

The Landmark Trust

LLWYN CELYN

History Album

Volume II: The Buildings,
Restoration & Engagement



*'...time, in its healing circle...had broken into the future
with a promise of new things.'*

- Bruce Chatwin, *On the Black Hill*.

Caroline Stanford

April 2019

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BASIC DETAILS

Built	1420
Listed	Grade I
Tenure	Freehold owned by Landmark
Opened as a Landmark	October 2018
Conservation architect	John Goom of John C. Goom Architects, Evesham
Structural Engineer	Tom Hill of Mann Williams, Cardiff
Quantity Surveyor	Adrian Stenning
Building archaeologist	Richard K. Morriss
Landmark project manager	Richard Burton
Main contractors	I J Preece & Son of Wormbridge, Hereford
Roofers	Rowlands Roofing Limited of Hereford
Below ground archaeology	Headland Archaeology
Ecology	Wildwood Ecology Ltd of Caerphilly
Dendrochronology	Prof. Neil Loader & Dr. Danny MacCarroll of UK Oak Project at Swansea University, & Dr. Dan Miles of Oxford Dendrochronology Unit.
Timber sampling	Ross Cook of Archaeoscan.
Documentary research	Professor David Austin, Ian Bass.
Artists-in-residence	Catherine Baker, Toril Brancher, Stefan Caddick, Jamie Lake and Clare Potter.

Supporters of Llwyn Celyn

We are hugely grateful to the 1,230 supporters who gave their support so generously to make the restoration of Llwyn Celyn possible. They include:



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The National Lottery**
and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund

**Cyllid a godwyd gan
Y Loteri Genedlaethol**
ac a ddyfarnwyd gan Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Thank you!

Landmark has also had help and input from an exceptionally large pool of people as we learnt about Llwyn Celyn and its setting. We would like to thank especially:

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All our volunteers who worked so hard on site in all weathers...

And all members of the Llanthony Valley & District History Group.

We couldn't have done it without you!



The Llanthony Valley & District History Group celebrate news of the HLF grant in 2015. Initiated in 2014 as part of the HLF-funded development phase, by Llwyn Celyn's completion in 2018 the Group had some 120 subscribing members – in other words, about 1 in 10 valley residents. See <http://www.llanthonyhistory.wales/>

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Llwyn Celyn when Landmark first visited, in May 2007.

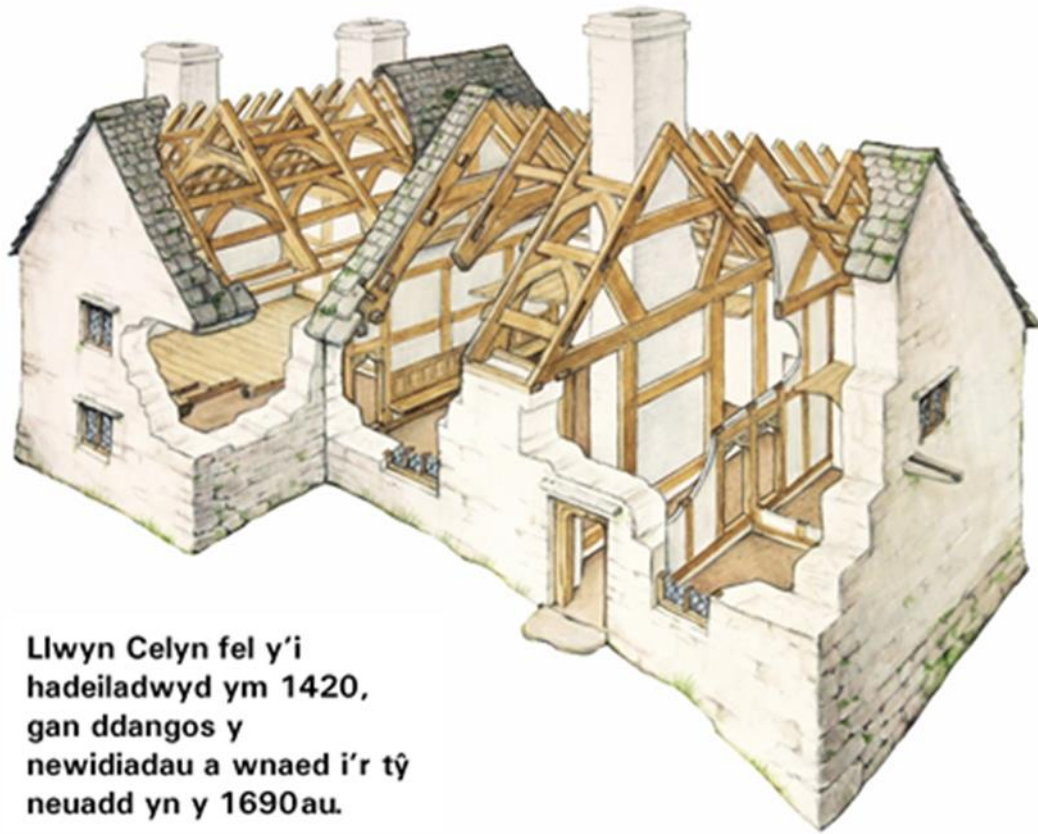
LLWYN CELYN ISAF

Mae dadansoddiad o bren Llwyn Celyn, adeilad rhestredig Gradd 1, wedi datgelu i'r tŷ gael ei godi ym 1420. Prin y mae wedi newid er diwedd yr 17eg ganrif, a'r cyfnod hwn yn bennaf y mae gwaith adfer Landmark yn ceisio ei adlewyrchu. Er gwaethaf yr holl ymchwilio, ni wyddom i sicrwydd bwy gododd y tŷ gwreiddiol yn Llwyn Celyn, na pham. Pan gafodd ei adeiladu fel rhan o ystad Priordy Llanddewi Nant Hodni, roedd Cymru newydd ddiweddef cyfnod go drafferthus. Dilynwyd sawl ton o'r pla rhwng 1349 a 1400 gan ddirinistr dan ddwylo'r ddwy ochr elyniaethus yn ystod Gwrthryfel Owain Glyn Dŵr ym 1401-15. Ychydig iawn o esiamplau o bensaernïaeth werinol sydd wedi goroesi o'r cyfnod, ac fel tŷ preswyl mawr ei fri mae Llwyn Celyn o'r herwydd yn drysor mwy gwerthfawr byth.

Mae Llwyn Celyn wedi cadw ei gynllun llawr canoloesol nodweddiadol. Ar y dechrau roedd ganddo neuadd ganolog â thair cilfach, agored i fyny hyd at drawstiau godidog y to, y codai'r mwg iddynt o'r tân yng nghanol y llawr. Ystyrir hwn yn dŷ sylweddol ei faint am y cyfnod, a'r neuadd oedd y gofod byw canolog i'r teulu i gyd. Eisteddai meistr y tŷ wrth fwrdd mawr ar y pen 'uchaf', a nodwedd brin yw'r fainc sefydlog sydd wedi goroesi yma. Ar ben 'isaf' y neuadd, y tu ôl i bared neu sgrîn o bren, rhedai coridor traws, a'r tu draw i hwnnw safai'r bwtri a'r pantri, lle y cedwid nwyddau gwlyb a sych yn y drefn honno.

Nodwedd angyffredin arall a oroesodd yn wyrthiol yw'r heulfa ddeulawr. Fe'i cyrhaeddid, mae'n debyg, drwy ddringo grisiau troellog tynn rhwng y waliau i fyny o'r neuadd. Er i'r grisiau ddiflannu erbyn hyn, daethpwyd o hyd i'r drws pigfain a arweiniai iddynt yn ystod y gwaith adfer. Darparai adain yr heulfa siambrau preifat hardd ar gyfer 'arglwydd' neu feistr y tŷ. Gellid ei chyrraedd hefyd ar y llawr isaf o ben uchaf y neuadd, trwy ddrws â gorddrws pren drosto â cherfiadau cain yn cynnwys dwy darian heb eu haddurno. Mae dau orddrws hyfrytach byth i'w gweld yn y coridor traws. Mae'r rhain i gyd yn nodwedd eithriadol mewn tŷ preswyl Cymreig.

Mae'r cwpl to a oroesodd yn fwy angyffredin fyth. Bwa sy'n cynnal y to yw cwpl, ac mae'r 'spere truss' yma'n fersiwn fwy addurnol ohono sy'n ymestyn i lawr i'r llawr isaf, ac ynddo agoriad sy'n creu mynedfa seremonïol i neuadd. Yn Llwyn Celyn, gellir gweld preniau'r cwpl o hyd yn y coridor traws. Cyn i'r simnai a adeiladwyd ei atal, roedd agoriad canolog yn y cwpl to hwn yn caniatáu golwg uniongyrchol ar y ddau orddrws braf yn y coridor traws o'r bwrdd uchel. Mae'n amlwg bod Llwyn Celyn wedi cael ei adeiladu ar gyfer un mawr ei fri, efallai i briordy Llanddewi ei hun hyd yn oed. Mae hanes Llwyn Celyn ynghlwm wrth Briordy Awstinaidd Llanddewi Nant Hodni, a oedd piau'r tir lle y'i codwyd ers dechrau'r 12^{fed} ganrif. Diddymwyd y priordy ym 1538, ynghyd â Llanthony Secunda yng Nghaerloyw, yr oedd wedi cael ei gyfuno ag ef ym 1480. Erbyn hynny roedd Llanthony-yng-Nghymru'n dŷ crefyddol go ddryslud.



**Llwyn Celyn fel y'i
hadeiladwyd ym 1420,
gan ddangos y
newidiadau a wnaed i'r tŷ
neuadd yn y 1690au.**

Prynwyd ystadau'r priordy ym 1546 gan gyfreithiwr cefnog o'r enw Nicholas Arnold, ac aros ym meddiant yr un teulu a wnaethant tan 1726. O hynny ymlaen bu Llwyn Celyn yn fferm dan ofal tenantiaid. Cyfnod o ffyniant anghyffredin oedd yr 16eg a'r 17eg ganrifoedd i denantiaid ffermydd ystad Llanthony. Diolch i rentiau isel ar brydlesi copihold hir a phrisiau cynyddol eu cynnyrch, arhosodd elw'r tir ym meddiant y tenantiaid yn hytrach na mynd i bocedi'r tiffeddianwyr. Arweiniodd hyn at greu dosbarth o ffermwyr-denantiaid boneddig ac iwmyr ffyniannus, annibynnol eu bryd. A hwythau'n ffermio llethrau serth, roedd ganddynt hawliau pori yn ogystal ar dir comin a gwastatioedd ar y brigau. Mae natur ddaearegol y mynyddoedd yn cynnig cerrig safonol ar gyfer adeiladu mewn blociau sy'n hollti'n naturiol. Golygai hyn y gallai'r ffermwyr godi ffermdai a thai allan cedyrn safonol, sydd i'w gweld hyd heddiw ar draws y dyffryn.

Un o'r llinachau ffermio pwysig hyn oedd y teulu Watkins o Lwyn Celyn, a ymgymerodd â gwelliannau sylweddol yn y tŷ tua 1690. William Watkin, neu ei frawd Thomas efallai, a osododd nenfwd yng ngofod agored y neuadd i greu siambr fawr uwchben ar y llawr cyntaf newydd. Esgynnid iddi i fyny grisiau newydd o bren a osodwyd wrth ochr simnai newydd enfawr ar gyfer lle tân a ffwrn fara (y daethom o hyd iddi y tu cefn i le tân o'r 20^{fed} ganrif). Ar yr un adeg, ychwanegwyd cegin ar wahân wrth gefn y tŷ, a ffwrn fara arall. Codwyd tŷ anifeiliaid ac adeilad bach arall yn yr un cyfnod wrth ochr yr ysgubor ddyrnu (sydd felly yn hŷn na 1695), a mwy na thebyg y tŷ seidr a'r twlc mochyn hefyd. Y teulu Watkins a greodd Lwyn Celyn fel y'i gwelwn heddiw, ac ychydig a newidiodd ar ôl eu hamser hwy yn y tŷ. Roedd gan y fferm bellach yr holl adeiladau arferol a oedd eu hangen i fod yn hunangynhaliol: ffwrn ddyrnu, tŷ seidr, tŷ anifeiliaid, stablau, twlc moch a thai odyr ar gyfer sychu brag i facsu ac ŷd. Gellir casglu felly mai ffermio cymysg – tir â'r da byw – oedd yr arfer yma, gan wneud y gorau o gaeau ffrwythlon y dyffryn a thiroedd diffaith yr ucheldiroedd.

O ganol y 19eg tan ganol yr 20fed ganrif, y teulu Jasper a ffermiodd yn Llwyn Celyn. Ym 1958, fe brynwyd Llwyn Celyn gan eu perthnasau Tom ac Olive Powell, a'u meibion hwy, y perchnogion presennol Trefor a Lyndon, sy'n dal i ffermio'r tir o'i gwmpas o hyd. Erbyn yr 21ain ganrif, roedd adeiladau Llwyn Celyn wedi dirywio'n arw dan effaith canrifoedd o law a'r dŵr a ddisgynnai o'r llethrau. Yn 2007, aeth Cadw at y Landmark Trust i ofyn am gymorth. Trefnwyd cytundeb caffael cymhleth trwy gymorth grantiau oddi wrth Cadw a Chronfa Goffa'r Dreftadaeth Genedlaethol, a'i gwnaeth hi'n bosibl i adeiladu cartref newydd i'r teulu Powell.

Mae'r athroniaeth sy'n sail i'r gwaith atgyweirio ac adfer am gadw cymaint â phosibl o adeiledd gwreiddiol y tŷ, gan ddychwelyd iddo yr olwg a oedd arno tua 1700, yn syth ar ôl i'r nenfwd a'r simnai gael eu gosod yn y neuadd. Golygai hyn ddadwneud rhai o newidiadau'r 19^{eg} a'r 20^{fed} ganrifoedd. Rhoddodd prosiect adfer dros ddwy flynedd waith a phrofiad i lu o grefftwy'r a pheirianwyr, a throsglwyddwyd crefftau a sgiliau traddodiadol i brentisiaid ac ymwelwyr fel ei gilydd. Cafodd muriau Llwyn Celyn eu tanategu yn y cefn a'u clymu'n anweledig at ei gilydd drwyddi draw â gwaiail resin; cafodd

cyplau to gollyngedig a phreniau eraill eu sythu'n ofalus a'u had-osod yn eu lle dyledus â phergiau; cafodd y toi eu tynnu'n gyfangwbl a'u hail-osod gan ddefnyddio teils newydd o Gwm Olchon gerllaw. Cafodd pren pydredig ei docio yn ôl yn geidwadol fel y gellid sgarffio pren derw cadarn yn ei le.

Codwyd cerrig y lloriau i osod system gynhesu odanynt, a chodwyd bwyler sglodion pren ym mloc yr hen stablau. Sefydlwyd system wely cyrs i drin carthffosiaeth a gwellhawyd y systemau draenio ar draws y safle. Prin y bu angen adnewyddu'r gwaith maen, ond cyflawnwyd cryn dipyn o waith ailbwyntio a phlastro, gan ddefnyddio mortar calch traddodiadol bob amser. Yn nes ymlaen, glanhawyd y paent du oddi ar y trawstiau a gorddrysau pren godidog. Daethpwyd o hyd i nifer o drysorau yn ystod y gwaith: yn ogystal â lle tân y neuadd a'r gilfach ar gyfer ffwrn Fictoriaidd yn y gegin bresennol, datgelwyd y drws bwaog cudd yn y neuadd, ynghyd â'r ffenestr a wynebai'r dde ar ail lawr adain yr heulfa. Darganfuwyd dau hen esgid ynghudd (i amddiffyn y lle rhag gwrrachod o bosibl), un ohonynt o'r 17eg ganrif, a gadawyd y rhain yn ofalus yn eu gorffwysfa dan y bargod.

Atgyweiriwyd tai allan Llwyn Celyn mewn modd sy'n sicrhau bod eu golwg ar y safle amlwg hwn yn newid cyn lleied â phosibl. Y tu mewn iddynt, fe wnaethom yr hyn oedd eisiau i hybu eu defnydd yn y dyfodol. Mae'r hen dŷ seidr bellach yn ystafell wely ac ystafell ymolchi; y drws nesaf iddo, mae'r hen olyn sychu brag (sydd dan glo'n barhaus) yn gartref heddiw i dŵr oeri er lles yr ystlumod, y buom yn ymdrechu trwy gydol y prosiect i fodloni eu hanghenion a'r gofyniad statudol i gydlynu â hwy. Mae gan yr ystlumod ofod wedi'i dwymo hefyd dan do'r tŷ seidr. Yn yr hen stablau, â graffiti llawn cymeriad yn dal i addurno eu drws hollt, y mae'r peirianwaith gwresogi a thrydanol.

Diolch i gefnogaeth Cronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri, bu nifer sylweddol o bobl leol a gwirfoddolwyr yn chwarae eu rhan yn y prosiect. Mae gwirfoddolwyr wedi cyfrannu drwy gydol y prosiect yn ystod pedair Wythnos Dreftadaeth wrth ei Gwaith, lle buont yn cofrestru i ddysgu a rhannu gwahanol sgiliau, gan blannu perthi newydd, helpu i atgyweirio waliau sychion, ailbwyntio, glanhau lloriau coblog, gwyngalchu ac yn y blaen.

Mae'r gymuned leol wedi chwarae ei rhan hithau ers dechrau'r prosiect. Ymgynghoriadau â'r gymuned a arweiniodd Landmark at weddnewid Ysgubor Ddyrnu'r 18fed ganrif gan greu manau addysgol ac arddangosiadol cymunedol, gan gynnwys tŷ bynciau sylfaenol a fwriedir ar gyfer ymgeiswyr am Wobr Dug Caeredin. Mae hen feili'r defaid yn darparu lle delfrydol yn yr awyr agored ar gyfer y gweithgareddau crefft traddodiadol sy'n dal i ffynnu yn y dyffryn. Bydd ystafell ar agor yn ystod y dydd yn hen dŷ'r anifeiliaid i ddehongli hanes y dyffryn i gerddwyr ac ymwelwyr eraill. Mae partneriaethau wedi cael eu sefydlu â chyrff lleol, ynghyd â grŵp hanes lleol llewyrchus. Ac yn olaf, bu gennym bedwar artist preswyl yn ystod y

prosiect: dau artist, llenor a ffotograffydd, a greodd rychwant o weithiau wedi'u hysbrydoli gan Llwyn Celyn. Mae Channel 4 wedi cynhyrchu rhaglen ddogfennol ddwy-ran ar destun prosiect adfer Llwyn Celyn. Derbyniodd Llwyn Celyn ddau ymweliad hefyd gan Noddwr Landmark, eub y Tywysog Siarl; daeth am y tro cyntaf cyn i'r gwaith ddechrau ym mis Gorffennaf 2014 wedi i'r grant galluogi gan Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri gael ei gadarnhau, a'r eildro ym mis Gorffennaf 2018, wedi i waith adfer y prif dŷ ddod i ben. Ar ddiwrnod poeth iawn, plannodd y Tywysog goeden afalau yn y berllan, a honno'n amrywiad hynafol Cymreig o'r enw Brith Mawr. Efallai iddi dyfu yma'n draddodiadol.



Llwyn Celyn on completion in summer 2018, one of the driest summers on record.

Summary

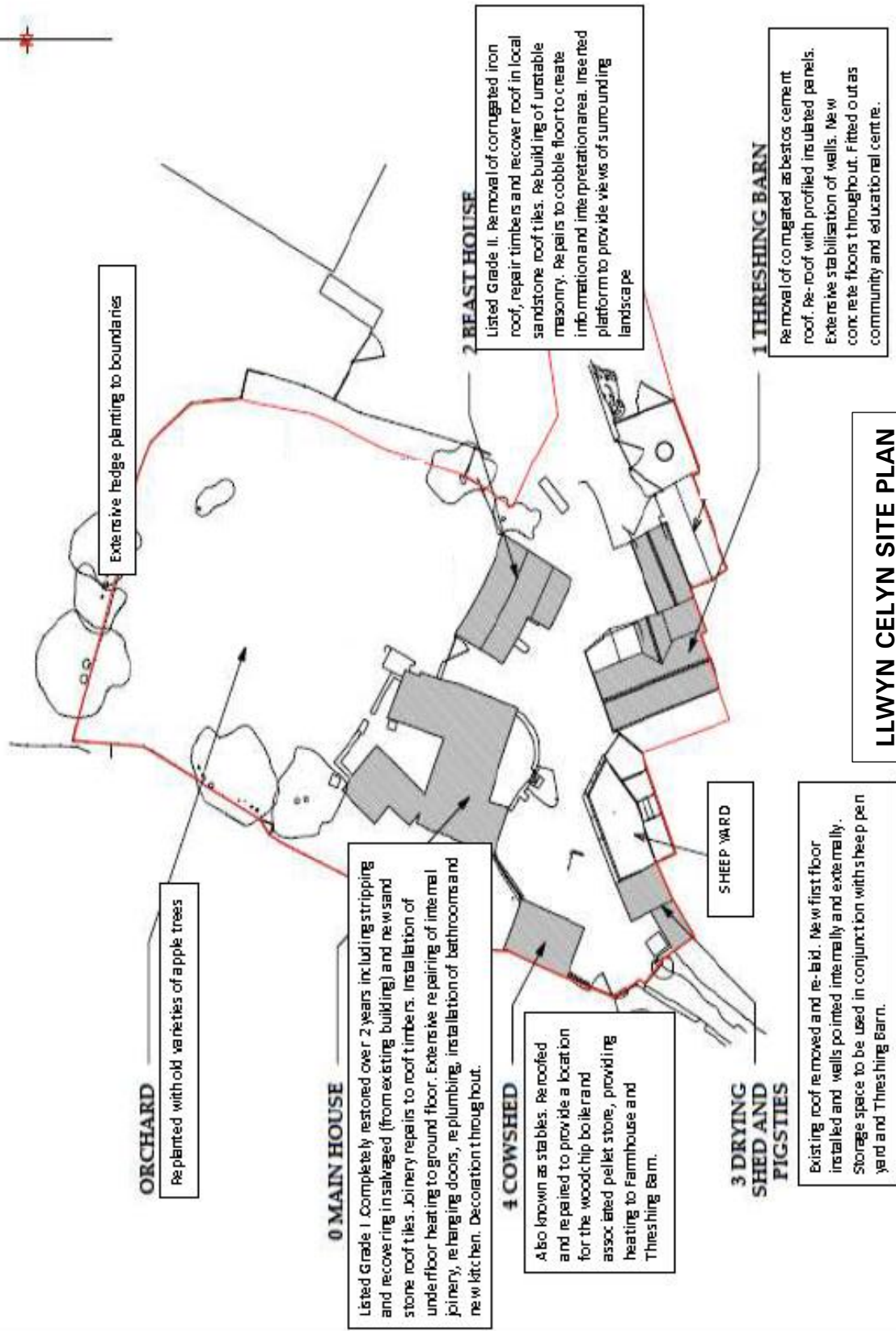
Grade-I listed, Llwyn Celyn's timbers have been isotopically dated to 1420. The house has changed little since the late-17th century, and it is chiefly this period that Landmark's restoration seeks to highlight. Despite much research, we still do not for sure who built this core house at Llwyn Celyn, or why. When constructed, the house was part of the Llanthony Priory estate, and it was built just as Wales emerged from a period of great upheaval. Successive waves of plague from 1349 to 1400 were followed by the destruction of Owain Glyn Dŵr's Rising of 1401-15, done by Glyn Dŵr's army and the English alike. Very few vernacular Welsh houses survive from this period, and this makes Llwyn Celyn, as an exceptionally high status house for its day, all the more intriguing.

Llwyn Celyn still has its classic medieval floorplan. As first built, it had a 3-bay central hall, open to fine roof timbers, up to which smoke rose from a fire in the middle of the floor. This counts as a large house for the day, and the hall was the central living space for the whole household. The master of the household sat at a big table at the 'high' end, and the fixed bench here is a rare survival. At the 'low' end of the hall, beyond a wooden screen or partition, ran a cross passage, and beyond that were the buttery and the pantry, for storing wet and dry goods respectively.

The two-storey solar wing is primary, and another rare feature. It was probably reached by a tight, intramural spiral stone staircase leading up from the hall, now lost, but whose pointed doorway was uncovered during the restoration. The solar provided fine, private chambers for the 'lord' or master of the household and was also accessed at ground floor level from the high end of the hall through a finely carved wooden doorhead with blank shields. There are two even finer doorheads in the cross passage. These doorheads are exceptional in a Welsh domestic context.

Equally unusual is the survival of a spere truss. A truss is an arch that supports the roof, and a spere truss is a more decorative one extending down to the ground floor, with an opening to provide a ceremonial entrance to a hall. At Llwyn Celyn, its timbers can still be seen in the cross passage. Before the chimneystack blocked it, a central opening in this spere truss gave a direct view of the two fine doorheads in the cross passage from the high table. Llwyn Celyn was clearly built for someone of great status, perhaps even for the prior of Llanthony Priory himself.

Llwyn Celyn's history is bound up with the Augustinian Llanthony Priory, which from the early 12th century owned the land on which Llwyn Celyn is built. The priory was suppressed in 1538, along with Llanthony Secunda in Gloucester, with which it had been merged in 1480. Llanthony-in-Wales by then was a religious house in considerable disarray.



LLWYN CELYN SITE PLAN

The priory estates were bought in 1546 by a rich lawyer, Nicholas Arnold, whose family owned them until 1726. From then on, Llwyn Celyn became a tenanted farm. The 16th and 17th centuries were a time of unusual prosperity for the Llanthony tenant farmers. Low rents on long, copyhold leases and rising produce prices meant the profits of the land stayed with the tenant farmers rather than passing to the landlords. This created a class of independently minded, prosperous yeomen and gentry tenant farmers. They farmed steep slopes, but also had grazing rights on common and waste land on the peaks. The mountains' geology yields good building stone in naturally cleaved blocks. All this allowed the farmers to build other good, sound farmhouses and outbuildings, which still dot the valley today.

The Watkins of Llwyn Celyn were once such farming dynasty and around 1690, big improvements were made in the house. William Watkin, or possibly his brother Thomas, inserted a ceiling into the open space of the hall to create a large chamber above on the first floor, reached by a new wooden staircase put in alongside a huge new chimney stack for a fireplace and bread oven (which we found behind a 20th-century fireplace). At the same time, a separate kitchen added at to the back of the house, with another bread oven. A Beast House and little building beside the Threshing Barn (which therefore predates 1695) were built in the same years, and probably the Cider House and piggery too. The Watkins created Llwyn Celyn as we see it today, and after them, little changed in the house. By now the farm had all the usual buildings needed for self-sufficiency: a Threshing Barn, Cider House, Beast House, stables, pigsty and kiln houses for drying malt for brewing and corn. As these reflect, the farming done at Llwyn Celyn was mixed, both arable and livestock to make the best of both lush valley fields and the high mountain wastelands.

From the mid-19th to the mid-20th century Llwyn Celyn was farmed by the Jasper family. In 1958, Llwyn Celyn was bought by their relatives Tom and Olive Powell, whose sons Trefor and Lyndon still own and farm the land around. By the 21st century, Llwyn Celyn's buildings were in a state of severe dilapidation. In 2007, Cadw approached the Landmark Trust for help. A complicated acquisition deal was struck, with grants from Cadw and the National Heritage Memorial Fund, also enabling a new home to be built for the Powells. The agreed philosophy of repair retains as much original fabric in the main house as possible, gently returning it to its appearance c. 1700 when the hall had just been ceiled over and the chimneystack inserted. This meant the reversal of a few 19th and 20th century changes but little else. A two-year restoration project involved many skilled craftsmen and engineers, and saw traditional craft skills passed on to apprentices and visiting groups. Llwyn Celyn's walls were underpinned at the rear and invisibly stitched back together with resin rods throughout; dropped roof trusses and other timbers were carefully straightened back into place and re-pegged; the roofs were entirely removed and replaced, using new tiles from the adjacent Olchon Valley.

The stone-flagged floors were lifted to install underfloor heating, and a wood chip boiler installed in the former stable block. A reed bed sewage treatment system was established and drainage improved across the site. Little stonework needed replacing but there was a great deal of re-pointing and plastering, all done with lime mortar. Later black paint was cleaned from the very fine beams and doorheads. Discoveries were made during the works: as well as the hall fireplace and the alcove for a Victorian range in today's kitchen, a blocked arched stone doorway in the hall was uncovered, and also the first floor, south-facing window in the solar block. Two old shoes, one of 17th-century date, were found concealed (possibly against witchcraft). We left them replaced them where they were found under the eaves.

Llwyn Celyn's outbuildings were repaired so that their appearance on this prominent site changed as little as possible. Internally, we did what was needed to ensure their future use. The former Cider House is now a bedroom and bathroom; the former malt drying kiln (kept locked) next to it now holds a cooling tower for bats, with whose needs, and the statutory requirement to meet those needs, we struggled throughout the project. The bats also have a heated roof space above the Cider House. The former stables, with characterful graffiti still on its split door, houses heating and electrical plant.

Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund's support, there has also been significant local and volunteer involvement. Volunteers have contributed throughout the project through four Heritage at Work weeks, for which volunteers signed up to learn and contribute various skills, planting new hedges, helping repair dry stone walls, re-pointing, cleaning cobbled floors, limewashing and so on.

There was also considerable community involvement from the start of the project. Community consultation led to Landmark transforming the 18th-century Threshing Barn into flexible educational and exhibition spaces for community use, including a low-key bunkhouse intended primarily for use by Duke of Edinburgh Award candidates. The former sheep yard provides a good outdoor space for traditional craft activities, which thrive in this valley. An interpretation room about the valley and its history has been created in the former Beast House for walkers and passing visitors, open during daylight hours. Partnerships have been built with local bodies, and a thriving local history group has been started in the valley. Finally, there were four artists-in-residence during the project, two artists, a writer and a photographer, who produced a range of work inspired by Llwyn Celyn.

The project to restore Llwyn Celyn was the subject of a two-part television documentary for Channel 4. Llwyn Celyn also received two visits from Landmark's Patron, HRH the Prince of Wales, the first before work began in July 2014 on confirmation of the enabling grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and again in July 2018, when restoration of the main house was just complete. On a very hot day, the Prince planted an apple tree in the orchard, an ancient Welsh variety called Brith Mawr (Big Speckled). Perhaps it grew here all along.

Philosophy of repair & presentation

Before Landmark undertakes any restoration, or even applies for planning and listed building consent, the core project team agrees an overarching philosophy of repair to act as a touchstone for decisions as the restoration process unfolds. At Llwyn Celyn, we had to think about both the main house and the ancillary buildings, which needed a somewhat different approach. Our planning consents were also based upon this philosophy of repair, summarised here.



On a cold November day in 2014, the core project team gathered at Llwyn Celyn to thrash out a philosophy of repair, to guide us through this long project. Left to right: Bill Martin (external consultant) and John Goom (conservation architect), and from Landmark John Evetts (Head of Furnishings), Caroline Stanford (Historian) and Richard Burton (Project Surveyor). It was a long day, but the outcome proved robust.

For the main house, the philosophy of repair was:

‘To give presumption in favour of Llwyn Celyn’s evolved form at its period of greatest significance, the late medieval house as reconfigured sometime in the 17th century. Such an approach accepts the removal or reversal of some 19th and 20th century additions and alterations.

‘Our aim for the surrounding ancillary buildings is to prioritise their successful functioning in sustainable new public use, while seeking to remain sympathetic to their original character as farm buildings.’

We also considered two alternative approaches:

1. An explicitly restorationist return to the primary, medieval hall house phase. This approach was rejected because:
 - full historical accuracy could not be achieved without unacceptable levels of speculation and dismantling (removal of the first floor chamber, staircase, chimney stack, later outbuildings; speculative treatment of fenestration and many surfaces.
 - returning the building to a single precise date would be at odds with the evolved character of a working farm.
2. A ‘conserve as found’ approach, giving equal precedence to all phases and interventions. This approach was not adopted because later alterations were few and ad hoc, blurring the significance of Llwyn Celyn’s exceptional surviving primary form and features.

For the ancillary buildings and structures on the site, our need to find a new use for them led to a slightly different approach. For them, we prioritised conserving their external appearance, but did what was need internally to provide for their new and sustainable uses, albeit with sensitivity towards design and materials.

The distinction between these different approaches taken in the main house and outbuildings is clear, and we hope successful, now that restoration is complete.



Llwyn Celyn before restoration

Landmark was first formally alerted to Llwyn Celyn's plight in 2006, when Will Hughes, then architect for the Brecon Beacon National Park Authority, wrote to us. We first visited Llwyn Celyn in 2007, and found it in genuine danger of imminent collapse. Identified as an exceptionally high status house by Fox and Raglan in the 1950s, it had long been on Cadw's Buildings at Risk Register. It was hard to get a sense of the house beneath, shrouded as it was in emergency scaffolding from which sheeting hung in tatters. Cracks were visible in many of the walls; the scaffolding obstructed much of the light inside. It was still a working farm, the yard was cluttered with disused farm equipment, the outbuildings full of items stored 'just in case.' It felt as though nothing had been discarded for decades – and yet nothing was in any state to be re-used. The whole site ran with liquid mud and animal waste, as water streamed off the hillside, a fair amount running through the house and the Beast House, whose north wall was bowing alarmingly.

The house was still occupied – just: two rooms on the first and ground floor at the service end (the buttery and pantry had been knocked into one in the 1960s or 70s, covering up one of the carved doorways in the cross passage). All the rooms were damp and bedraggled, packed with the detritus of former lives. In the hall, a beige tiled 1960s fireplace filled the big inglenook and faded family pictures adorned walls from which once genteel wallpaper was gently peeling. From one of the iron pegs in the ceiling hung a wasps' nest of old farm bills and papers strung onto a wire.

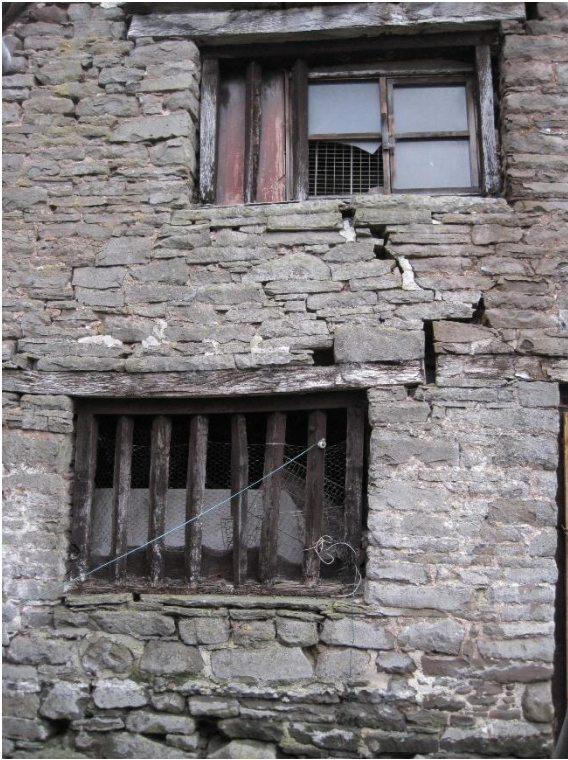
At the solar end, on the ground floor water ran across a mud floor in today's ground floor bedroom. The first floor was no longer in use except for the service end bedroom; the other bedrooms had rotten floorboards and leaking ceilings from the holes in the roof. Plaster was falling off the walls (including, memorably, a large portion of hall ceiling on the morning of HRH Prince Charles's first visit – we left it where it fell, which he seemed to appreciate).



Llwyn Celyn in the 1960s. (RCHAMW)



Llwyn Celyn in 2012. The site was still a working farm and running with mud.



The Cider House.



The back door



The rear kitchen was largely filled by partition walls containing a bathroom. There was no inside lavatory.



A glimpse of the south wall of the former hall (today's dining room). The Cider House (below) was used for storage.





There was standing water in today's solar end bedroom (top). Today's ensuite bathroom was equally un-usable (above).

Timber-dating analysis at Llwyn Celyn

Based on the style and weight of its timber frame (arched wind braces, spere truss) its and floorplan, for a long time we judged that Llwyn Celyn was probably built around 1481. This date was plausible because this was when Llanthony Secunda in Gloucester made a reverse takeover bid to absorb its original mother foundation, Llanthony Priory in Wales. In any case, we thought, hardly any vernacular buildings survive in Wales from before Glyn Dŵr's Rising 1400-1415.

In 2016, we commissioned conventional dendrochronology (or tree ring analysis) from Dr. Dan Miles of the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory. We were disappointed, but philosophical, when this failed to yield a date fix at Llwyn Celyn, because the timber was all too fast grown to provide distinctive ring width sequences for matching against the reference chronology database. It was, in dendrochronologists' parlance, too 'complacent' (in other words, rainfall levels were such that the trees generally grew happily and consistently, without the distinctive ring widths due to climate stress needed to calibrate a date).

Then early in 2017, Dan suggested that we submit samples from the timber cores already taken at Llwyn Celyn to Professor Neil Loader's team at Swansea University, who are working on the UK Oak Project, a Leverhulme Trust-funded research project in partnership with The Research Laboratory for Archaeology and History of Art, and the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit. The UK Oak Project <https://www.oak-research.co.uk/> is using a ground-breaking technique relying on the chemical signature of oxygen isotopes in tree rings to date timber samples with the same precision and accuracy as conventional dendrochronology, regardless of ring width. The project's main thrust is to measure climate change, but the technique has obvious relevance to buildings too, especially in situations like that at Llwyn Celyn where ring widths do not prove distinctive.



Drilling for cores. While avoided if possible, if a core breaks it can be carefully taped back together. For conventional growth ring analysis, a sample must include the sapwood at the edge of the bark. Ideally, a run of at least 50 growth rings is required per core. This can prove tricky if the growth rings are wide.



Two of the Llwyn Celyn samples with intact sapwood and bark edge were identified as the most suitable for analysis. As this was the first time this experimental technique had been used on an undated building, the project team asked Landmark to commission radiocarbon analysis (or Carbon-14 analysis) on the same samples as independent verification. Radiocarbon analysis typically provides date spans too wide to add much to a building's story, but this time we were happy to agree, thanks to a small amount unspent in our dendrochronology budget (part of our Heritage Lottery Fund grant on the project).

To everyone's excitement, the oxygen isotope analysis provided statistically robust results for felling dates of winter 1418/19 for a principle rafter in the solar roof, and winter 1420/1 for a joist at the service end. Both sampled timbers are unequivocally in their primary build positions. As further validation, the stable oxygen isotopes material from specific tree rings were then submitted for radiocarbon dating – which provided a very narrow date range of 1407-28 with 95.4% probability, validating the accuracy of the isotopic analysis.

As oak was used unseasoned in construction, these results allow us to say with confidence that the main house at Llwyn Celyn was built c1420. This is intriguingly early in the period of reconstruction that followed Glyn Dŵr's Rising. Llanthony Priory was apparently sacked by Glyndŵr's men in 1405-6 although documentary records are scarce for this period.

This makes Llwyn Celyn one of the oldest surviving domestic buildings in Wales and, if it were needed, provided still further vindication of Landmark's determination to save this important building. On the basis of this success, the Swansea team agreed to attempt to date further sampled cores, even though these had at first been discounted, either because they contained too few growth rings or because the timber showed signs of having been pollarded during its growth. By calibrating two shorter runs from the same core at consecutive but non-adjacent points on a known sequence, and with rigorous statistical analysis, they were able to date a number of other parts of the site.



Drilling timber cores in the rear kitchen (above) and snug (below) in 2014.

This was extending the application of isotopic technique further than to date, but the statistics again proved robust and significant new insights were provided as summarised here:

LLWYN CELYN DENDROCHRONOLOGY RESULTS		
SAMPLE LOCATION	PROBABLE FELLING DATE	LIKELY TENANT
Main house		
Solar roof member	1418/19	Unknown
Joist in service end snug	1420/21	Unknown
Inserted hall floor	1678-1708 (last measured ring 1688 but no bark edge)	William Watkin
Hall mantel beam	Heavily pollarded but confirmed as c.1690	William Watkin
Rear kitchen joist	After 1655	Wm Watkin
Beast House (now info room)	1688/9	Wm Watkin
Link House	1695/6 (suggesting the Threshing Barn therefore predates this)	Wm Watkin
Lower Barn (now bunkhouse)	1843	Ben Davies

As explained in more detail in the History volume of this album, a clear narrative emerges, of Llwyn Celyn's lease passing to the Watkin family in 1656 when it was still an open hall house, but by then outdated and, by implication, run down. William Watkin and his brother Thomas bring a new injection of energy and funds, as well as the confidence that they could enjoy their lease for four lives, making investment worthwhile. It is the Watkins who ceil the hall, insert its huge chimneystack and add the rear kitchen. They also built the Llwyn Celyn table dated 1690 and installed the raised and fielded panelling above the fixed bench, in what by then was a rather archaic disposition of the room.

They also built the Beast House, with room to stall a dozen cattle (dairy farming was highly profitable in the late-17th century) and the little Link House between the Threshing Barn and the lower barn that was added by Benjamin Davies in 1846. While we have no dendrochronology for them, it seems very plausible that the well-built Cider House and piggery also dated from c.1690.

The results from the isotopic analysis will be properly written up for academic publication in due course, but it is clear that the collaboration between Landmark and the UK Oak Project at Llwyn Celyn witnessed a major step forward in the timber dating of historic buildings, as well as yielding significant insights into Llwyn Celyn's history.

Petrographic analysis of a stone roofing tile

Landmark commissioned petrographic analysis of a roof tile, to help us match the existing tiles. For the geologists among Landmarkers, 'It was found to be 'a poorly sorted immature sandstone, technically a lithic greywacke. It consisted largely of angular to sub-angular clasts of quartz, together with a significant number of fragments of various metamorphic rocks. Plagioclase feldspar and muscovite mica are also present in small quantities....The matrix is a mixture is a mixture of siliceous silt and clay minerals. Occasional patches of crystalline calcite are also present.'

It came from the Brownstones Formation of Lower Devonian (Old Red Sandstone) strata, a sandstone succession that extends from the Clee Hills in Worcestershire to the northern limit of the South Wales coalface. The Brownstones outcrop a mile west of Llwyn Celyn.

The best available match for the new tiles came from a quarry just into Hertfordshire, a couple of valleys north east of the Olchon, supplied by Hereford Sandstone Supplies Ltd of Longtown.

Description & Analysis of Llwyn Celyn

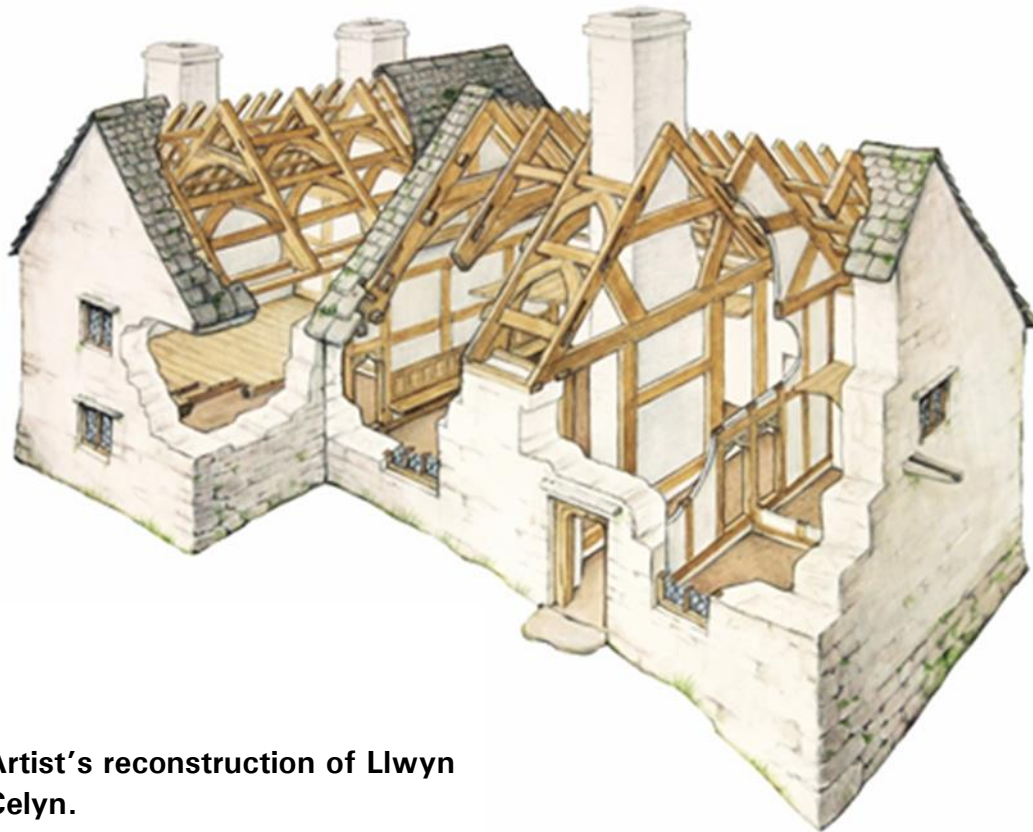
The Main House

Phase I: The late-medieval house

The late-medieval farmhouse is the obvious focal point of the farmstead and by far the most important building within it – as acknowledged by its Grade I listed status. Its front door faces south towards the mountain known as Bryn Awr, and the house therefore runs west-east down the slope.

The red sandstone of the area is a local building material, the geology of the Black Mountains meaning that it emerges naturally from the hillsides in convenient sized blocks. It also cleaves easily, to serve well as the local roofing and flooring material. While Llwyn Celyn is a high status house, and while in other parts of Britain such use of stone often reinforces this status, in the Llanthony Valley stone is simply the most easily available indigenous building material.

The original house was made up of the two main components in an L-shaped plan. The west-east stem holds the central hall range, containing the original hall and the in-line services (built of timber felled in 1420/21). The projecting two-storey solar range at the west end makes up the 'foot' of the 'L', and as its timbers were felled in 1418/19 it seems likely that this range was built first. Such suites of private rooms were often added later to hall house as privacy became more of a priority but it is very unusual to find a solar range built at the same time as the main hall in a house of this size, especially at such an early date. Analysis of the timber framing once it was uncovered suggested that its builders were not quite sure how to join the roofs between the two ranges, resulting in something of a botch (even if the roof did then survive for 600 years).



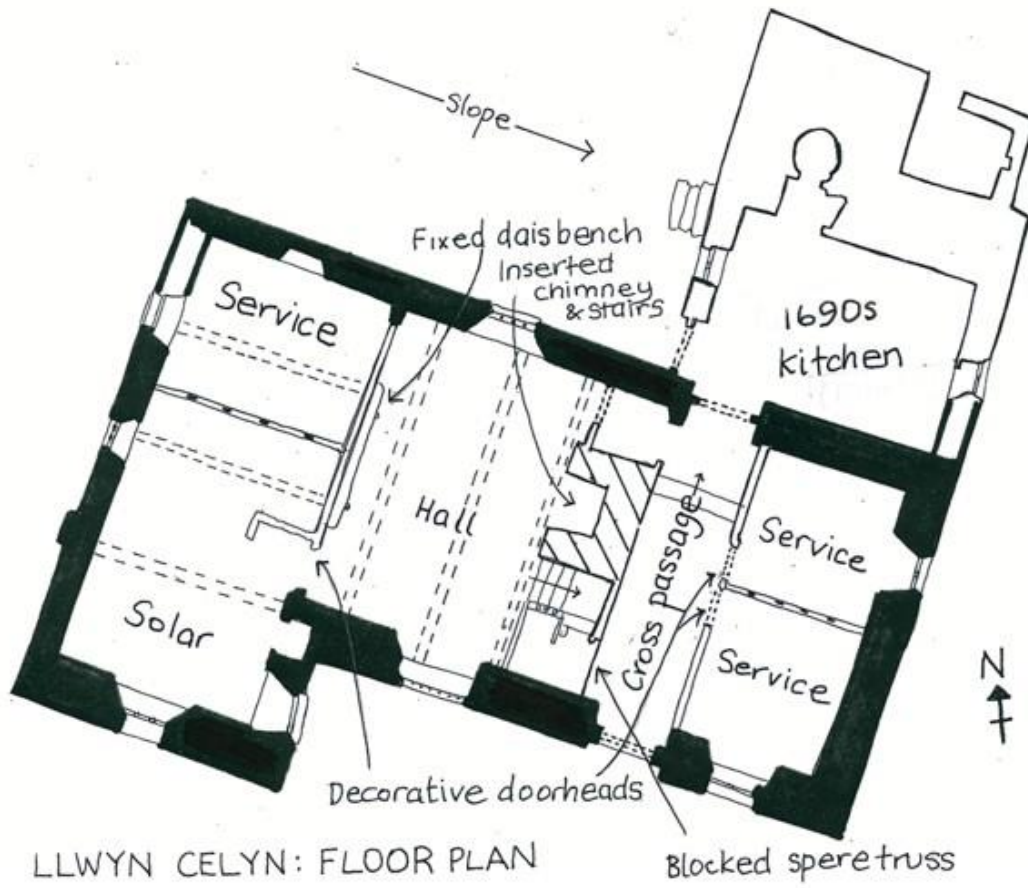
Artist's reconstruction of Llwyn Celyn.

Attached at right-angles to the eastern end of the north wall of the hall range is a kitchen wing (timber felled c. 1690) and a former lean-to (previously an earth closet). These were clearly part of the domestic accommodation. The outer walls of both the original house and this later addition are built of local red sandstone rubblestone with slightly larger blocks used as quoins. It was almost certainly designed to be 'butter rendered' and lime-washed, and a thin layer of render and limewash still adhered to most of the exterior. This was been retained wherever possible beneath the reinstated butter render. In past centuries, most vernacular houses, and even churches, were given a sacrificial coat of limewash, however startling its brightness to modern aesthetics.

Inside, the 1420 hall and service rooms are separated internally by a timber-framed cross wall. As this section is aligned down the slope, it required a fairly substantial battered plinth at the east gable end. Opposing doors in the side wall of the hall range lead into the screen's or cross-passage separating the hall to the west from the service rooms to the east.

Unusually, the division between the screen's passage and the hall was marked by a fairly plain spere truss, subsequently mutilated by the insertion of the chimney stack.¹ Such features are found in the Marches but are a rarity in Wales. Llwyn Celyn has the only spere truss identified so far south, and when open, it gave a direct view from the high table of the decorative doorheads to the service rooms, their fine ogee-arched heads set into a timber-framed cross-wall. These doors led into a pair of service rooms to the east separated by a cross-frame - the buttery and pantry - for dry and wet stores respectively. That partition was removed in the 1960s or 70s to create one single room and the southerly doorway was blocked and papered over (both these aspects are now reinstated).

¹A spere truss is a decorative wooden arch that both helped support the roof and marked the division between the main area of the hall and the screens passage. It typically included an opening or that could be closed by a moveable screen to minimise draughts.



Above these specialist service rooms was and is a single large chamber, probably originally reached by a ladder. The first floor room had a built-in laver, or possible urinal, a remarkable survival. Its spout projects from the gable wall and a hacked back stone bowl on the inside was found under later plaster during restoration. The remnant of another, similar spout was found re-used in the wall of the little link house beside the Threshing Barn, which perhaps came from the solar range.

Hall

The three-bay hall counts as large for the period. It has an inserted ceiling (c. 1690) but was originally open to the apex of the fine wind-braced roof. While common at this period over the English border, such arched wind-bracing is another relatively unusual feature in southern Wales. The hall was presumably originally lit by windows in each side wall, although it has not proved possible to identify this fenestration. The hall would have been heated by a fire in an open hearth in the centre of the floor. There is ample evidence of smoke blackening of the visible timbers of the roof structure but no surviving evidence of the position of a smoke louvre. During restoration works, a blocked, pointed stone arch opening was uncovered in the south wall of the hall towards the high end. This is thought to have been either the entrance to an intramural staircase leading to the upper floor of the solar range (although no evidence was found of a corresponding opening at first floor level or disturbance of the wall itself) or an alcove for storage and display.

There would have been a dais at the 'high' end of the hall opposite the screen passage and this could have been topped by a coved dais canopy at roof height; such a feature could explain some of the apparent oddities in the junction between the hall and solar ranges and the different positions of the dais wall and the west end gable of the former malt kiln. It also seems that the solar range originally presented into the open hall as an open jetty at eaves height, further emphasising the sense of hierarchy.

There was a doorway only at the south end of the dais screen, which survives and has a finely carved ogee-headed frame with shields in the spandrels, evidence of the status, or at least the ambition, of the builder. Somewhat to our surprise, a thorough search for any traces of colour throughout the building revealed no sign of colour on the shields or of wall paintings, which were common in the Marches in high status houses in the late medieval and early modern period.

Above this door can be seen a small piece of surviving timber that may once have been part of the springing for the canopy. Another central bracket also survived at first floor level, support for the jetty.

Solar range

The solar range attached to the 'high' end of the hall range was always of two storeys and originally contained two rooms at ground and first-floor levels, each separated by a cross-frame, although most of the ground-floor section of this had been removed and a later partition inserted. The ground floor partition has been reinstated in what is believed to be its original position. The smaller northern room at each level could only be accessed through the larger one, and so make perfect en suite bathrooms today.

The floor level in both ground floor rooms of the solar range was originally higher than that in the hall, creating an awkward change of level and very limited headroom. To enable easy access accommodation, permission was granted to lower the floors by some 15cm or so, which also permitted the introduction of underfloor heating.

These rooms also required drainage amelioration, significant underpinning and stabilisation measures. The first of these is externally apparent in the gabions along the hillside. Archaeology during the works, done in the northwest corner where the shower now stands, revealed no foundations – their absence perfectly normal in earlier times – and no sign of an earlier floor or building on the site.

No indications were found of a fireplace in the ground floor solar range, and indeed given that its ceiling is clearly primary, there could not have been one. One possibility is that the larger room (today's bedroom) was heated by a brazier – or not heated at all. This room was the larger of the ground floor rooms, leading through a doorway at the eastern end of the cross-frame to the smaller northern room, as now reinstated. There was no evidence of a primary doorway into that room directly from the hall. With no access into the smaller room from the hall, it was probably a private inner room associated with the larger one to the south. (A much later doorway inserted to the right of the fixed bench to give access to this smaller room was blocked during restoration.)

Breaks in the joist pattern of the first floor in the north-western corner of the former larger room could indicate the possible position of the access between floors. The first floor was also separated by a full cross-frame – seemingly not aligned with that below.

The solar itself (the best room) was the southern first floor chamber, today's bedroom. Fox and Raglan thought the solar was originally open to the roof timbers, which had some smoke blackening and nice roll-stopped chamfer detailing. However, the eventual consensus during the restoration project was that it was probably *not* open to the roof, as the ceiling joists were clearly primary. This room too could have been heated by a brazier or conceivably an open hearth, and any blackening above due simply to the constantly swirling smoke. The room was well lit by the south-facing window, which was discovered during the works, masked beneath later butter pointing and fully revealed today in its original well-constructed form.

The northern section of this range seems always to have been of three floors, with a loft above the first-floor room. The first-floor room was probably a bedchamber as, perhaps, was the attic space above, accessed by a ladder.

Phase II: Late-17th-century changes

Dated by isotopic timber analysis to 1656-98, a series of major changes took place in the late-17th century. These changes are entirely typical of the evolution of domestic housing in the early modern period, although occur very late at Llwyn Celyn.

A large masonry stack was inserted into the eastern end of the hall, backing on to the spere truss and the screens passage. The character of the first floor over the screens passage is quite different to that inserted into the formerly open hall. It may have been inserted later and more pragmatically and it is possible that a smoke hood, now lost, provided an interim arrangement between the open hearth and the enclosed flue. It was suggested at the start of the project that the stack could have been inserted first with the floor over the passage, so that the hall initially remained open to the roof. However, the timber analysis taken in conjunction with the known sequence of leases imply rather that the hall was ceiled and the stack inserted in the late-17th century.

The attached two-storey kitchen block to the north-east of the house was timber dated to post-1655 and can therefore also be associated with the insertion of the chimney stack; it was accessed through the northern doorway of the cross-passage and this may have been one of the reasons why the inserted stack backed onto the cross passage rather than being built within it, as sometimes happens. This allowed the passage to be used for direct access to the kitchen. The block is well constructed, with a window at each side and the neatly stop chamfered joists common in the other affluent farmhouses springing up in the valley at this period. Like the hall and cross passage, its floor is of stone flags. It has a large bread oven built into its north wall.

The room above this kitchen is accessed by its own external set of steps and was presumably used for servant accommodation and/or storage.

South of the hall chimney stack and associated with the inserted floor over the hall are the present stairs – an open well design with three sets of risers and two quarter landings, to cope with the difference in the first-floor levels between the first floor of the service range and the created first floor room above the hall. The design of the stairs, square newels with ball finials, solid string balustrades, moulded handrails and turned balusters is consistent with a date in the later-17th or early-18th centuries. During restoration, signs were also found that there had been an earlier staircase on the other side of the stack, presumably replaced by the surviving one. The partition to the stairs in the hall incorporates reused moulded timber brattishing, probably part of the original late-medieval cornice.

In the solar range, the ceiling joists were given a simple fluted 'finger' decoration traces of which survived – in poor condition – above a modern fibreboard ceiling. Such decoration is typical of the late-17th century, and has been reinstated.

Phase III: Later Changes (late-18th, 19th and 20th centuries)

Few changes were made after the start of the 18th century, when rents rose dramatically. Those that were made have mostly been reversed under Landmark's philosophy of repair for a return to the point at which the hall ceiling and chimney stack were put in.

A series of alterations were eventually made to the ground floor of the solar, which passed out of domestic use. It had a raised stone floor with a surface drain which could be associated with some 'wet' process – dairying, cheese-making and such-like; it had certainly become a very wet area either being built into the bank originally or, and more likely, being originally built above ground level but suffering subsequent slippage of the ground outside with a steady build up against the outside of the wall. This proved a major challenge during restoration.

At some point – perhaps as late as the 19th century – an L-shaped corridor was created along the south side of the first-floor of the hall range, and turning right at the end to provide separate access to the north space in the solar (today's bathroom). These corridor partitions have been removed. It is not clear when the south facing dormer window was originally created and this has been left as it is.

Small fireplaces and associated chimney stacks were added to both first floor rooms in the solar range, the opening of the southerly hearth at least having a 'lintel' crudely scored into the render in imitation of dressed stone. Both these fireplaces have been covered up, the one in the bathroom now serving as a useful services duct.

A flimsy partition was introduced into the former first floor solar to create a box room or dressing room at the southern end of today's bedroom. As the main south facing window had been blocked by now, the small east facing window was inserted. The partition has been removed, but as the date of the east window is uncertain, it has been left. It was perhaps the creation of this window that obliterated any sign of the egress of an external staircase, if the stone doorway discovered in the hall during restoration did indeed lead to one.

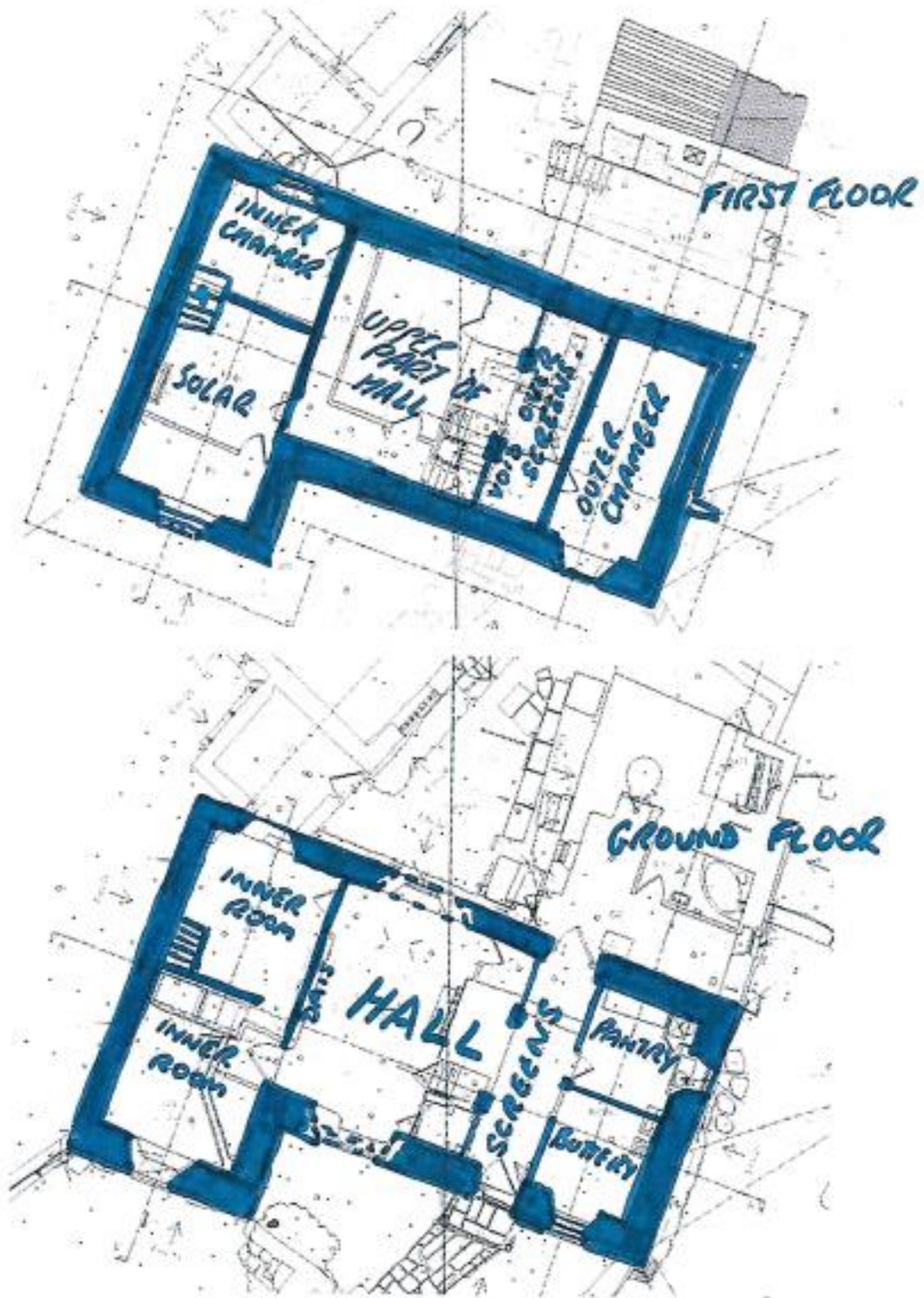
Later changes in the 19th century included the creation of a larger bread oven in the kitchen block, the addition of a privy, and further minor changes to doorways and partitions. One of the few interesting features of this period was the use of metal-framed windows with distinctive 'clenched fist' handles – used on other properties on the Llanthony estate; these are a fairly common design, found in catalogues of the day, but interesting in their own right. In the absence of any evidence for earlier windows, these metal windows and latches have been reconditioned but kept in situ.

Phase IV: Recent Changes / Llwyn Celyn as we found it

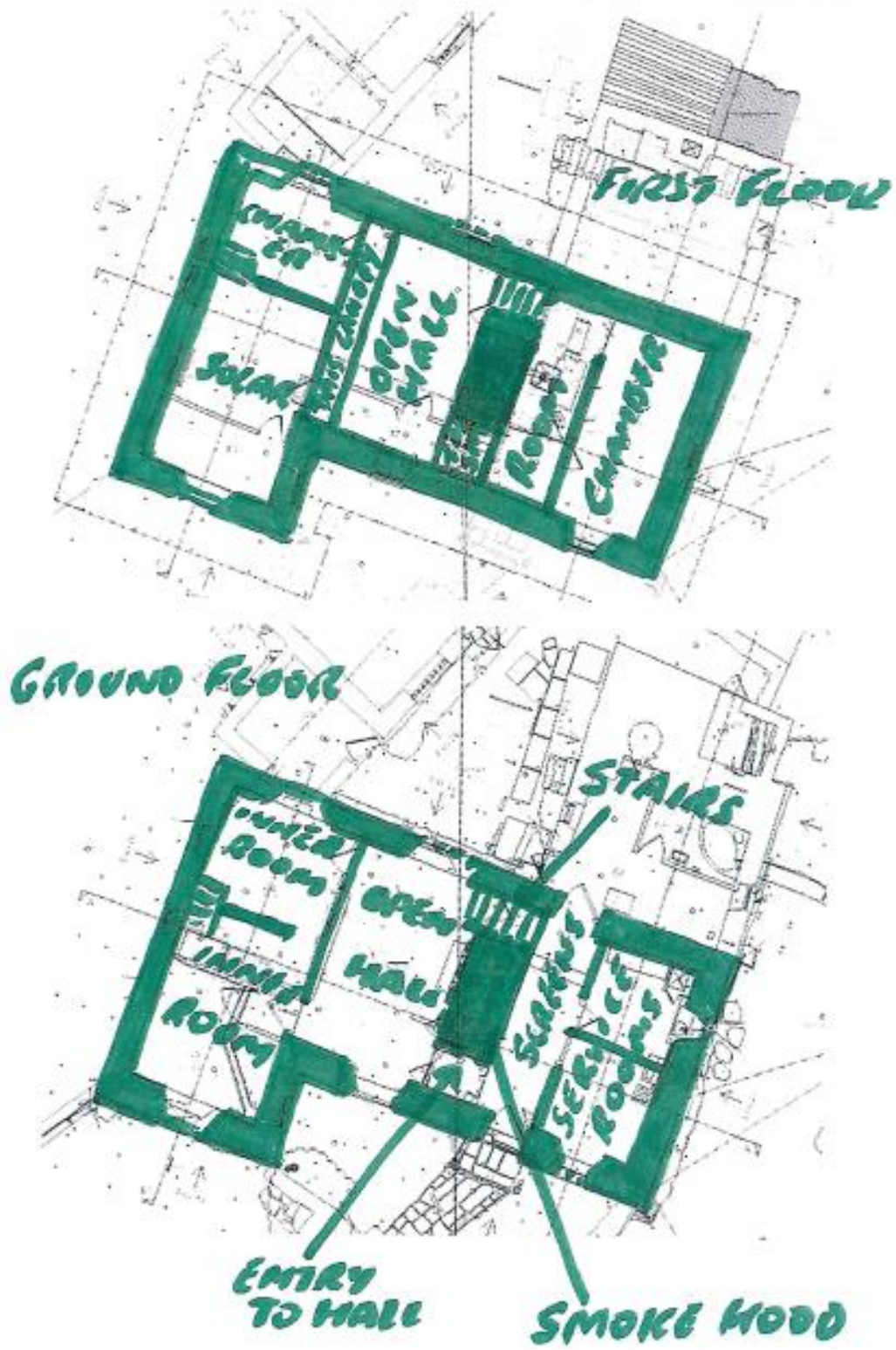
In the mid-to-late 20th century, various ad hoc changes. Some fireplaces were blocked up, and made changes to others, notably the blocking of the hall inglenook opening and the insertion of a large, beige-tiled coal fireplace. At least some of the roof over the hall range was re-raftered. The northern end of the roof in the service wing was also replaced, possibly after a fire. The primary ground-floor partition between the service rooms was removed to create one large kitchen, the southerly doorway off the screens passage blocked in the process (these changes have been reversed by the restoration). Crude partitions were inserted into the rear kitchen to house a bathroom – but one that was never properly plumbed in.

Archaeologist Richard Morriss's summary of phasing for the main house

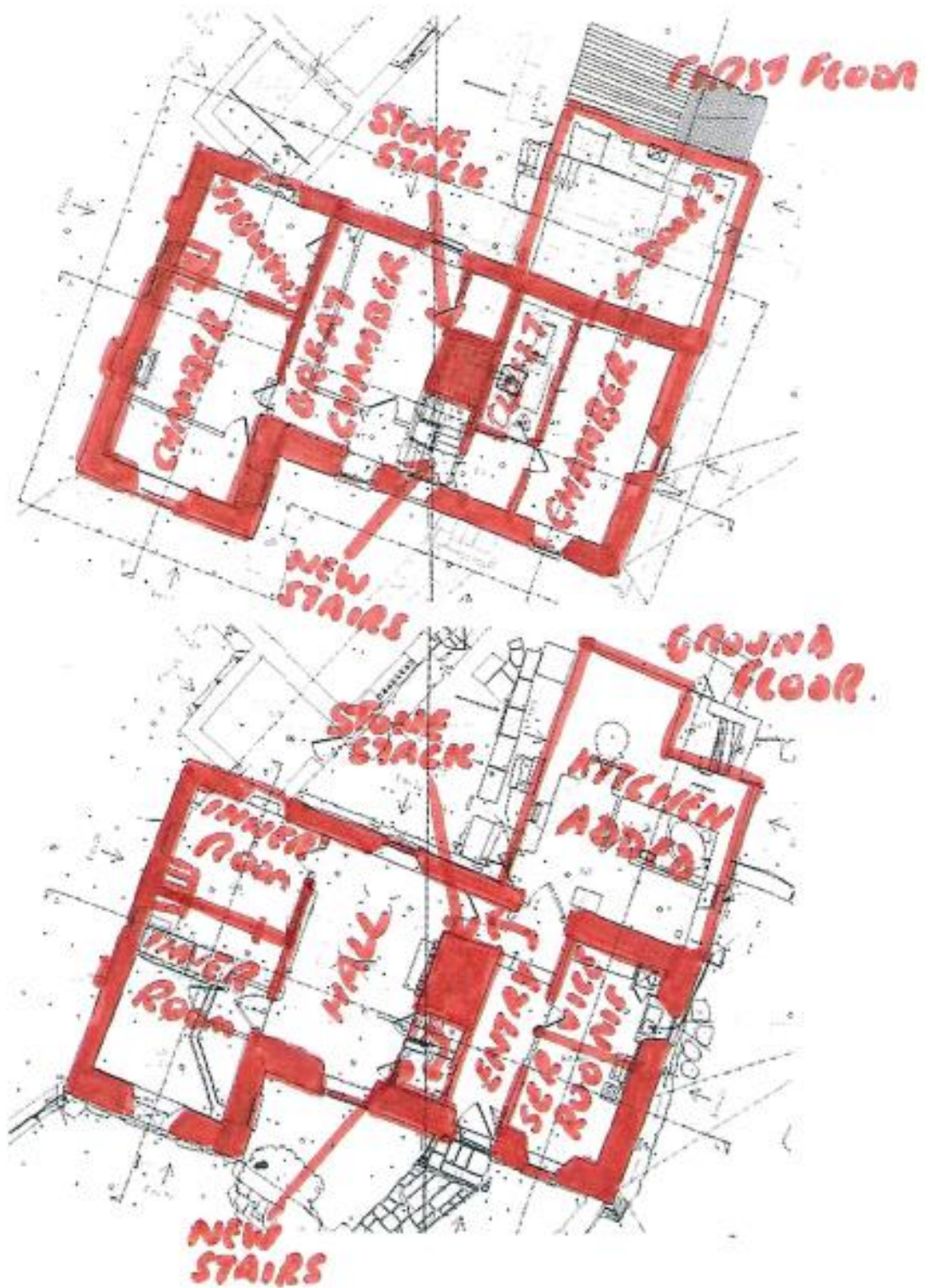
PHASE ONE : c. 1420



PHASE TWO : c. 1600?



PHASE THREE : c.1700



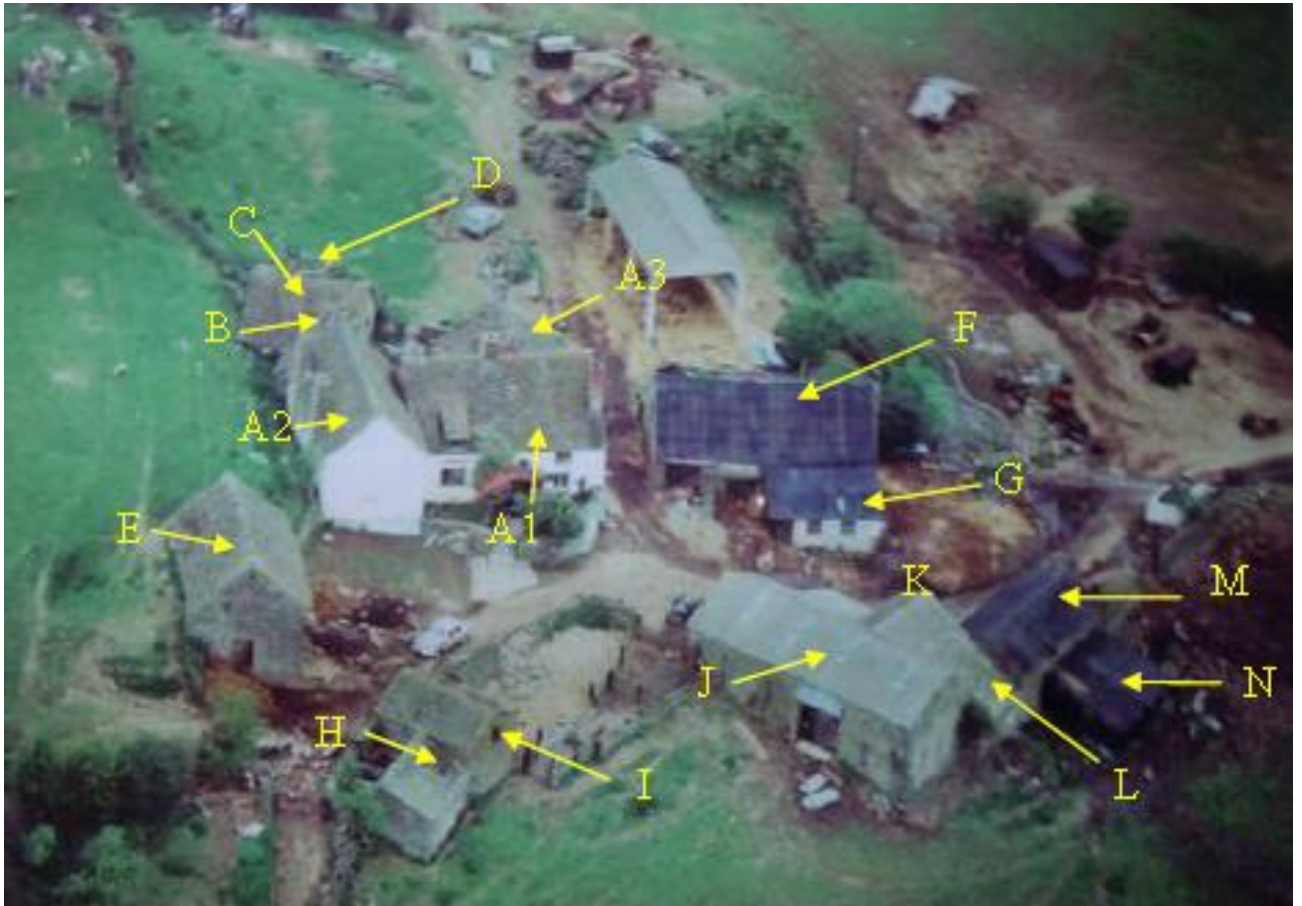
The Farm Buildings

Like the farmhouse, the walls and roofs of the farm buildings are mostly built of the local rubblestone. Underlying the layout of the farm is a series of small terraced areas with revetment walls that are quite substantial structures in their own right. These terraces, along with the rest of the stone boundary walls within the site, are an important part of its general character and a unifying element in the farmstead. The different levels were also important in the way that several of the farm buildings were designed and used.

Building B: Malt kiln (infill range)

The malt kiln is a small rubblestone building in the irregular gap between the north of the main house and the Cider House (Building C), which it post-dates. It is perhaps of the 18th century. It has a curious junction with the side of the house – even using a part of the house’s masonry as part of its own walling and blocking the gable end windows in the process. In the front, or east, wall there is a single doorway but the rear wall is built into the adjacent bank. The only other opening into the building was one inserted through the first-floor of the adjacent Cider House. Internally there was evidence of plaster on the upper section and indications of a first floor. The combination of evidence for a stack or flue against the house wall; an upper floor; plastered walls, and the many perforated tile fragments found in debris suggests that some form of drying process was being undertaken in this building, with a heat source on the ground floor. As there was a larger grain dryer elsewhere on the farmstead (Building I), it is thought this was a small kiln for roasting barley to extract malt, used for brewing of beer. The barley was soaked in water to help it germinate, and then raked several times a day to obtain the right sugar content. Malsters have all but disappeared today, but in the past every farm would have known the process.

Today, the malt kiln is kept exclusively for the use of the bats that formerly lived in the house, for whom a cooling tower has been built out of breeze blocks according to the strictures of Natural Resources Wales.



Identification of the farm buildings as originally found, the aerial photograph probably dating from the early-1970's.

- **Building A:** Farmhouse (A1: former hall house, A2: solar range, A3: rear kitchen)
 - **Building B:** Malt kiln (now a cooling tower for bats)
 - **Building C:** Cider House
 - **Building D:** Lean-to (now de-roofed)
 - **Building E:** Stables (now housing heating plant)
 - **Building F:** Beast House (now the information room)
 - **Building G:** Shelter shed
 - **Building H:** Piggery (demolished, now a sitting out area)
 - **Building I:** Wheat drying kiln
 - **Building J:** Threshing Barn
 - **Building K:** Granary
 - **Building L:** Link house
 - **Building M:** Lower barn
- Building C:** the Cider House (today the bedroom and bathroom annexe)

The Cider House is a well-built and relatively unaltered two-storey rectangular rubblestone building to the north of the solar wing of the house, physically linked to it by the infill of the later malt kiln. It probably dates to the late-17th or early-18th century. A terraced area had to be cut into the bank to allow it to be built. The east gable elevation is the main elevation of the building and faces into the rear yard area of the property. It is well built of worked but roughly coursed rubblestone with longer blocks for the quoins, and nicely battered walls.

On the ground floor there is a square-headed primary external doorway with a stepped threshold and dowelled timber frame. To the left of the doorway is a primary window opening. The wooden window frame itself seems to be primary and is of seven narrow lights divided by diamond-set timber mullions. Centrally positioned beneath the gable at first-floor level is a second window, once of similar design but of five lights, much altered. At this level the protecting drip mould above it has survived virtually intact. Because the west gable is built into the bank, only its upper section is visible. This has a single blocked window opening – or low taking-in doorway.

The ground and first floors were both single spaces before works began, with no obvious indications to suggest that there were former partitions, fireplaces or stairs, ruling out domestic use. A hole had been drilled into the soffit of one of to take the top bearing of a vertical shaft of some kind. A very fragmented millstone was found embedded in the floor and there were also the setts for a former trough of some kind against the back wall.

This was a Cider House within living memory. The missing shaft served a cider press powered either by man or beast in which the apples were crushed. The remnants indicating a trough or support could have been associated with a press where the 'cheeses' – bags of crushed apples – were squeezed to extract the liquid. The loft could have been for storage, whether apples and another crop, easily loaded in from the hillside through the doorway at first floor height.

Building D: The Lean-to

The lean-to structure built against the northern wall of the Cider House range largely infills the formerly open narrow section of terraced area in between that building and the revetment wall to the north. It is fairly crude and could date to as late as the 19th century. The massive stone set into its west wall originally carried spring water, for washing and other purposes well into the 20th century (this flow has sadly now been diverted by the farmers).

Building E: The Stables

The stable block lies south-west of the house and was considerably altered in the mid-20th century by Tom Jasper to create a mono-pitched roof. A traditional plain gabled roof was reinstated during restoration. It is built of roughly coursed rubblestone with longer and better worked stones used in the quoins.

At the southern end of the west wall is a doorway at first-floor level accessed directly from the adjacent field which slopes steeply upwards to the west.

It was used to house animals on the ground floor, with feed storage above.

Today it houses heating plant. The upper leaf of the stable door is covered with graffiti (among them 'folk art' ploughs and many initials, including 'J' for Jasper) and it has therefore been left unpainted.

Building F: The Beast House (today's information room)

Apart from the farmhouse, the Beast House is the only other listed building on the site (Grade II). Its roof timbers have now been accorded a felling date of 1688/9, justifying this listing. It is a structure of fairly randomly coursed rubblestone, aligned west-east and built end-on to the prevailing slope. The south wall had a window towards the eastern end – now blocked by the shelter shed. Two buttresses were added at some stage to help shore up the building in its challenging position across the contour line, and it had suffered considerably from water run-off.

The west gable is plain, apart from what appears to be a primary taking-in doorway at attic floor level. This has a plain timber lintel and must always have

been reached by ladder, as there is no evidence for fixed steps. The original upper part of the east gable was originally of masonry but had been taken down and replaced with corrugated iron; it is now glazed studwork to create a viewing gallery. The lower part of the gable survived and is a symmetrical composition with doorways at both ends and a central square-headed window, all protected by a fairly crude but continuous projecting stone drip mould running the entire width of the building. Whilst the doors have changed the window retains its original timber frame of five un-glazed narrow lights with diamond-set mullions.

The steeply pitched roof is plain gabled, four bays with simple timber trusses supporting three tiers of trenched purlins and a ridge-piece. All the timbers are rather crude and some could have been re-used – especially the common rafters. Rusting corrugated iron sheets were replaced during restoration with graded stone tiles. The loft floor has taking-in doorways in the west and east gable walls and was originally one large single attic space. As the truss ties are only just above its floor level and as the loft floor was largely missing anyway, it has not been replaced to enable the building's use as an information room.

The main section of the ground floor had stalling for a dozen cattle either side of a central feed passage flanked by stall aisles accessed by the two southern doorways. The Beast House had stalls for a dozen cattle, and its late 17th-century construction date is entirely consistent with a period when dairy farming was booming.

The western end of the ground floor is higher than the rest, and separated from it by a crude partition. It was in recent use as a tack room.

When restoration began, the north wall of the Beast House was bulging alarmingly, undermined by the perpetual runoff from the hillside. It had to be taken down and completely rebuilt, this time with an adequate drainage channel alongside.

Building G: The Shelter Shed

The lean-to building against the eastern end of the south wall of the Beast House appeared at first to be a simple, very late structure built of concrete blockwork with a corrugated iron roof. However, during restoration the side walls were found to be of much earlier, rubblestone construction, incorporating earlier timbers integral to the main Beast House and possibly of the same late-17th-century date. It has therefore also been re-roofed with stone tiles, as an open shelter for walkers.

Building H: The Piggery (demolished)

This little two storey building (too far gone to be saved) was latterly a piggery – certainly on its upper floor. It was built at right-angles to, and abutted, the earlier wheat drying kiln. There was no connection between the two but the piggery was built of the same roughly coursed rubblestone.

The northern part of this range appears to have been altered to create a series of open yards serving pig sties to the south – at the effective first-floor level of the buildings due to the sloping ground. There were doorways into the pig houses at each extremity of the spine wall.

The building may originally have had a low-pitched and plain-gabled roof, but most of the northern roof slope seems to have been removed as part of the creation of the open yards. The rest of the roof was in very poor condition, and covered with roughly graded, unpegged stone tiles with overhanging eaves and verges, an interesting survival for roofing historians. It probably dated to the late-18th or early-19th century but had few dateable features.

Building I: Wheat Kiln

This is a two storey structure aligned north-south and built into the bank, so that its northern end the first-floor level is at the prevailing yard level. It is built of roughly coursed rubblestone with large blocks at the corners. There is a doorway at ground floor level in its east wall but no other openings in its side walls. There was a single doorway at first-floor level off the main yard through

the north gable wall, but this has now been blocked to separate Landmark and community use.

The plain gabled roof has a fairly shallow pitch and is covered in roughly graded stone tiles. Structurally it is of two bays, with a central truss. This is a simple design of tie-beams, principal rafters and a pair of thin 'V-braces' from tie to principals. The braces are jointed to the northern faces of the larger timbers by half-lapped nailed dovetails. The truss, and the masonry of the gable ends, support two tiers of roughly, and shallowly, trenched purlins and a ridge-piece.

The northern end of the ground floor has a substantial stone built-kiln with a heat hole on the south side, and retained a set of derelict steps up between it and the east wall. Dating is virtually impossible – other than suggesting somewhere within a broad later-18th to early-19th century period. It was clearly a building used for drying grain, which was placed on top of the kiln and heated through before being threshed in the nearby Threshing Barn. The Wheat Kiln now provides secure storage space for educational and community use of the Threshing Barn.

Building J: Threshing Barn

The former Threshing Barn is a long rectangular single storey structure with a contemporary porch, built down the slope on the south side of the main farm complex. It runs roughly north-south and is built of roughly coursed rubblestone, with large blocks at the corners. The original ventilation loops are tall and narrow with very plain surrounds; internally they have splayed reveals topped by fairly substantial timber lintels.

The main entrance, protected by the projecting and contemporary porch, is on the east side. The front elevation as found was largely obscured by 20th-century add-ons to either side of the porch, all but one of which have been removed. The porch consists just of the two side walls projecting from the main part of the barn, their ends acting as the jambs of the opening.

The main opening in the west elevation is large double-doorway matching the eastern entrance, to provide a classic threshing floor arrangement by which the doors could both be opened to allow the prevailing breeze to help sort the wheat from the chaff. Despite its position and the use of larger rubble blocks for its jambs, it is just possible that this opening was inserted later.

The south gable is the tallest section of the building because of the sloping ground level. Both gable ends were clearly reduced in height when the roof was renewed (notice how the roofline now pinches the ventilation loops on both gables) and their pitch was lowered. They are otherwise little altered – other than for a taking-in doorway high in the south gable that has been infilled at some stage.

The present steel- trussed roof is mid-20th century when the pitch was significantly lowered. Plain gabled, it came to us covered in corrugated asbestos cement sheeting. The original roof would have been taller and more steeply gabled – probably similar in its profile to that of the Beast House. In repairing and converting the Threshing Barn, while the existing roofing material clearly had to be replaced, we took the decision to acknowledge its representative evolution as a farm building and so to retain the lowered pitch and re-roof in more benign corrugated roofing material.

The interior is and probably always was one large single space open to the roof. There was a broad, primary, but very dilapidated wooden door between the porch and the main body of the building. Sadly it was too far gone to be worth saving, and as our approach to all the outbuildings was to retain their traditional appearance in the landscape but beyond this, do what was needed to bring them into successful and sustainable use, a new glazed door has been introduced to admit as much light as possible.

Internally, there were no signs of any of the typical, ephemeral timber-framed partitions that to separate the threshing floor from the storage bays to either

side of it, used both for storing crops awaiting processing and, depending on the individual arrangements of the farm, those that had already been processed.

Dating was initially difficult, especially because of the replacement of the roof, but insight emerged late in the project when timber in the little link house (see below) to the south of the Threshing Barn was dated to felling 1695/6. From their junction, the link house clearly postdates the Threshing Barn structurally, implying that Threshing Barn was built before 1695/6. There is a very fine, similar barn on the road up to Cwmyoy dated 1703, so even though other such barns in the area date more typically to the later 18th and 19th centuries, a mid-17th century date for Llwyn Celyn's Threshing Barn is not implausible given the site's earlier history.

Despite its re-roofing and various accretions, the Threshing Barn remains one of the key buildings on the farm in terms of its architecture and its position within the farmstead, a symbol of pride and status to the farmer.

Building K: The Threshing Barn Northern Additions

Two extensions were added in the angle between the northern end of the east wall of the Threshing Barn and the north wall of its eastern porch. Although two separate structures, they were clearly built soon after each other. Both were simple lean-to structures built of concrete blocks covered in corrugated asbestos cement sheeting. Each contained a single space with limewashed walls, presumably for cattle accommodation.

These additions were of no architectural value and of limited historical significance, merely a reminder of the continuing and rather ad hoc evolution of a farmstead of this size and type. The southern one was slightly earlier and slightly larger and has a doorway at the southern end of its east wall and a 'Crittall-style' steel-framed window at the northern end. This has been retained as a storage space for equipment for the Threshing Barn in its new use as a community and training facility. The other has been removed.

Building L: The Link House

This is a small rectangular rubblestone structure built in the angle between the southern end of the Threshing Barn's east wall and the south wall of its porch. It is built of roughly coursed rubblestone and projects slightly further southwards than the gable end of the barn.

At the eastern end of that elevation was a blocked primary doorway, with a simple two-light casement window incorporated into the blocking. The lower part of its east wall was incorporated into the west gable of the adjacent Granary (Building M). This made a primary window in the wall redundant and it has been blocked. The link house also had a hearth, flue and small wall cupboard, all much altered and built in by the time they emerged. The roof was a simple mono-pitch, covered with roughly graded stone tiles. Inside was a single space divided into two by a tubular galvanised steel stall divider; it had rendered and limewashed walls and a concrete floor.

All this led us initially to identify the link house as a loose box, possibly put up in the early-19th century, we thought. While clearly much altered internally, the external envelope was little altered. Our archaeologist's assessment in 2014 was that 'it has a minor degree of significance within the farmstead, but does butt uncomfortably against the adjacent buildings to either side of it.'

Only with the benefit of this hindsight, and of the knowledge gained during restoration of the previously concealed features did this little building suddenly become more interesting. The second phase isotopic analysis in 2018 revealed a felling date of 1695/6 for one of its roof timbers, apparently in its primary position (although this is a matter of debate). A medieval spout similar to the one still projecting from the house was found incorporated into the fireplace wall, which could have been consistent with its removal from the solar range during the 1690s refurbishment – but this is speculation. Much altered internally, its original use is unknown: suggestions range from a detached kitchen (although this seems somewhat unlikely for such a considered addition given the construction of the rear kitchen around the same time) or,

conceivably, a little self contained dwelling. Its remaining character has now unfortunately been almost entirely subsumed by its conversion for use as part of the bunk house.

Building M: The Granary

The Granary is a long one and a half storey building abutting the link house to the south of the Threshing Barn. Three timbers in its roof structure have been given a felling dates in the mid-19th century. It is thought originally to have been a cart shed with granary above. Built of roughly coursed rubblestone, its external appearance has been conserved but internally it has now been comprehensively fitted out as a rudimentary bunk house. This is not part of the main Landmark accommodation and is let separately, primarily to candidates on the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

The Restoration of Llwyn Celyn

On 3rd July 2014, as news broke of our Heritage Lottery Fund grant (55% of project costs), Llwyn Celyn was visited by HRH The Prince of Wales. We were still fundraising and not yet on site, so hosting such an event required a degree of improvisation, to which the Development team rose magnificently.



Prince Charles with Landmark's Director, Anna Keay.



Welsh cakes and English sparkling wine were served in the Threshing Barn – with wood chips to cover the floor imported for the occasion.

Landmark finally took ownership of Llwyn Celyn in June 2014, by when a new house had been completed for its previous owners. With the confidence of the HLF's backing, we launched a mail appeal in November 2014 and set about finalising the scheme and tendering. The appointed contractors were a local firm from Hereford, I. J. Preece & Son. The appeal eventually reached its target in January 2016, and we were then on site from April 2016 to September 2018. The following photographs provide snapshots of this complex project and a flavour of life on site during that time.



Each month through the project, we gathered in the site hut (a portacabin) with the contractors to move the project along. Left to right: Adrian Stenning (Quantity Surveyor), John Evetts (Furnishing Manager) Susan McDonough (Head of Historic Estate), Jane Lockwood Taylor (project coordinator) and John Goom (conservation architect) – discussing a finer point after the main meeting with the contractors.

July 2016 – marking time and getting ahead on other aspects as we waited for the bats to move out of the main house. Ecological legislation trumps any kind of historic building or construction works.



Service trenches going in, carefully overseen by archaeologists. Sadly nothing of interest was found to illuminate the site's earlier history.



Architect John Goom discusses rainwater samples with Preece's contract manager Ritchie Williams, Richard Burton looking on.



Discussing pointing samples. The red earth on the site was used as aggregate in the lime mortar, ensuring that the external pointing blended well with the stone and the landscape.



The Threshing Barn was found to be in danger of slipping down the slope. Structural engineer Tom Hill prescribed a cat's cradle of scaffolding and orange nylon strapping to hold gable in place until it could be fully consolidated.



This blocked window in the solar was hidden beneath later butter pointing, and hidden beneath plaster internally. Now cleaned off, we wondered how we had missed it!

Autumn 2016 – the roof coming off, always a time of great learning about a building.



Roof tiles all stripped, the fine wind braces of the once open hall and inserted chimney stack are clearly apparent. Rotten pegs meant this roof truss had to be inched back into position. The difference in colour is clear between the smoke-blackened timbers of the undersides of the roof and the clean oak on their topsides.





Autumn 2016. When the roof was stripped, each tile was individually removed by hand, and passed down a chute just as it would have been in centuries past.



Project architect John Goom laying out a Welsh valley, a traditional solution to making the junction between roof slopes watertight. The massive stone tiles, which run in diminishing courses from the roofline, are Devonian Old Red Sandstone. They were quarried from near Longtown. Where sound, salvaged tiles were re-used among the new ones.



Two old shoes were found carefully concealed on the wall heads. This was traditionally done to ward off evil spirits. This one appears to be 17th-century, perhaps relating to the Watkins' works. After careful recording, the shoes were replaced in situ, where they remain.

This shoe was small and narrow, probably a woman's. Very well made, it is cloth lined and neatly finished, with two leather soles. Its heel (probably a raised one) was missing.



Autumn 2016. The front dormer stripped.

Below: A view into the roof space above the cross passage (a bathroom today), showing the blackened roof timbers and, behind them, the line of the rear kitchen added in the 1690s. It was in this space that the large wooden hopper now in the information room was found. We never worked out either how it got into this cramped space or what it was used for.



Looking north in the solar range roof space. Note the plastered partitions between the studwork, showing that this attic floor was also in domestic use.



Above: this crack in the south gable of the solar range is typical of what had to be dealt with.

Below: As the roof was stripped, these little oak pegs came to litter the site, redolent of long evenings of fireside whittling. Today, stainless steel tingles are used to fix the roof tiles instead.





The many cracks in Llwyn Celyn's walls were invisibly stitched back together using resin ties. Diamond tipped drill heads are used to drill the path of the core, into which a 'sock' is inserted. High-strength resin is then injected .



For a time during the project, when the roof was off and the first floor boards lifted, a sense could be caught of what the hall was like when open to its rafters. The curved brace above the high end shown here could possibly have been a support for the dais canopy. The medieval carpenters had trouble with join between the solar range and the hall range; it may even have been left as a jetty with the solar joists exposed.

Below: the massive chimney stack inserted in the 1690s burst through the carefully laid out progression of wind braces.





John Goom (architect) and Tom Hill (structural engineer) scrutinise the roof of the solar range, whose timber was felled in 1418/19. Meanwhile, we were opening up to investigate the spere truss in the cross passage.



Below: Richard Suggett (RCAHMMW, centre) and Richard Morriss (archaeologist) debate the evidence of the spere truss.





The ground floor was carefully lifted piece by piece ready for the installation of underfloor heating (here in the rear kitchen)



Llwyn Celyn's timbers hold various markings that do not seem to relate to the carpenter's setting out of the building. They may be apotropaic marks, to ward off evil spirits – or they may be someone's idle doodle!

Four days before Christmas, 2016. Getting to grips with the state of decay in the house. By now the inglenook fireplace has been revealed in the hall. The state of the revealed sole plate was giving cause for





The ground floor of the solar range stripped out, looking south. The ceilings were so low that at some stage a doorhead had been hacked out of the crossbeam (top left). The thickness of the walls is apparent in the window embrasures.



By January 2017, signs of reconstruction were emerging, rather than simply unpicking. Here, the original, rather bodedged joint between the solar range and hall range roofs has been improved. Note the lap joint repair at the apex, carefully scarfed in.



June 2017: a major milestone was reached, as the scaffolding was dropped from the main house. Incredibly, this was the first time we had ever seen the house without scaffolding. It was also the first chance to fully appreciate the newly tiled roofs.





Attention also turned to the outbuildings. Here, the Beast House roof is stripped ready for re-battening. Its north wall has been rebuilt by now. We learnt that the little lean-to shelter is much older than we had thought.



Huge gabions have been installed against the west bank behind the solar range, serving both to improve site drainage and to act as a retaining wall.



Major piling and underpinning underway in the Threshing Barn, today invisible beneath the concrete plinth that also helps stabilise its walls. The excavation of the floor also enabled the installation of underfloor heating.





June 2017. Insulation of the underside of the hall roof going in, timber repairs and a first scratch coat of lime render on the walls. Through this door into the solar, plaster repairs are underway to the ceiling, using fibred lime plaster sheets across which the finger moulding can be dragged.



Trial samples of moulding ready for approval, and the plasterer's tools. The wooden mould will be dragged through the wet plaster to form the moulding.





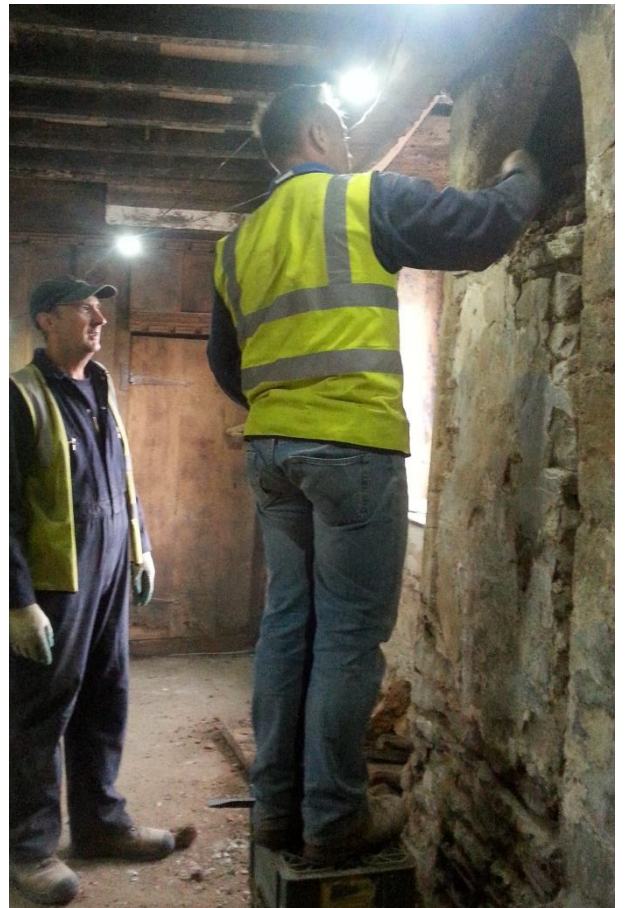
August 2017: the windows are now glazed and the rear courtyard is taking shape. John Goom discusses progress with Ritchie and Jerry Preece. Kasia's volunteers have planted heritage variety apple trees in the orchard.





The 2017 SPAB Fellows visited the site in September, here with Susan McDonough, Landmark’s Head of Historic Estate. By now, the underfloor heating had been installed and limecrete floors were down in the house (below in the hall).

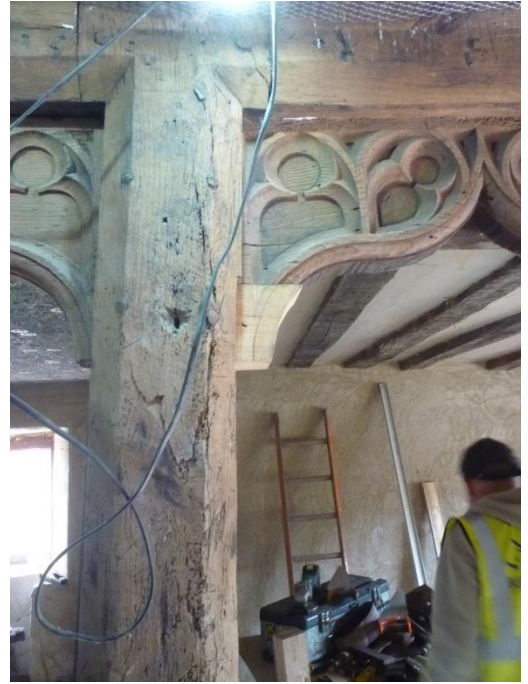




Sept 2107 also brought the discovery of the arched doorway in the hall, concealed beneath later cementitious plaster. The rubble infill was removed for us on the day of the September site meeting.

These traces of ochre limewash on the jambs were the only trace of medieval colour we discover during the project (the blue paint is much later, a colour commonly used in the 19th century).

The opening may have been a display alcove, or possibly an intramural spiral staircase to the solar. Later alterations had removed any evidence of a staircase at first floor level – it may have emerged through today's window.



Much of the joinery on the project was done by Simon, here chiseling out the missing point of a spandrel.





Winter 2017/18 was one of the coldest for many years. The Beast from the East arrived with several heavy snowfalls from December (here) through to late February. Preece's kept working pretty much throughout – provided the valley road was open! This was followed by one of the hottest and driest summers on record. By August (below) we were praying for rain for the grass seed to grow, and protecting lime mortar with damp hessian to prevent it drying too fast with risk of cracking.



A second visit by Landmark's Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales



Having visited before work started, HRH The Prince of Wales was keen to see the Llwyn Celyn project at completion. A private visit was fitted into his schedule on 5th July 2018, exactly four years after his previous visit. It was a major incentive to get the main house completed, even though there was still much to be done on the other buildings. On a very hot day, Prince Charles met craftsmen and key supporters of the project. He also planted an apple tree in the orchard, an ancient Welsh variety called Brith Mawr (Great Speckled). We presented him with a copy of *Llanthony Valley: A Borderland*, the book written as part of the output of the Llanthony Valley & District History Group, and he signed the Landmark Log Book.





HRH Prince Charles met key supporters and members of the project team.



The Prince planted an apple tree in the orchard, here prepared by Engagement Manager Kasia Howard who oversaw much of the onsite planting, helped by volunteers.

Heritage at Work weeks

Heritage at Work weeks were a new initiative for Landmark, conceived as part of our HLF-funded outreach programme. There were four H@W weeks (as we contracted it for social media) during the project: space was made in the works schedule for volunteers to come to site and learn about traditional materials and building techniques; have a go at some of them themselves, and generally help with tasks on the wider site. This blog, written in September 2016 by Kasia Howard, Landmark's Engagement Manager, gives a good sense of what H@W weeks were all about.

'Autumn has begun to edge its way into the Llanthony Valley, but luckily not before we delivered the second of our Heritage Lottery Funded-Heritage at Work weeks. Eleven adult volunteers, seven Young Heritage Apprentices from the Prince's Foundation, two students and one work experience pupil joined forces together to complete an amazing amount of work with good cheer and enthusiasm. Warm, wet, then hot weather kept us busy diving for shelter, then thirsting for refreshment.

'It is thanks to the experts who lead the individual activities that we were able to achieve so much. Ty Mawr Lime once again equipped the volunteers not only with the skills needed to repoint parts of the cowshed, but also the understanding of why we work with lime mortar. John Barber and Luke Saunders kept a special eye on their volunteer team who helped out with the drystone walling. The hefty stones once ploughed and dug out of the ground need careful handling. The perimeter wall is a mighty structure, retaining an ancient trackway on one side, with the ground on the other sloping sharply away. It was not the easiest of areas to work in and there is a wide variety of stones – some block, others rounded and smoothed by the action of melting ice water, or gouged by the glacier itself as it pushed its way through to form the Llanthony Valley millions of years ago. The glacier eventually stopped its course just a mile or so away from Llwyn Celyn, dumping vast quantities of glacial

debris and forming a ridge (the terminal moraine), on which sits the village of Llanvihangel Crucorney.



Many hands made light work at Llwyn Celyn



Kasia Howard, Landmark's Engagement Manager, gives a new volunteer a tour of the site



Nigel Jervis from Ty Mawr demonstrates the art of lime plastering.



A volunteer practising – it's not as easy as Nigel made it look!



The perimeter drystone wall was continuing its march downhill along an ancient trackway.

'The Young Heritage Apprentices also had the opportunity to spend the day working with Richard Jordan of Jordan Heritage Roofing. A mock-up of a roof, mounted onto the back of a trailer allowed Richard to work with groups at ground level and on a compact scale. The YHA's worked with slates rather than the heavy stone tiles found on Llwyn Celyn's roof. Roofing is not as easy as it looks – enough maths is thrown into the process to baffle most people, before you even begin to think about diminishing courses, Welsh valleys (tiled as opposed to lead lined-valleys between two roof slopes) or decorative features. Richard made it tantalisingly clear that the possibilities are endless.

'On the Friday, we held a Landscape Study Day with Professor David Austin, Eddie Proctor, John Gibbs (a local art expert), Einion Gruffudd (from the National Library of Wales) and Rob Yorke. The day delivered a loosely chronological history of the valley, its people and its buildings – of a place that has witnessed conflict and change. Despite the timeless quality of the hills, time is always shifting here too and it fitted to end the Study Day by thinking about the future, of how lives might change here and the balance shift between nature and nurture as farming practice evolves and landscape management evolves.



Prince's Foundation Young Heritage Apprentices puzzle over the roof tiles. They compared traditional and modern techniques.



Pegged slates hung over laths

'On the Saturday Llwyn Celyn welcomed a range of visitors from near and far to an Open Day, one of many such during the project. Gareth Irwin, traditional Welsh furniture maker, was joined by artist Penny Hallas who delivered an inspiring drawing workshop influenced by the work of David Jones, who lived and worked in valley for a time. Here Jones developed his practice, painting and drawing with an emotional response to the landscape – layering images in a way that defy time, mixes perspective and creates new relationships between objects, boundaries and horizons. Penny encouraged people to draw onto acetate sheets that could then be overlaid in different ways, creating unique images that were full of depth - shifting, intangible, yet completely engaged with the place.'



In 2014, Professor David Austin led walk-and-talks in the Llanthony Valley for History Group members, decoding the landscape archaeology of its landscape, and its lost buildings. This led to members devising their own summer walks in subsequent years, to share knowledge and oral history.

Llanthony Valley & District History Group

As part of the development phase of the HLF funding, Landmark's Historian Caroline Stanford initiated a local history group in the valley, meeting once a month in the Cwmyoy Memorial Hall. From quite tentative beginnings of talks and getting to know each other, we encountered a fantastic coordinator in Pip Bevan, who got the administration of group emails and so on going, and soon had a group Dropbox running. Many group members turned out to have established and nascent research interests of their own; others were content simply to come and listen to a talk and exchange their own memories of life in the valley. Research topics were soon many and various – religion, transport, farming, trackways, buildings...

Thanks to the HLF funding, in the first summer of the Llwyn Celyn project, Landmark was able to fund a series of landscape and building walk-&-talks delivered by David Austin, Emeritus Professor of Archaeology at Lampeter St David's. These were very popular, and the following summer the group devised their own programme, walking the mountain slopes, tracks and lanes well known by many but not to all. The group settled into this routine of a winter programme of talks and a summer one of walks on which members shared memories and exchanged knowledge.

In October 2015 the group was formally constituted with its own officers and deeds. As part of the Llwyn Celyn project, one of its members, Dr. Oliver Fairclough, wrote a book about the valley drawing on the collective archive and members' photographs, funded by the HLF through Landmark as publisher. Members have also contributed actively to the information in the Beast House and been a fantastic support to the Llwyn Celyn project throughout, generous with their local knowledge. When Llwyn Celyn opened in 2019, the LVDHG had some 120 members – meaning 1 in 10 valley residents is a member. It looks set to be another lasting legacy of the project.

The LVDHG meets once a month and non-members are welcome. See <http://www.llanthonyhistory.wales/> for details of the current programme.



The manuscript for *Edi Beo Theo*. The two parts are transcribed at the top, and then verses written below, a red capital letter denoting the start of each. (MS CCC.59/v.113r, with thanks to Corpus Christi College, Oxford for permission to reproduce).

Edi Beo Thu: a 13th-century carol known as ‘the Llanthony Carol.’

The lovely carol known Edi Beo Thu Hevene Quene (Blessed be you, heavenly queen) was written down in Old English in the second half of the 13th century. It is also known as the Llanthony Carol. As Llwyn Celyn stood on the estate of Llanthony Priory, this of course made it of interest.



Llanthony Prima, dedicated to St John the Baptist. The priory was largely built by the early 1200s and this simple tune must once have filled the now ruined nave and echoed around its cloisters.

The carol surfaces in a book that once belonged to the library of Llanthony-by-Gloucester and that now belongs to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. As so often, this battered volume of 120 sheets of parchment consists of various manuscripts and shorter works bound up together into a single book. The carol is on the first (v.113r) of seven leaves bound right at the back, where the script is earlier than the rest of the book, and 13th-century in style. It is probably a record of an already well established song.

On these last seven leaves especially, but also other sections, the pages have a surprising amount of 'plummet' or annotations in lead, unusual in such manuscripts treasured as fair copies.

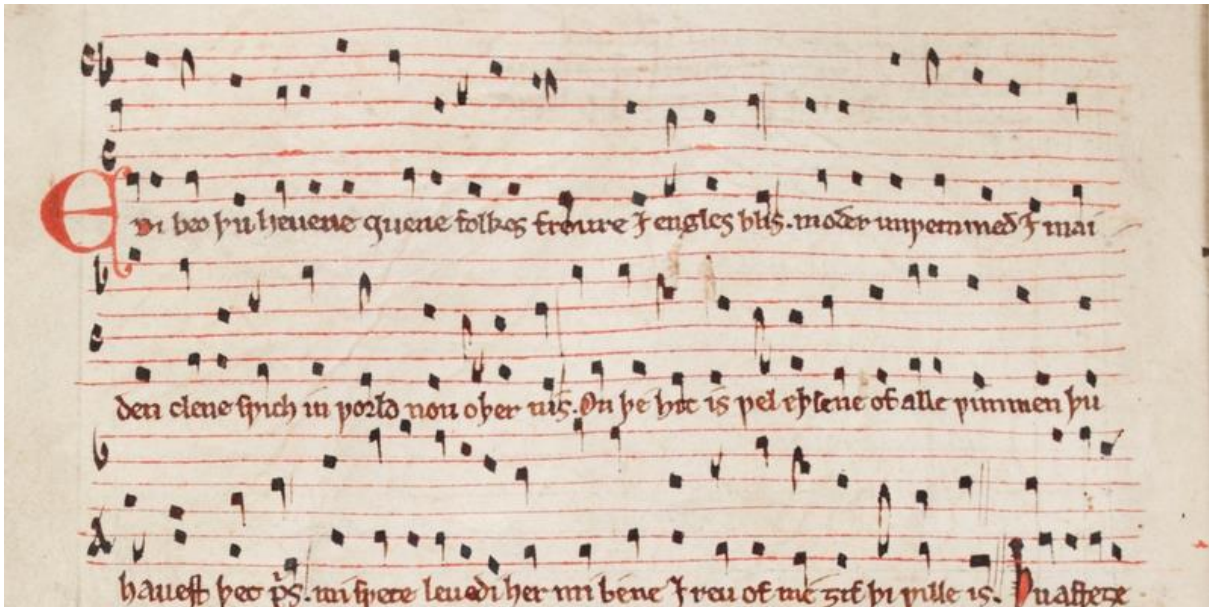
Books wander, and so establishing its provenance to Llanthony-by Gloucester was important. The carol is one of several hymns in the book, which also includes a long catalogue of diseases, grammatical exercises, verses in honour of St Kineburg and an epitaph for 'Humphrey the Good.' This Earl of Hereford died in 1275 and was buried before the high altar of St Kineburg's chapel at Llanthony-by-Gloucester. It seems, then, that it is the book of a medieval schoolmaster who taught boys in the grammar school attached to the priory.

And we can further date the book by its dedication, which cheerfully mingles pidgin Latin and Old English:

Rex regnum, riche kink	King of kings, rich king
Lux dux princeps ouer al thing	Leader of light, prince of everything;
ffre Cuntis suete thing	The free Countess wishes this of
Walterum protege Waldink	Walter son of Walding,
Qui me communi librum dedit utilitat.	Who gives me to be used as a book for all.

The 'free Countess' is Margaret, Countess of Gloucester, free referring to the time she was an unmarried widow after losing her husband at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. As she did not remarry until 1328, this dates the book's donation to the second decade of the 14th century. The Walding family lived in Forest of Dean west of Bristol, where they held the manor of Stanton / Staunton from around 1200 (not to be confused with the Stanton-in-Gwent, a manor that abutted the Cwmyoy manor below Llwyn Celyn).

In the Middle Ages, carols were sung at any time of the year and not just Christmas, and this carol is an incredibly rare survival in the vernacular tongue (rather than Latin). Old English was spoken from the 5th to the 12th centuries (and is not to be confused with Chaucer's Middle English).



The tune is written for two voice parts, an alto and a soprano.

Edi Beo Thu has soprano and alto parts. Gerald of Wales, a prolific chronicler and writer in the late 1100s and early 1200s, noted that in his day such dual polyphonic singing was most found in Wales and Northumbria: 'it was from the Danes and Norwegians, by whom these parts were more frequently invaded and held longer, that they contracted this peculiarity of singing.' He was referring not to many parts in harmony, but just two, one 'murmuring below and the other in like manner softly and pleasantly above.'

This form of harmony is known to be very similar to *tvisöngur* (Old Scandinavian, meaning twinsong). Another contemporary commentator 'Anonymous IV' wrote that English singers, especially those from 'the area known as the Westcuntre' (ie the Marches) called thirds, rather than fifths or octaves, 'the best consonances.' In taking a third of an octave as its main consonance, and also in its use of the F mode with B flat, Edi Beo Thu is thus representative of an intriguing Nordic heritage that reaches still further back in time, when Danes and Vikings stalked the Marches. Such harmonisations were more often extemporised by ear than written down, so the manuscript is a rare glimpse of such early music.

And the words themselves are intriguing. The themes are Christian of course, conventional in their praise of the Blessed Virgin, the Annunciation and the virgin birth. However, the sentiments also stray beyond the orthodox Biblical themes into language found in troubadour songs of courtly love: the singer pleads 'have mercy on thy knight' and is lavish in praise of Mary's loveliness. It's also a livelier tune than might usually be associated with monastic plainsong: perhaps this catchy tune was less a carol sung by the canons of Llanthony in their own worship, than a secular song that could be danced to, or hummed joyfully through the Llanthony Valley and streets of Gloucester as people went about their work.



Landmark staff singing the carol in St John the Baptist Church at Shottesbrooke, December 2017.

Today, the Llanthony Carol is known worldwide, with several versions on YouTube from as far afield as Russia. At Landmark, some of us learnt it and sang our own version in the lovely church on the Shottesbrooke estate beside our head office, a church that was itself built in the 1330s. And perhaps, even probably, the same tune was whistled a hundred years later in 1420 by the masons and carpenters who built Llwyn Celyn.

Llwyn Celyn's Artists-in-Residence

Thanks to our Heritage Lottery Funding, we were able to select three visual artists, a sound artist and a writer to respond to the work at Llwyn Celyn: Catherine Baker, Toril Brancher, Jamie Lake, Stephan Caddick, and Clare Potter. Each artist has approached the challenge in a different way, partly because we deliberately chose artists working in different art forms and partly because each found something unique to which to respond. Kasia Howard, Landmark's Engagement Manager, wrote a series of blogs for our website about the artists-in-residence during the restoration project.

Fractures – Jamie Lake

In April 2016, Llwyn Celyn was at a turning point, on the very cusp of change, when its slow decay was about to be reversed through careful restoration and conservation work. It was timely then, that on the evening of Saturday 23rd April 2016, artists Jamie Lake, Will Carter and Fiona Hamilton presented their work in response to the site – work that captured Llwyn Celyn as it waited for this process to begin.

Jamie Lake was one of four artists in residence who documented the site during the course of our work. Jamie chose to focus on the period prior to the start of the restoration and conservation work, capturing the site in its current state - a derelict medieval farmstead on the brink of serious decay:

"To me the fractures were the visceral signs of change: the often overlooked but violent marks of dissolution. Conservation and restoration can appear to work contrary to this, filling in the fissures and bringing back together what has fallen apart. I wanted to bring the fractures into focus, to record them before they were resealed, and to reflect on the mutability of Llwyn Celyn. I wanted to have and to create a momentary pause: to sense the fragility of what seemed intense and present, before it moved on."





Jamie designed the light installations and then worked with Will Carter to photograph the illuminated fractures and fissures in the buildings, to create images that expose the fragility of the fabric and the urgency of the work. Jamie was also joined by poet Fiona Hamilton, who documented her observations and responses:

"The idea of light in the cracks and crevices of buildings is fascinating. So working in this building and this place felt very important. It's still a home to many creatures, animals, insects, plants. It has been a home to people over many centuries and it will be a habitation again. It made me think about myself as a visitor, coming into this space. Noticing small things left in the building were like little invitations to think about other times. And here in this valley where the hills are ancient, the houses medieval and centuries old, alongside the life cycle of humans and of insects - all those time scales co-existing and overlapping, fascinated me."



Presenting the work on Saturday evening involved re-creating many of the light installations that Jamie had experimented with during the course of the winter months. On this occasion though, he did not have to fight the winter wind and rain. The April day was still and sun-soaked. Jamie and Will also set up a series of projections, casting images of thawing water, and wind whipped wallpaper across the stone walls of the stable and Threshing Barn.

As the audience arrived the long spring evening was just starting to fade and turn to nightfall. There was still just enough warmth in the air to enjoy the site and the works with hot drinks in hand, before gathering in the Threshing Barn to hear Fiona read a selection of her poetry. Fiona's keen observations were retold against the backdrop of the sheep bleating in the fields, dogs howling in the neighbouring farms and the descending sounds of bird song. We also heard her opening and closing poems performed in Welsh by Cari Barley.

Llwyn Celyn would inevitably change. But on this evening we were able to appreciate how the buildings wear their time, as a measure of their geological

foundations and their history. The lights illuminating the fractures exposed their fragility, but also celebrated human activity, and beckoned us to think about what the future may hold here.

Llwyn Celyn by Fiona Hamilton

Let there be light
in the cracks and crevices of old walls
in the spaces between bricks
Where mortar has crumbled and spilt.

Let light shine where wooden beams list,
incapable, now, of holding back
the farm's slow-motion yawn
through stretched, weathered, skin.

Let light illuminate absences,
gaps where beetles have burrowed
and walls have sunk
in softened, rain-logged land.

Let light be deliberate and bold:
photon-rivers flowing
through a barn's breach,
a flaming brand lancing a dark field.

Let this moment be lit
So we see
not what we came here for
but the inverse:

the overlooked, the undervalued
residues and remnants,
a scintilla of particles
rejoining earth, wind, rain.

'Drawing from life from the landscape'

Catherine Baker was another of our Llwyn Celyn Artists-in-Residence, from her home studio near the Bloreng Mountain. She lives and works on this Welsh mountain side and engages in an ongoing conversation with the changing seasons, colours and weather around her. 'I go out walking through the seasons, at different times, in all weathers. I make lots of notes in my sketchbook and draw from life. That's the starting point for all my work – it's drawing from life from the landscape.'

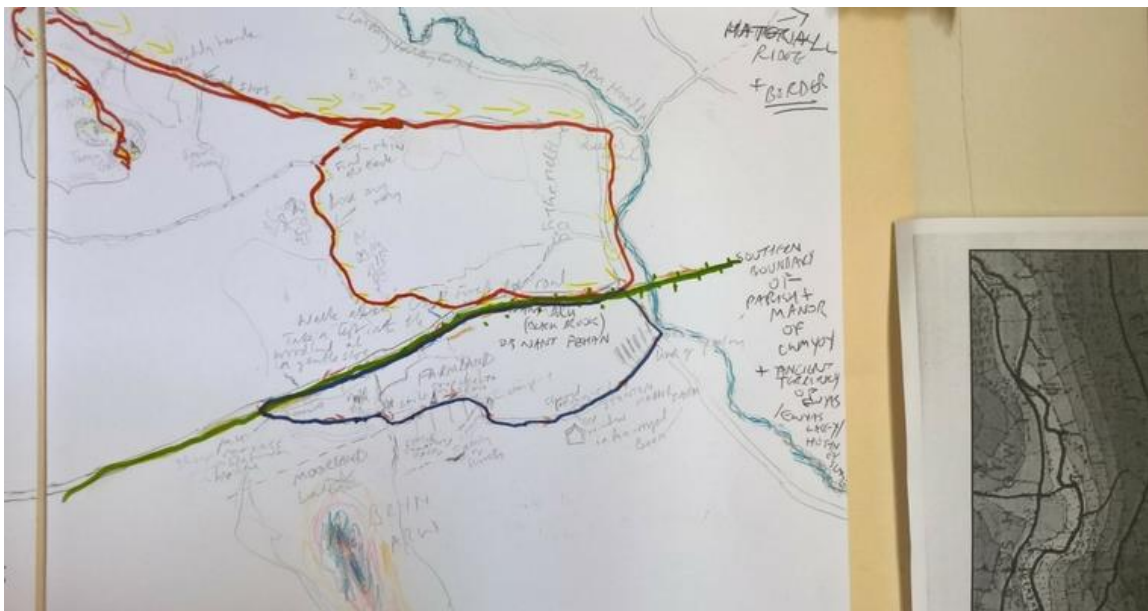


Cath in her home studio

Cath paints and draws, and her work appears on the surface to be quick abstract responses to a landscape, but as you familiarise yourself with these marks you begin to sense that they are gathered impressions over time, the result of many exchanges with the landscape.

'Black-Plum Mountain' Drypoint, Monoprint and Ink

For Llwyn Celyn, Cath worked on two large drawings – one in response to her visits to the site itself and the other to the wider landscape of the Llanthony Valley around it. Cath has been repeating three walks around the site. One takes you up onto Bryn Arw, to a wonderful vantage point where Llwyn Celyn is seen against the backdrop of the Gaer, on which sits an Iron Age hillfort. Another walk is up to the Gaer itself, from which you can look down onto the Llanthony Valley and see the pattern of ancient fields, the dividing line between lowland and upland, and the sheep picking their way through ancestral tracks. The third walk takes her across the Honddu River and upwards on to the Hatterall Ridge, where another view of Llwyn Celyn and its surroundings can be viewed. All these landscapes can be read by unpicking the visual clues. Cath absorbs these narratives and records them in her own codices of gathered pages – unique documents that are as much works of art as her finished images.



Some of Cath's work also now hangs in the Threshing Barn.



Rubbings of materials and textures found on site

Sketch book pages and notes from Cath's walks around Llwyn Celyn
Cath keeps a map of her walks where she records her many experiences and impressions. 'I just want to keep moving and experimenting – but always starting from landscape.'

In the application for the residencies, we challenged the artists to do something new – to expand their work into a new area or material. For Cath it was the subject matter, a medieval building channelling a medieval landscape, which gave her a new challenge.

'I'm interested in what people are doing and the craftsmanship. I don't use figures in my work, so it won't become figurative in any way but I might use quotes from people. It is interesting working in a building – I haven't really done that before.' Cath looked at local field names via the Cynefin website. She also experimented with image transfers to create textures reminiscent of the old plaster walls in Llwyn Celyn– sometimes using thick paint which can be sanded down. She also collected texture rubbings from different surfaces on the site.



Rubbings of materials and textures found on site

Artists often talk about 'mark making', almost as if describing a unique fingerprint or gesture. Cath says: 'It's about finding a certain way of using a material to describe something. Using different thicknesses and gestures for a line or shape, for example using a crayon on its edge so you get thick, dense marks, or pen and ink to give finer lines. Mixing different media together too, and taking away.' This process of 'taking away' is key to Cath's working method. She does not hide where she has removed a mark, and it's not about a mark being wrong either.

'Taking away is just as important as adding,' she emphasises. Cath shows me a beautiful, almost fragile image that includes an outline of the Bloreng and fragments of the landscape below the mountain. 'I've been working on it maybe for a period of 2 years. I add bits here and there or take them away, until I'm happy with the composition and it conveys to me something of the essence of my original response to the subject. I think it's finished now. 'The decision to finish the work appears a mutual one, made with the mountain, so connected does she seem with it.

The 'taking away' is not only a response to revisiting a place many times over in the course of creating an artwork, but also part of achieving an aesthetic. Cath is influenced by the Minimalism, '...lots of quiet then an interesting small area of detail'. On her studio wall a quote relating to John Cage's music distils this perfectly into words: *The delicate counterpoint of sound and silence*. 'That's what I want to try and get into my work. '

Writer clare e.potter

Clare is a poet, performer and educator based in Pontypridd. Clare set out to 'record the site speaking in her groans and whispers as layers are peeled back...I see this as a collaborative process between me as poet and Llwyn Celyn as story-teller.'

Clare makes soundscapes of her poetry, and at Llwyn Celyn her work further investigated the theme of borders. She writes in both English and Welsh.



Image: Rhys Jones

March 2017

Today, I listen

Sound emerges from the lambs' lungs,
the raven seeking out its own echo;

sound emerges as the bee, early,
fumbles in aubretia; the flies trapped
in strip lights, delirious;

the leather mallet dulls idle chatter,
lets the oak send out its long held
vowels.

Sound of dog on hill, hail on tarpaulin,
and the carpenter with his drill
seeking something solid.

Heddiw, Rwy'n Gwranddo

Sain yn tyfu yn ddwfn o ysgyfaint yr
oen,
y gigfran yn hela ei adlais;

sain yn blodeuo o'r gwenyn cynnar
yn brysur mewn neithdar,
o'r pryfed caeth mewn sribed golau,
gorffwyll;
yr ordd ledr yn tawelu'r parablu
er mwyn gadael i'r dderwen ynganu'r
geiriau y bu'n eu dal mor hir.

Sŵn cŵn ar y bryn, cesair ar y to
a'r saer gyda'i ddril yn twrio
am loches gadarn.

A response to the Landscape Study Day at Llwyn Celyn Sept 2016

In Sept 2016 Clare was invited to attend and respond to the Landscape Study Day – a day of talks and sharing of knowledge about the Llanthony Valley and Llwyn Celyn’s place within it. The following selections of poems are taken from her full creative commentary.

Artistic Movements

We, in the Threshing Barn
hunker down to hear eight centuries
of art created in this valley of Ewyas,
this Llanthony Valley; rich tapestries;
slides of winged angels and romantic
elevating of the priory (re-named abbey);
Turner, Warwick-Smith, Sandby,
Hodges, Colt-Hoare, these men,
these men, these men felt
exalted, contemplated mixed pigments,
disturbed skies, stirred-up-rivers,
fixed ruins in their fine mellow yellow tints,
deepened lines, shadows still heightening
sunlight, sunlight on the valley.

We, in the Threshing Barn snapped back
from Gill’s Nude Girl with Hair, by a turbulent
thwack of the tarp at the doorway.
What’s it keeping out as we wander
wonder Wordsworthian, learning landscape
through art, learning place from
the tip of this speaker’s tongue,
the hiss and hum of the projector
(and the bats quiet in the rafters,
their stories still wing-tucked)?

Beyond the barn in Llwyn Celyn’s demesne,
in the once-grounds by the stone wall being rebuilt
the damascene tree, damson
plums, drupaceous, testicular,
purple bold against its green,
skins bulging with unmade ink;

the dyer gathers her trug, will boil,
release autumnal colours from slumber
– will stain her fingers, the page.

Artist Toril Brancher

Could the grass remember?

Toril is an artist photographer based in Abergavenny. Her residency explored a shared experience of place on a site occupied for hundreds of years. Her most recent works use wild flowers, glass and a scanner. Toril used these techniques, documenting the people, the space, the materials and skills involved in the restoration of Llwyn Celyn in a unique record. Some of her work hangs in the shelter shed beside the Beast House.

