Cynwyd Scrapbook Five

Discovering Old Welsh Houses Group

Denbighshire Branch

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For more information about any of the articles and research in this book, please contact: leesjenny@gmail.com

Introduction

This is the fifth of the popular 'Cynwyd Scrapbook' series published by our **Discovering Old Welsh Houses (DOWH)** group - a charity whose vision is to celebrate Welsh heritage through the study of traditional houses and the lives of the people who lived in them. Our work, done by volunteers with the guidance of experts from the archives, universities and 'learned societies', includes:

• Recording the architecture of old houses - particularly those built before 1750, with tree ring dating (dendrochronology) of their timbers when appropriate

• Researching the history of each dwelling and the lives of its occupants

• Exploring the local landscape, community, social and economic history

Our findings are shared by publishing house histories on our website, contributing articles to books and journals, and discussing research at our local DOWH groups. Readers will find that the articles in this and the previous Cynwyd books, at https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page18.html , are interlinked, as the families appearing in them are often related to each other - sometimes over a span of several centuries - and may have lived in different dwellings at different times, particularly in the case of farm tenancies.

These books are based on our DOWH research, enhanced by readers worldwide contacting us with fascinating information about, and often photographs of, their ancestors connected with our local area! The articles focusing on the historic dwellings of *Cadwst*, *Caenog*, *Hafod yr afr* and *Henblas* grew from our current **Edeirnion Project** researching and dating properties thought to originate from the 15th- 16th centuries; largely financed by generous grants from the **Woodtiger Fund** and **Vernacular Architecture Group**. Enormous thanks are also due to all our researchers – in particular DOWH members Pam Buttrey and Martin Cherry, and to the residents of all the houses who not only provided access, but also related to us the oral history of their areas!

Membership of Discovering Old Welsh Houses entitles you to guided visits to private historic houses in North Wales; our illustrated bilingual newsletters; lectures and house history workshops; membership of local DOWH groups, and support with researching the history of your own or other old houses of interest**.**
Join at: https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page6.html
or by contacting our Membership Secretary Fiona Gale at
membership@discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk or on **01824 520231**.

Jenny Lees, DOWH Denbighshire branch, November 2023

1. Cadwst - medieval mysteries in the Pennant valley

The beautifully renovated building known as *Cadwst Mawr*, lying only a few miles from Cynwyd in *Cwm Pennant* above Llandrillo, originated as a high-status, full-cruck open hall house dating probably from the 15th century. [1]It was originally timber-framed and appears to have been a two-bay open hall, probably flanked by storeyed upper and lower ends, with private family rooms at the upper end and storage and service rooms at the lower.

The origins of the name *Cadwst* are uncertain, but the Welsh word *cad* can mean battle or army - *cadfaes* being a battlefield, and a now obsolete form of the word *cadw* also meant 'flock' or 'herd'. No existing houses have yet been found in North Wales dating from before the **1400s**, but although *Cwm Pennant* now has only an average number of farmsteads, in **1292-3** Pennant *township* had 23 taxpayers paying a total greater than that from any other *township* in Llandrillo parish! [2] In addition to evidence of medieval cultivation around the valley floor, there are also relics of early medieval settlements and agriculture extending much higher on the *Berwyn* range above *Cadwst* than is the case today, and it is thought these may have had to be abandoned after the climatic cooling and natural disasters of C14th.

By mid C16th, alterations to *Cadwst* would have included a first floor over the hall (partly removed in recent times); an inserted chimney in the hall centre, and stone walls partially replacing timber-framing. Although the extravagant architecture of *Cadwst Mawr* suggests an owner of importance when first built, by the late 1600s '*Kadwst*' was listed by Edward Lhuyd [3] under '*Other houses*', with no owner mentioned, whereas *Hendwr, Branas, Tyfos, Cilan, Plas yn Faerdre* and *Cryniarth* were at that time considered by Lhuyd 'Houses of note'.

We don't yet know who originally built *Cadwst Mawr*, but a **1715** document mentions a mortgage on *Tyddyn Glan Cadwst and lands* concerning **John ap Evan ap Oliver** of

Pennant, '*now long since dead*', and son and heir **Oliver Jones**. And there is the **1728** Will [4] of *Gentleman* **Oliver Jones** of *Llandrillo yn Edeirnion* who was '*of Cadws*t' in a **1750** property transaction. From this will we know that Oliver's *Messuages, Lands, Tenements and Hereditaments* lay *elsewhere in the County of Merioneth* (as well as in Llandrillo parish), and beneficiaries included Oliver's son **Humphrey**, daughter **Mary**, and his *loving sons* **Evan**, **David** and **Thomas Jones.** Also included was an **Edward Williams** of Cynwyd who had mortgaged property to Oliver (who might this be?) and payment dates were at the times of the feasts of *St Michael the Archangel* and *the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*.

In **1750** *Cadwst* was sold to **Gwin Lloyd** of *Hendwr* in a transaction involving Oliver's heir **Humphrey Jones** and **Jane** and **Lowry Davies**, daughters of his deceased sister Mary. But in the **1843** *Tithe Apportionment* for Llandrillo parish there were two separate *Cadwst* listings; one of around 202 acres owned by Earl of Dudley **Lord Ward** with tenant **Evan Evans**, and another owned by **Thomas Durack** with tenant **David Davies**; seemingly for *Cadwst bach*

Cadwst mountain pasture land viewed from Blaen y dre isaf (Jenny Lees 2022)

Positions, shapes, and names of *Cadwst mawr* fields on the tithe map are fascinating, as although the listings describe type of land usage at the time, field names themselves often originate from previous centuries, and give clues as to land use then. *Erw ty poppy* should probably be *ty popty* [oven], perhaps suggesting a former outside kitchen - once not uncommon to reduce risk of fire, and *Clwt y delyn* apparently still has a harp-like shape!

Erw Sothach, with *sothach* apparently meaning 'trash', was puzzling until a colleague [5] discovered from a soil survey of England and Wales that the soil in that field is of a wet clay and contains a lot of siliceous stone, being seasonally waterlogged and acidic, and so a field of 'rubbish' or waste agriculturally!

Although now mainly pasture, large areas of Cwm Pennant were once under 'arable' cultivation, and *Cadwst* fields on the tithe map include incredibly narrow *Quillets* [separate parallel strips of land held by different people within a 'common' field or *Maes*]. *Cadwst* quillets were among several belonging to various other owners - an arrangement thought to date back to an area of *medieval shareland* or 'open field arable' farming which extended over 12 acres south of *Cadwst* through the *townships* of both *Pennant* and *Garthian*.[6]

By C19th *Cadwst* was extensively remodelled, with much of its timber framed walling replaced in stone, and from C19th onwards newspapers, now easily available online, provide a glimpse of the social hierarchy in the area around *Cadwst*, as seen in this August **1848** advert:

'LLANDRILLO, MERIONETHSHIRE. TO MINERS AND CAPITALISTS. MOST DESIRABLE FREEHOLD INVESTMENT, Genteel Residence, Farms, &c. TWO Compact and Valuable FREEHOLD ESTATES, containing upwards of 660 Acres of Arable, Meadow, Pasture, and Hill Land' … 'with every prospect of Lead Ore under the same'. **LOT ONE** included *Rhydygethin*, '*suitable for a Genteel Family*', together with tenanted farm plus mention of *very valuable* lead mines at nearby *Llangynog*, and excellent grouse shooting on hill land '*adjoining a preserve of Lord Ward's. A Pack of Hounds is kept in the neighbourhood*'. Of the over 660 acres, **LOT 2** had only 33 acres of arable, meadow and pasture plus 45 acres of hill land, belonging to a substantial stone-built farmhouse with associated Labourer's cottage in the occupation **David Davies** and known by the name of *Cadwst*'.[7]

Cwm Pennant viewed from above Garthiaen (Jenny Lees, May 2022)

Over 140 people were invited to the annual dinner given on 22nd March **1878** by **Mr. H. Robertson** of *Pale* to *the tenantry, keepers, water walkers, and shepherds of the Pale and Earl of Dudley's estates*, and the Chairman alluded to Mr. Robertson's liberality. **John Jones** of *Cadwst*, who had

appeared in 1870 to be titled *Parch* (Minister), referred to the good feeling existing between the Churchmen and Nonconformists of Llandrillo, and was probably the ***Mr. John Jones,*** *Llandrillo*, conducting prayers at an **1885** *Corwen Temperance Demonstration* celebrating the 50th year of the Merionethshire temperance movement - during which reforms advocated had included the need for establishment of cocoa rooms or coffee taverns and reading rooms in every town and village.

The article '*19th Century Tithe Commotion – from Cynwyd to Llandrillo'* in this book describes the extraordinary scenes on May 20th **1887** when bailiffs managed to seize livestock from several farms between Cynwyd and Llandrillo, including that of **Mr. H. Evans** at *Cadwst* and **Mr. D. Williams** of the *New Mill* (*Y Felin Newydd*), before they were driven away on their return visit and a tithe reduction of 10 per cent eventually granted!

William Jones of *Cadwst* had entered 'Shank' in the Puppy Stakes of the 1877 Rug Sheepdog Trials, [8] and we know from Census records that aged 37 in **1891** he had taken over from his father **John** as *Head* at *Cadwst bach*. In **1898** there was an Inebriates Act and in August the article 'PETTY SESSIONS: 'DRUNK IN CHARGE OF A HORSE' reported that in June **William Jones**, *Cadwst*, had been convicted of this offence in Bala. An Inspector Roberts had charged him, brought the horse to the King's Head, and advised him *to go to have a sleep*, but William later took the horse home and was fined Is. 6d. in addition to payment of 8s. 6d costs! [9] But 'Charlie', a horse belonging to William, can be seen busy at work in the **1900** photograph below!

Horse belonging to William Jones of Cadwst Bach, 1909

I was surprised to see that *The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard* for 9th June **1899** had published the names of each donor of an astoundingly long list of (mostly lavish!) presents for the wedding of **Miss Margaret Jane Jarrett**, eldest daughter of Mr Edward Jarrett of *Plas yn faerdref*, Llandrillo - held at the Calvinistic Methodist Church where *a trumphal arch was erected at the entrance*. The gift of ***Miss Winnie Williams****, Cadwst,* was just listed '*cup and saucer*', but in the **1901** census I found she was a *Housemaid* aged 19 working there!

Cadwst Mawr was once the home of **Evan and Winifred Owen** and their children **Tom** and **Elizabeth** ('Lizzie Grace'), who married **Emrys Jones**, paternal uncle of **Elwyn Ashford Jones**. Elwyn tells how the couple went to farm at *Wern Pennant*, further up the Pennant Valley, and how in around 1940 a young evacuee came to *Cadwst Mawr* and was told by Lizzie: "You are now my little brother". Amazingly, sometime during the 2000s he returned to live at Llandrillo in order to look after Lizzie, now widowed and living in the old people's bungalows, in her old age- a true 'Little Brother'! The image below of **Winifred** and **Evan Owen's** gravestone is courtesy of **Edward Roberts**.

In 1995 thanks were given to the present owner **John Wyn Jones** and his brother **Ieuan** of *Ty-draw* for permission to carry out an important archaeological survey on their land, [10] and it is incredibly lucky that **John Wyn Jones** and his family have not only 'saved for posterity' such an important historic building as *Cadwst Mawr*, but also renovated the property with enormous skill to produce such a beautiful home. In the article below, *From Cynllwyd to Cadwst -and a return to Cynwyd too!*', John relates the family's fascinating story!

Jenny Lees, 2023

References

1. We are awaiting results of isotope dating commissioned by DOWH. As the principal trusses were very finely detailed with decorative 'quarter-round' mouldings', *Cadwst* may even date from as early as the beginning of the 1400s.
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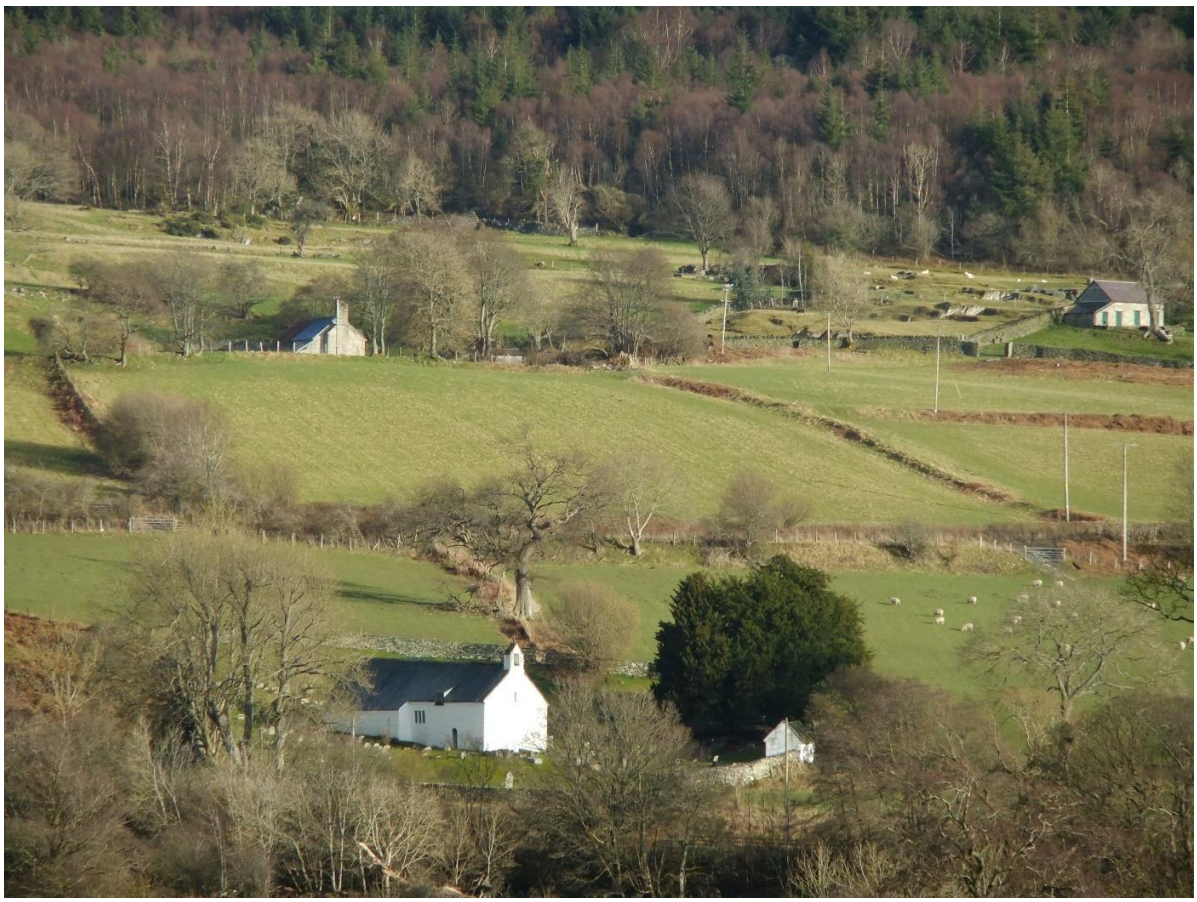
2. Hafod yr afr – yet another medieval hall house for Llangar!

Viewed from outside its front, *Hafod yr afr* looks just like a 19th century farmhouse. But it originated as a medieval hall house, dating from the mid-16th century[1] and built during the period when the Barons of Edeirnion still 'ruled' the parish of Llangar. These barons were descended from **Madog ap Maredudd**, last Welsh Prince to rule the whole of ancient Powys, and while Madog's great grandson Gruffudd ap Iorwerth became Baron of Cymer,[2]



Hafod yr afr - above Llangar church and viewed from Hafod y calch (Jenny Lees)

Gruffudd's brother **Elise ap Iorwerth** became Baron of Llangar. The brothers' domains of *Cymer* and *Llangar* were separate *townships* within Llangar parish, and as *Hafod yr afr* lies within the former *township* of Llangar, its site is likely to have been associated with the Llangar barony. The decorative cusping of some of its timbers [below] suggests *Hafod yr afr* was originally of some importance, and by **1435** the Barons of Cymer had built the medieval hall house of *Plas Uchaf* across the valley.[3] But due to the Llangar Barons having only an under-aged female heir in the 14th century, their fascinating and important lineage continued outside Llangar *township* [4] - events described in the article *Cryniarth Rescued for Posterity* in Cynwyd Scrapbook One, https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page18.html .

Early parish records rarely name actual dwellings, but from **1624** onwards several Llangar baptism and burial listings include the locally unusual name **Nicholas**. These may have been connected with *Hafod yr afr*, as by **1729** it was home to *Yeoman* **Edward Nicholas**, whose *Inventory* in his 1729 will [5] gives some idea of life there at the time. His household possessions, as was customary at the time, are listed room by room, and '***Kitchen***' items included two *Chests*, a *Table*, four *Stools*, two *Chairs*, two *Iron Potts*, three *Pewter dishes*,

seven *Spoons*, a *Little Pot*, *Nogins* (small cups or mugs), eight *Pales*, 1 *Cro* (possibly a hook or fish hook?), 1 *Pan*; 1 *grade*l (griddle?), 1 *pare of tongs*, and 1 *Candlestick*.

In the ***'Buttry'*** were *1 Churn, 1 Firkin* (a small barrel or tub for butter or liquids), *1 Bench, 1 Little Tub, 1 Block* and *3 Earthen Potts*. The ***Large Chamber*** items included *1 Bedstead, I Cubboard, 2 Little Chests, Bed Cloaths & Linnens, 3 Sacks, 1 Bagg & a Wallett, 1 [?] Pillion* (a kind of saddle), *1 old sadle, 1 pack for sowing & other small things, Implements of Husbandry,* and 2 *Mares* and a *Colt*, but the ***Little Chamber*** was only listed with one *Bolster*.

There was no mention yet of a *parlour* at this time, and dendrochronology suggests that when first built as a cruck hall house, *Hafod yr afr* consisted of a two-bay central hall with service and parlour bays to either end. It also appears to have almost immediately been floored, with a large chimney constructed at the lower end where the huge inglenook is now visible, so possibly either or both the *Little* and *Large Chambers* of the Inventory might have been on an inserted first floor - though this may have been only a partial floor in *crogloft* style.

Cusped cruck blades in the higher part of Hafod yr afr, with later wall behind

Also included in Edward's **1729** Inventory were 2 oxen, 4 young heifers, 7 of [some type of] sheep, 41 sheep, 4 cows, one yearling *calfe*, one *Little calfe*, *Powltry*, and Geese -suggesting that *Hafod yr afr* was at that time a year-round working farm, rather than a *hafod* used only in warmer months. The cusped cruck 'blades' shown above were part of the original medieval hall, but later on this part provided livestock accommodation - a low row of massive upright slate slabs divided a slated floor section, possibly for threshing, from the un-slated part.

We know from the **1766** *Marriage Settlement* of Baron of Cymer **Hugh Hughes Lloyd of *Gwerclas*** and wife **Margaret Walmesley** [6] that *Hafod yr afr* was by then part of *Gwerclas* estate (which owned most of Cynwyd farmsteads and village at the time), as it included:

'*And all that Chief Quitt or Fee Farm Rent of 6d issuing out of Messuage tenements and lands in Llangar, formerly in tenure of Edward Nicholas afterwards of Margaret vch* (daughter of) *Edward and now of* ***William Evans*** *Clerk and called Hafod yr Afr'*

Hafod yr Afr's tenancy was evidently continued by **Edward Nicholas's** daughter **Margaret**, but by **1766** it was held by **Wiliam Evans**, who was *Recto*r of Llangar church from **1762** to around **1783**. He may not have lived there himself, as a **David Hughes** of '*Hafod 'rafr*' was buried in **1774,** but what is now *The Old Rectory* lies just a short walk away across the fields.

1766 façade of the home rebuilt by Hugh Hughes Lloyd of *Gwerclas* (Jenny Lees 2016)

By 1800 *Hafod yr afr* had undergone significant change, with the two downhill bays converted into a double-fronted house with up-hill byre, though interestingly part of a cruck can be seen on its outside rear wall - the house having been timber-framed before being encased in stone. At the time of the **1838** *Tithe Apportionment* for Llangar Parish the property *w*as now owned by **Griffith Howel Vaughan** of *Rug* with *Occupier* **John Lloyd** - much of *Gwerclas* estate having been sold to *Rug* following the family's financial misfortunes.

Tithe Apportionment field names often indicate land use in previous centuries, and *Hafod yr afr* ones [7] are fascinating. The largest field, listed as *Ffridd* (mountain pasture or sheep walk) covered over 8 acres above the house, and just beyond its boundary was the *House and Garden* of *Ty'n y Mynydd*; already a ruin by 1975 but inhabited until 1836.[8] *Hafod yr afr* land running down to Afon Dyfrdwy's banks (now below a main road) would have provided water for grazing livestock, and *Cae banadl* (Broom) *tan ffordd* was maybe used for growing animal fodder, as frequently happened with Gorse. *Cae* [y]n *coed* was perhaps woodland pasture; once used to graze cattle and swine, and the four fields including one named *Dryll* (piece, fragment or portion) suggest the *quillets* of a previous medieval shared field system.[9]

Returning to **1838** *Occupier* **John Lloyd (Llwyd** in earlier records) we know from a gravestone in Llangar churchyard (below) that he was born in *Bodheulog* in **1802**; died at *Ty'n y berth*, nearer Cynwyd village, in **1889**, and between **1833** and **1850** had seven children at *Hafod'r afr* with his wife, **Catherine Hughes** from *Cwm isa*. Between **1841** and **1889** John is said to have been both *Clerc Festri'r Plwyf* (Parish clerk?) and *Clochydd* (Sexton) for Llangar and later Cynwyd church, which replaced Llangar church as the site of worship in **1856**. He was probably responsible for bell ringing as well as grave digging, and John and his son **Robert** who followed him were said to have carried out 1,241 burials between them![10]

As John was *Sexton*, it would be interesting to know whether **John ap Evan,** *Sexton*, who was buried at Llangar on 2nd December **1647** and possibly son of **Evan ap Nicholas** (buried on 17th October **1636**), also lived at *Hafod yr afr*; conveniently close to the ancient church!

In the **1861** Census **Hugh Pugh**, who had moved from the Dolgellau area to *Hafod yr afr*, was listed as *Keeper* as well as *Farmer*; perhaps he was gamekeeper on *Rug* estate's *Berwyn* moors, conveniently situated just above his home, as the sport of driven grouse shooting

apparently dates back to around 1853. In **1863** Hugh's *Farmer* son **John Pugh** married **Jane Evans**, daughter of *Innkeeper* **William Evans** of the *Blue Lion*, Cynwyd - a tavern featured in Cynwyd Scrapbook Two's article *Blue Lion Memories*, and it is interesting that **John** was *Farmer and Cattle dealer* when *Executor* of his father's will in **1877**, as the village taverns provided accommodation and grazing for drovers who took huge herds of beasts from Wales towards England, with one of their drove routes leading down from *Mynydd Mynyllod*.

By **1888** *Hafod yr afr* had returned to the **Lloyd family** with the tenancy of **Humphrey Lloyd**. He puzzled me by '*Heading*' the **1881** census for grand *Plas Isaf* (Llangar) with occupation *Gardener*- until I discovered that his very affluent employers, featured in this book's article *Plas Isaf -Another Edeirnion Dynasty: Part Three*, were absent at census time!

Hafod yr afr viewed from neighbouring Bryn Saint (Jenny Lees 2016)

In the **1891** Census **Humphrey Lloyd** now headed *Hafod yr afr*, with wife **Ann**, daughters **Catherine** and **Sarah** and 16 year-old son **John** -interestingly listed as *Gardener's Apprentice*, but by **1901** Humphrey was a *Widower,* with daughter **Catherine** listed as *Cook* and daughter **Sarah** as *Dairy maid*. **Humphrey** himself died in **1903** and by **1911** *Hafod yr afr* , listed with 5 rooms, was headed by **Evan Jones** with wife **Martha** and their schoolgirl daughters **Elizabeth** and **M. Ellen**. But tragically, following the outbreak of World War One, not only was their son **Griffith Thomas Jones** killed in action in **1917** with the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, but his brother **Robert Samuel Jones** also died of his wounds the following year.[12]

In July **1918** the **Hon. Mrs. C.H. Wynn** (of *Rug*) made an agreement with **John E. Thomas** of *Bryn Awen*, Corwen parish, for the tenancy of the '*messuage and lands called Hafod-yr-afr*' in Llangar parish, at an annual rent of £35, but at some time before 1920 (in an undated document) the tenancy was granted to **Mrs. J.E. Thomas**; so maybe her husband had died?

Rear view of Hafod yr afr (Image courtesy of Cassa Townsend)

In **1961** *Hafod yr afr* was purchased from the *Rug* estate by **Hilda Myfanwy Townsend** (nee Jones) and husband **Eric Townsend**. It has passed down through two further generations of Townsends since and is currently undergoing sympathetic ongoing renovation, under the stewardship of the **Townsend** family. Hilda was descended from the **Williams** family of *Pant y Clai*, Cynwyd, and the family say: "*As we learn more about the Welsh side of the family, we understand why Grandma Townsend wanted to return to the area of her family's roots*!"

Although both *Hafod yr afr* and Llangar church can now only be reached from the road between Cynwyd and Corwen, until the early **1980s** a now washed-away footbridge between *Hafod-y-calch* and *Gwerclas* linked the west side of the valley and its inhabitants with the former *township* of Llangar. The bridge is marked on the 1950s map below: *Hafod yr afr* is not named but shown above *Bryn Saint*, and *Plas Uchaf* (unnamed) is just south of *Plas Isaf*. The fascinating recollections of **May Parry**[11] describe how, while living at *Plas Uchaf* with leaking roof before its subsequent rescue from dereliction, she worked at *Gwerclas* and crossed Afon Dyfrdwy to visit relations at *Hafod yr Afr*. And it was a sad day when my own family could no longer just walk across the river from *Hafod y calch* to visit our friends!

References

Jenny Lees, 2023

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9. See Alfred Neobard Palmer and Edward Owen, *A history of Ancient Tenures of land in North Wales and The Marches*, (2nd edition,1910).
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11. Cynwyd Scrapbook One, pp. 17-20, https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page18.html
12. https://ww1.wales/other-counties/merionethshire-memorials/cynwyd-war-memorial/

Full details of tithe apportionment, parish and census records, along with full references to our research on *Hafod yr afr*, will be included in our DOWH house history for *Hafod yr afr* , to be online by 2024 or earlier at https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page14.html

3. Caenog – once land of the Cistercians!

Our DOWH tree ring dating has shown that the oldest part of the splendid farmstead of *Caenog* dates originally from **1550-52**! But it also lies within part of Gwyddelwern parish once known as '*Esgyngaenog*', and formerly owned by the Cistercian monks of Strata Marcella Abbey (*Ystrad Marchell*) near Welshpool.[1] *Esgyngaenog* was granted to them in **1176** by **Maredudd ap Hwyel, Lord of Edeirnion**,[2] and it is suggested that this name, since '*esgyn*' can mean ascent, referred to the land of *Caenog* and the farm of *Highgate* above.[3]

Northeast corner of ground floor room at Caenog, with north end of 'post and panel' screen

The Cistercians were once a significant influence in Edeirnion, as their communities depended on grants of land given in exchange for 'spiritual' services such as praying for benefactors. Although their abbeys were usually in lowland areas, they also acquired additional *granges* and *vaccaries* (with cattle) - often in more upland areas like those around *Caenog*. We know that in **1292-3** a **Llywelyn ab Adda** of *Esgyngainog* paid the then large sum of 21s 1d [penny] for the *Merioneth Lay Subsidy*,[4] but Llywelyn may not have been a Cistercian himself, as such properties owned by the monasteries were often rented out. The article '*In search of our Cistercians in Edeirnion and Penllyn*' in this book tells more of Cistercian life, but here below is the intriguing history of *Caenog's* occupants from the **1500s** onwards!

Our 2023 DOWH architectural assessment suggests that when first built *Caenog* was a house of exceptionally high quality and of a 'central entry' type, with a hall on one side of the entry passage, a parlour to the other, and a large fireplace serving the hall. It was timber-framed and already floored throughout, with part of the roof over the chamber having the rare feature of extravagantly boarded rafters, and a roof truss with elegant trefoil cusping and decorative pegs [page 17 below]. Seemingly no expense can have been spared, and it has been exciting trying discover who might have financed the building of it in **1550-2**, and for whom!

One possibility relates to **Robert ap Rhys ap Maredudd**, the chancellor and vicar-general of the diocese of St Asaph and personal chaplain to Henry VIII's Cardinal Wolsey who lived in

great luxury at *Plas Iolyn*, near Pentrefoelas. In **1525,** before 1536 dissolution of the monasteries, Strata Marcella documents recorded a *demise* for 99 years to Robert of 'all messuages, lands, tenements etc. in the commotes of Penllyn and Edeirnion called *Tyr y Mynach* and *Heskyn gainog*.' Robert probably rented out *Heskyn gainog* property, and though he could not have built *Caenog* as he died in **1535**, his daughter **Catherine Llwyd** married the famous scholar **William Salesbury** (or *Salusbury*) who may have been connected with the Salesburies who owned *Caenog* land by 1653. (Apparently William, who was a renowned Protestant, had to spend most of the reign of Catholic Queen Mary (**1553–1558)**, in hiding - could any of this time have been spent at his father in law's former property of *Caenog*, with its very unusually boarded roof ?!)

Cors y gedol, between Barmouth and Harlech (Jenny Lees 2013)

Another historical account [5] suggests an impressive genealogy for a **William Wynn** whose family could also have been involved with *Caenog*. He was descended from fifth *Baron of Glyndyfrdwy* **Gruffydd Vychan** via his son **Tudur** *Lord of Gwyddelwern*, whose daughter **Lowry** married secondly **Gruffydd ap Einion** of historic *Cors y Gedol*. Their son **Elisau ap Gruffydd** married **Margaret**, heiress of *Allt Llwyn Dragon* [now *Plas yn Ial*] and their son **Richard ap Elisau**, probably of now ruined *Maerdy mawr* Gwyddelwern, was father of **William Wynn** of *Hescyn gaenog*. Though this name could refer to the *township* rather than *Caenog* itself, a considerable degree of prestige is suggested by the marriages of Richard's siblings into the families of *Yale, Rug, Bodrhyddan, Nannau, Branas Uchaf and Hendwr*!

As mentioned above, by C17th some of Strata Marcella's former lands of *Esgyngaenog* appeared to be in possession of the Salesburys of *Rug*; in **1699** Edward Lhuyd in Parochialia listed *Kainog* as being in the *Lordship* of *Mr Salsbri of Rug* and in **1653 Owen Salesbury of Rug** granted Corwen *yeoman* **Lewis ap John ap Edward** 3 acres of land in '*Caenog*' in return for building upon them and maintaining fences between Owen's land and various commons. But in

1723 Margaret, daughter of the *Gentleman* **William Vaughan** of *Caynog***,** married **John Lloyd**, son and heir apparent of **Maurice Lloyd** of historic *Palé* (below).

William had paid a large sum of £350 to John's father as Margaret's 'marriage portion', and a **1732** elegy to **William Vaughan** of *Caenog* is by the Welsh bard Ellis Cadwaladr.[6] Rather curiously, in his **1732** will [7] the same *Gentleman* **William Vaughan** was *of Moel fodig*, nearby in the township of *Trewyn*, Corwen parish, and the will mentions his '*real estate called Moel fodig*' together with '*all my undertenants, lands*', so *Caenog* could have been one of a number of William's properties. Sadly, the husband of his daughter Margaret, **John Lloyd** *of Caenog*, was to never take up his inheritance of *Palé*, as he died in **1741**, and although John had made no will, his fascinating and extensive *Inventory* can be read online at https://viewer.library.wales/224116#?xywh=192%2C1123%2C1410%2C1555&cv=5

Truss now in *Caenog* attic with trefoil cusp and decorative pegs (Martin Cherry)

Margaret, '*Vaughan otherwise Lloyd*', renounced all rights to her husband's property apart from an annuity of *£35 for her life* (as had been arranged in her marriage settlement), and as was often such an arrangement at that time, John's property was administered by male relatives '*for the use and benefit*' of their sons **John** and **Maurice Lloyd** until they came of age -in this case jointly by Margaret's father-in law **Maurice Lloyd** of *Palé* and brother-in-law **Evan Evans** of *Branas*;[8] yet another significant historic property**!** We don't yet know where Margaret lived after her husband's death, but in **1732** her own brother **David Vaughan** of *Moelfodig* married Margaret Jones, daughter of *Gent* David Jones of *Ty gwyn*; a house dating back to **1447** and subject of another fascinating DOWH history.[9]

We have not yet explored whether there was any connection between the **Lloyds** of *Palé* and the **Jones** family who appear *of Caenog* from **1765** onwards with mention of a ***John Jones the elder*** *of* Caenog, and whose inscribed gravestones can be seen in Gwyddelwern churchyard. Our DOWH assessment suggests that in the mid-18th century a pantry was added to the east end of *Caenog* and a 'new house' attached to the west end in the 19th century, and at the time of the **1843** *Tithe Apportionment Caenog* was tenanted by **Mary Jones** but owned

by **Griffith Howel Vaughan** of Rug. Some of the field names listed in the *Apportionment*, frequently originating from previous centuries, are fascinating – was *Ffrith moch* an area of mountain pasture used for pigs? *Caenog* land contained a wide range of arable cultivation, peat and woodland as well as large amounts of mountain pasture or *ffridd*, and the field names and tithe map can be seen online.

In addition to Parish records specifically naming *Caenog* from 1793, we have Census data for *Caenog* from 1841 onwards, in which each household was listed with a designated *Head*. This role included widows such as **Mary Jone**s, whose husband **John** had died in **1836** aged only 42, but by the **1861** census (aged 57) was now *Farme*r *of 382 acres* employing *7 labourers and 1 boy* as well as a *Dairy maid*, *Housemaid*, *Cowman*, *Carter* and *Servant boy*; probably living on the premises.

Caenog, looking southwards to *Caer Drewyn* hillfort and the *Berwyn* range

From the 19th century onwards newspapers, now available online, can provide a glimpse of life at *Caenog* and in **1876 t**he Jones family experienced a very sad loss, reported as follows:

'CORWEN. SUDDEN DEATH. A boy named **John Bowen** son of **Mr. John Jones**, *Caenog*, fell in a field near the house whilst playing with one of the servants, named John Jones, on Monday evening, July 3rd, and expired early on Wednesday morning, and was interred at Gwyddelwern churchyard on Saturday, July 8th. It is believed that it was sunstroke which caused his death, the heat being very great that day'.

John Bowen Jones had been only ten, and a Welsh poem to him was published in the *Llangollen Advertiser* on 28th July 1876. His father was the **John Jones** who had taken over *Caenog* from his mother **Mary** by 1871, and was by **1881** farming 500 acres, with three of his seven *Servants* listed as *Nurses* aged 15 and 12 -perhaps looking after the youngest

children? **1907** saw the death of **Margaret Jones** of *Caenog*, followed in **1908** by husband **John**, to whom the *Llangollen Advertiser* published an adulatory tribute on 15th May, then in **1910** John's Executors were stated to be giving up the farm, and a huge sale took place at *Caenog* - reported to be one of Merionethshire's largest farms, with auctioneers stressing the 'reputation of the vendors as breeders and exhibitors of first- class stock'.

Elegant family gravestone memorial in Gwyddelwern churchyard (Jenny Lees 2023)

In the **1911** Census for Caenog**, Alfred Herbert Jones** (33), son of **John Jones**, was listed as *Farmer* but also *Employer*, together with *Ironmonger* brother **Edward Bowen Jones** (27)

sisters **Bessie Jones** (31) and **Mabel Vaughan Jones** (24) - all unmarried and with four unmarried servants. In **1912** *Caenog* was included in a huge sale of around 2,895 acres of '*the outlying portions of the Rug Estate'*, but after **Alfred Herbert Jones** of *Caenog* died on 4th October **1945**, his *Effects* were valued at £7734 - 11s, with probate in 1946 to **John Ifor Jones**, bank clerk, and Robert Lloyd Williams, commercial traveller. And we know from another of many Jones family grave inscriptions in Gwyddelwern churchyard that **Mary Jones**, *Caenog*, daughter of **John** and **Margaret Jones**, died aged 89 10th December 1958

Outbuilding range viewed from Caenog's main front (Jenny Lees 2023)

Caenog with new 'house' to the west end, left of the central chimney (Jenny Lees 2023

References Jenny Lees, 2023

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5. *History of Powys Fadog*, Vol VI, p.4.
6. Glenys Davies (1974) *Noddwyr Bardd ym Meirion*, p. 17.
7. Will of William Vaughan, NLW ref. SA/1732/23/W.
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9.. https://discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/library/Hhistory/den%20208_HH%20_40_Ty-Gwyn.pdf

Full details of tithe apportionment, parish and census records, along with full references to our research on *Caenog*, will be included in our DOWH house history for *Caenog*, to be online by 2024 or earlier at https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page14.html

4. Plas Isaf – Another Edeirnion Dynasty: Part Three

Part One [1]of this story told how the ancient demesne of *Plas Isaf* played an important role in Edeirnion from at least when **Robert Wynne Pyers** died at *Plas Isaf* in **1642-3 –** descended from one of the powerful small dynasties founded by the sons of **Owain Brogyntyn**, son of the last Welsh Prince to rule the whole of ancient Powys, **Madog ap Maredudd**.

And Part Two[2] (in Cynwyd Scrapbook Three, p.49) traced the lives of *Plas Isaf's* inhabitants from the **1703** burial of Rector **Owen Eyton** to the **1843** death of **John Manners Kerr**, who inherited *Plas Isaf* in **1825** from his childless wife. In **1829** John married **Catherine Lloyd**, heiress of prestigious *Maesmor* (from where *Plas Isaf's* earliest occupants had also been descended!) and in his will he was *of Maesmor*, with *Plas Isaf* tenanted. The **1851** *Plas Isaf*

census then listed **John Jones**, *Farmer & Land agent*, with house and farm servants, dairy maid, waggoner, cowman and 12-year-old *errand boy*, and in **1861 Miss Jones** of *Plas Issa* was a '*charitable,benevolent and pious lady*' providing Christmas festivities for the poor.

But the property's subsequent history initially seemed a mystery, as the **1871** and **1881** *Plas Isaf* censuses included just the family of *Gardener* **Humphrey Lloyd**, with wife **Ann** *Servant in charge of House*, and in **1891** listed only *Domestic Gardener* **Edward Ellis** and family.So I wondered if *Plas Isaf* had fallen upon hard times! But then, by chance, a researcher mailing me about another publication revealed that his own ancestors had owned *Plas isaf* from the late **1860s-1880s** (perhaps after **Miss Jones** of *Plas Isaf* sold furniture and coaches from the house in **1866**), [3] but had failed to appear in local censuses as only resident part of the year!

My correspondent's relatives were descended from **John Lloyd** (**1742-1823**) of *Glynnannau* and *Hendre* (later *Hendre Arddwyfaen*), whose son **John** (died in **1821**) had gone to London in the **1780**s to make a fortune in the tobacco trade. The 'tobacco' Lloyds bought the family farms at Llangwm from the line of eldest son William, then acquired more local properties as the old *Garthmeilio* estate was reduced, with the second John's son becoming **John Lloyd of Plas Isa** (**1797-1875**). He funded a font in Llangwm church, where his grandfather was also buried, [4]and after his 5th August 1875 death John's children funded a window dedicated to his memory there. Although he actually died in Brighton, John was clearly a valued member

Garthmeilio from the lane (Jenny Lees 2016)

of our local community, and the *Cambrian News* on 13th August **1875** reported for 'Corwen':

'*A general feeling of sadness has been produced in this town by the lamented death of* ***Mr Lloyd****, who expired at nine o'clock on Thursday morning, August 5th, at 50, Brunswick-square, Brighton …. His upright and straightforward conduct gained universal respect, while his kindness of heart, and generosity of character, gained for him many friends. But it will be*

the poor that will perhaps have the greatest reason to regret his loss; his kindness towards them will not be easily forgotten for his liberality was well known.'

Later, in October **1879**, we also learn that: 'A few years ago, when a season of depression passed over the agricultural interests of this country, the late **Mr. John Lloyd, J.P**., *Plas Isa*, Corwen, showed his sympathy with his tenants on his Llangwm estate by remitting a portion of their rents. We are exceedingly glad to hear that his son, **Mr. Alfred Lloyd** …. has, through his agent, **Mr. W. G. Williams**, signified his intention to allow his tenants 10 per cent, off their rents at the next audit at Christmas to help them to tide over this trying year.'[5]

And in January **1880** the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*, reporting that *Messrs Lloyd of Plas Isa* were making a 10 per cent allowance to tenants of the *Llwyndedwydd* and *Hendreddwyfaen* estates, hinted very significantly that: '*We hope to see other landowners in the neighbourhood meet their tenants in an equally liberal spirit.*' [6] Interestingly, **Alfred Lloyd's** agent was from the **Williams family** of *Gwerclas*, who feature in the Cynwyd Scrapbook Four article '*From Gwerclas to New Zealand – a Williams family diaspora*', [7] and lived less than a mile from *Plas Isaf*. These rent reductions were also at a time when some other landlords in the Llangwm area were considered oppressive and uncaring, as explained in Hugh Evans' intriguing Welsh history *Cwm Eithin*. [8]In 1887 resentment against church tithes in the area also led to the events described in the article *Tithe Martyrs and a Poet - from Llangwm to Cynwyd*, another article in Cynwyd Scrapbook Four.

John Lloyd's widow **Ann Caroline** was still coming to North Wales in summer **1887**, when she was mentioned by the *Llangollen Advertiser* as being present at the 4th August Llangollen sheep dog trials held at *Plas yn Vivod*, but in October **1895** a *Plas Isa* auction [9]advertised:

Llwyndedwydd (Jenny Lees 2019)

'*The whole of the Costly and Superior Household Furniture contained in 3 Reception Rooms, and 10 Bedrooms, Kitchens, Pantries, Servants Hall, &c., together with the Out-door Effects,*

by order of Mrs Lloyd, who is leaving'- and **Ann Caroline** died soon afterwards at Brighton in **1897**. At her husband John's death his personal estate had been worth £140,000 in personal estate, in addition to his real estate including family farms at Llangwm and the Astwick Manor estate near Hatfield, Hertfordshire.

In **1901** *Plas Isaf garden* had carriage drive, walled garden atnd parterre, and although the oldest house no longer exists as such, parts may still remain within today`s building. *Plas isaf*, now belonging to the descendants of **Edward Jones** whose son and family moved there from *Hafod y calch*, includes their large organic farm as well as their meticulously restored and listed 17th century barn, viewable on: https://www.plas-isaf.co.uk/wedding-gallery/

Jenny Lees, 2023

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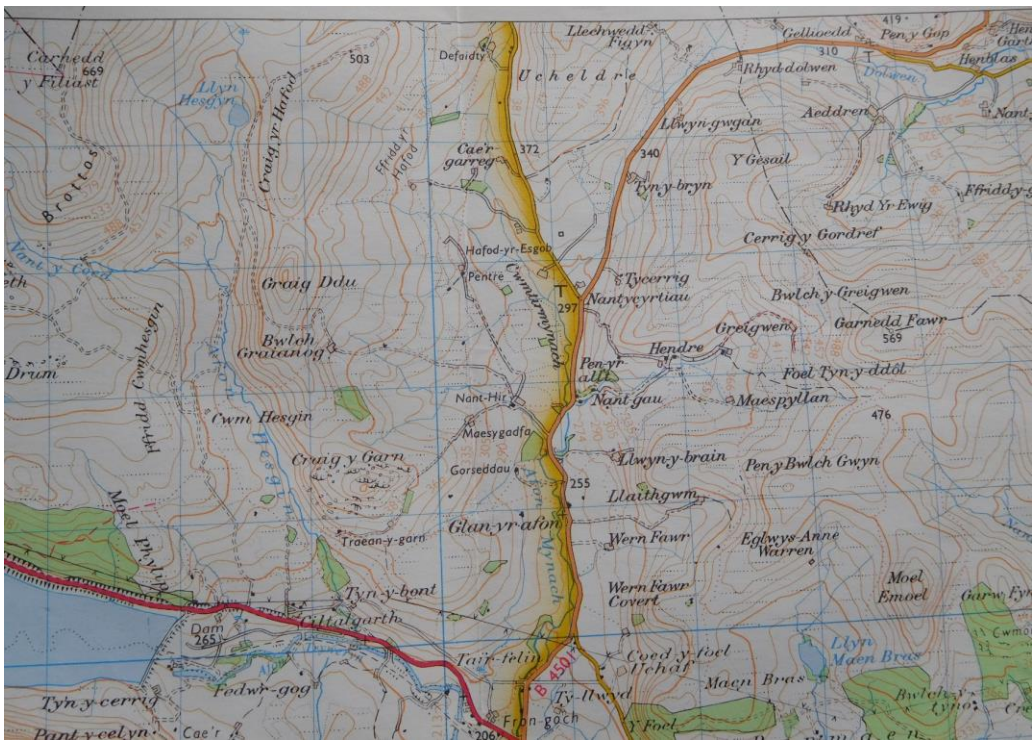
5. In search of our Cistercians in Edeirnion and Penllyn

Readers may have seen our DOWH house history of *Efenechtyd*,[1] its name being a corruption of *Y Mynachty*, meaning 'monastic land or dwelling'. Situated on what was the original route between London and Holyhead before Thomas Telford built the present A5, *Efenechtyd* once served as a *vaccary* (where cattle were kept) and 'dairy house' for the Cistercians of *Valle Crucis* abbey near Llangollen.[2] Although five miles from the abbey, *Efenechtyd* was one of the separate farms or *granges* which monasteries acquired, in addition to main sites, to provide food, timber, peat and turf for fuel, and hunting grounds for wild game.

While researching the history of *Caenog* farm (pp.15-21 above), which lies on former *Strata Marcella* abbey land, I was fascinated to find in David Williams' 2001 book *The Welsh Cistercians* the suggested grid references to many more former Cistercian holdings in Edeirnion and Penllyn! Originating in late C11th France, the Cistercians had spread across Europe, with *Tintern* being their first abbey in Wales by **1131**. *Strata Marcella*, also known as *Ystrad Marchell*, was established in **1170**, with *Valle Crucis* abbey then founded in **1200** as *Strata Marcella's* 'daughter-house'.

Gydros above Cwm Pennaner, with Moel y Gydros behind (Jenny Lees 2022)

Many of these Cistercian holdings were in idyllic upland landscapes familiar to many of us, and *The Welsh Cistercians* lists among former *Strata Marcella* properties the location *Cwm-main* - not the valley of the same name, but a holding (SH 925467) lying above *Cwm Penanner*, marked on the map below and separated from peacefully situated *Gydros* by *Moel y Gydros*.



We can often deduce the location of monastery *granges* from their Charters describing the boundaries of land acquired, and an 18th April **1183** *Strata Marcella* charter [3] records '*the whole land called* '*Llecheudin*' (*Llechwedd Figyn*, see maps below) granted by **Elisse ap Madog**, Lord of Edeirnion, which an 1886 article [4] suggested had bounds agreeing with those of *Gydros* property. Many of this 1183 charter's names appear recognizable, with '*Geyro*' probably being *Afon*

Ceirw, but the stream named *Nanthucheldref* does not seem to be associated with the house of *Ucheldref* [5] near Corwen and Gwyddelwern, as an 1871 article [6] concluded (apparently incorrectly) -it instead appears to refer to the area of *Ucheldre* above *Cwmtirmynach* ('valley of monastery land') near the *Manachduner* [Mynachdwr] of the Latin charter (See map above). *The Welsh Cistercians* book also lists in the former *Bala- Penllyn Grange* of Strata Marcella a *vaccary* at *Cwm Hesgin* (SH 882419), where an isolated former farmhouse still stands - once home to the artist and poet Clyde Holmes.

Cistercian possessions in *Penllyn* belonging to *Strata Marcella* also included lands in beautiful *Cynllwyd* (c.SH 906262), an area featured in the article *From Cynwyd to Cwm Cynllwyd -and beyond!* in **Cynwyd Scrapbook Four**. [7] Other more Cistercian monasteries such as *Basingwerk* and *Valley Crucis* also owned property in *Penllyn*; Basingwerk Abbey owned large areas of pasture at *Boch y Rhaiadr* grange (SH847396, near where *Afon Tryweryn* now joins *Llyn Celyn*); at *Gwern Hefin* grange (SH893328, near the road to *Parc* from Lake Bala), and property called '*Penmaen*' including part of *Cwmtirmynach* (around SH913428). *Nant y cyrtiau* (courts) is interesting as *cyrt* sometimes indicates a Cistercian property such as a grange, and Basingwerk also owned *Llyn Tegid* (Lake Bala) itself!

Cwm Hesgin in the upland landscape above Ciltalgarth

Also interesting to consider is what motivated benefactors 'granting' land to the Cistercians and other monastic foundations! Although some financial transaction or 'barter' was often involved, spiritual concerns were crucial, as it was then believed important to pray for a person's soul **after** death, as well as during their lifetime. In **1191** Prince Gwenwynwyn made a grant to *Strata Marcella* '*for the salvation of my soul, and those of my father and mother, and all my ancestors and successors*',[8] and grants could also be conditional on a benefactor being buried in the 'hallowed ground' of the monastery. 'Charitable deeds' could also be expected of the monks by benefactors, and the Welsh princes once expected *Basingwerk's* lands in *Penllyn* to provide for hundreds of their men on one night in each hunting season -but Edward I abolished such obligations after the 'Conquest' of Wales![9]

Another Cistercian location identified by David Williams was the area of *Cwm Hyfed* (around SH 903297) in *Llangywer* (Llangower) parish, and the **1844** *Tithe Apportionment* for two adjacent farms here has an unusual proportion of field names concerned with cattle! *Llechwedd du* farm included three adjacent fields named *Cae'r lloi uchaf, canol* and *isaf* (upper, middle and lower fields of the calves), while nearby *Cwm Hyfed* farm names included *Fridd y buchod* (mountain pasture of the cows), *Buarth y lloi* (yard of the calves), a *Cow hous*e in *Buarth cae'r graig* (yard in field of the rock), and *Cae tan y beudy* (field below the cowshed). One can imagine that these names might have originated at the time of a Cistercian *vaccary*; perhaps at a time when we know the climate was warmer and cattle were not always housed inside – at one time they were apparently milked in the fields. We can explore the terrain of fields named in the Tithe maps (now online) today, and the image below shows some of the pastures named in the *Llangywer* example above .

Pasture below Llechwedd du with steep valley of Nant Rhyd Wen to the right

Early Cistercians were renowned for being pioneers of woodland clearance, with sheep and cattle still grazing today on hills they once owned, but particular woodland areas were also important to them in supplying timber for building and fuel, 'pannage' for herds of pigs, land for hunting wild game, and forest produce such as nuts and honey: *Coed y mynach*, once owned by Strata Marcella and listed as located at SH 866406 but now mostly submerged by *Llyn Celyn*, was probably such an area. Although now seeming geographically isolated from their 'parent' monasteries, the Cistercian properties such as *granges* and *vaccaries* were part of an integrated system of 'supply chains'.

After suppression and dissolution of the monasteries in **1536-9**, the lands described in this article would no longer have been in the hands of the Cistercians, having been appropriated by the Crown unless previously sold then frequently granted or sold to new landowners. Sometimes the monasteries had leased lands before dissolution, and in **1525** Strata Marcella had already made a lease of 99 years to **Robert ap Rhys ap Maredudd** of '*all messuages, lands, tenements etc. in the commotes of Penllyn*

and Edeirnion, called Tyr y Mynach and Heskyn gainog'.[10] Robert, who was chancellor and vicar-general of the diocese of St Asaph as well as personal chaplain to Henry VIII's Cardinal Wolsey, lived at *Plas Iolyn* near Pentrefoelas ,and features in a December 2023 DOWH Newsletter article .

Many houses in the areas mentioned in this article are the subject of ongoing DOWH research and our Parishes Project is gradually compiling a database identifying all pre 1750 houses, many of which merit individual house histories when time permits. *Cwm Hesgin* (or *Hesgyn*), now a Grade II Listed building, was thought when listed to be of probable late C17th origin; https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/300024659-cwm-hesgyn-llandderfel , and *Gydros* already existed among *Llanfo*r (or *Llanfawr*) parish houses listed in Edward Llwyd's 1690s *Parochialia*. Sometimes we discover properties that are now just ruins, but often have a fascinating history – one example being the farm called *Cwm Hyfed* of 114 acres that still existed in 1747. This was one of the many discoveries of DOWH member and researcher Pam Buttrey, who has made an extensive historical study of houses in the *Penllyn* area, and on our field trip to the former Cistercian pastures illustrated above, she observed that the ruin below, lying below *Llechwedd du* and probably its former property at a time yet unknown, would perhaps be interesting for one of our archaeologists to investigate!

In addition to *Efenechtyd*, Valle Crucis abbey also owned properties including *Hafod yr abad* (SJ188486), high on the Horseshoe Pass, and half of the *township* of *Mwstwr*. This was possibly centred on *Plas isaf* (SJ164421) at Glyndyfrdwy, extending northwards towards the south bank of *Afon Dyfrdwy* where dwellings including *Garth y dwr* (Image page 30 below) now lie.

Lastly (for now!) a local Cistercian mystery! Having discovered that *Caenog* was in *Esgyngaenog*, the part of Gwyddelwern parish granted to Strata Marcella abbey in **1176** by the then **Lord of Edeirnion**

Maredudd ap Hwyel, I also found that in **1198** Maredudd's first cousin, **Lord of Edeirnion Elise ap Madog**, as well as granting pasture rights throughout Edeirnion, also sold Strata Marcella some other land in Gwyddelwern parish.[11] It was sold *for the consideration of eight pounds* and recorded as *Gwothelwern*, with boundaries from *helegluin* [helyg llwyn?] *seithu*c to gweun [gwern?] and thence

to *Moel casseg*.[12] I have not discovered the location of this land, but one possibility is that, as Gwyddelwern parish did formerly include part of Cynwyd, could it be where there existed a dwelling called *Ty helyg* near Llangar Rectory; ruined in 1975 but still inhabited in 1836, and a *Bwlch y gaseg* further uphill in the Berwyn range -perhaps once providing mountain pasture for the Cistercians?

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Jenny Lees 2023

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6. From Cynllwyd to Cadwst – and a return to Cynwyd too!

Readers of the article '*From Cynwyd to Cwm Cynllwyd -and beyond*' in Cynwyd Scrapbook Four may recall the family of **Edward Jones**, brought up at *Cae poeth* and *Coedladur* in Cwm Cynllwyd before farming at *Hafod y calch*.[1] Edward's older brother **Lewis** also appears in '*Once upon a time at Plas yn ddôl*' in the same book, and here **John Wyn Jones** of *Cadwst* shares his own family story that includes yet another of the siblings, his grandfather **John**.

Grandfather John Jones and his wife (Image courtesy of John Wyn Jones)

Evan Owen Jones, son of grandfather John and father of **John Wyn Jones**, came in the late 1940s or 50s to work for his uncle Edward at *Hafod y calch*, and married **Harriet Margaret**

Edwards. John's great-grandmother Harriet told the tragic tale of how a shepherd employed at *Garthiaen* fell through the ice in a stream on the site of *Cadwst's* present hydro-electric plant, and although brought down to *Blaen y dref isa* and put into bed with Harriet to try and warm him, he failed to survive, and his gravestone inscription reads '*The good shepherd*'.

Young John 'riding rodeo' at Cadwst -once a way of gathering the livestock

More family tragedy followed, as John's maternal great grandfather **Huw Edwards** was sadly killed by a stallion on *Hendwr* drive. John has inherited his oak chair, inscribed with Hugh's name and with an intricately carved back in the form of a love spoon. Although his widow remarried twice, her two periods in Corwen Workhouse (once an only too common fate for those without financial support) were apparently a source of shame for John's mother.

Another relation of John's family was **Catherine Davies**, who emigrated to Patagonia from Llandrillo with husband **Robert** and three sons on the ship *Mimosa* in **1865**. Sadly eleven-month-old **John** was buried at sea after dying on the voyage and Catherine died within a month of arrival; followed by Robert's death in 1868 and that of their son **William** in 1872,

leaving only son **Henry Davies** who later emigrated to Canada. [2] Amazingly, the remains of a body discovered in a grave at Porth Madryn in 1996 was eventually found to be that of Catherine - through DNA testing of her relative Nia Olwen Richie,[3] another of John's local relatives. Ricardo Preve's film *The Patagonian Bones* was made of the story, and John and his wife **Glenys** have also been able to visit Patagonia to meet their relatives living there.

Sheep farming at Cadwst (old Cadwst Mawr now concealed behind the trees)

John also recalls hearing that when some of the **Davies** family moved to *Cors y Gedol* – perhaps to a home farm there, they walked some of their livestock all the way to Barmouth from Llandrillo! On his father's side, John is proud of the heritage of his grandfather's family, who were photographed outside *Cae Poeth* in the article *Teulu Mawr* in *Pethe Penllyn*, with young grandfather John and five of his six siblings (brother Lewis being in America). John observes that, according to research by Beryl Griffiths, his own ancestors include the antiquary **Robert Vaughan** of *Hengwrt* (born in 1592!), and John's own name appears in what has been called the 'Welsh genealogical bible', published by Professor T. Ceiri Griffith.[4]

When **Rose Davies** from *Blaengwnodl* visited *Cadwst*, John's mother told him that Rose was the last person still living to have slept in their old hall house, which had been converted from cowhouse to storage when John's parents acquired the tenancy of *Cadwst Mawr* in the early **1950s**. But by the time **John** and his brother **Ieuan** had eventually managed to purchase the property themselves, the former hall house was deteriorating rapidly. And when in 2010 many might have just retired to a village bungalow, **John** and wife **Glenys**, assisted by family and local craftsmen, took on the amazing restoration project that has not only created their present comfortable home, but also saved an extremely significant historic building. And the ancient renovated *Cadwst Mawr* now has the new name and address of *Abercwm, Cwm*

Disgin, chosen by **John** and **Glenys** to distinguish it from the neighbouring 'newer' main house of *Cadwst Mawr*, from which they moved out after renovating the oldest house!

John Wyn Jones and his extended family also have farmland in other areas, and the mountain climate of North Wales often demands that livestock are moved to warmer pastures at different altitudes in winter. Readers may know of the '*Cadwst*' land near to *Caenog*, and recently *Cadwst* cattle have arrived to graze on newly acquired land just across the *Dyfrdwy* from *Hafod y calch*, near to *Ty'n y berth* - also land of which **Emrys Bodden** tells fascinating tales in the *Cynwyd Scrapbook Three* article '*Our Farming Heritage: Part One*'. [5]

On Berwyn mountain (Image courtesy of John Wyn Jones)

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7. Henblas, once home to Edward Jones, Bardd y Brenin

Henblas, lying above Llandderfel, has been listed Grade II* on account of the very special importance and rarity of its features, and originated as a high-status medieval cruck framed hall house with a possible C15th date.[1] As with similar hall houses such as *Plas Uchaf*, Llangar, [2] its hall would have originally been completely open to the roof, with an ornate wooden partition from which two of the three arched doorways gave access to service rooms, and a third middle one led to a passage possibly once leading to an external kitchen?

Centuries later, in **1752** *Henblas* became the birthplace of **Edward Jones**, the famous harpist, musical historian and collector of traditional songs and melodies who was chosen as official

harpist to the Prince Regent in around **1790** and became known as *Bardd y Brenin* - the King's Bard when George the Fourth succeeded to the throne in **1820**.[3] Our DOWH house history has traced some of Edward's relatives who have inhabited *Henblas* over time, and Edward's father **John Jones**, who married **Jane Jones** on 17th September **1745**, was a harp-maker and harpist who was also skilled at several other musical instruments including the organ, and taught his nine children to play the Welsh harp, *spinet*, fiddle and *crwth* (an ancient Celtic instrument). In addition to their 3rd son **Edward Jones** becoming *Bardd y Brenin*, Jane and John's 2nd son **Robert Jones** was also organist at St Chad's, Shrewsbury.

Henblas viewed from the lane (Jenny Lees 2015)

Edward's paternal grandfather **John Richard** was baptised in **1678** as son of **Richard John Richard** and **Eleanor Morgan**, and in **1698** married **Elizabeth Edwards**. In his **1763** will **John Richard** was *of Tyddyn Ucha* in *Trer-llan*, in which he lived after his son **John Jones** took over *Henblas* in **1749**, and several things suggest *Henblas* may originally have had a different name (perhaps only becoming 'Henblas', meaning old hall or mansion, when a newer part was added?) A **1727** letter [4] said **John Richard** had been living '*in the old houses that were on the Henblas land*', and as in a **1749** property document **John Richard** was of *Tuhwynt ir Voel* [house beyond the *moel* or bare hill] - the position of *Henblas* when approached from Llandderfel, this could have been the original name of old *Henblas*.

Bardd y Brenin **Edward Jones'** extended family also had interesting links with many of the historic properties existing near *Henblas* today. **John Richards**' wife **Elizabeth Edwards** *of Doldrewyn, Henblas* (Edward's grandmother) had a sister **Margaret Edward** at *Garth Lwyd*; a sister **Ann Edward** at *Brynbwlan*, and brother **Cadwaladr Edward** living in *Y Pandy*, while **John Richard**'s sister **Lowry Richards** lived in nearby *Garth goch*. By **1775** the career of **Edward Jones** had already taken him to London, where he was patronised by prominent Welshmen and became harp tutor to several wealthy families, and interestingly, a **1780** document now described his father **John Jones** as a Gentleman: *1. James Cecil of Strand, co. Middlesex, esq., and William Cecil of the same place, gent.*

2. ***John Jones*** *of Henblas, Llandderfel, co. Merioneth, gent. Messuage and lands called Gwastade in Llandderfel*.'

Crogen, Llandderfel (Jenny Lees 2018)

Both **Edward's** parents lived to see him become Prince Regent's official harpist, as his father **John Jones** was buried in November **1796**, and his mother **Jane Jones** in January **1803**, and some of the *Henblas* siblings appeared to keep in touch with both each other and their parental home. Organist **Robert Jones** was said to usually visit *Henblas* in summer, and in **1816-17** Edward Jones wrote of being with Robert at Shrewsbury, on his way to see their younger brother **Ellis Jones**, who was now a farmer in *Penisarllan*, Llanfor, and married **Miss Edwards** of *Crogen*. Interestingly, in **1816 Bell Lloyd** of *Crogen* and son **Edward** exchanged with Ellis's organist brother **Robert Jones** a cottage and lands '*part of a farm called Tan House or Tycerrig*' [image below] for a *messuage and lands called Gwastade* -all in Llandderfel. **Ellis Jones** died in **1830** and in his will was a *Gentleman* living at The College House, Llanfawr, with property including lands in Llanfawr, Llandderfel and Llanrhaidr y mochant.

Edward Jones died in London in 1824 aged 72, and although his elder brother Robert's **1831** will mentioned '*all my messuages, farms, lands and estates in or near Llandderfel or elsewhere in Merioneth'*, after the death of Robert's brothers **Thomas, Ellis and Evan Jones** *Henblas* was inherited by his nephew **William Ryder**; owner of *Henblas* by the time of the **1840** tithe apportionment, with tenant *Farmer* **John Roberts**. The **1841** census listed four different 'households' for *Henblas*, and it is of interest that in 1837 **David Roberts** of *Henblas* was described as a *fuller*, as a map [5] shows a disused mill, *Felin uchaf*, nearby.

The Tithe *Apportionment* [6] for *Henblas* includes meadow land, mountain *fridd* or *sheepwalks*, pasture, woodland, plantations, a spring or well, a mill pool, and peatland where fuel or turf for roofing could be cut, as well as open moorland. Tithe field names, often many centuries

old, often give fascinating clues to earlier land use - *Cae mesod uchaf* and *Cae mesed issa* seem to be upper and lower acorn fields, with the latter including woodland where perhaps ancient *pannage* rights allowed browsing by pigs or other livestock? *Cae saer* (field of the carpenter) could have been where wooden constructions such as crucks were made in the open, and *Cae glas* often indicated good pasture fields, as *glas* can mean either green or blue.

The field name *Moel cach* - *Moel calch*, [bare hilltop of the lime] on the NLS 1888-1913 map,[7] is within an area of limestone,[8] but accounts also exist of its original name being *Moel y cylch* [circle], and it is still the site of a monument celebrating the 1937 Coronation of George V1 and Elizabeth.

Wills can also be very interesting, and the **1849** Will [7] of *Farmer* **John Roberts**, *Henblas*, left his grandson **John** £5, but only on the following conditions!
'.. to be paid to him [aged 18] at the discretion of the undernamed Trustees, provided that he will be obedient to his parents, by going to school when time do afford him to go – and whatever else lawfully for him to obey them - if he will not obey his parents, the Trustees are at Liberty to do what they think best with them [the £5]'.

From **1851 -1871** censuses show *Henblas* as '*headed*' by *Farmer* **Morgan Edwards** with his wife **Anne** and family - in 1851 with 8-year-old nephew **Hugh Williams** listed also as *House Servant, Boy*!), and by **1861** their listing also included *Shepherd*, *Carter*, *Servant* and *Agricultural labourer* as well as *widowed Daughter in law* **Jane Roberts** aged 53, employed as *Dairy Maid*, and *Nephew* **David Roberts** aged 22 (perhaps her son?) as *General* Servant.

In **1881** *Henblas* had a new *Head*, *Farmer* **Robert Evans Jones**, and **Rhys Edwards**, *Farmer's son* in the 1871 census for *Henblas*, no longer appeared at *Henblas*, but instead headed the **1881** census for nearby *Garth lwyd*. Interestingly his wife **Elizabeth** was listed in the **1891** census as born in Utica, North America, '*naturalized British Subject*'-so had Elizabeth Edward's family been in Utica for the 'gold rush' at the mine there?

Garthlwyd from above, home of Rhys Edwards and Elizabeth in 1881 **(Jenny Lees 2015)**

From **1891-1911** a **Morgan** family now appeared in the *Henblas* censuses; in **1891** headed by **David Morgan** with wife **Ann** and seven of their adult or teenage offspring, aged between 15 and 33, each listed as both *Single* and *Farmer's Sons* or *Daughters*, with just 13-year-old **Henry** listed as *Scholar*. In **1901** workers on the farm were still all family members rather than non-family employees, with **Henry** now *Shepherd on farm* - and when 52 year old son **David Morgan** took over *Henblas* by **1911** after the **1907** death of parents **Ann and David Morgan**, he as well as his siblings **John**, **Margaret**, **Mary** and **Robert Morgan** were all still single and working on the farm, and the house recorded with 9 rooms including the kitchen.

Jenny Lees, 2023

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8. A 19th Century Tithe Commotion – from Cynwyd to Llandrillo

The article '*Tithe Martyrs and a Poet - from Llangwm to Cynwyd*' [1] recounted Hugh Evans' intriguing tale of the 'Tithe Martyrs' who refused to pay unreasonable tithes in **1887** after prices for agricultural produce had become extremely low.[2] In the same year, the *Llangollen Advertiser, Denbighshire Merionethshire and North Wales Journal* [3] reported some rather similar happenings, announcing:

'THE ANTI-TITHE AGITATION. DISTRAINTS AT LLANDRILLO & BODFFARI. EXCITING SCENES —THE BAILIFFS PUT TO FLIGHT'.

After the Ecclesiastical Commissioners refused to reduce tithe charges, about twenty-six farmers in Llandrillo district had also stood out for nonpayment, and in May **1887** about fifteen bailiffs, '*in charge of Ap Mwrog, auctioneer, Rhyl'*, arrived by train at Cynwyd Station to seize the farmers' possessions in lieu of tithes owed. Their party split into two groups, one taking the main road to Llandrillo [pictured above] and the other the lane passing *Tyfos* on the far side of river *Dyfrdwy*, but while the bailiffs had been refreshing themselves in Cynwyd, messengers from there had warned the Llandrillo parish farmers of their arrival!

Although on reaching *Rhyd y glafes* farm, held by **Mr. White**, the bailiffs were turned away by '*a large number of farmers, factory men, and others, armed with sticks*', at *Ty'n y wern*, occupied by **Mr. D. Jones**, a number of pigs were seized in lieu of payment due. In addition, four cows were seized from **Mr. W. Williams** at *Syrior*, a stack of hay was taken at *Cilan* from **Mr. J. Jones**, twelve cattle were lost at *Tyfos* by **Mr. H. Davies**, and seizures were also made from both **Mr. H. Evans** at *Cadwst* and **Mr. D. Williams** of the *New Mill*.

However, a few days later when the bailiffs started off again from Cynwyd to Llandrillo, a '*threatening mob, the men secreting themselves behind hedgerows, and pouncing suddenly*

upon the bailiffs', prevented entrance to any further farms. The newspaper commented that the seizures had created *great excitement*, with a crowd of farm labourers and youths at Cynwyd surrounding the bailiffs and auctioneer and treating them in *such a manner that they were compelled to seek refuge*. A second attempt by the bailiffs to *distrain* (seize property for payment due) at *Rhyd y glafes* resulted in them being chased off the premises by a large bull, '*to the intense amusement of the spectators*!'

Ty'n y wern c. 1895, William Rees centre and daughter Lizzie 2nd left (Gwenan Roberts)

The newspaper then reported that the Vicar of Llandrillo and Rector of Cynwyd had granted a reduction of 10 per cent, though did not say how quickly afterwards this result was achieved. But it was also reported that, after a separate group of bailiffs sought refuge and beds in Denbigh, they were mobbed on leaving a public-house and took refuge in the station, with four escaping down the line towards Ruthin! Although the local Farmers' Association's secretary quietened the crowd, on emerging again the bailiffs were hustled towards a pond on the outskirts and a cry was set up to duck them, with some thrown into the muddy pond *from which they were, however, soon extracted*. Ringed by the crowd, the men were made to solemnly promise to leave the town and never return as tithe bailiffs. They did so, and with the arrival of the police, who then escorted them, the bailiffs escaped and left the town!

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Jenny Lees, 2023

9. History of Pen y Ddôl by Elwyn A. Jones

Pen y Ddôl, Cynwyd, was, on and off, my home or base for fifty-six years of my life. It is a beautifully designed and well-built house overlooking the river Dee, and although I have no exact date of when the house was built, it would have been in around **1900**. On studying the **1902-5** photograph below, the house can be seen in the background, and it seems the retaining wall to the garden had not then been built. Stones from the derelict cottage at the bottom of the hill were used to build this wall at a later stage, and the name of the old cottage was *Pen yr Erw*, which used to be the boatman's cottage for crossing the river before the nearby Jacobean bridge was built.

Pen y Ddôl was built as an extension to *Pen y Bont* farmhouse located behind it -proof of this being the remains of two connecting doors discovered recently while renovating the house. It seemed that at the beginning of the twentieth century the owner or occupier of *Pen y Bont* farm was eager to diversify by leasing fishing rights on the river Dee to anglers, as some of the farmland was situated alongside the banks of the river. With the convenience of train travel at the time, anglers from the big towns and cities were able to travel to rural areas like Cynwyd to enjoy a weekend - or even a week or more- of fishing. They would need somewhere to stay, and as the few inns in the village at the time lacked the facilities to provide appropriate accommodation, the *Pen y Bont* occupier decided to offer accommodation himself by building an extension.

But by the **1920s**, circumstances in rural areas like Cynwyd had changed due to the effects of World War One. In his legendary November 1918 speech, Prime Minister Lloyd George had said "*What is our task? To make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in*"- promising to create decent homes for the heroes, who were of course the ex-servicemen who had served in the war. In rural areas many ex-servicemen were more than eager to get a foothold on the farming ladder, but as most farms were then owned by the large estates, acquiring one was not an easy option! But the government started a new scheme, by which landowners were urged to lease land to local authorities and the councils expected to divide allocated land into

small farm holdings of around 30-40 acres each, mainly for ex-servicemen. In some circumstances, new farmhouses and outbuildings needed to be built by the councils to accommodate new tenants and their farm animals, and examples of these can still be seen alongside the A5 between *Rug* farm shop and *Dwyryd* (now Druid) traffic lights.

It seemed that *Pen y Bon*t farm was one of the few farms ideally suited to be divided into two small holdings and was therefore leased to Merionethshire County Council by the Robertson family of *Pale Hall*, Llandderfel. The numerous outbuildings of *Pen y Bont* could be easily divided to form two well-sized farmyards and the farmhouse with its extension was large enough to create two separate houses. But some building work had to be carried out by the council, and a new back-kitchen and extra bedroom were added to *Pen y Ddôl*. The 80 acres of land was divided into 40 acres for each holding and the newly created farm called *Pen y Ddôl* ('Head of the Dale') due to its location.

Pen y Bont with Pen y Ddôl to the right (Image courtesy of Elwyn A. Jones)

I have not yet identified the first tenant at *Pen y Ddôl*, probably an ex-serviceman, but **Harold Jones** was the tenant at *Pen y Ddôl* during the **1930s** and up until **1944**. Originally from Gwyddelwern, Harold was a very cultured man who wrote articles of high quality for local newspapers. His wife **Winifred**, originally from *Dôl Penna*, Dinmael, was a former schoolteacher at several Uwchaled schools, and her brother **E. W. Roberts** was for many years Headteacher at the Central School, Pentrefoelas. During his tenancy at *Pen y Ddôl*, Harold built additional farm buildings such as a new Dutch barn and large poultry hut, and was a keen and skilful gardener and well-known bee keeper. According to rumours he was very meticulous; demanding work of the highest quality, with every gatepost on the farm having to be over seven feet deep in the ground!

When my parents **Edward Elwyn** and **Olive Jones** took over the tenancy of *Pen y Ddôl*, on

1st April **1944**, the farm (like a few others in the area) supplied milk to the village, with customers including the inhabitants of about thirty homes; the local primary school; the Youth Hostel, and the *Prince of Wales* inn. As this meant extra duties for the farmer, a young 'land-girl' called **Margare**t from Pwllheli was assigned to help my father, and one of her main duties was to deliver daily bottled milk around the village in a home-made cart on two bicycle wheels - often accompanied by a restless five-year-old boy! Reading my father's *Milk Account Book*, it is interesting to note the number of surnames that have by now disappeared from the village, as well as the many dwellings which have changed names: **Gibsons** of *Croeso*; **Duckingfield** of *Bod Erw*; **Jarvis** of *Awelfryn* (ex-minister of Bethel Chapel); **Morris** (Headmaster) of *Mount* (later *Tan y Marian* and today *Ael y Bryn*); **Covell** of *Bryn Derwen*, and **Wills** of *Croft* ((now *Llwyn*). The **1946** average price seemed to be around 4 ½ pence a pint; 2p today, and when Margaret had to leave after the war my busy father needed to transfer the contract to another local farmer, **Meirion White** of *Penlan Bach*.

Harold and Winifred Jones at *Pen y Ddôl*, 1930s-1944 (Courtesy of Elwyn A.Jones)

Following World War Two farming became quite a lucrative and profitable business, and by **1948** my father was able to buy a brand-new Ferguson tractor and a plough for £400 from Jones Brothers Garage at Bala. I believe he was the first small farmer in the area to own such a tractor at the time - although his eight-year-old son managed to crash it within a few months! As the years progressed my father was able to buy more agricultural machinery and even a second-hand car in **1952**. In **1955** electricity was installed by MANWEB, which became a great asset to the farming community.

By **1955** the lease of the farm to Merioneth County Council ended and it was returned to the Pale Hall Estate, then owned by the Duke of Westminster of Eaton Hall, Chester. Repairs carried out included a new cooling house, as required by law for milk production, but by **1960** the Pale Hall Estate had to be sold due to the heavy toll of death-duties following the

Duke of Westminster's death, and tenants were given the first opportunity to buy their farms. The asking price for *Pen y Ddôl*, including house, farm buildings and 40 acres of land, was £1,750, and though my father took a lot of persuading to buy the farm, it was the best decision he ever made! Now being the new owners, my parents carried out long overdue improvements including a new bathroom, inside toilet, hot water system and modern grates, but due to ill-health my father gave up milk production by **1969** to concentrate on cattle and pig rearing. Having sold 20 acres of land furthest from the farm and built a new garage and drive, he sold the remaining 20 acres to neighbours when by **1979** my parents retired from farming. The farm buildings were also sold and converted to two dwellings, with my parents remaining in the house until they died, and I moved away in **2000**, selling the house to **Pete**r and **Eleanor Cole**, who were eager to return to their home village. Their further changes included an extension, garage and gymnasium, so now we have a new extension to the original extension!

Elwyn A. Jones, 2023

Articles published previously in Cynwyd Scrapbook Three (2018)
(Online at
https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page18.html)

Confidences of an Eighteenth Century Baroness: Part Two
Dark Deeds and Drovers at Mynyllod
Home Comforts at Hafod y calch
Remembering Dai Morgan Evans
A Quest for Brynberllan!
A Most Colourful Cynwyd Character – Memories of Major Leslie Dow
Our ancient township of Gwnodl: The First Six Centuries
Once upon a time at Glan Alwen
Dwr Mawr, Llangar – The Big Flood of 1846
Our Farming Heritage: Part One
Plas Isaf – Another Edeyrnion Dynasty: Part Two
The Cynwyd Dee Bridge (English version)

Articles published previously in Cynwyd Scrapbook Four (2021)
(Online at
https://www.discoveringoldwelshhouses.co.uk/page18.html)

Henfaes isaf - another cruck framed hall house for Llangar!
From Cynwyd to Cwm Cynllwyd - and beyond
Hidden Histories of Cwm Main
Once upon a time at Plas yn ddôl
Tithe Martyrs and a Poet - from Llangwm to Cynwyd
From Gwerclas to New Zealand – a Williams family diaspora
To the far reaches of the parish - from Cynwyd to Ddwyryd
Tre'r ddôl – the community, its chapel and its school
Plas yn ddôl gan Megan Hughes Tomos

Cynwyd Scrapbook Five

Discovering Old Welsh Houses Group

Denbighshire Branch

2023