janice Dale

While writing the history of the Wynns of Newborough family, I kept coming across references to Anne Boleyn having an association with Bodfean [Boduan]. The 6th Baron Newborough wrote the following for the BBC in 1959

... Wynn of Bodfean in the reign of Henry VIII was a close friend of Anne Boleyn. She often stayed here and it happened that Henry gave her, when they married, a considerable amount of land adjoining the Bodfean estate. Anne bequeathed this to the Wynn of Bodfean of that day.

Just before her execution it was suggested to the king that he should recover from the queen, by a signed deed, the property in Wales that he had given her. This he refused to do and so it was that her property in the county passed into the Wynn family and much of it remains to this day...

I have been unable to find the source of this - has anyone any ideas ?

FLINTSHIRE BRANCH

Report to March 2021 by Wally and Margaret Barr

A number of branch members have continued their work on house histories and the parish project. Gerallt Brooks-Jones has completed the parish of Llanasa and recommends *Ffynnonogroyw and District: A Journey Through Time* (W. Ken Davies, 2020) as a useful tool in adding detail to local history work. Further parish project work is ongoing but at a rather slow pace.

Margaret Barr and Gina Skyner have now finished their history of Terfyn and the report is available online in the DOWH library. Fortunately, an increasing amount of material is available now online, so some research has been possible even when access to archive departments has been denied. Nevertheless, the recent flooding in Ruthin may delay the opening of the N.E. Wales archive building even further.

We are pleased to note that branch member Gina Maddison will be giving a Zoom talk to the group on Wednesday 14th April.

Accessing the records of the Welsh Methodist (Wesleyan) Church by Rhian Morris

Finding records for Welsh Nonconformist congregations is not always easy, and in the days before lockdown I said that I would use my contacts as the daughter of a Wesleyan minister to find out if there was any centralisation of records and access to them. The short answer is no and finding the relevant records is no easy task.

Through a friend I was put in touch with Mr Gareth Williams, who before retiring was Archivist for Caernarfonshire. After retiring he took on the task of trying to track down the records in question, visiting archives throughout Wales. He told me that each local archive possesses some records which had been deposited with them and that the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, also holds some records. Mr Williams told me that the records for Flintshire are virtually all at the Record Office in Hawarden (presumably the *Gallery of Travelling Methodist Ministers/Oriel Gweinidogion D/DM/1712/1* which I came across when looking at the new NEWA site); what the situation is for other counties, I don't know. At Aberystwyth is a collection of records from all over Wales, *Papurau Hen*

Gapel Tre'r Ddol/Tre'r Ddol Old Chapel Papers, including a few records from the north-east, but this collection is yet to be fully catalogued.

However, finding relevant entries will be rather like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack, because of the way Wesleyan circuits were arranged. Firstly, each Methodist minister kept their own records rather than individual chapels having a register. Secondly, Methodist ministers moved from one circuit to another every three years until the 1940s/50s, and thereafter every 5 years. Thirdly, to make matters even more difficult they worked as a team in a circuit, and during that 3 or 5 years would have officiated in up to 20 chapels. For example, my father served in at least 10 circuits right across N. Wales. In his last circuit there was a team of 5 ministers officiating in at least 18 chapels from Penmachno to Colwyn Bay. During one 10 year period circuit boundaries changed so often that we moved 5 times.

Hopefully the above will clarify what is available and where, even though it won't make anything much easier to find. The image below is of Rehoboth Chapel, Coedpoeth, before it was demolished. This was another chapel with which her father was closely associated.



Rehoboth, Coedpoeth © Eirian Evans cc-by-sa/2.0 :: Geograph Britain and Ireland

FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

The contents of this issue of the Newsletter reflect our members' determination not to be completely restricted by covid-19 and lockdown. This editor was delighted to receive articles on such topics as deed seals and street names, both topics not at all unrelated to house and family history. It is to be hoped that others will feel encouraged to follow suit

as we patiently await the release and return to full activity which vaccination promises.

While material can be accepted in almost any format, the ideal will continue to be Microsoft Word text and separate JPEG images. Failing this, Adobe PDF is almost as easy to handle. Thanks to all who contributed and keep up the excellent standard.



MARC FITCH