



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 39 Rhagfyr 2021

NEWSLETTER 39 December 2021

GWEFAN: <http://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.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://discoveringgoldwelshhouses.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

FROM THE CHAIR by Richard Cuthbertson

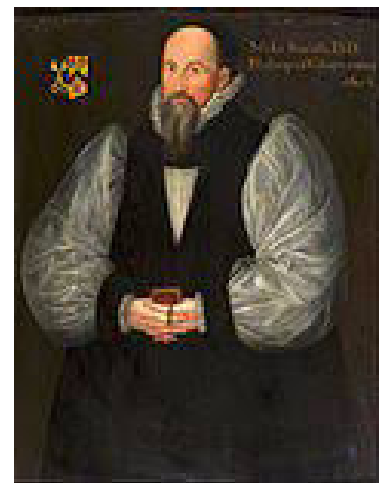
Well, the days get darker and gloomier as November advances. I cannot remember when the hour changed so late! However, we have our monthly Lecture Series to cheer us up and I must take my hat off to Martin Cherry, whose October talk was a brilliant exposition going to the core of what we were set up to do, 'discovering' the evolution of the Welsh vernacular house from the very earliest which we have found (around 1400) down to 1700, where we have many examples. It made for a riveting journey and has given us all much food for thought.

I can only aspire to the same level of delivery when I talk about **Bishop Goodman's House, Tŷ Du**, five hundred yards up the road from *Pete's Eats* in Llanberis - but of course I'll do my best to entertain!

Lastly, Margaret D., John T. and Terry W. each have had or expect to have surgery soon. I know you will join with me in wishing them well. My best wishes to you all!



Tŷ Du circa 1912. The people seated are said to be a group of students from Crewe



Godfrey Goodman of Ruthin 1583-1656 Bishop of Gloucester

NEWS UPDATE FROM THE SECRETARY by Margaret Dunn

While the pandemic is still causing a considerable number of mainly slight illnesses, we are gradually all working out how to start enjoying our interests and hobbies in a safe way. Now we are well into autumn there is less to do outside in our gardens, so hopefully many members are meeting together on architecturally / historically interesting walks, or Parish Project rambles seeking old houses so far only noted online or meetings in village halls etc. It has been so good to see lots of members at our monthly talks. We are very grateful to all those who have given such excellent Zoom presentations. A huge thank you! The varied topics have proved to be very popular and we have been joined by members from as far afield as the USA! Many thanks also to Peter for hosting the meetings and to Fiona for circulating the details to members. We also hear of a number who are continuing with their house history/community history research at home and in Record Offices. Do let your branch secretaries know if you need ideas or help to choose what to do next. Unfortunately, the interesting Denbighshire cruck house which was recently sampled failed to date.

The web users' group, led by Peter and Martin, has been working flat out on the **new DOWH Website**. It is hoped to launch it in the not-too-distant future. It should be both clearer and easier for members and others to find out about who we are, what we do, what we offer and how to access our re-catalogued reports. We owe our thanks to them all, and especially to Peter.

The **DOWH Houses Database Project** continues to collate and check the records on over 1,000 houses so far visited, and, as a searchable database, will aid branches and the whole group prioritize future research and activities after the pandemic. Good progress is being made and this phase of the database should be completed by the time this Newsletter is distributed. In the next phase all branch secretaries and their branch members will be invited to use their local knowledge to check the entries relating to their unitary authority. A brief guide will be circulated before this phase starts.

The **DOWH's Parishes Project** is developing at varying rates in the branches as additional parishes are included, with some branches choosing to undertake different aspects out in the parishes such as checking if houses still exist, are derelict or in ruins, and photographing house exteriors (from public footpaths etc); do contact your branch secretary to receive the formatted sheet and for news about which parishes near you still require checking. When completed this information will be added to the Houses Database after it has been checked by branches.

House History Research continues wherever members and branch secretaries select houses. The **DOWH Executive** meet each month (except August) to guide the current developments and the **Trustees** meet every 3 months; do let your branch secretaries have your ideas and comments to pass on to them. The next Trustees' Zoom meetings will be on 1st December 2021 and then 2nd March 2022.

Membership Fiona Gale and branch secretaries have started to contact anyone with incorrect or overdue subscriptions, or with Gift Aid queries. Fiona can be contacted by phone on 07718625606 or 01824 520231 and by email at membership@discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk

Programme of 2021-22 Zoom meetings

As a reminder, the following is a summary of the forthcoming attractions discussed in the last Newsletter and still to come:-

Thursday 9 December 2021 (note the day!) Geoff Brandwood - *The Pub unwrapped and the golden age of pub-building*.

Full details of the winter/spring programme for 2022 will appear on our website, but do keep the following dates free:-

12 January, 2022 Martin Bridge - *The mysteries of tree-ring dating: explaining the science of dendrochronology*

9 February, 2022 Elizabeth Parkinson - *Welsh houses in the hearth tax of 1662-1674*

9 March, 2022 John Townsend - *Bees and bee-keeping before the modern hive (1851)*

6 April, 2022 Andy Hyde - *Framing the mortice and tenon: how to think like a carpenter*

11 May, 2022 Sarah Maitland-Jones - *Introducing Henllys, Caerwys, a Tudor court house*.

FROM THE TREASURER Rosemary Brotherton

Do you shop at Amazon? If Yes, please keep reading. Are you logged in to smile.amazon.co.uk? *Discovering Old Welsh Houses* is one of their listed charities. For every purchase you make, while linked in, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price. It doesn't amount to much, but every little helps. So, take time and register yourself with us at smile.amazon.co.uk.

Discovering Old Welsh Houses 15th Anniversary 2005-2020
By Margaret Dunn



Richard Cuthbertson talks about his famous house *Plas Penmynydd*. Margaret Dunn (right) is all attention!

An anniversary celebration was held in the gardens and house at Plas Penmynydd, Anglesey on 26th September 2021, by invitation of Richard Cuthbertson, our chairman. This had been much delayed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thirty people attended and there were apologies from many others. We basked the warm afternoon sunshine and followed a one-way system indoors to enjoy of delicious home-made cakes, and endless tea and coffee. Rosemary, our new treasurer relieved everyone of £5 towards our

funds, took their contact details and also sold 3 copies of *Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia* (now reduced to £15 + p.p). Margaret was presented with a lovely bouquet of roses and gave a brief overview of some highlights since 2005. Richard then spoke about his house and its families back to the period of the Tudor dynasty.

Some DOWH Highlights

It all started with the Beddgelert History Society excavating a ruined C16th house in Nantgwynant in 2000 and wanting to date some house timbers re-used in a nearby cowshed. I



Richard Cuthbertson and Margaret Dunn
at Plas Penmynydd

think that Terry Williams is the only other person who was involved from the very beginning. We first heard about dendrochronology in 2004 and obtained a grant of £400 from the Snowdonia National Park Community Grant for Prof. Nigel Nayling from Lampeter to assess timbers in this cowshed and three nearby C16th houses; in 2005 two of these houses were dated and we became 'hooked' on dating more houses.

We have since visited **over 1,100 houses across North Wales** and have **assessed around 138 for tree-ring dating**, almost entirely in collaboration with the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratories. We have completed **160 volunteer-researched house histories** and **74 professional building reports**. This would not have been possible without the financial support of many grant-aiding bodies to whom we are very grateful. **Over £252,000 has now been received in grants** and we have raised additional match-funding through subscriptions and special events. All

our Annual reports and Financial statements can be seen online at the Charity Commission (Reg No 1131782).

We thank the staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, and especially Richard Suggett, for their support and advice, particularly that related to the joint publication in 2014 of the illustrated book **"Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia"**.

We started by hunting for houses in Caernarfonshire using the 1950s *Inventory* by the Royal Commission with its very useful summaries and house plans, concentrating on tree-ring dating and house history summaries. Over the years our emphasis has widened from solely tree-ring dating towards researching the overall development of domestic architecture and of the lives of the people who lived in these houses. This is indicated by the changes to our name, particularly in June 2016, moving from **"DATING"** to **"DISCOVERING" Old Welsh Houses**. With the help of local members many "unknown" old houses have been identified and some have yielded very unexpected early dates which have changed the understanding of Welsh domestic architecture.

Interest has spread across north Wales and we currently have six county branches and over 200 members. Over the years a much larger number of volunteers has become involved and the group could not have developed without the hard work of so many. We thank them all and especially those with roles as officers or trustees. Pre-2020, over 180 "live" talks had been given to a variety of large and small organisations.

In 2018 Heritage Angel Awards Wales was established to encourage voluntary activities in five aspects of Welsh heritage. *Discovering Old Welsh Houses* (DOWH) was one of thirteen organisations across Wales to enter the "Best Heritage Research, Interpretation or Recording" category and was selected as one of three organisations to go forward to the finals. These were held in Caerphilly Castle in November 2018 where DOWH received a "highly commended" certificate. DOWH was delighted by this recognition of the importance of the heritage work undertaken by our members across North Wales.

In 2020-2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have held monthly Zoom lectures which have proved very popular and we have widened the scope of our bilingual quarterly Newsletters to include a range of articles contributed by members. Both these features will be continuing. This year we have also been working hard preparing a searchable database of all houses visited, developing a comprehensive parish-based search for houses built pre1700, and revising our website. We very much look forward being able to meeting together face to face both in branches and as we plan future priorities.

We were recently described as **"the most successful community architecture group in Wales - and maybe in the**

UK". So, **THANK YOU** for all your contributions to our growing and enthusiastic organization as we look forward to an exciting and interesting future.

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

ANGLESEY BRANCH

Anglesey Branch Report by T.P.T.Williams and Susan Hurst

There is still little formal activity to report. A planned visit to Cefn Coch, Llanfechell had to be postponed when the owners were affected by Covid-19 and were required to isolate. It is hoped to reschedule.

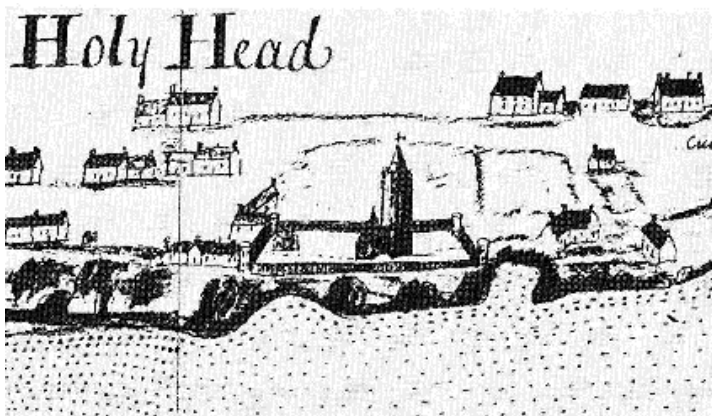
A lost Holyhead treasure by T.P.T.Williams

We in Anglesey constantly lament the lack of candidate DOWH houses to study. This is felt all the more by those who know a little of what was still to be seen only a

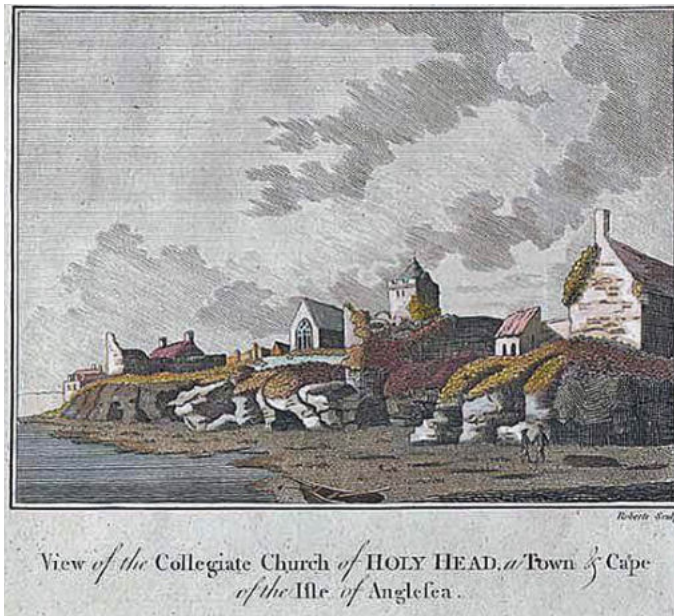


Francis Place's view of Holyhead from 1699 with the site of the C15th hospice marked

relatively few short decades ago. Thus in Holyhead as the war clouds lifted in the late 1940s there stood in Swift Square adjacent to the 4th century Roman fort, an incredible

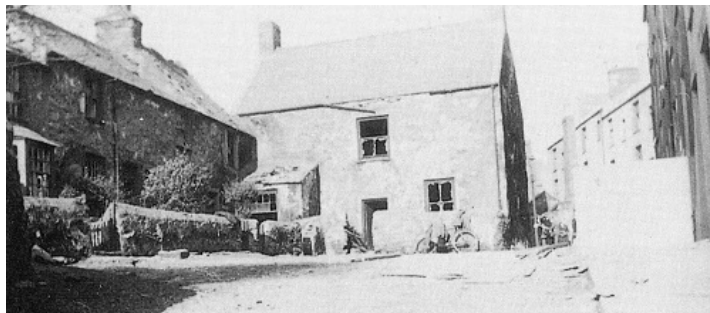


Lewis Morris's view of Holyhead from 1739-40 with the L-shaped 'Welsh' Inn at right



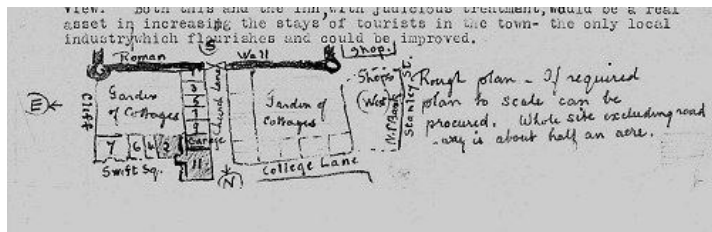
Francis Grose's 1775 painting showing the gable end of the C15th hospice at the right

medieval survivor - the pre-Reformation 15th century hospice from the days of the *clas* church of St. Cybi, embedded in the remains of an old L-shaped complex of buildings known for centuries as Swift's or the Welsh Inn. Artists including Francis Place in 1699, Lewis Morris in 1740 and Francis Grose in 1775 captured it in sketches and paintings. But by 1947 no one cared for these relics and they were soon thoughtlessly swept away. There was no CADW or Coflein then, of course. Only one heroine was concerned enough to record their passing, Holyhead's great local historian Ms Lucy Williams. In papers in the *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society* 1947 and elsewhere, she recorded the 'fine oak trusses', 'flat-laid purlins and rafters' and 'oak wattle' revealed as the ancient house was unroofed and demolished. She lovingly cleaned and preserved sections of ancient oak panelling - where are these now, one wonders ? Lucy also secured some photos of Swift Square and the old building in its last days, one of



Lucy Williams' 1947 photo of Swift Square with the C15th hospice, later the 'Welsh' Inn, to the left

which is reproduced here together with a page from her notes of the site . How she would have revelled in the work of DOWH were she with us today !



A page of Lucy Williams' notes on Swift Square with the L-shaped C15th hospice and 'Welsh' Inn shaded

New light on the Llanddwyn Island ruins ? by Susan Hurst

With the widening of the remit of DOWH to include house history as well as pure dendrochronology, we are more moved to consider built remains now too degraded for the latter but still redolent of interest and even romance.

In 2011, excavations on Llanddwyn Island, off the Newborough coast of Anglesey, uncovered built remains associated with St. Dwynwen's ruined medieval church. Currently the excavator and SLR Consultants are conducting geophysical survey there¹ and speculate that a medieval priory may have been converted into a parish church some time after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the late 1530s. It is at least as likely that the church, with its associated cult of St. Dwynwen, formed an important centre of pilgrimage, as celebrated in the C14th poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym.



Moses Griffith's 1770s painting of Llanddwyn Church - note the distinctive round tower, now utterly lost

Edward I's conquest of Wales reached as far as Llanfaes in the east of Anglesey, then the principal sea port of Gwynedd. His nearby planted borough of Beaumaris required that Llanfaes be effectively transplanted to form a new borough near the western commotal centre at Rhosyr, which became Newborough. The inhabitants, however, just got on with their lives providing archaeological evidence largely lost on the mainland. The most famous cleric associated with the Llanddwyn church complex in the 15th century was Dean Kyffin, the notorious 'Deon Ddu' who

with others plotted the successful landing of Henry VII in 1485. In the 1770s Thomas Pennant could see what he called 'the small ruins of the prebendal house' which he thought to be Kyffin's residence. Foundations of probable secular buildings have indeed been found both adjacent to the church and on the adjacent mainland in the sandhills forming the coastal hinterland. The former have been referred to as the Sexton's house or sometimes the Rectory. It is much to be hoped that the present work may throw new light on these.

St. Dwynwen's church was already in ruins by 1742 as is clear from a contemporary print by the Buck brothers. There

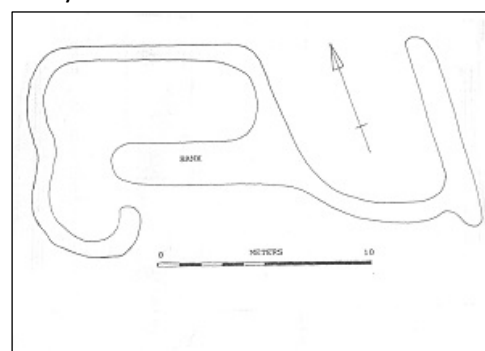


Llanddwyn church - house ruins at left *Buck brothers 1742*

is a strong tradition that its roof timbers were reused in the construction of the Abermenai ferry boat, the subsequent sinking of which, with much loss of life, was seen by the superstitious, as divine retribution for this impiety.

The current excavator suggests that much stone may have been taken from the church ruins in order to build the two lighthouses on the island. It may also have gone towards the construction of the pilots cottages, associated outhouses and the large Pilots Cove breakwater.

To the north of the church are fields that were farmed by a small community of crofting families between the 18th and 20th centuries. Evidence is said to suggest there were as many as four or five families on the island. As well as farming they would have assisted in the upkeep and running of the two lighthouses and pilot boats. The last residents left in the early 1900s.



Plan of the 'small ruins of the prebendal house' *After Hugh Owen 1920*

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-58925766>

CAERNARFONSHIRE BRANCH

Peter Masters draws the attention of members to the fact that *British Archaeology No. 178* has a detailed article about the medieval roof of Westminster Hall - *Secrets in the roof of Westminster Hall* by Dan Miles of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory; a well illustrated and in depth report of this important project. See also his *Tree ring dating of Westminster Hall, Palace of Westminster, London. Pilot study* Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory Report 2019/30.

MERIONETH BRANCH

Branch Meeting Wednesday 8 December 'Discovering Medieval Dolgellau' by Martin Cherry

Sounds unlikely? But an hour or so's walk around the town can throw a lot of light on how it might have looked in the Middle Ages and how later changes respected the ancient street pattern. A relaxed stroll with the option of some light pre-Christmas refreshments to follow - a cup of coffee, a glass of wine, a sandwich or something hot at a local cafe or hostelry - venues to be confirmed when we know the numbers attending. **Meet 11.00 under the arches in Eldon Square (outside Tŷ Siamas).** Let Martin know if you can come and if you wish to join us for refreshments afterwards. E-mail martincherry@btinternet.com - by 15 November if possible.

A Merioneth oddity - or is it? by John Townsend



Garth-gell

Between Llanelltyd and Bontddu is a small valley called Cwm Mynach. It runs from the Mawddach estuary north for just over 4 miles, after which it merges into the hinterland of the Rhinog mountains. There is a small community called



The ruined house

Tai Cynhaeaf at the bottom of the valley. My wife and I live in an offshoot of Cwm Mynach called Nant Cesailgwm.

We are keen walkers and, like others, were restricted in how far we could travel from home during the pandemic, so we explored some of the more minor paths in the area. When we go on our walks, we are always on the lookout for old houses. On a walk on the west side of the valley we came across a large derelict farmstead we didn't know about. I took some photographs and then we continued on our way over to the Clogau gold mines.

Once we got home, I did a quick check to see if the farmstead had a name on the current OS map - it didn't. So, more investigation was needed. Although the local Archives were closed because of Covid restrictions, this was not a



The associated shed ruins

problem as all the initial research could be done online. I started with the OS six-inch 1888-1913 map (the Merioneth County survey was undertaken between 1873 and 1888) which showed the farmstead but without a name.

Then to the tithe map of 1842. Unfortunately, in this area the maps and apportionments are poor; only the landowners' boundaries, the occupiers of the land, field and

farm names are shown, but no house names, just red blobs on buildings. The farm name for this area was shown as Garth-gell which I know as a Victorian house near to the Cwm Mynach road, about ¾ mile north of the farmstead - so the tithe map didn't help.

Onward to the O.S. 1st Series map of 1838 (the Merioneth County survey was undertaken between 1805-1838) - and success! The farmstead is shown as Garth-gell. This was a complete surprise, especially as where the current Garth-gell now stands, the map shows a house called Cae-pellaf. A bit of measuring and map overlays confirmed that the current Garth-gell is built on the site of Cae-pellaf.

So, what appears to have happened is that sometime after 1805 and before 1888 Cae-pellaf had been pulled down and rebuilt as the 'new' Garth-gell - the old farmstead being abandoned (the owners of Garth-gell believe the house was built in 1805, which would fit). Incidentally, the name change seems only to have affected the house since the substantial woods to the north of the current Garth-gell are still called Coed Cae-pellaf.

I've not come across a house name change like this before. Normally, the original house name remains when it's rebuilt, but not in this case. Is this an oddity in Cwm Mynach, or do other areas covered by DOWH have similar examples? If so, please let me know via merioneth@discoveringgoldwelshhouses.co.uk and I'll write a follow-up article. Any DOWH member who wants information on how to access the maps mentioned in this article, please use the email above.

beekeeping that can still be seen in various structures on farms and in gardens. No doubt Peter Masters will be announcing further technical details in due course. Ed.



Penarth-fawr, near Criccieth. Built at some time after 1476. The so-called 'spere truss' echoes the aisled halls of the princes.

Insights from tree-ring dating on the houses of North Wales Summary of a lecture by Martin Cherry via Zoom

The second Zoom presentation of the 2021-2 season was given by Martin Cherry on 13 October. As it was not recorded, a summary is given here.

161 houses in the north have been tree-ring dated (up from 26 in 1994), many of them yielding dates for several phases. A tree-ring date refers to the time of felling, often very precisely to the season as well as the year, and it is generally accepted that building would have followed within a year or two while the wood was still soft and malleable. After that time timber becomes increasingly difficult to fashion. (A note for your diary: Martin Bridge, of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, our main tree-dating partners, as it were, will be giving a Zoom lecture on **Wednesday 12 January**²)

With the exception of some ex-situ timbers from Basingwerk Abbey, Flintshire (c. 1385), nothing in the north has been tree-ring dated to before 1400. Clearly, buildings survive from before that time (notably the stone castles) but there is no convincing explanation for this 1400 threshold. One or two early castle doors and thirteenth-century church roofs have been found further south, but the

² *The mysteries of tree-ring dating. Explaining the science of dendrochronology* at 7 pm.



17th century bee-keepers at work. *Contemporary print.*

Bees and bee keeping before the modern hive (1851)

On **March 9th 2022** John Townsend, a DOWH trustee and keen beekeeper, will talk **via ZOOM** about honey bees and bee-keeping from the post-medieval period up to 1851 when the beehive as we understand it today was invented. He will cover the importance of bee products (wax, honey and mead) during this period, as well as the physical signs of

earliest scientific date for a house in Wales is 1402 (in Breconshire) and, for our region, 1420 (Aberconwy House in Conwy, pictured). Some have suggested that the wars



Hendre, Llandrillo. Built around 1502/3, possibly on former bond lands, manipulating traditional land law a little before Henry VII made it legal to do so.

between Glyndŵr and the Lancastrians might account for it but, while damage was extensive, it strains credibility to maintain that nothing survived. More likely is the inherent obsolescence of the building methods used in earlier centuries; common-rafter roofs (once common in churches) have a tendency to rack and keel over, while the earliest



Aberconwy House, Conwy. The earliest tree-ring dated house in Wales (1420), reflecting the confidence of a new breed of merchants in a town severely damaged by Owain Glyndŵr.

cruck-framed buildings, documented in North Wales in the fourteenth century, may well have had their cruck feet embedded in the earth and so highly susceptible to rot.

Nevertheless, it is curious that in none of the fifteenth century houses are any old timbers re-used from earlier buildings. There seems to have been a conscious decision to wipe the slate clean and start anew. As Richard Suggett has

pointed out, there was a widespread rebuilding, on the part of wealthy merchants, of houses in towns (some of which we know were badly damaged in the wars, as with Aberconwy House) or by great lords asserting their authority in buildings such as the court at Ruthin (1421). More research will doubtless throw light on what lay behind the substantial number of gentry country houses such as Penarth-fawr near Criccieth that sprang up across the region. (More house histories, please!) Probably built by a new generation of powerful administrators appointed by the crown, these men also had roots in the ancient Welsh dynasties: they had a foot in both camps and helped to foster a new consensus that prepared the path for the Tudor settlement. They believed (or possibly they knew



Cae-glas, Llanfrothen. A 'modern' fully storeyed house built around 1547/8. A prosperous cattle farm: the owner and many like him were commercial money lenders and not at all 'near the margin of existence'.

from houses that still survived in their time) that the Welsh princes and aristocrats lived in great aisled halls and their own new houses self-consciously referred to these - as can be seen in Penarth-fawr (pictured). Their houses were a statement of current power and ancient lineage.

By around 1500, a buoyant land market, stimulated by various arrangements designed to circumvent the tradition of subdividing estates, created opportunities for families of more modest status - what might in later centuries be called yeomen farmers - who built substantial cruck-framed houses with open halls, such as Hendre, Llandrillo of 1502/3 (pictured). The legal changes introduced by Henry VII hastened this process, although it took many families two or three generations to acquire the wherewithal (and perhaps also a sense of security) to build afresh - and in a new style. Prosperous cattle farmers, for example, began to build quite modern houses, floored throughout (such as Cae Glas, Llanfrothen, 1547/8), although it took many decades before the old symbol of hospitality, the open hall, was completely jettisoned. By that time, families of gentry status were adopting the new fashions of the Renaissance.

A longer and more fully illustrated version of this summary will be placed on our website in due course.

DENBIGHSHIRE BRANCH

Denbighshire Branch Report by Janice Dale

I organised our first event on 1st October for a walk around Llandrillo village, which I also threw open to villagers - the number who turned up outnumbered DOWHG members. It turned out very successfully and I have been asked to repeat for more people of our village - so if any DOWHG members want to join the 2nd walk, do please contact me. I have had offers of a couple of house visits close to Llandrillo, which I will be organising in the near future.



Earl of Dudley Vanity Fair 18 June 1870
Carlo Pellegrini, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Help needed by Janice Dale

John Williams Lord Ward became 1st Earl of Dudley in 1860. According to *Great Landowners of Great Britain* of 1883 he owned 4472 acres in Merioneth and I have been trying to find records for all these acres, when his seats were in Worcestershire and Staffordshire. In my parish of Llandrillo he owned 848 acres and several houses in 1827 [from a Llandrillo rate book] - but where else in Merioneth did he have an interest ?

I e-mailed the Dudley R.O. who replied comprehensively, but do not hold any information on Lord Ward's Welsh properties. I have tried *TNA Discovery* but there is apparently nothing there. Nor is there anything in the Gwynedd archive schedules. The N.E. Wales archives at Hawarden do have some deeds, supposedly deposited from Thomas Kenrick 1837 [D/BC 6288] by trustees under the will

of the late Earl of Dudley. I had great hopes of this and bought a digital copy, only to find it doesn't mention any properties at all, just lists the parties to transactions. So my plea is, does anyone know where I might be able to find out more about Lord Ward/Earl of Dudley's Welsh holdings? Or if you come across any information, do please let me know !

FLINTSHIRE BRANCH

Flintshire branch report by Wally and Margaret Barr

Since our first post-lockdown outing around the historical town of Caerwys in July this year, we have held two branch meetings. In September, 11 of us met in Llanasa Village Hall and afterwards watched a DVD on the repair and restoration of old timber-framed buildings. In October, 10 of us met in Caerwys Town Hall to continue with the DVD, looking at stone-built buildings this time, followed by an interesting discussion on old buildings in the county (see photo).

Our branch meetings have of course followed Covid rules and we have taken care to be socially-distanced. Progress with the Parish Project and House Histories continues.



A note about summer bat visitors to our houses and farm buildings by Irene Brightmer

I am sure some of you had the pleasure of hosting bats in the eaves of your house this summer, and saw them flying off at dusk to hunt for insects. They seem to favour old houses and farm buildings, but new houses are also occupied sometimes.

If the bats were numerous it is likely that they were nursery roosts of 'common pipistrelles', which is the most widespread British bat species and one of the smallest in size. Or you may have had the related 'soprano pipistrelles', a species only differentiated in the 1990s by the higher notes of their call. Soprano pipistrelles create larger nursery roosts than their lower pitched relatives. Pipistrelles tend to return to the same roost each year. We have had soprano

pipistrelles visiting us for over ten years; they first came following an illegal disturbance to their previous roost.

These nursery roosts consist entirely of pregnant females, which gather in May to prepare for the birth of their pups in late June/early July. Like most bat species the pipistrelles give birth to only one pup per year. For their first month or so the pups are fed solely with the mother's milk. Then the pups learn to fly and are able to hunt for insects on their own. Young pups learning to fly are at their most vulnerable, falling from heights and being predated by cats etc.

As the bats leave the eaves of our roofs each summer



Soprano pipistrelle bat. Hard to differentiate from its cousin, the common pipistrelle bat, this widespread species hunts close to water and can be found in woods and gardens

evening at dusk, their direction of travel is towards water or woodland where each individual catches and devours thousands of insects on the wing every night. Their droppings, which are dry and crumbly, consist of the minute remains of insect wings etc.

Bats are mammals but have an unusual life cycle. At the age of one or two years the adults reach maturity and mate in the autumn, following dispersal from the summer roost. The female retains the sperm during hibernation, until the spring when she ovulates, and only then does fertilisation take place and she becomes pregnant.

From their arrival at the roost in May, the pregnant females emerge each evening at dusk, about 20 minutes after sunset. Precise timing depends on the temperature and the light. Around the solstice this year there was no activity in our roost of soprano pipistrelles until 21.45 (BST). They stay out foraging for insects for several hours until the light breaks near dawn, and they return. During daytime the bats are inactive and silent, and a mother sleeps with her pup curled up under her wings.

Bats are very long-lived for their size, compared with mice for example, and may live for 20 years. The adults have few predators being nocturnal, and it is believed that

living in colonies helps them to develop immunity to disease.

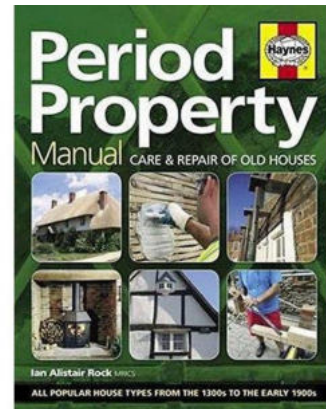
The UK population of pipistrelles has been declining in recent decades; like all bats they are protected by law, with heavy fines imposed for interfering with roosts. Reasons for the decline include modern agricultural practices, as well as renovations to residential and agricultural buildings and the use of toxic timber treatment.

For various reasons bats have an unjustified bad press. **But bats do not damage our properties and they pose no known health risk to humans in the UK.** If you want to know more about your summer residents you can contact the groups of local enthusiasts, the champions of bats - they will be pleased to hear from you, and may help you to do a count. It will all help to add to our knowledge about these important and fascinating tiny flying mammals. Try the 'Bat Conservation Trust' or your local bat group such as the 'Clwyd Bat Group', the 'Gwynedd Bat Group', etc, all easy to find online.

BOOK REVIEWS by Richard Cuthbertson

There is a steady stream of interesting books published about subjects that may interest our members and it seems to me that it is worth having a section of the Newsletter dedicated to this. The views expressed would always be those of the Author, but it will give us all a chance to know better what's out there. I hope 100 to 200 words would usually be enough. I have recently read two books which I review below.

Period Property Manual, care and repair of old houses by Ian Alistair Rock, MRICS, published by Haynes.



Yes, this is the old Haynes Manual that many will know from our teenage years was an essential guide to keeping our old cars on the road ! Now it's about a clear and simple guide to looking after old houses.

In the last five years the cost of building and Maintenance work has considerably increased, and even if you can afford it, can you find a Builder you can trust to do the work in a professional manner?

This well presented Manual gives us tips and clues about

how to do the work and might even encourage some of us to do simple jobs ourselves. It gives clear and well illustrated advice and might well be shared with potential contractors before work starts just to make sure that they understand your requirements. It is an easy read and simply to run through its pages gives us plenty of informative insights that will help us understand and care for our houses. I see it rather as a home owner's Bible which can easily and cheaply be bought second hand from eBay, ABE Books, or Amazon. Thoroughly recommended.

House and Cottage Restoration by Hugh Lander, published by Acanthus Books



This book differs from the first in that it does not cover the techniques of house repair in detail, but gives many lists of do-s and do-nots, in all the many situations which may face the owners of all kinds of period property. It is profusely illustrated with good photos, and simply by looking at these you will greatly increase your knowledge of period taste and design. Sometimes the advice given is not so much about what is right but about the author's view; but in general it gives a sound base on which to make decisions and I am happy to recommend it as an important contribution as to why Old Property can give so much enjoyment. Buy it on eBay, ABE Books, or Amazon for a few pounds.

FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Stop Press - Caernarfonshire Branch activity by Margaret Dunn

The following report from Margaret was too late for inclusion in sequence in the already assembled Newsletter so

is given below. Ed.

Our second attempt to hold a guided historical and architectural walk around Beddgelert village successfully took place on 4th November in dry and sunny, albeit chilly, weather. Following late cancellations there were only five of us but it was an enjoyable afternoon and it was great to meet together. We discussed the impact the rivers Glaslyn and Colwyn had in dividing the village into three parts, each mainly owned by one owner who determined when and how that part of the village was developed and what styles of architecture were used.

Apart from the medieval priory church and two sixteenth century farmhouses, we noted only early and mid nineteenth century houses. On the village outskirts small houses were erected for quarrymen, labourers and those servicing the needs of early tourists. Towards the village centre almost alpine-looking guest houses, inns and hotels were erected later in the century. The 1802 opening of the Beddgelert hotel followed the opening of the Turnpike roads and triggered the popularity of Beddgelert as a major tourism centre for which it continues to be well-known.

It was agreed that further outside/community hall meetings should be arranged to encourage us to restart our research.

Members' publications

The Old Houses of Llanddulas and Rhyd y Foel by Gill A. Jones and Wendy A. Williams. 2021. Mentions almost 100 local houses. Contact the DOWH Conwy branch for further details. See the DOWH website under Publications/Booklets.

Llanddulas and Rhyd y Foel - the Story of Eighteen Schools by Gill A. Jones and Wendy A. Williams. 2021. Contact the DOWH Conwy branch for further details. See the DOWH website under Publications/Booklets.

The Forebears of Anne Lloyd and those of her two husbands Thomas Yale and Theophilus Eaton by Gill A. Jones. 2017. See the DOWH website under Publications/Booklets.

A quest for Cymer in Edeirnion and its barons. Part 3: Gwerclas in focus by Jenny Lees. *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*. 2021. Vol XVIII part IV pp 247-356.



TESCO Bags of Help

