

The Landmark Trust

RHIWDDOLION

Ty Capel

Ty Coch

Ty Uchaf

History Album



**Written and researched by Charlotte Haslam
Revised and updated by Caroline Stanford, 2001
Re-presented in 2015**

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BASIC DETAILS

Ty Coch

Built: late 18th century

Last owner: Mary Louisa Lee

Acquired by the Landmark Trust: 1968

Architect: L Bedall-Smith, Cardigan

Builders: Messrs Hughes, Bethesda

Ty Capel

Built: 1893

Plans by: Rev. David Williams, Cwm-y-glo

Last owner: Mrs Axon

Acquired by the Landmark Trust: 1967

Architect: L Bedall-Smith, Cardigan

Builders: Messrs Hughes, Bethesda

Ty Uchaf

Built: c 1685

Acquired by the Landmark Trust: 1998

Architect: Adam Voelker

Builder: Reg Lo-Vel and Mark Roberts

Joinery: Peter Andersen

Electrician: Ken Taylor

Opened as a Landmark: December 2001

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View from Ty Coch

Summary

At least until late medieval times, the upper Conway valley was inaccessible, sparsely inhabited, and plagued by lawless bands who found the oak forests a useful hideout. But with the arrival of peace came the desire for permanent homes, so that many of the earliest houses in the district date from the 16th century. These are often found in small upland pockets of fertile land, watered by a stream, where they lie sheltered and hidden.

Of the three Landmarks in the Rhiwddolion valley, **Ty Uchaf** ('Upper House') is the oldest; on the evidence of a datestone surviving in the ruined pigsty, it was built in 1685. It is typical of its time: single-storeyed, with an end chimney, and two main rooms with extra sleeping space provided in a loft which originally extended over two-thirds of the cottage (the *croglofft*), accessed by a ladder. The room to the right of the door, with the big fireplace, would have been the principal living and cooking room, and the smaller, unheated one on the left either a service bay or a primitive parlour; the two rooms were originally separated by a partition. The byre beside the house was probably added in the late 18th century, and may have replaced an earlier structure – the farm would always have required at least one building to act as cow byre, stable and hayloft. The house roof would have been thatched, but it is possible that the byre was slated from the first, and that the house section was re-roofed in slate at the time that the byre was added on.

The roofless structures at either end of the house-and-byre range are 19th-century additions: the one on the left seems to have served as a store, and that on the right may have been a dairy or brewhouse. The dry-stone walls in front of the house, and the now-ruined pigsty, are of about the same date. Various pens, enclosures and other structures, some now only identifiable as footings, can be seen near the house; of these, the only other roofed structure is the *ty bach* (little house), which is probably late Victorian.

The name **Ty Coch** means "red house", though there is no obvious reason for this; it may, in a general way, mean "warm", from the hospitality offered there, or it may be derived from the less cold colour of the stone compared with dressed slate slabs, or perhaps it had a red front door. It is probably a hundred years or so younger than Ty Uchaf, being built before the end of the 18th century. It seems however that it may incorporate the materials of an earlier structure, since it contains a cruck, formed from the trunk and branch of a single tree, spanning the fireplace. The structure may have been a barn, since cruck trusses continued to be used in agricultural buildings well after their use in domestic buildings had been abandoned. In its original layout, Ty Coch was not very dissimilar to Ty Uchaf, and once had a similar sleeping loft.

For centuries the pattern of farming life continued almost unchanged, but the revival in the area of lead mining and then of slate quarrying on an industrial scale transformed the valley. A row of miners' cottages was built on Sarn Helen (the old Roman Road), and in 1860 a school and a chapel were provided. In 1869 the Bard Griffith Hugh Jones became headmaster, and for the next 50 years the district was enlivened by his brass band, his choral union and his eisteddfodau. The chapel choirs sang hymns of his composition, and the Rhiwddolion chapel, sensationally, acquired a harmonium to accompany them. In 1892 **Ty Capel** was enlarged, and an open-air auditorium built alongside for special occasions.

Restoration by the Landmark Trust

By the early part of the 20th century the mines and quarries had closed, and employment possibilities declined. The few remaining villagers of Rhiwddolion, finding the Roman road of little use to them and the whole hamlet out on a limb, slipped away. The chapel was closed in 1956, and the Landmark Trust bought it in 1967. Ty Coch continued to be lived in after the quarrymen's cottages had lost their roofs, but it became increasingly marooned from modern life and in 1968 it was also sold to the Landmark Trust. Ty Uchaf, however, only came into the hands of the Trust in 1998, acquired in order to preserve this unspoilt setting.

The previous owner had already begun a restoration of Ty Uchaf, of which various traces still remain. Its conversion to a Landmark took place under the guidance of architect Adam Voelker and was carried out by the Trust's own workforce, headed by Reg Lo-Vel, who has worked on many of the Trust's renovations. It is a soft and conservative restoration, faithful to the original simple plan form of house and byre, and to the evidence of the *croglofft*.

Ty Capel, on the other hand, was in sound structural condition when the Landmark Trust bought it and obtained permission to turn it into a dwelling house. To give extra light to the big room a new window was made in the south wall, after which the slates were re-hung on the end, exactly as before. The kitchen and bathroom were fitted in at the other end, leaving plenty of space over for the sleeping gallery. The Communion rails, originally at the south end with the Communion Table behind, were used to form the balustrade. The deal floorboards and the boards that line the walls and ceiling are all original and the varnished pine partitions, though new, are absolutely typical of chapel furniture. The simple colouring, and the stencilling round the dado rail, are also designed to be in keeping with the decoration of a small chapel, and the architect, the late Leonard Beddall-Smith, aimed to ensure that the feel of the whole building is highly evocative.

Ty Coch needed rather more work. The roof was in a bad state and had to be completely redone. Luckily there were some slates to be used up from the original roof of another Landmark, the Bath Tower in Caernarfon; they are the large ones on the front of the building. There was no room to fit a kitchen and bathroom into the existing building, so they were added on at the back. The stones for the extension came from a field next to Ty Uchaf and were given to us by the neighbouring farmer of Ty Mawr. The local joiner designed and built the kitchen cupboards, and local slate flags were laid on the sitting-room floor. A low wall was built at the front, and the hillside dug back behind to help prevent damp.

So after all, the events of the 19th century turned out to be no more than an interruption; Rhiwddolion has returned to its original pattern and the same simple sort of life can again be lived there, if a good deal more comfortably. The lack of a road to the front door emphasises the link with the past, for there can be few places left where the foot-boundness of that life can be so strongly realised. Above all, it looks today very much as it did for some hundreds of years before the quarries came and went, an upland pocket of habitation among the now encroaching conifers – which may themselves be no more than an interruption in the natural landscape.

Rhiwddolion: the Settlement

If you wished to choose one place to illustrate the history of the more remote areas of North Wales, and the forces that have affected their development, you could do little better than to take the settlement of Rhiwddolion as your example. Each stage has left a visible impression, to be clearly read; from the Romans up to, and including, the problems of living in such areas today. The Romans brought the road, establishing part of the network upon which the area's occupation was based. Farming gave way to leadmining, and then quarrying, as the land was exploited by organised companies with capital behind them. The decline of these industries brought depopulation to this remote valley and the eventual need for the preservation of the buildings by outsiders to conserve the traces of this vanishing way of life.

There is evidence that the valley was occupied in prehistoric times. When the Romans came, they brought their road Sarn Helen through, to link Kanovium in the north and Tomen y Mer to the south. (Sarn Helen or Helen's Causeway is a name which has been applied to Roman roads in Wales for centuries, but today it now refers only for this particular road, which runs from one end of the country to the other). The Rhiwddolion section of the road is still visible as a track; once, it would have been patrolled by legionaries stationed at Caer Llugwy to the north west. Iddon, an early Celtic Christian, founded a religious cell here in the seventh century.

Yet after the Romans, until late mediaeval times, and even into the Tudor period, the upper Conway valley was inaccessible, sparsely inhabited, and plagued by bands of lawless men who found the wide oak (not pine forests) a useful hideout. Then, in the 16th century, a civilising influence was brought to bear by the Wynn family, who purchased the Gwydir estate in about 1500. This extended along the west side of the valley from Llanrwst, southwards to Dolwyddelan, and thus included Rhiwddolion.

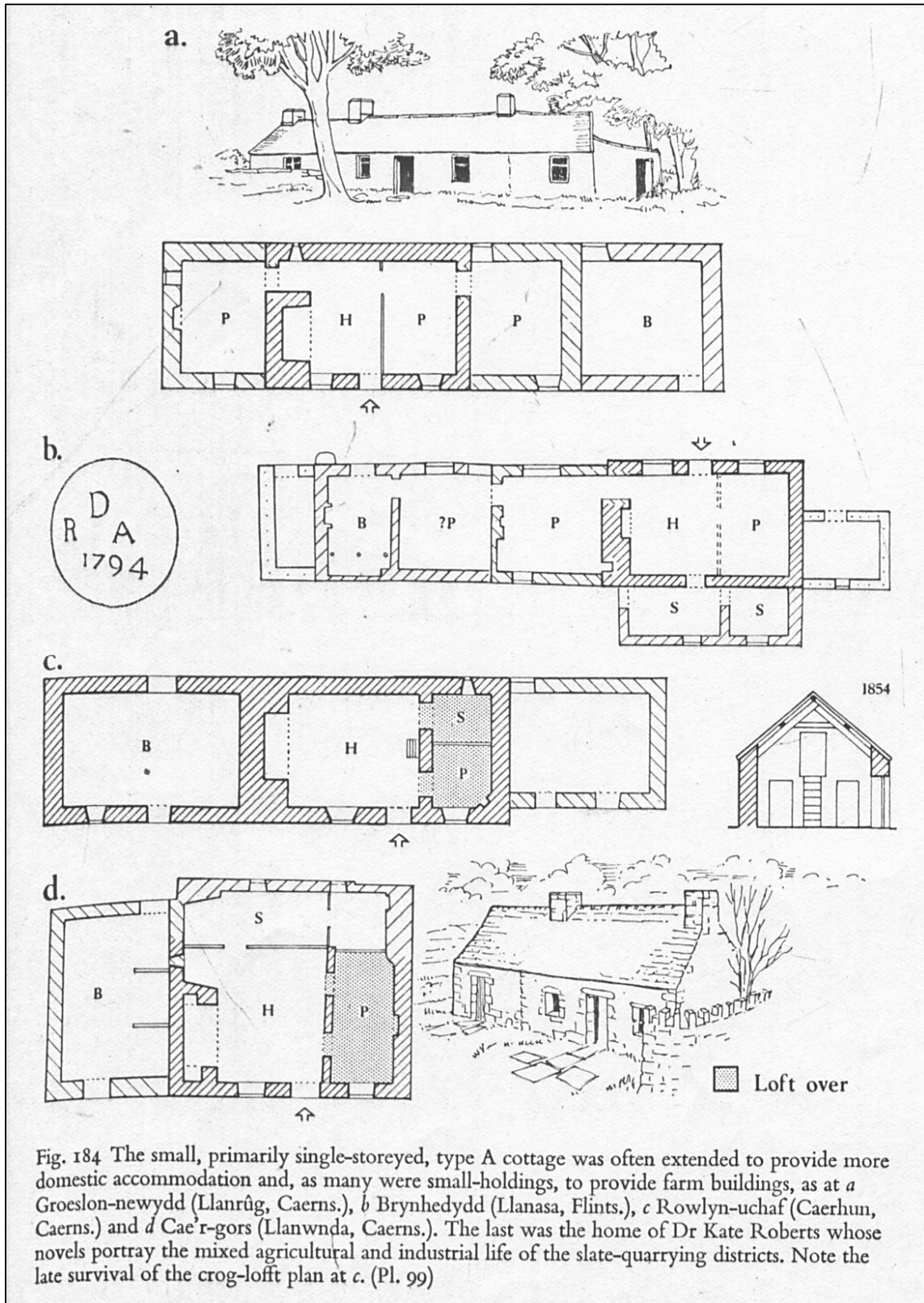


Fig. 184 The small, primarily single-storeyed, type A cottage was often extended to provide more domestic accommodation and, as many were small-holdings, to provide farm buildings, as at *a* Groeslon-newydd (Llanrûg, Caerns.), *b* Brynhedydd (Llanasa, Flints.), *c* Rowlyn-uchaf (Caerhun, Caerns.) and *d* Caer-gors (Llanwnda, Caerns.). The last was the home of Dr Kate Roberts whose novels portray the mixed agricultural and industrial life of the slate-quarrying districts. Note the late survival of the crog-lofft plan at *c*. (Pl. 99)

(From *Houses of the Welsh Countryside*, by Peter Smith, 1975)

With the arrival of peace came also the desire for permanent homes, so that many of the earliest houses in the area date from the 16th century. They are often to be found in small upland pockets of fertile land, watered by a stream, where they are sheltered and hidden. It is a pattern which repeats itself throughout Caernarvonshire and Merioneth, and which may go back a long way: occasionally there are traces of older houses in the form of hut circles. Sometimes these high valleys were only used for the summer grazing, when the farmer would live in his Hafod, or summer farmhouse; sometimes they were in occupation all the year round.

The little valley in which Rhiwddolion sits was very probably one of those inhabited from early times, being in a particularly favoured position, as its name, meaning meadow on the hill, implies. The ancient communication route linking the Dolwyddelan and the Conway valleys also passes through it. Without archaeological exploration however, the earliest building that can be positively dated is Ty Uchaf, dating from the late 17th century. A stone bearing the date 1685 was found built into the pigsty, a date consistent with the form of the house. Ruined Ty Isaf, just above Ty Capel, seems to date from the same period and a date of 1687 carved on a lintel built into a 19th century cottage is further evidence for occupation at that time.

These houses of the 16th and 17th centuries, however small they may seem to us, were built by the “gentry” and the builder of Ty Uchaf would have been a relatively wealthy yeoman farmer. The name Ty Uchaf reflects perhaps this status, perhaps its position at the head of the valley, since it means High House. It was not until the mid-18th century that smallholders began to build permanent homes for themselves, but then for the following century their cottages sprang up, dotted at random over the landscape in the established pattern of scattered settlement. The builders were often living near the breadline, and their houses were accordingly simple.

They were single storeyed with an end chimney and a door in the middle between two windows. There were usually two rooms, with extra sleeping spaces provided in a loft over half, or sometimes the whole of the cottage. When they needed to extend they did so by adding a bit on the end. Rhiwddolion has a number of houses of this type. Ty Newydd, now a ruin on the edge of the forest between Ty Coch and Sarn Helen, is a good example and has a fine slate lintel.

Ty Uchaf, with its croglofft still in evidence, is an early example of this stage of development and Ty Coch, which formerly had a loft, also follows the same pattern. Ty Coch was probably built at the end of the 18th century, but it does contain a cruck, so that it may incorporate the materials of an earlier structure, possibly a barn, since the curved cruck trusses, formed from the trunk and branch of a single tree, were used in agricultural buildings later than in domestic buildings. The site itself does not seem to be an early one; until the 18th century the usual practice, for reasons of drainage, was to build your house running into the hill, rather than along it as here. The name Ty Coch means, literally, Red (Coch) House (Ty) but there is no obvious reason for this; it may, in a general way, mean warm, from the hospitality offered there, or the less cold colour of the stone compared to dressed slate slabs, or perhaps it always had a red front door.

This pattern of farming life carried peacefully on, largely ignoring events elsewhere, until suddenly, in the 19th century, circumstances outside its control broke in to change it. The Industrial Age hit North Wales as a whole with the great boom in the slate industry, while more locally to the Conway Valley there was a sudden revival in lead mining. Few areas remained unaffected by one or other and Rhiwddolion seems to have served its turn with both.

Lead had been mined in Wales since ancient times, and in Caernarvonshire, on a small scale, since the 17th century when the Wynns of Gwydir opened some mines on their land near Llanrwst. This was to remain the principal area for the industry in the county, but some was found further south in the Conway valley, and rather

more at Llanengan on the Lleyn peninsula. The revival, which started c.1850, was fired off by increased demand and made possible by improved mining techniques and the organisation of capital which resulted in the formation of such bodies as the Mining Company of Wales. The amount of lead ore being shipped from Trefriw to Conway rose from 88 tons p.a. in the 1840s to 253 tons in 1853, and the total output of the area in 1857 was 422 tons. In the 1870s there were 17 mines working in the Llanrwst area alone. This success was not to last however, and by the 1880s it was definitely over. There was never really enough lead to justify the investment or the transport costs, although the coming of the railway in the late 1850s alleviated these. In 1885 the desperate miners of Betws offered to work for a royalty of only £1 per ton, in an unsuccessful bid to keep the mines open, but most closed. Some did continue into the 20th century, producing blende as well as ore, but for the most part Caernarvonshire's lead industry faded once more into insignificance.

A far greater impact was made on the life of the county by slate quarrying. This too had been going on in a disorganised way for a long time, but in the late 18th century the big land-owners began to take an interest and to invest capital. This led to the discovery of more efficient ways of reaching the slate (the gallery or terrace system invented by James Greenfield, manager of the Penrhyn Quarry, 1799-1825) and then of transporting it by means of tramways and horse-drawn railways. The great pioneers were the Penrhyn Quarry, near Bethesda, opened in 1782 by the Pennant family, and the Dinorwic Quarry near Llanberis, opened in 1787 but run on a large scale by the Assheton-Smiths from 1809. At their height in the 1880s they each employed nearly 3,000 men and had an annual output of around 100,000 tons of slate. Both had especially constructed ports from which to ship the slate and narrow gauge railways to get it there.

Another flourishing area was around Nantlle, south of Caernarvon, where the Dorothea Quarry opened in 1829. Between them these three areas employed most of the quarrymen of the county, 32% at Bethesda, 35% at Llanberis and 28% at Nantlle. An estimate of the size of the profits can be reached by a look at Penrhyn Castle, built from part of them.

The example of these huge enterprises set men quarrying wherever slate was to be found, their often futile attempts marked by the heaps of waste that can be seen throughout the county. The Conway valley was no exception, but the odds were against it.

The slate was not in general of high quality and we can imagine the miners' occasional frustration as they hewed the standard sizes of the day. These came to be known as Ladies (16in x 8in), Narrow Doubles (12in x 4 1/2in) and Countesses (24in x 10in). Slates longer than 30 inches were known as Queens, although all these sizes must have been approximate and sales were by tally rather than weight. Nor did they lie particularly flat when laid: it was a common practice to tuck moss between the tiles to keep out the wind and rain.

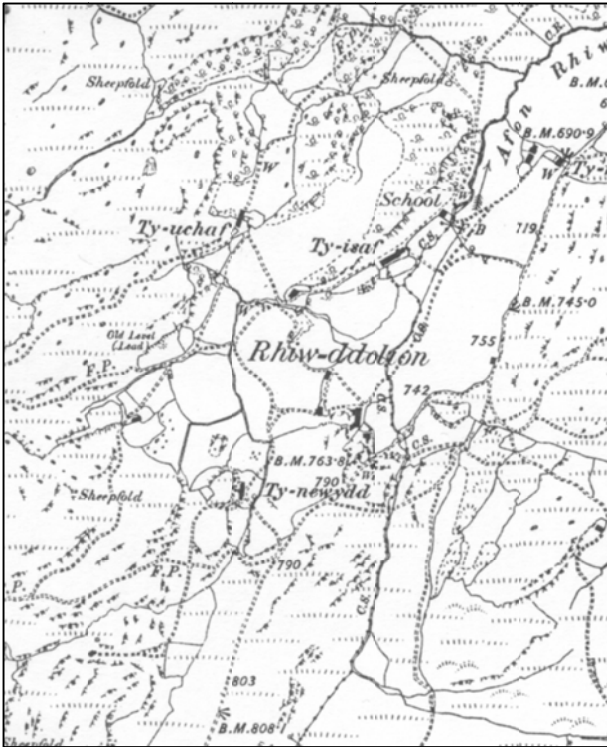
The transport problems away from the quarries were enormous, all the slate having to be taken by cart to Trefriw, from where it could be shipped to Conway and on to Liverpool. The railways came late, not reaching Betws y Coed until 1868, but this, as with the lead, and coupled with sudden investment by local landlords, brought about an increase in output for a few years, 27,000 tons being shipped from Conway in 1858. By the 1880s the figure had dropped to 6,000 and all but a few quarries had closed. Only 2% of Caernarvonshire's quarrymen were ever employed in the area. The end of the 19th century saw a general decline in the industry, halted temporarily around 1900 by mechanisation, but prices dropped steadily, the smaller quarries could not survive, and even the giants had to reduce their workforce.

The arrival of these industries had brought about an increase in both prosperity and population, and also another, greater, change: for the first time villages appeared. They grew up near the quarries and mines, terraces of small, well-built, two roomed slate cottages, “wonderfully clean and well and comfortably furnished” according to Robert Roberts who taught at Bethesda in the 1850s. They varied in size from tiny hamlets high on remote hillsides, to quite substantial townships like Llanberis or Bethesda; they marked an entirely new pattern of life. Before this even such socially central buildings as churches and chapels stood physically isolated in the landscape; now villages grew up around them and often took on their names as well.

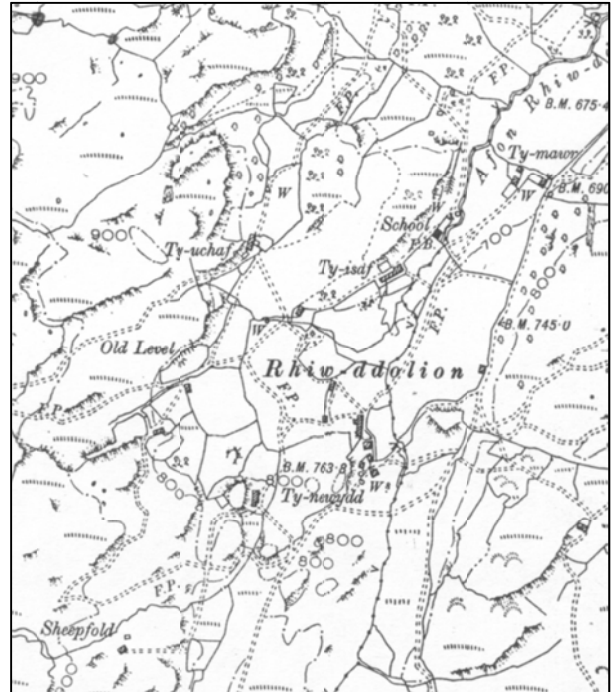
The divide between the two forms of life, rural and industrial, was never absolute however, particularly in the early days. Many a quarryman’s, or miner’s, cottage had a small plot of land on which they could support a cow and grow a few vegetables, so that they had something to fall back on should quarry or mine close. In other cases the miners or quarrymen were, anyway, members of a farming family, supplementing the family income. In some areas the overlap would have been greater than in others, for instance in the Conway valley where most of these enterprises lasted for a few years only, so that the men would frequently have been looking for new jobs.

The story of Rhiwddolion seems to have begun in just such a way, with a few of the men from the farms and cottages, like Ty Coch, finding work in a quarry or mine nearby, or by doing a bit of “scrape” quarrying on their own account. Then in the late 1850s a small lead mine was started at the top of the valley. It was quite common for mine-owners to make a great show of efficiency and financial backing by putting up buildings and houses for the workforce to attract shareholders, while very little was in fact going on below ground. It is possible that Rhiwddolion was one of these, for the “Old Level (Lead)”, marked on the 1888 Ordnance Survey, hardly seems big enough to justify the row of cottages

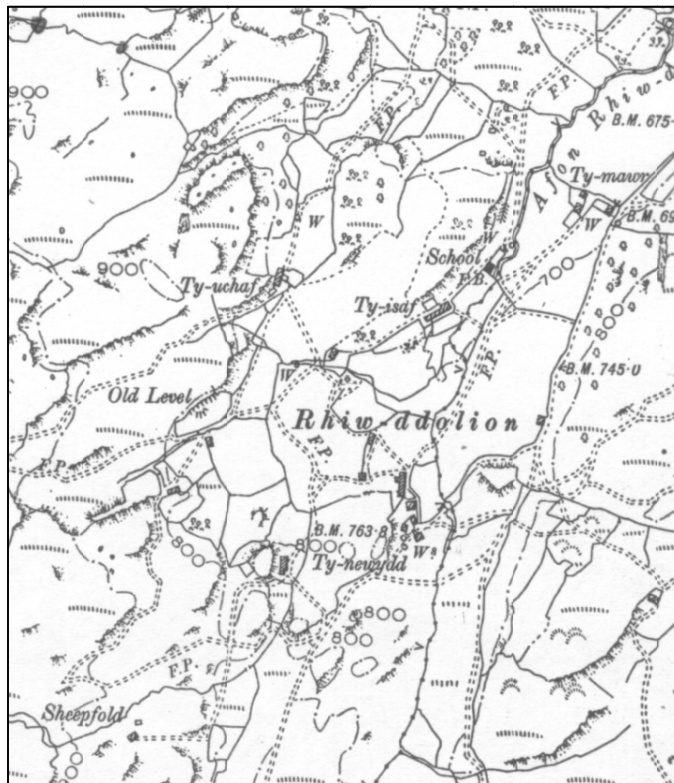
Rhiwddolion 1888-1919 as shown in the Ordnance Survey (6" = mile)



1888



1901



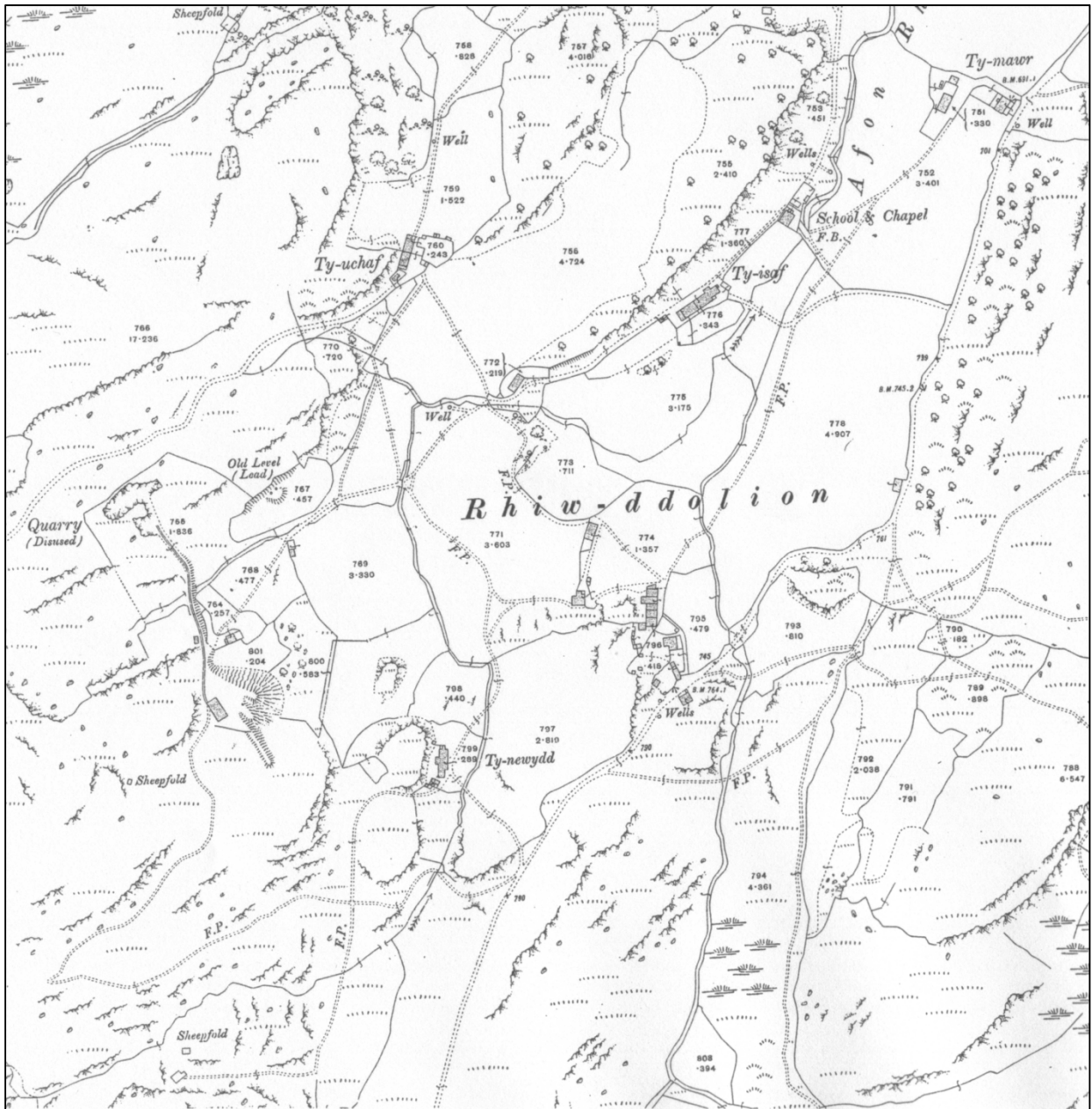
1919

and storeyed manager's house on Sarn Helen, apparently associated with it, since they appear on the same map.

It must have provided work for a time, however, and this, combined with its convenient position on the road between two major valleys giving more opportunities for jobs, caused the population to increase. In 1860 it was thought large enough to warrant the provision of a school and chapel; a small building was put up on land belonging to Ty Isaf, intended to serve both purposes. The religious needs of the community had previously been looked after at meetings held in private houses, but now a regular Calvinistic Methodist Cause was established. This was the beginning of Ty Capel.

By 1888, according to the Ordnance Survey, the lead mine had closed, leaving the miners in the terrace out of work. Some may have found jobs round Llanrwst, across the Miners' Bridge, others would have moved away altogether. A few may have changed their trade to that of quarrying, since, by a stroke of luck, in about 1880 Lord Ancaster of Gwydir had opened the Hafodlas Slate and Slab Quarry on his land, a mile or so down a well-trodden path from Rhiwddolion. Members of the more adaptable farming community may already have been going off during the week to quarries in the area, where they would have lived in the barracks provided by most owners for the workforce. They were often employed in such tasks as the carriage of slate, or lead, on packhorses or in carts, from the point of production to the nearest quay or station, so that it did not much matter to them which industry was involved.

So the village survived; the empty houses left by the departing miners would soon have been filled by quarrymen and by the 1901 OS Edition further cottages had sprung up east of Ty Newydd. About 1890 a small quarry was started in their own valley, near the soon-forgotten leadlevel, although this quarry does not appear on the OS map until 1913. From the waste heaps it does not look as though the rock was ever very good, more suitable for slabs and building material



Rhiwddolion on the 1913 OS edition. Although the quarry is disused by now, the miners' cottages are at their most defined. Ty Coch is identifiable as a building on all these maps, but is not named, perhaps reflecting its lesser status compared with Ty Isaf and Ty Uchaf.

than slates, but once again it did give a focus to the village, and in 1892 they felt confident enough to think of rebuilding the chapel. Although the existing building was in the care of Gutyn Arfon and the deacons, it actually belonged to a Mr James of Llanrwst, owner of the lead mine perhaps. This was thought to be unsatisfactory and he was asked to sell it to the Calvinistic Methodist Connexion.

Their arguments were so persuasive that Mr James in fact donated the building and its land outright.

The Rhiwddolion Quarry, like most small, remote enterprises, can never have been very successful, but it ticked over for a number of years, with one small tramline taking the rock out through a passage blasted into the bottom of the pit. In the 1913 Ordnance Survey, however, it is marked firmly as “disused”. Those who could would have gone back to Hafodlas, which in spite of the general decline in the industry, was still doing reasonably well. In the early 1890s it had been taken over by the Betws y Coed Slate Quarry Co.Ltd. They were allowed to work slate, slabs, stones, lead and any other minerals except gold; to erect buildings, install machinery and tramways as necessary; to use the water of Llyn Elsi, the incline and the tramway leading from the quarry to the road, and the yard on the road. They paid £40 p.a. and a royalty on slates and slabs. They enlarged the workings and in 1903 a report was made, for a prospective buyer of the company. It was estimated that about 12,000,000 tons of rock would be available from the five galleries, of which half would be useless, and only 5% of the remainder realisable as actual roofing slates, so wasteful is the splitting process. The final output would be 400 tons of roofing slates a month. This was considered a conservative estimate, based only on existing workings, but in fact only about half that amount is known to have passed annually through Cai Llechi, the slate (llech) platform at Betws y Coed station.

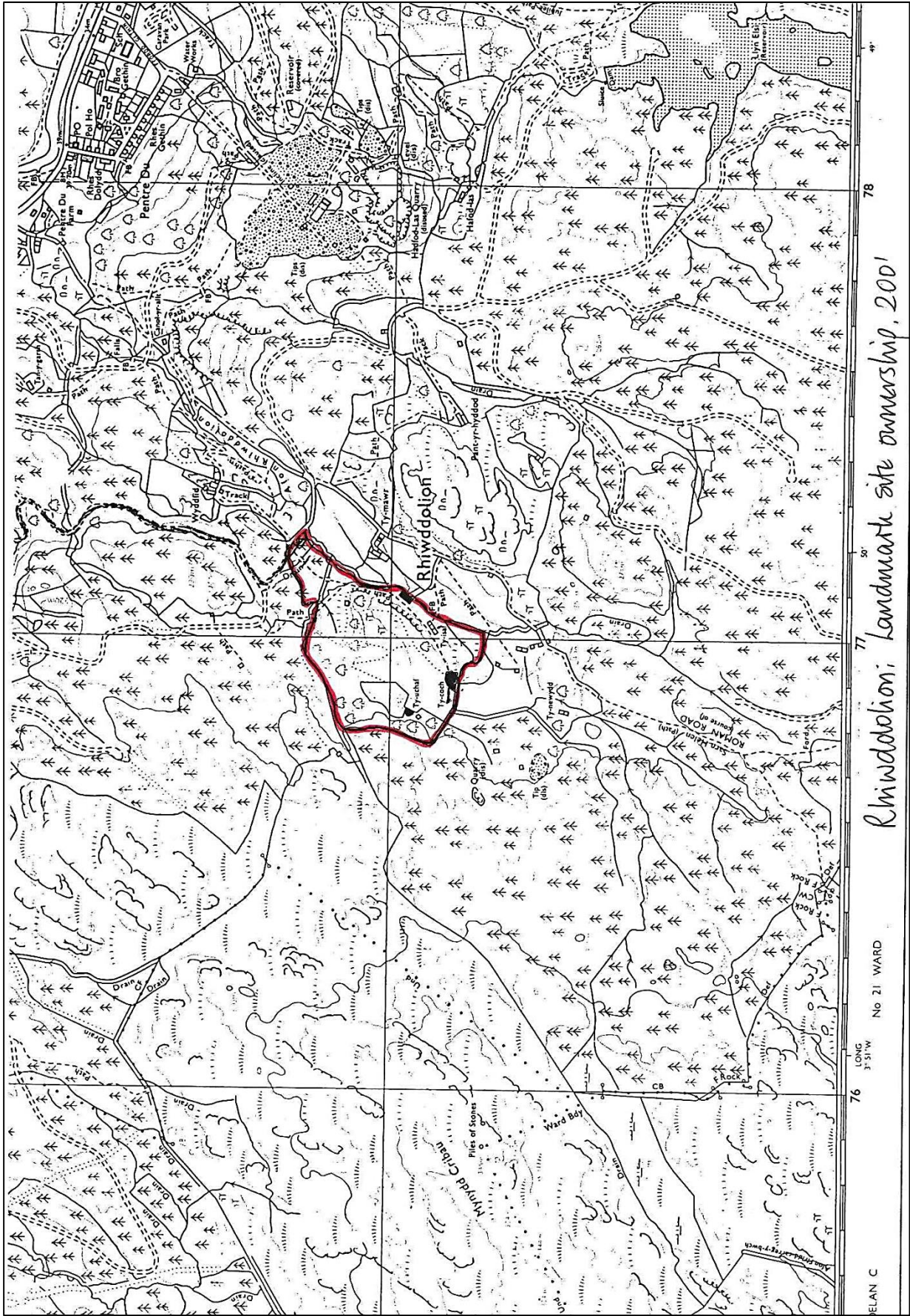
The rock was of the same Ordovician strain at Blaenau Ffestiniog in Merioneth, rather than the Silurian rock of the Bethesda, Llanberis and Nantlle districts. It was of a very dark blue colour, coarse in grain, which made it difficult to split so that it was thought better for producing large tough slates rather than fine ones, and especially good for slabs.

The quarry buildings at Hafodlas consisted of three electrically lit splitting mills in which the machinery was driven by large water wheels, a store room, carpenter's shop, enamelling shop and oven, smithy, four weight offices and machines, three drum sheds, a large building over which were the offices, and four cottages. There were two miles of tramline, (compared to fifty miles at the Penrhyn Quarry) and a workforce of sixty five, including the office staff, divided into eight "bargains" or teams. The men mostly lived out, probably in Rhiwddolion or Betws y Coed: the report complained of the higher wages that they demanded and advised the erection of twenty new cottages.

The Hafodlas Quarry soldiered on into the 20th century, in spite of fluctuations in profits and other problems outside its control, such as the drying up of Llyn Elsi one year, and the great quantity of rain another, which made work on the rockface impossible. It changed hands a number of times, but was still going as the Betws y Coed Slate and Slab Co. Ltd. in 1942. It finally closed at the end of the War, when the demand for slate had almost entirely dried up and the skilled men were fast vanishing.

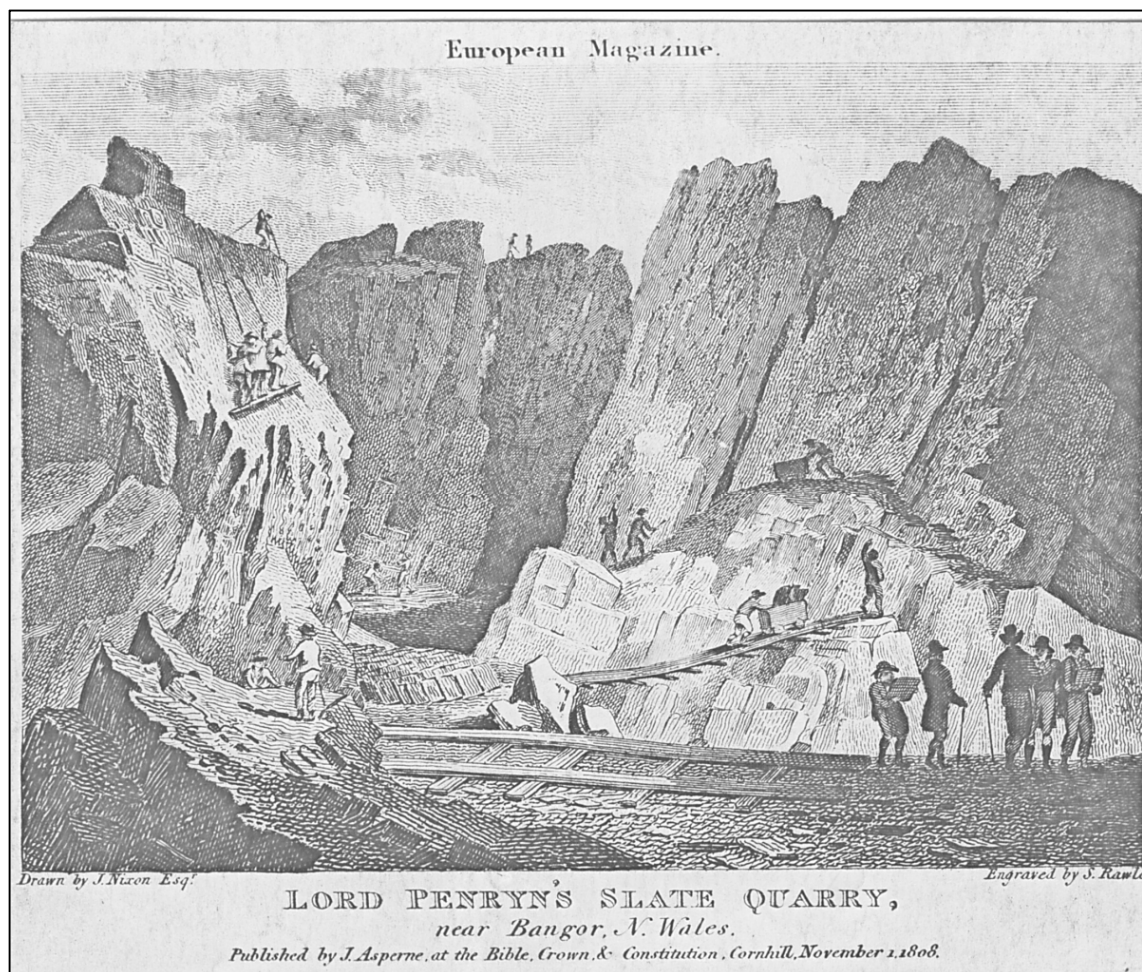
The population of Rhiwddolion, with inadequate farmland to support them all and no other alternative to hand, had declined with the slate industry. Some moved down to new cottages next to Hafodlas, while those that stayed had to walk along Sarn Helen to the Dolwyddelan valley to find work, or look further afield still. When, after the War, even these opportunities no longer existed, those inhabitants that were left, finding the Roman road of little use to them and the whole village out on a limb, gradually slipped away. Eventually there were no

more children to be taught, nor a congregation to meet, and so Capel Rhiwddolion was closed in 1956. The Calvinistic Methodist Connexion sold it to a local builder in 1963, who sold it on to a Mrs Axon. She sold it to the Landmark Trust in 1967. Ty Coch continued to be lived in after the quarrymen's cottages had lost their roofs, but becoming increasingly isolated from "modern life". It was finally sold to the Landmark Trust as well, in 1968. Ty Uchaf survived as a private holiday cottage for a while, and when it was put up for sale in 1999, Landmark was pleased to be able to add it to its portfolio, thereby ensuring that the tranquillity of the setting will remain as undisturbed by modern life as it has always been.

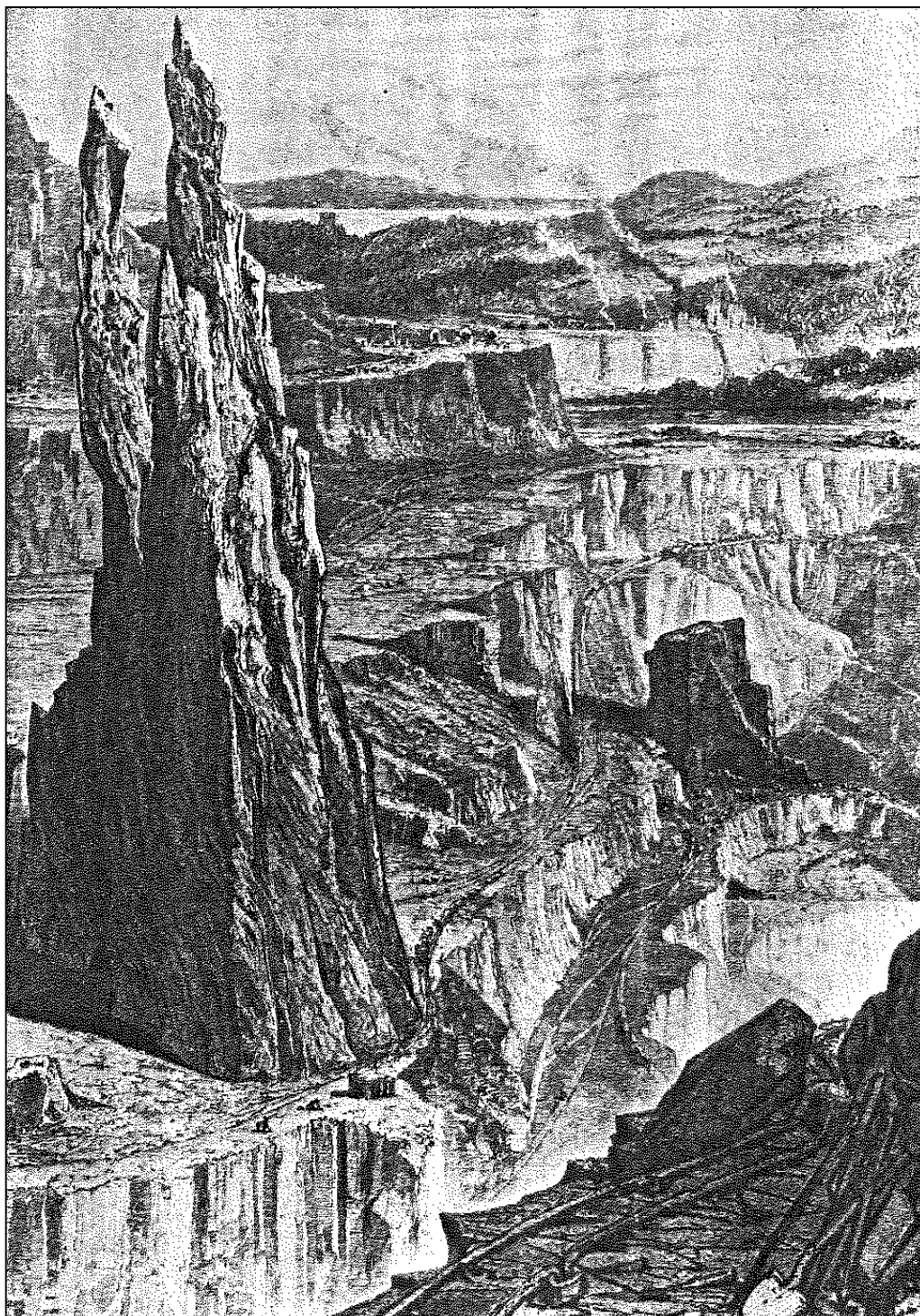


The Quarries in the 19th century

A visit to the slate quarries soon came to be regarded as an essential part of any tour of North Wales. The appeal was two-fold: the great cliffs and terraces satisfied the 19th century lust for Aweful Scenery, while at the same time their purpose gave ample opportunity for the equally prevalent admiration for profitable industry. No guide to the area was without some account of them, the most commonly described being the Penrhyn Quarry. An echo of the *frissons* felt by the Victorian tourists (and the risks taken by the miners on their scaling ladders) can be felt today by taking the A4086 through the Llanberis Pass and on to Caernarfon.



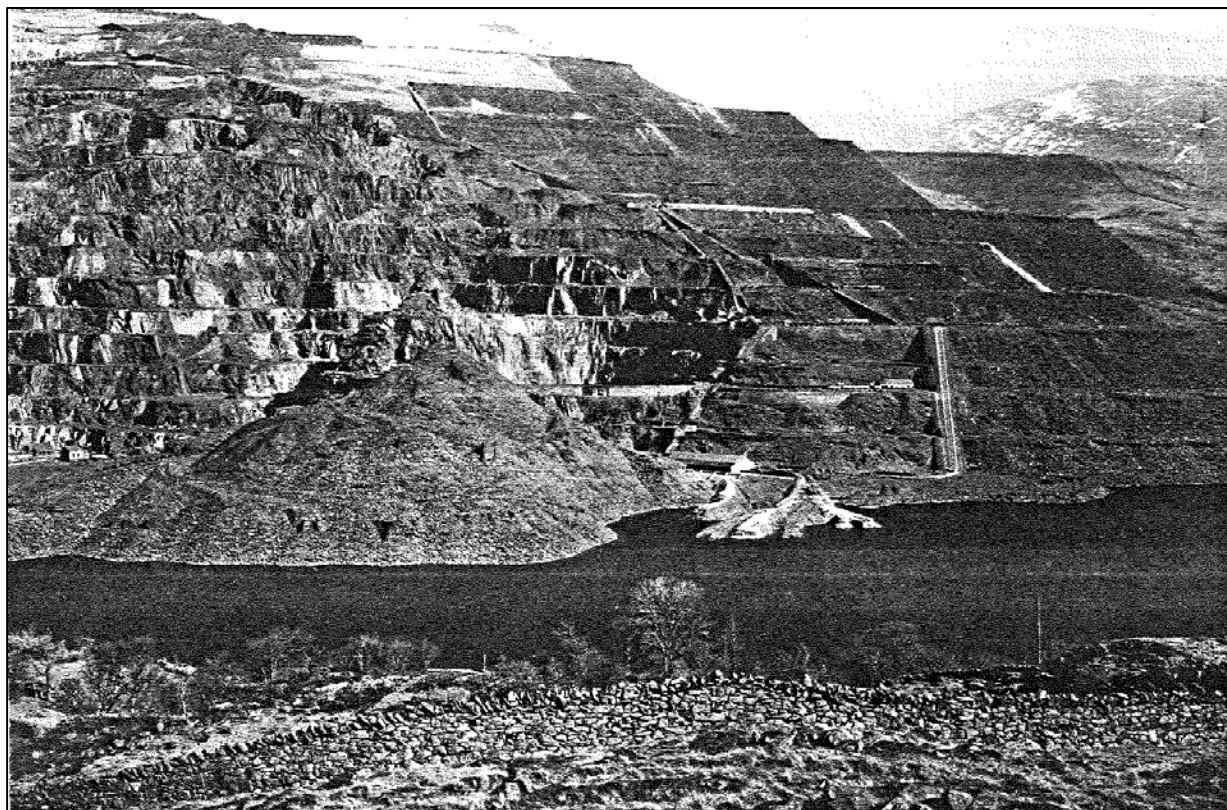
The *European Magazine* November 1808



Penrhyn Quarry c1890, with Talcen Mawr in the foreground.



The inner or southern end of Penrhyn Quarry.



Part of the Dinworic Quarries rising above Llyn Peris.

LORD PENRYN'S SLATE QUARRY,
NEAR BANGOR, N. WALES.

[WITH A VIEW.]

THE slate quarry of which the annexed Plate is a representation, was the property of the late Lord Penryn. It is on the side of a lofty mountain, and within half a mile of the great post road from Capel Cerig to Bangor, in the county of Carnarvon.

This quarry may be reckoned one of the curiosities of Carnarvonshire; and any traveller taking the tour of North Wales should not omit seeing it. The solid masses of slate dug from the summit to the base are from 80 to 100 feet; and when the sun reflects its beams on its sides, it gives the finest prismatic colours imaginable. The dividing the strata of slate from the main body appears to a stranger beholding the workmen a service of danger, particularly when they are employed in splitting the rock from the summit. This is effected by a small beam fastened to the top, with two ropes at each end, on which four, five, or six men frequently stand, and with their iron crowes and sledge-hammers flake off the slate from the sides, in pieces from two to eight feet in thickness, and six to seven in length. In other places, the slate rock is divided by blasts from gunpowder. From the miners, the different pieces go to the persons who shape them. This is done on the spot; and when finished are put into small waggons that hold near half a ton each, and from this conveyed along an iron rail-way, which runs on a gentle declivity for two miles and a half to Port Penryn, and from thence shipped to Ireland, Scotland, and many parts of England.

The slate produced from this quarry is of a remarkably fine quality, a close texture, very light, and a bright sea-green colour in general, but some parts of the strata are a purple blue. They form them of different sizes, for the different purposes they may be used; such as grave-stones, chimney-pieces, and covering for houses. The first are prepared with a high polish, about six

inches thick, and fit for the sculptor's hand, without any further trouble than his engraving: these are generally sold by the ton weight. Others, that are only half finished, and used for stairs, horse-blocks, &c. and left in that state to be formed according to the purposes wanted, are also sold by the ton: the first are sold about 55s. and called imperial; the latter at 30s. per ton. For the roofs of houses, three sorts are made, and go under the following descriptions, duchesses, countesses, and ladies: the first measure 24 inches by 12, and sell for 6l. per thousand; the next, 20 inches by 10, and sell for 4l. per thousand; and ladies, 16 inches by 8, and sell for 2l. per thousand. At the port of Penryn school-slates are made and framed in a complete manner for use, which are also exported in great quantities.

Having described the quarry, it would be doing injustice to the distinguished taste of Lady Penryn to pass over in silence her beautiful cottage, which, by her polite attention, is allowed to be seen by every person travelling this part of Wales. It is simply elegant; a fine lawn before the house extends to the rapid river Ogwin; and immediately opposite, the slate quarry, screened by a stupendous mountain at the back, gives this place a most romantic appearance. The walks in the domain are laid out with uncommon taste; and on the summit of a high rock, which bends its craggy brow over the Ogwin, the view is prodigiously grand. Near the foot of the hill is a great fall of water, over large rocks, roots of trees, &c. and would make one of the richest studies possible for any artist to take his subject from. Lady Penryn has fixed on this rock several seats, formed of wood painted like mushrooms, that have a most novel and whimsical appearance. About a mile from the cottage is the farm. This also lays claim to the visitor's attention, as being the completest thing of the kind in Wales. The poultry-yard, pig-styes, dairies, and all the offices are composed entirely of high polished slate; and water laid in to every division in such abundance, as makes the poultry and pigs superior to those that in general are to be met with. Her ladyship has fitted up two rooms in this farm, where the family frequently dine. The cottage is called Ogwin Bank; and the stables, stairs of the cottage, &c. are all made of slate.

Bingley's Guide to North Wales 1839

At Dôlawen, or Braich y Cafn, in the mountains on the south-west side of Nant Frangon, are Mr. Pennant's

SLATE QUARRIES.

Few places will be found more worthy to engage the attention of the tourist than these quarries. The bustle of the workmen on the various ledges, the breaking up of the strata, and the noises of splitting and shaping, with intervals the loud explosion from the blasting of the rocks and the subsequent crash of the pieces thrown down in every direction, will be novel to many of the travellers through this country.

The number of the workmen employed are about 2000, and of boys about 300, and the quantity of slates shipped daily is upon an average 250 tons. These quarries are worked in ledges from 15 to 17 yards deep, in order that the men may be the better able to proceed with their work and that the slates, when detached, may have less distance to fall, and consequently be less injured. These ledges are at present 15 in number. The whole excavation gives one the idea of a vast amphitheatre surrounded with gigantic steps.

The process of dressing and preparing slates for the public market, and the fanciful titles by which the various sizes are designated, are very happily described in the following verses. They are the production of the late Mr. Leycester, who was for many years a judge on the Welsh circuit.

"It has been truly said, as we all must deplore,
That Grenville and Pitt made peers by the score;
But now 'tis asserted, unless I have blundered,
There's a man who makes peereases here by the hundred;
He regards neither Grenville, nor Portland, nor Pitt,
But creates them at once without patent or writ.

By the stroke of the hammer, without the king's aid,
A Lady, or Countess, or Duchess is made.

Yet high is the station from which they are sent,
And all their great titles are got by descent;

And when they are seen in a palace or shop,
Their rank they preserve, and are still at the top.

Yet no merit they claim from their birth or connexion,
But derive their chief worth from their native complexion,

And all the best judges prefer, it is said,
A Countess in blue to a Duchess in red.

This Countess or Lady, though crowds may be present,
Submits to be dress'd by the hands of a peasant;

And you'll see, when her Grace is but once in his clutches,
With how little respect he will handle a Duchess.

Close united they seem, and yet all who have tried them,
Soon discover how easy it is to divide them;

No spirit have they, they are thin as a lath,
The Countess wants life and the Duchess is flat.

No passion or warmth to the Countess is known,
And her Grace is as cold as hard as a stone;

And I fear you will find, if you watch them a little,
That the Countess is frail, and the Duchess is brittle;

Too high for a trade, without any joke,
Though they never are bankrupts, they often are broke.

And though not a soul either pilfers or cozens,
They are daily shipped off and transported by dozens.

In France, jacobinical France, we have seen
How thousands have bled by the fierce guillotine;

But what's the French engine of death to compare
To the engine which Greenfield or Bramah prepare,

That democrat engine, by which, we all know,
Ten thousand great Duchesses fall at a blow.

And long may that engine its wonders display,
Long level with ease all the rocks in its way,

Till the vale of Nant Frangon of slates is bereft,
Nor a Lady, nor Countess, nor Duchess be left."

From Cathrall's *Wanderings in North Wales* 1851

After inspecting the city, the tourist will derive pleasure from visiting

PENRHYN CASTLE,

The baronial mansion of the Hon. E. Douglas Pennant, M.P. for Caernarvonshire, situated within an easy walk of Bangor. It occupies the site of the ancient palace of Roderic Molwynog, Prince of Wales, whose reign commenced in 720. The estate came into the family of Pennant partly by the purchase of the late Lord Penrhyn's father (John Pennant, Esq.), and partly by his own marriage with Anne Susannah, daughter and sole heiress of the late General Warburton, of Winnington, Cheshire. By this matrimonial compact, the two moieties which had for some time been divided became united, and his lordship having no issue, the immense estates devolved upon the late George Hay Dawkins Pennant, Esq., whose daughter married the present possessor. The castle, built of grey Mona marble, presents an extensive range of buildings, surmounted by lofty towers, some of which are circular, while the keep—in which are the domestic apartments of the proprietor—and another of the principal towers, are square, with the addition of angular turrets. Partially screened by surrounding woods of the most luxuriant growth, through the extent of which the Ogwen winds its way to the sea, the effect, as it is approached, is at once picturesque and imposing: and the elegant and superb character of the internal decorations, chiefly upon a groundwork of the finest marble, corresponds with its outward magnificence. The whole of the accessories, the lodge and entrances to the park, with

its walls and massive gateways, are on the same extensive plan; the walls, comprising a circuit of not less than seven miles. An elegant chapel, hot and cold baths on the beach, out-buildings, &c., altogether serve to convey the idea of some regal establishment, rather than the quiet abode of a wealthy commoner of Great Britain. The situation of Penrhyn Castle certainly stands unrivalled. Occupying the summit of an insulated hill, which on one side sweeps down to the coast, it commands views of the bay and town of Beaumaris, Bangor, the greater part of Anglesey, with Priestholme Island, the Great Orme's Head, and Penmaen Mawr. On the other, it gently descends to the base of those gigantic hills that compose the Caernarvonshire range, in the midst of which Snowdon rises with majestic splendour.

Among the heir-looms of Penrhyn is to be seen a *Hirias*, or *drinking-horn*, of the hero Piers Gruffydd, in the shape of an Ox's horn, ornamented and suspended by a silver chain, curious as a memorial of ancient manners. The initials of the chief's name and family are engraved on it. Piers Gruffydd owned the Penrhyn estate in the reign of Elizabeth, and joined the fleet of Sir Francis Drake, in a vessel which he purchased and equipped at his own cost. He was subsequently in the gallant action with the Spanish Armada, and after that victory joined with Sir F. Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh, in their different expeditions against the Spaniards in the West Indies. Admission may be obtained to the castle on Tuesdays and Fridays, in the absence of the family; and on Fridays only, from one to five o'clock, when they are at home.

Near to the principal entrance to Penrhyn Castle is the village and church of Llandegai. In the church is a valuable table monument, with two recumbent alabaster figures, removed thither from the religious houses of Llanvaes, at the dissolution of the monasteries; also, a mural monument to the memory of Archbishop Williams, who died at Gloddach, and was interred here in 1650. An elegant marble monument is likewise erected to the memory of the late Lord and Lady Penrhyn, executed by Westmacott.

Port Penrhyn and the Slate Quarries.—At the egress of the river Cegid into the Menai, a commodious harbour has been formed, capable of admitting and securing vessels of 300 tons burthen. This port was the creation of the late Lord Penrhyn. The quay is upwards of 300

3 yards in length, and a large tonnage of slates, brought by railway from the quarries, about six miles distant, is thence shipped to all parts of the world. Amidst its fleet of commercial marine, may occasionally be seen the striped bit of bunting waving from an American vessel. The export of slate from the Penrhyn slate quarries averages fully 70,000 tons per annum. In 1844 Mr. James Wyatt, the agent of Colonel Douglas Pennant, stated at an Admiralty inquiry about the Menai Strait, that 440 cargoes, with 41,000 tons of slates, were shipped westward. The tram road to the quarries is six miles long, and with the port and quay, cost Lord Penrhyn and the late Mr. Pennant £175,000. At these wonderful works nearly 2000 people are employed, and the weekly wages paid amount to about £1,700. At this busy scene of industry, including those engaged at the wharf, and the wives and children of the workmen, it is stated that 11,000 are supported from the quarries. Mr. Thorne, who recently describes the place, says, "The quarrying is conducted in ledges up the whole front of the mountain, which is carved out in an amazing manner. The scarified face of the mountain, with the multitude of men hacking away at every part of it; the many 'shoots' of scattered slates, which seem in constant motion as fresh loads are being poured down; the enormous heaps of debris; the regular piles of trimmed slates; the incessant activity visible over the entire area; the noise of the multifarious processes, and that also of the loud talking and shouting of the workmen, which like that of all Welsh *meir*—and here all the workmen are Welsh—has to a Saxon ear a sound very like that of quarrelling;—all these things combined have a quite remarkable effect when the works are entered. The works are maintained in the highest state of efficiency. Every mechanical and scientific contrivance which is available is said to be employed, as well as every means of lightening the labour and lessening the danger of the workmen."

"The slate quarries of Penrhyn," says Miss Costello, "are situated near Nant Ffrancon, at a spot called Cae Braich-y-Cefn, and are exceedingly curious, and even picturesque. Most of those places where enormous labour produces enormous wealth are to me displeasing to contemplate; but there is nothing here that conveys an idea of over-taxed workmen—no horrible underground toil and dark dungeon-like caves, where human creatures are condemned, like souls in

4 penance for some hideous crime, to drag heavy weights and chains through frightful chasms, and delve and dig for ore in spaces not large enough for them to stand upright: here are no deadly vapours, no fatal gases mortal to humanity; all is wide and open in the pure light of day, high and broad and healthy. The mountain is cut into ridges of slate, and here and there the projecting edges have formed themselves into graceful shapes. In the very centre of the quarry rises a beautiful conical pillar of slate, which the admiration of the workmen has spared, now that their labours have brought it to the shape which it bears. It is a great ornament to the area, and it is to be regretted that in time it must fall, as the slate of which it is composed happens to be of the purest kind. The huts of the workmen scattered over the quarry have a singular effect; and the wild aspect of the men accords well with their abodes. The thundering sound produced by the occasional blasting of the rock is very grand, and rolls and echoes amongst the caves and along the heights; and the grey masses glowing in the sun, and reflecting the sky through their rents, have an imposing aspect."

"A few years ago the writer of these pages," says Mr. Edward Parry, "had the pleasure of being in the quarry at the same time as the Duke and Duchess of St. Albans, and at the request of her Grace, he accompanied them throughout the different departments. On being informed that duchesses were manufactured there, her Grace immediately expressed a wish to see the ceremony performed, which, to her great surprise, was no sooner said than done, and the workmen presented her Grace with a full-sized duchess. Her Grace laughed heartily at the manner in which it had been done, and in return gave the workmen half a sovereign." The whimsical names of duchesses, countesses, ladies, &c., were bestowed upon the various sizes and makes of slates by General Warburton about a century since.

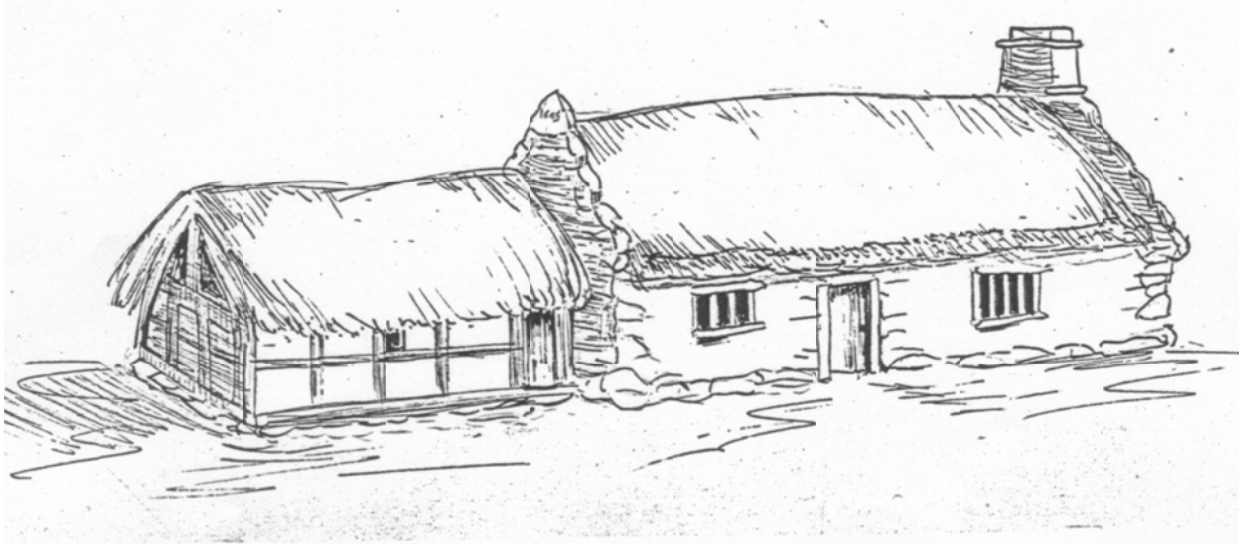
History and Restoration of Ty Uchaf

Ty Uchaf is probably the second of three farmsteads at Rhiwddolion, all of which would have been substantial homes in their day. The remains of the earliest of these can still be seen in the shadow of a rocky scarp just above Ty Capel. It probably dates from the mid-seventeenth century and was perhaps the 'parent' house to Ty Uchaf, built for an eldest son, for example. We know of the third house only from a re-used stone lintel with the date 1687, recorded as having been incorporated into one of the quarry workers' terraces (now lost), along Sarn Helen.

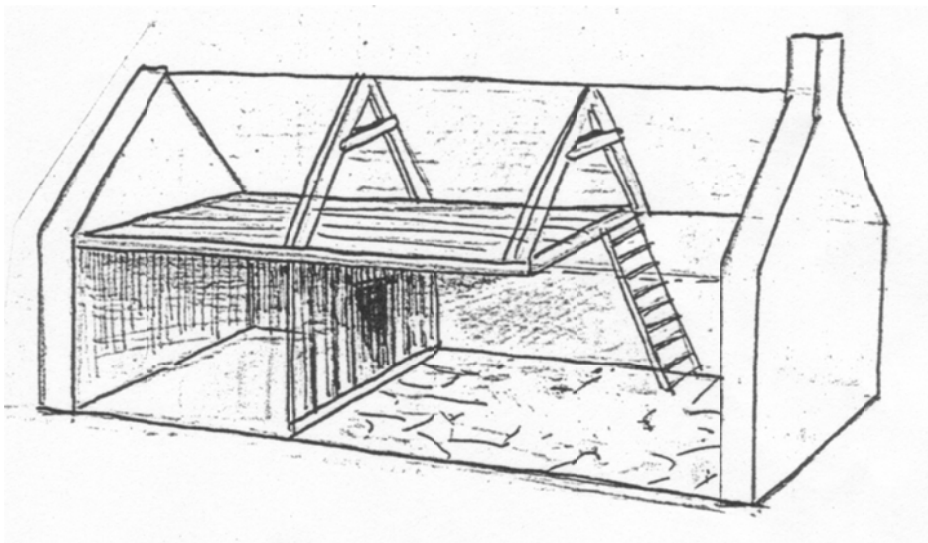
We believe Ty Uchaf was built around 1685 from another discarded lintel stone, built into the pigsty at the front of the house and discovered during our work. This rounded triangular stone was probably placed on the gable end, at the apex of a small parapet, which stood proud of the original thatched roof, as shown in the drawing overleaf. When the evening sun slants across the datestone, the date with its reversed '5' is thrown into clear relief. This date is consistent with the construction of this single storey house, with the byre extension probably added in the eighteenth century. The lean-to additions, yard walling and Ty Bach ('the little house') are likely to be nineteenth century additions. You can still make out the original extent of the smallholding, probably no more than 20 –30 acres, in the sheltered fields lying to the north- and south-east of the house and the various dry stone pens and boundary walls. The site has been carefully chosen; there was plentiful water and access to good pasture, while the plateau provided rock foundations and the hillside a measure of protection from the elements – all aspects that had determined building sites from the earliest times.

The cottage's early form is reflected in the off-centre entrance and asymmetric windows, whose position and scale are determined by the internal accommodation. The windows and door are their original size, though the joinery and much of the glazing belong to the nineteenth century. Originally, the

windows would have been three or four lights, with diagonally-set oak mullions. The doorway leads directly into the former 'hall', the larger window nearest the fireplace providing a late echo of the mediaeval oriel window.



Impression of Ty Uchaf as it might have appeared in 1685 (*P Welford*)



Simplified three-quarter section showing the probable original internal arrangement: a three bay structure with an unheated end bay roofed over to form the *croglofft* for sleeping. The 'high' end of the hall nearest the fire seems always to have been open to the roof, while the bay nearest the door was ceiled over. The wooden partition separated off the service bay, or perhaps a primitive parlour.
(P Welford)

The original floors would probably have been slate flags. All that remains of the original wallfinish is a small section in the apex of the gable above the fireplace – a rough lime render ‘battered’ over the rubble masonry and then limewashed. The evidence for the continuation of the *croglofft* across the central bay comes from joist cut-outs found on the hall side of the remaining tie-beam. Similarly, we found evidence of the mortises for a post-and-panel partition on the tie beam between the first and second bays, above the present bedroom partition. There is even a shallow cut-out towards the middle of the tie beam which suggests that at another time after the original partition had been removed, a ladder to the loft may once have rested there.

Many of the roof timbers are original although more recent adjustments to the roof alignment are clear including the unification of the barn roof with the cottage. The two oak trusses have pegged tie beams with collars and a simple lapjoint at the apex; they are roughly squared, unembellished and honest. The tie beam of the second truss was cut at sometime in the past. While the remaining tie beam is much decayed, some of the notches cut for the *croglofft* joists are still apparent and the rafters for the bedroom ceiling now rest in corresponding notches in the bedroom face of the beam. When we acquired Ty Uchaf, joists ran longitudinally along the original two bay span, and had been extended in recent times to the fireplace wall. Such adaptation explains why so many *crogloffts* have been lost, and in this instance it had made the cottage feel cramped and dark. We decided that it would make a more pleasant space to live in, as well as being historically and architecturally more interesting, to reinstate the *croglofft* as least as far as the remaining tie beam. There was however no structural reason to replace the missing tie beam, which would also have restricted the headroom in the hall to an irritating extent.

The hall would have been where earlier inhabitants cooked, ate and lived. The fireplace was built high and wide, typical for these little cottages, and still has its

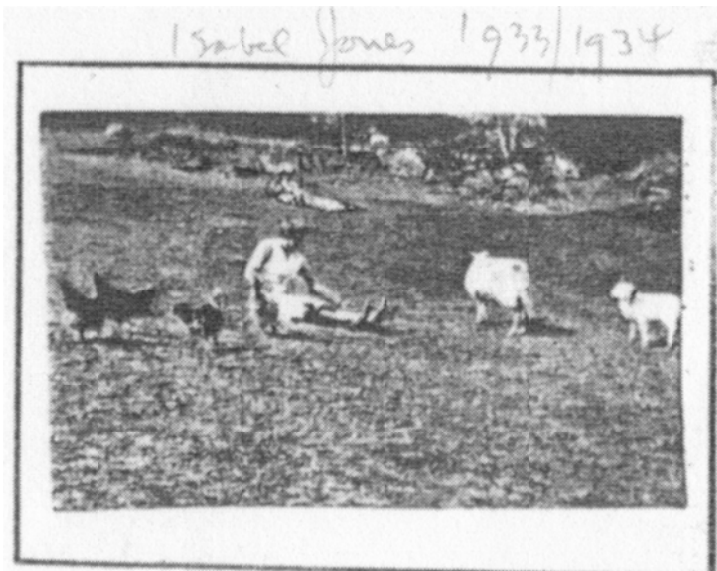
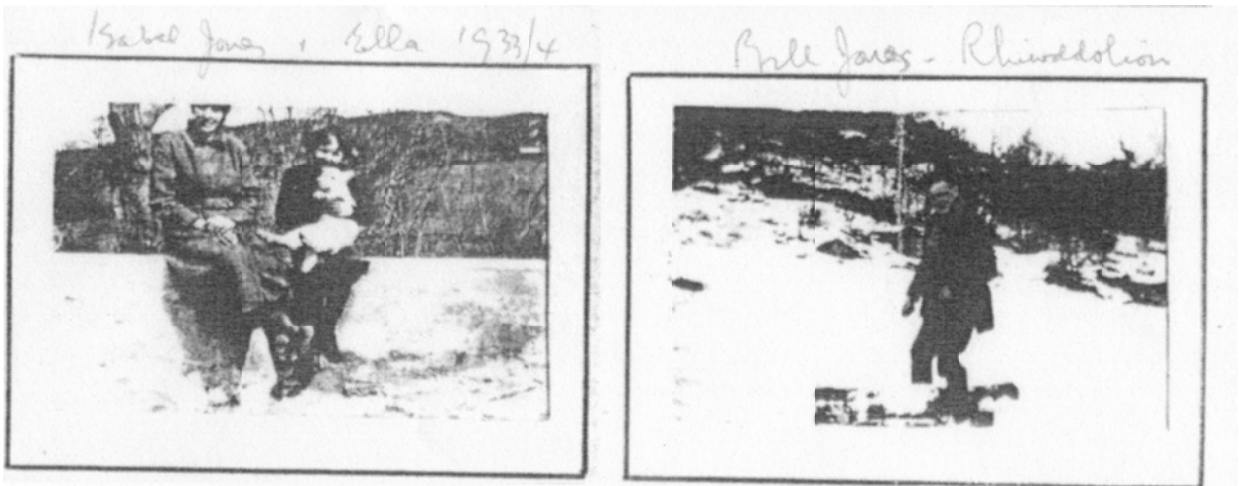
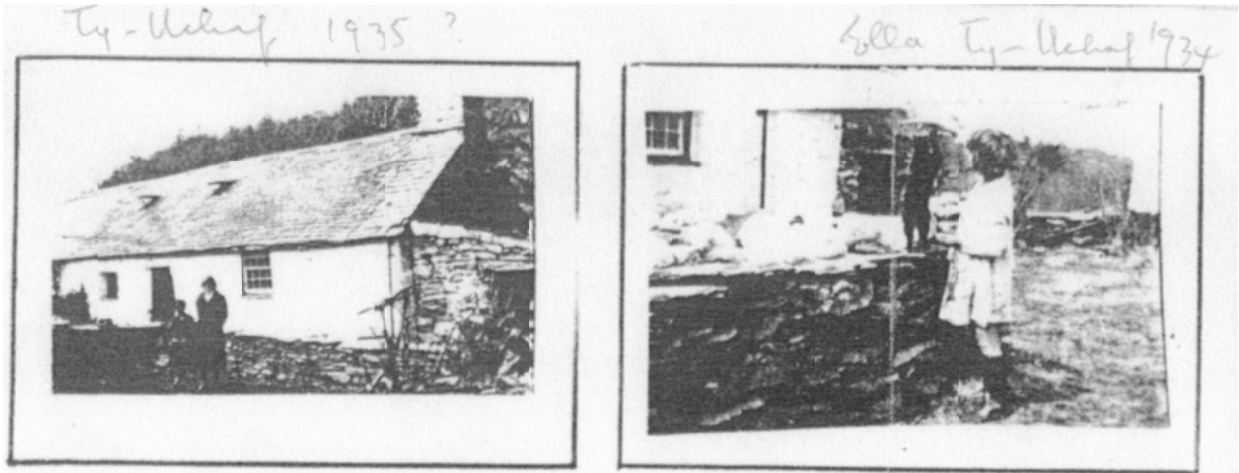
original oak bresummer, which is roughly chamfered. As is often found, a large, flat boulder was built into the back of the hearth as a type of fireback.

Beside the cottage is the stone-built byre (now the Landmark bathroom and entrance lobby, and a storage room). From the outside, breaks in the masonry make clear that it is a later addition, probably built in the eighteenth century. Perhaps it replaced an earlier timber framed structure, since such extra shelter would always have been needed. It seems that the roof of the current byre was slated from the first – maybe the house section was re-roofed, slate replacing its original thatch, at the time the stone byre was built. At either end of this house-and-byre range are drystone, roofless structures probably added in the nineteenth century. These might have been used as a store (to the left) and perhaps a brewhouse or dairy to the right, where there is evidence of an oven perhaps using the chimney gable of the house. The rough flagged forecourt at the front of the house and the pigsty with the datestone are likely to date from the same period, with Ty Bach following on as a modern convenience at the end of the century.

Life appears to have continued at Ty Uchaf through much of the twentieth century with very little change. Mr Desmond Morris sent us some evocative snapshots of his wife Ella's life at Ty Uchaf as a girl in the 1930s and blurred and grainy as they are, they provide evocative vignettes of life at Ty Uchaf through the seasons in the valley.



Ella Jones with her mother, her broom-wielding suggesting that perhaps the little yard was intended to be kept clean and tidy. The skylights, presumably lighting the *croglofft*, are shown to be far from modern insertions. The horizontal 'Yorkshire' sliding sash is also in evidence. The Joneses had moved to Ty Uchaf for the sake of Ella's father's health at the prompting of Mr Bright of Ty Coch – and indeed it was Bill Jones that Mr Bright employed to construct the 'swimming pool' in the stream below Ty Coch. Mr Jones also made Ella the tiny duckpond out of slates in front of Ty Uchaf for her pet duck – it is still there. The cottage's water supply came from a well about thirty yards below Ty Bach. Ella did her homework by candlelight and was a clever girl who passed the scholarship to go to Llanrwst County School – not such an easy journey as to Betws-y-coed and it was for Ella's sake that the family left this remote little house in 1936.



Pictures from Ella Morris's album.



Ty Uchaf when bought by Landmark in 1998.



Early stages, with the walls stripped of modern plaster and the modern extension of the *croglofft* to the point where the second tie beam was.



The *croglofft* extension removed, deep grouting and re-pointing underway.

When Landmark bought Ty Uchaf, it was halfway through a fairly uncompromising modern restoration. We have left elements of this phase in the byre as a contrasting illustration of a different approach to conservation/restoration. The buildings were restored through 2000 and 2001, chiefly through the efforts of Reg Lo-Vel who took up periodic residence in a caravan or, when conditions grew too inclement, in Ty Capel with his dog, Guinness.

The roof is largely as we found it but perhaps slightly compromised from what this little house deserves: the pitch has been over straightened and the distinction between house and byre lost as a result. However, for the time being it still serves its purpose; some repairs have been carried out, a rear skylight installed and the front skylights repositioned.

There were some remnants of old flush pointing and a limewash/slurry finish around the front door and we decided to replicate this across the building as a whole. This involved digging out the recent cementitious pointing and then deep grouting and pointing, a time consuming task. The large quantities of local Welsh grey lime required for the mortar to re-point were supplied, together with much useful advice, by Ty Mawr Lime.

The gutters have been removed at the front not just because they are a relatively modern touch but also because we feel the cottage looks better without them. We expect the sacrificial coating of limewash to give the front wall protection from the weather, with regular re-coating being an accepted part of the proper care of such buildings. The rear wall of the main room has probably always been susceptible to damp, being built into the hillside at a point where today at least there is a great deal of ground water. We retained the sand/cement render we found on the outside since it was so firmly fixed, reinforced it with a slate coping and improved the drainage to carry the water away, both at ground level and by retaining the gutters at the back.



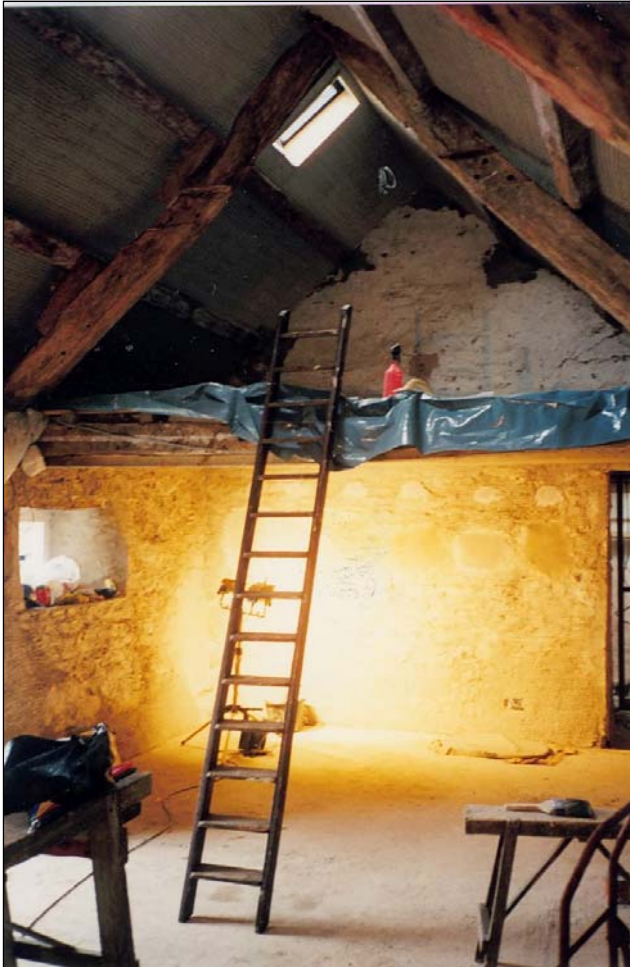
The remaining tie beam, showing the mortices for the former plank-and-post partition and the groove where a ladder may have rested. The joists for the new bedroom ceiling rest in the original notches.



The scratch coat of lime plaster now on the walls, it was time to think about laying out the floor.

We inherited a concrete floor throughout the building, on which lay insulation, an underfloor heating system and quarry tiles in screed. The levels were wrong, and so we decided to go back to a slate slab floor. The large, thin slabs we had to use onto the concrete represent more advanced quarrying skills than would have been current in the late seventeenth century but are an improvement on the quarry tiles and correct the levels internally. The fireplace has been kept as an open inglenook, which we feel is the ideal which should be aimed for in a little cottage such as this. We shall be monitoring the effectiveness of the fire carefully. The stone bench and suspended hearth were taken from other local vernacular examples, their stonework limewashed but not plastered to show that they are modern reinstatements. All the stone, including the large stone slabs on top, came from what we found on the hillside.

The roof timbers and fireplace have been limewashed in to give as much light as possible in an otherwise dark little building, a common treatment in vernacular houses. Some softening of the whiteness is to be expected and even desired, and now as in the past, we shall then be re-limewashing every so often. We decided not to replace the missing tie beam in the roof since there was no structural need to do so and the progressive raising of the floor level meant that headroom would have become restricted. It was important to keep what remained of the *croglofft* since it is such a rare survival and a feature that had been lost at Ty Coch, and we wanted to keep the bedroom and living accommodation in the original three-bay structure, with waking hours spent in the 'hall'. The slate floor throughout the three bays reinforces the impression that this is a single large space that has simply been partitioned as its use has evolved. The kitchen area positioned itself within the room once we realised that the natural tendency was to stand and look out of the front door. The bedroom makes use of the old service bay beneath the *croglofft*, with a hair-lined plaster ceiling to keep it snug. The horizontal sash window was carefully restored in faraway Berkshire since no local carpenter could be found who thought its repair was possible.

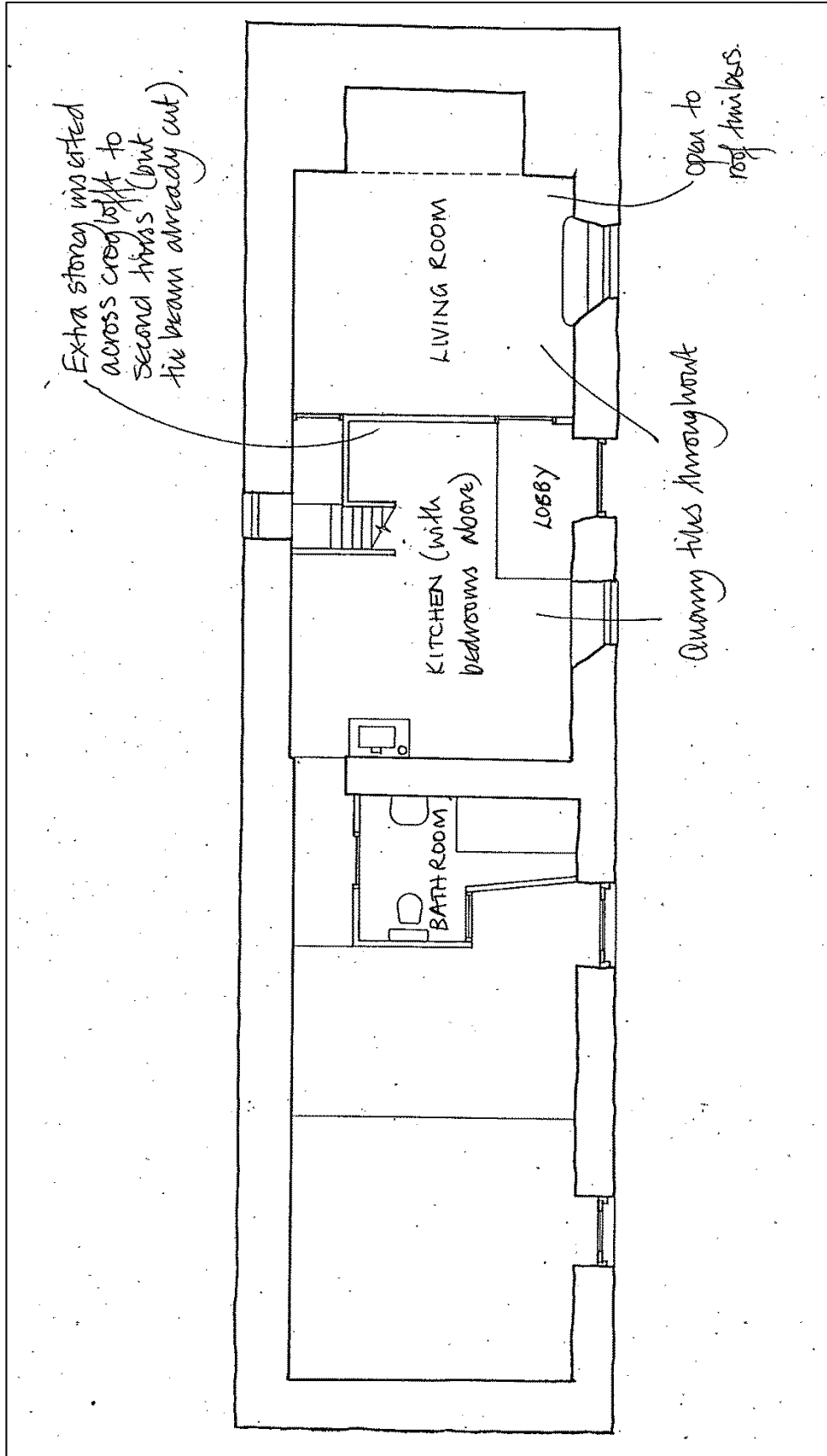


The bedroom area before the partition was reinstated.

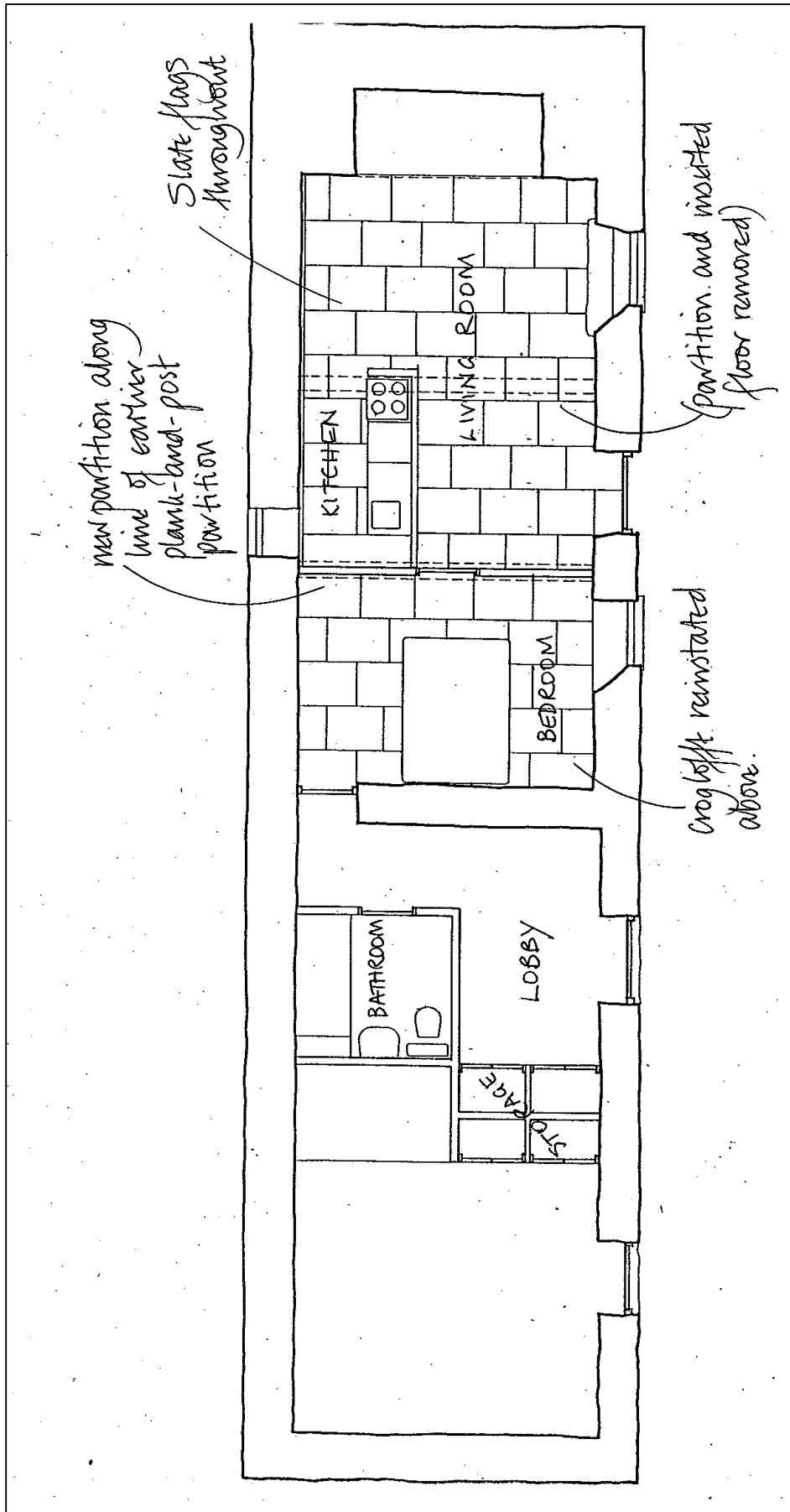


Looking into the byre from the cottage before work began, at what is now the bathroom and lobby.

The bathroom, a modern necessity (for which we had had to build an extension at Ty Coch), is in the former barn with a skylight inserted for light. Use of the barn also gave us the opportunity to create a 'boot lobby', a necessary luxury for walking gear and muddy boots. We have made the paint finishes in the bathroom and lobby area plain and simple, perhaps as in a hill farm, in the cottage end, but in the rest of the byre next door the different approach of the previous owner is still apparent in dry-lined walls, plaster board ceiling and quarry tiled floors. It is a very useful space for Landmark storage and houses the Rhiwddolion water supply equipment; but it also serves as an illustration of how easily traditional materials and finishes can be superseded by harsher modern alternatives. The Landmark restoration of the main house at Ty Uchaf represents an altogether softer, less intrusive approach and an unexpected result of this approach has been how contemporary the original simplicity and proportion of this little house feel today.



Ty Uchaf when acquired by Landmark.



Ty Uchaf after Landmark's restoration.



The exterior during the early stages, with the front skylights and overhead power cables still apparent.



Reg Lo-Vel and Guinness

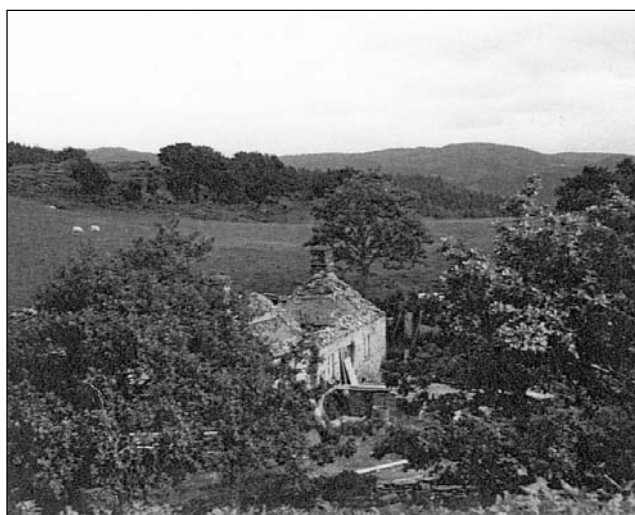
History and Restoration of Ty Coch



Ty Coch when bought by Landmark in 1968.

As with Ty Uchaf, we know less of the history of Ty Coch than Ty Capel. All three of the buildings that have become Landmarks evoke strong memories for local people who have known them within living memory, so that apart from Elias Owen who live there in the 1890s when the chapel was being rebuilt, we also know that William Bright lived in Ty Coch from 1927 to 1957. It was Mr Bright who first dammed the stream to make a swimming pool for his grandchildren.

Although most of what remained when we bought it dated from the eighteenth century, the fact that Ty Coch contains the remnants of a cruck frame suggests that its builders may have purloined materials from an earlier building on or near the site. Ty Coch needed considerable work by the time Landmark acquired it. The roof was in a bad state and had to be redone completely. Luckily there were some slates to be used up from the original roof of the Bath Tower in Caernarvon; they are the large ones on the front of the building. There was no room to fit a kitchen and bathroom into the existing building, so they were added on at the



Ty Coch – work underway

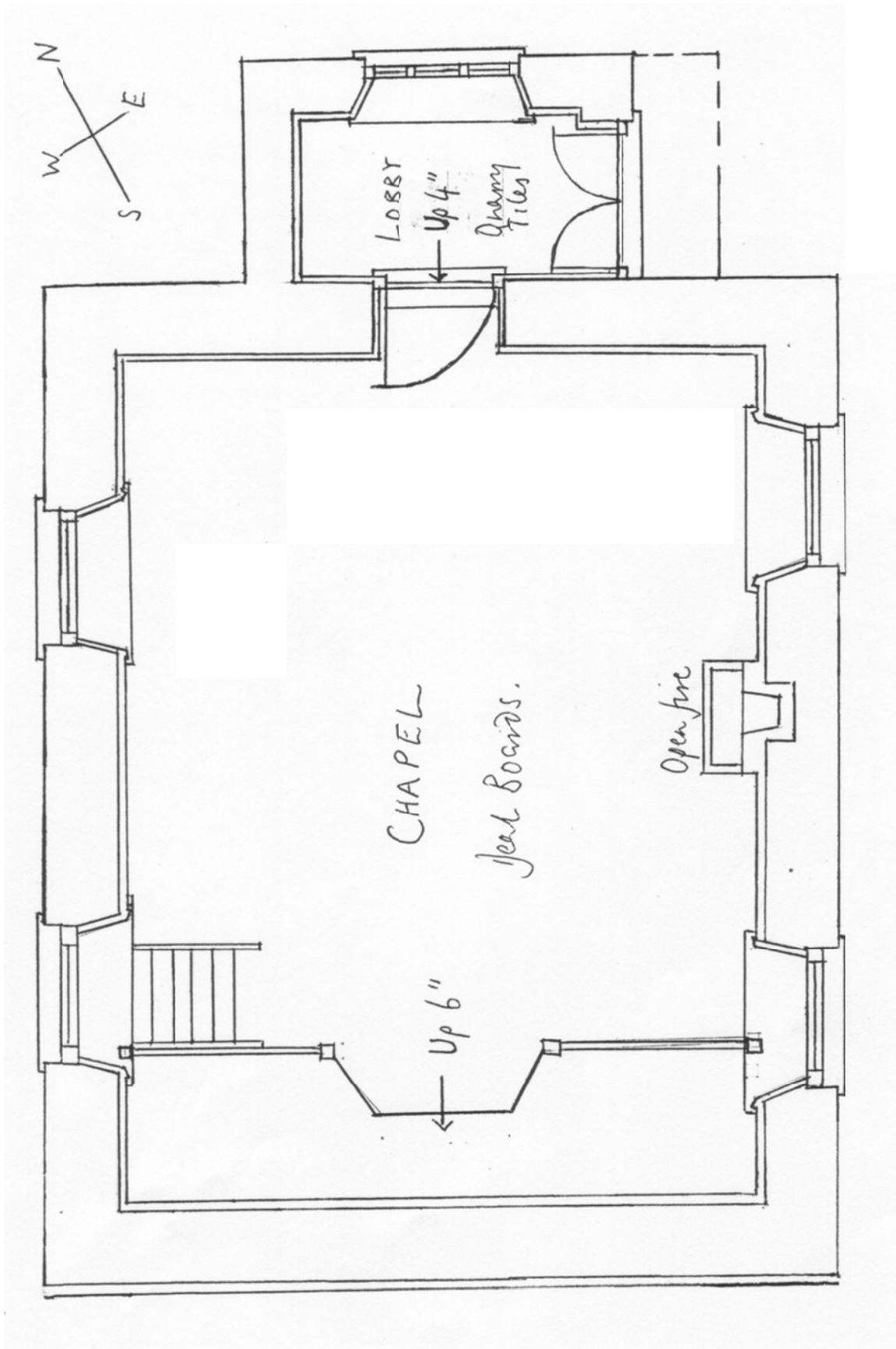
back. The stones for the extension came from a field next to Ty Uchaf and were given to us by the neighbouring farmer of Ty Mawr, Mr Llewelyn Pierce. The local joiner designed and built the kitchen cupboards, and local slate flags were laid on the sitting room floor. The low wall at the front was built, and the hillside dug back behind to help prevent damp.

History and Restoration of Ty Capel

In 1867 when Rhiwddolion was becoming a thriving community thanks to the slate quarrying, the first teacher, Miss Ann Roberts, arrived. She taught in the chapel erected on land owned by Ty Isaf. The stage was now set for Rhiwddolion to make its one and only impact on the annals of local history: in 1869 Griffith Hugh Jones became Headmaster. He also went by the Bardic name of Gutyn Arfon, a tribute to his musical abilities. For the next fifty years the area around was enlivened by his brass band, his choral union and his eisteddfodau.



The Rhiwddolion School Party, with Gutyn Arfon, Schoolmaster, August 23rd 1890



Capel – Ground plan 1967

Ty

Gutyn trained local children in music classes he held in several villages, and the operettas they performed achieved celebrity throughout the Conway valley. In the chapels they sang hymns of his composition and in Capel Rhiwddolion these were accompanied, to the initial shock of the congregation, by the strains of an Harmonium, or American organ, the first to be introduced into a chapel in the district, possibly even in the county.

When Mr James donated the original chapel building and the land it stood on to the Calvinist Methodist Connexion in 1892, plans were quickly drawn up “by the Rev. David Williams, Cwm-y-glo, and the work was executed by Mr David Williams, Dolwyddelan. Stones for the work were provided free of charge by friends of the place”. The materials were carried free of charge too, according to Gutyn Arfon’s account, and one of the friends of the place was an Elias Owen of Ty Coch. (This account may be found at the back of this album. It also mentions ‘Robert Williams, Ty Ucha, who died aged 63’.) The completed chapel was opened on Sunday, 9th July, 1893, with a service conducted by the Rev. T.J. Wheldon of Bangor and Thomas Williams of Gwalchmai, Anglesey, which seems to have lasted all day. The new Capel Rhiwddolion, now Ty Capel, is larger than its predecessor, the gable of which would be seen on the south wall when the slates were removed in 1967 (see photographs). The open air “auditorium” was also laid out in 1892-3, a useful addition since the congregation is said to have consisted of forty families at one time, including those from outlying farms. During the week, the chapel doubled as a schoolroom.

By 1963 the chapel was no longer in use and the Calvinistic Methodist Connexion sold it to a local builder, who sold it on to a Mrs Axon. When the Landmark Trust bought it in 1968 and applied for permission to turn it into a dwelling house the chapel was in sound structural condition. To give extra light to the big room a new window was made in the south wall, after which the slates were re-hung on the end, exactly as before. The kitchen and bathroom were cleverly fitted in at the other end, leaving plenty of space over for the sleeping gallery.



Ty Capel – in 1967, before restoration.



Under restoration, with the new window installed



Ty Capel during restoration, 1967-8.



The Communion rails, originally at the south end, as shown on the plan, with the Communion Table behind, were used to form the balustrade. The deal floor boards and the boards which line the walls and ceiling are all original and the varnished pine partitions, though new, are absolutely typical of chapel furniture. The simple colouring and the stencilling round the dado rail are also exactly right for the decoration of a small chapel, and above all, the feel and smell of the whole building is highly evocative.

So after all, the events of the 19th century turned out to be no more than an interruption; Rhiwddolion has returned to its original pattern and the same simple sort of life can again be lived there, if a good deal more comfortably. The lack of a road to the front door emphasises the link with the past, for there can be few places left where the foot-boundness of that life can be so strongly realised. Above all, we see it today looking very much as it would have done for some hundreds of years before the slate industry came and went, before overhead electrical cables came, disfigured and later had to be buried, an upland pocket of habitation among the now encroaching conifers – which, hopefully, are themselves no more than an interruption in the natural landscape.

Some notes on places nearby

Betws y Coed

A town of bridges and for a long time very little else. First were the Miner's Bridge, over the Llugwy, and the Stepping Stones over the Conway. Then came the five-arched Pont y Pair, traditionally 15th century. Later, in the early 19th century, Pony yr Afanc was built over the Conway, soon to be superseded by Telford's Waterloo Bridge in 1815. By this time a small hamlet had grown up round Pont y Pair, but Betws only began to grow in the 1870s, after the Conway Valley line had reached it. Soon the population had doubled, and by 1884 there were six licensed hotels, 5 temperance hotels and 34 boarding houses. It became one of the main tourist centres for Snowdonia, considered picturesque while not being too over-powering. Today it is the tourists themselves and the craft shops that are somewhat overwhelming.

Blaenau Festiniog

Grim tips of slate waste tower over the town, which is reputed to have an annual rainfall of eleven feet. The two great quarries are now open to the public and their caverns well worth visiting.

Beddgelert

A bridge thronged with yellow and orange Snowdon climbers and worshippers at the apocryphal grave of Gelert. Nearby the lovely Pass of Aberglaslyn with another good bridge, and into Snowdonia, Nantgwynant.

Beaumaris

The most complicated of the castles that James of St George built for Edward I, in a pleasant town.

Bodnant Gardens

Most spectacular in May when the rhododendrons are in flower and the laburnum arch, but beautiful at any time. An enormous and varied garden.

Bryn Bras Castle

19th century Norman castle, slightly too sham-looking. Partly the work of Thomas Hopper, architect of Penrhyn Castle.

Cochwillan

Recently restored hall house with a terrific hammerbeam roof. Was a ruinous barn. Open by appointment.

Criccieth

Mild and pleasant seaside town with a good castle and delicious home-made ice cream to be had in the street below Cadwaladers.

Cwmystraddlyn

Wild open valley. At its top looms the Abbey-like ruin of a slate mill built on somewhat mistaken principles by a cotton manufacturer.

Gwydir Uchaf Chapel (DoE)

Built by Sir Richard Wynn in 1673, still in the Gothic style. Lovely painted ceiling with rustic religious scenes and good angels.

Llanberis

When the Dinorwic Quarry closed, the DoE and the National Museum of Wales bought the whole works and opened it as the Quarrying Museum.

Llandegai

Estate village of Penrhyn Castle, almost a garden suburb. Good monuments in the Church.

Llandudno

In spite of its reputation, a surprisingly unaltered Victorian seaside resort, complete with iron workshop fronts and lamp posts.

Llanfrothen (Garreg)

Clough Williams-Ellis' estate village, ebullient with "Portmeirion green" paint, ironwork and a dustbin shelter in the shape of a gazebo. War memorial and lodge to Plas Brondanw (gardens worth visiting when open for National Gardens Scheme), where he lived.

Llangelynin Old Church

Another remote and simple church, associated with Llewellyn. Thick with atmosphere. Key to this and Llanrychwyn at the farms near them.

Penom

Norman priory church and simple buildings on northeasterly tip of Anglesey. Rather grand dovecote.

Plas Newydd (National Trust)

Built in Gothic style for Marquess of Anglesey by James Wyatt and Joseph Potter, 18??-1810. The light off the straights reflects on Rex Whistler's mural, which shows a glorified version of them.

Portmadoc and Tremadoc

Laid out and named after Maddocks who built the Cob and turned the most beautiful estuary in North Wales into productive farmland. The square in Tremadoc, with the arcaded town hall, is particularly successful and charming, all on a small scale.

Portmeirion

Clough Williams-Ellis showing that architecture can be fun and that development need not mean desecration. Rich in small details of design and imaginative juxtapositions of contrasting styles.

Llanystumdwy

Simple and beautiful Lloyd George grave, showing that Clough Williams-Ellis was not only the architect of Portmeirion.

Ty Mawr (National Trust)

Cottage birthplace of Bishop William Morgan, c.1545, translator of the Bible into Welsh.

Sarn Helen

Name given to the many Roman roads in Wales, but strictly only belonging to the North-South spinal route from Caerhun in the Conway valley to Carmarthen. The branch to Caernarfon is also known as Sarn Helen, with some justification, since it is the city most strongly associated with Elen, the British princess of the Mabinogion who married the Roman Emperor Macsin Wledig (Magnus Maximum) and caused the roads to be built. Another theory is that they were built by Helen, mother of Constantine. The stretch that passes Rhiwddolion continues past Dolwyddelan, on to the Roman camp at Tomen y Mur. Much of it can be followed on foot.

Information on Rhiwddolion and the area generally came from the following sources:

Report of Capel Rhiwddolion by Gutyn Arfon; 1893

Betws y Coed and the Conway Valley; Ivor Wynne Jones; 1974

Sarn Helen, A Roman Road in Wales: Morris Marples: 1939

Dictionary of Welsh Biography

A History of the North Wales Slate Industry: Jean Lindsey; 1974

Slate of Wales; F.J.North; 1946

Houses of the Welsh Countryside; Peter Smith; 1975

Caernarvonshire: J.E.Lloyd

History of Caernarvonshire: A.H.Dodd

Directories and papers on the Hafodlas Quarry in Caernarfon Record Office

Information on the restoration of Ty Capel and Ty Coch was kindly given by the architect, Mr L Bedall-Smith.

'CARED DOETH YR ENCILION'

The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion

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Miss C. Dorrien-Smith,
The Landmark Trust,
21, Dean's Yard,
Westminster,
London SW1P 3PA.

1 November 1979


Dear Miss Dorrien-Smith,

I'm very sorry that I have been so long in getting the translation of Guto Arfon's account of the chapel at Rhiwddolion for you. Unfortunately illness and a number of other commitments since June have interfered rather seriously with the work at the Society's office.

However, I have now managed to arrange for the translation and I am enclosing it together with the photocopy of the Welsh account of the chapel. I also enclose the translator's invoice for his fee for translating and typing the translation viz. £3.75. Perhaps you would send the fee direct to him at the address given on the invoice.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,


Honorary Secretary

REPORT, ETC.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I wish to present this Report to you as a memorial to the loving toil which you showed in the rebuilding of the above Chapel.

There is no certainty as to when the Methodist Cause was founded in this locality; but it would appear that this happened in Pantyrhyddod. The cause moved from Pantyrhyddod to Ty Isa, since that farmhouse was more convenient. At that time there were many church members who could not take communion without travelling to Bala; and although the journey was long, it is said that they went there regularly. Among others, two godly old women are named, namely Margaret Parry, Ty ucha, and Margaret Roberts (Jones), Ty Mawr.

The following persons are named as those who helped to establish the Cause here - Hugh Roberts, Pantyrhyddod, who was accustomed to preach (and who was son of a godly woman called Anne Jones who came from the Llansannan area as a servant for one Betti Rogers, Cwmdreiniog; it is said that she was the first Methodist to come to the area); Dafydd (Roberts?), the smith, Ty isa, a character remarkably warmed by religion; and it is said that John Jones, Llan, Dolwyddelan, (grandfather of the late Rev. Samuel Roberts, Bangor), was one of the first to come here to hold church services, etc.; together with John Williams, Dolwyddelan (uncle to the late John Jones, Talysarn, etc.); John Williams, his son; John Jones, Tanycastell, (before he started to preach); and a godly old woman called Nanws ach Robert, Cae du.

soon after the start of the Cause at Pantyrhyddod, Hugh Roberts, the preacher mentioned above, was holding a church meeting there when he asked those present what was Faith. After failing to elicit an answer from several people, a certain Morris Williams told him that he thought it meant LOVE. In a prayer at the end of the meeting, Hugh Roberts begged the Lord to show them the light, when many started to cry pitiously, since they thought that the preacher was complaining to the King of Kings that they were ignorant and in the dark! The women were accustomed to hold prayer meetings in Ty Mawr, and one or two of the brothers were allowed to be present by invitation. In one of these meetings, about the year 1805, everyone started to glorify the Lord, and following this a revival started in the locality. In another held on a sabbath evening at Ty isa, about 1826, great glorifications broke out, and this was followed by a strong revival. About this time, the sons of Hohn Owen, Ty isa, were accepted into membership of the church - namely, Robert, John and Joseph Owen; and also Hugh and David Jones - the first being the son, and the other, the nephew, of Robert Jones, Ty mawr (who was an influential deacon in the Betws-y-coed church); all of whom are, or were, church officials.

Note a list of those who were faithful to the Cause in the place, and who have, by now, gone to their rest:

Hugh Roberts, Pantyrhyddod, who died when he was around 22 years old.
Robert Jones, Ty mawr, who died 24 July 1858, aged 86.
John Owen, Ty isa, who died in 1859, aged 79.
Robert Williams, Ty ucha, who died aged 63.

Thomas Williams, Cwmdreiniog, who died 11 July 1862, aged 85.
 Elias Jones, of the same, who died 27 July 1862, aged 58.
 Robert Hughes, Henefail, who died 16 March 1864, aged 63.
 Owen Jones, Ty mawr, who died 28 September 1871, aged 53.
 Griffith Rowlands, who died in Ffestiniog 5 May 1874, aged 72.
 Hugh Hughes, Wyddfyd, who died 15 May 1875, aged 54.

In the year 1864 a REGULAR Cause was founded in conjunction with the church in Betws-y-coed, when Owen Jones, Ty mawr; David Owen, Ty isa; and Griffith Roberts, Graig Forus (now from Miners' Bridge) were chosen as deacons; and of which the latter two remain, and are very faithful to their Lord. In 1869, the Cause was made independant, although it remains in the same 'taith' on Sundays, as Betws-y-coed. ['Taith' is not easily translatable, in this context; its normal meaning is 'journey'. Two or more chapels are permanently linked for convenience in organising preachers, a visiting preacher visiting each of the chapels in the 'taith' to preach during the course of the Sunday.]

In the year 1867, through the kindness of a gentleman called Mr. Chambers, a landed proprietor in the locality, a day school was opened there, with Miss Ann Roberts, Cwmlanerch (later Mrs. Rawson Williams) in charge; and in February 1869, the present teacher took charge of the school.

The schoolroom was built in 1860-1. It was repaired in 1878 at a cost of £17.5.1½d.; and in 1885, the sum of £11,10.0d. was spent on the building, when the secretary received £5 towards the costs from the late Joseph Evans, Esq., Haydock, the owner of the premises at the time. In February 1887, the secretary procured new reversible benches for the building, at a cost of £7.10.0d., and the following persons contributed thus:

Mr. Edward Jones (the former Mayor of Pwllheli)	£5.0.0.
Mr. Wm. Hughes, Wyddfyd (now in America)	17.6.
Mr. Thomas Roberts, Miners' Bridge (ditto)	17.6.
Mr. John Jones, Cwmdreiniog	10.0.
Mr. Griffith Jones, Bootle	5.0.

In the spring of 1892, the secretary commenced attempts to procure the schoolroom as property of the Calvinistic Methodist connexion; and on 21 June, on the request of the Arfon Monthly Meeting the following persons went as a deputation to see Mr. Richard James, solicitor, Llanrwst (owner of the land and the building) in an attempt to persuade him to sell the property – Rev. T. Gwynedd Roberts (Secretary of the Monthly Meeting); Messrs. David Owen, Ty isa; G. Owen, Watchmaker, Llanrwst; and the secretary. The outcome of the discussion was that Mr. James presented the building as a gift to the Connexion. Deeds were drawn up by Messrs. Richard James and Humphreys, solicitors, at a cost of £6.6.4d., and the following were appointed as trustees:

1. David Owen, Ty isa (farmer).
2. Griffith Roberts, Miners' Bridge (Labourer).
3. Griffith Hugh Jones, Rhiwddolion School (Schoolmaster).
4. William Hughes, Henefail (Greengrocer).
5. Rowland Roberts, Henefail (Miner).
6. John Robert Jones, Ty mawr (Farmer).
7. Rev. Henry Rawson Williams, Betws-y-coed (Minister of the Gospel).
8. Rev. Griffith Roberts, Vron, Carneddi, Bethesda (do.).
9. Rev. Thomas Roberts, 20 Ogwen Terrace, Bethesda (do.).
10. Matthew Roberts, Llugwy Terrace, Capel Curig (Butcher).
11. Richard O. Williams, Treflys, Gerlan, Bethesda (Slate Inspector).
12. Wm. Owen, British School, Llanllechid (Schoolmaster).

Following this, it was decided to rebuild the schoolroom, a plan was prepared by Rev. David Williams, Cwm-y-glo, and the work was executed by Mr. David Williams, Dolwyddelan. Stones for the work were provided free of charge by friends of the place, namely Rowland Roberts, Henefail, and John Roberts, Ty newydd, being helped by James Hughes and Robert W. Hughes, Henefail; Elias Owen, Ty coch; Thomas Owen, Brynderw; and John R. Jones, Ty mawr. The materials were carried free of charge by the following persons – David Owen, Ty isa; Ann Hughes, Wyddfyd; John Jones, Cwmdreiniog; Thomas Jones, Hafodlas; Evan Evans, Cwmcelyn; William Hughes, Henefail; Robert Griffith, Cae gwyn; John Williams, Hafoty; Owen Griffith, Frongoch; William Roberts, Glyn Llwgwy; Theophilus Jones, Cae'nycod; Rev. Eli Evans, Dolwyddelan; and David Pierce, Maesnewyddion.

The work was commenced on 27 March 1893, and the building was formally opened on 9 July (Sunday) the same year, when Revs. T.J. Wheldon B.A., Bangor, and Thomas Williams, Gwalchmai, Anglesey, officiated as follows:

At 10, Rev. T. Williams, 1 Peter, V.10.
2, ditto Ephesians, III, 16-19.
2, Rev. T.J. Wheldon, Esiah, VI, 1-8.
6, ditto Ephesians, IV, 7-8.

'BUT WILL GOD INDEED DWELL ON THE EARTH?' - YET HAVE THOUGH RESPECT UNTO THE PRAYER OF THY SERVANT, AND TO HIS SUPPLICATION, O LORD MY GOD, TO HARKEN UNTO THE CRY AND TO THE PRAYER, WHICH THY SERVANT PRAYETH BEFORE THEE TODAY: THAT THINE EYES MAY BE OPEN TOWARD THIS HOUSE NIGHT AND DAY, EVEN TOWARD THE PLACE OF WHICH THOU HAST SAID, MY NAME SHALL BE THERE.'

G.H. JONES (GUTYN ARFON).

ADRODDIAD, &c.

ANWYL GYFEILLION,

Dymunaf gyflwyno yr Adroddiad hwn i chwilyn gofeb o'r llafurus gariad a ddangosasoeh yn ail-adeiladu y Capel uchod.

Nid oes sicrwydd pa bryd y sefydlwyd yr Achos Methodistiaidd yn yr ardal hon; ond ymddengys mai ym Mhantyrhyddod y cymerodd hyn y lle. O Pantyrhyddod symudwyd i'r Ty Isa, oherwydd fod y ffermdy hwn yn fwy cyfleus. Yr oedd yma luaws yn aelodau eglwysig pryd nas gallent gymuno heb fyned i'r Bala; ac er meithbed y daith, dywedir yr aent yno yn fynych. Ym mysg eraill, enwir dwy hen wraig dduwiol, sef Margaret Parry, Ty ucha, a Margaret Roberts (Jones) Ty mawr.

Crybwyllit y personau a ganlyn fel rhai fuont yn cynorthwyo i sefydlu yr Achos yn y lle, — Hugh Roberts, Pantyrhyddod, yr hwn a arferai bregethu, (mab i wraig dduwiol o'r enw Anne Jones, yr hon a ddaethat o gymydoggaeth Llansannan i wasanaethu at un o'r enw Betty Rogers, Cwmdreiniog; a dywedir mai hi oedd y Methodist gyntaf a ddaeth i'r ardal); Dafydd (Roberts?) y gof, Ty isa, hen gymerniad hynod o wresog gyda ehrefydd; a dywedir fod John Jones, Llan, Dolwyddelan, (taid y diweddar Barch. Samuel Roberts, Bangor), yn un o'r rhai cyntaf i ddot yma i gadw cyfarfodydd eglwysig, &c.; ynghyd a John Williams, Dolwyddelan, (ewythr i'r diweddar Barch. John Jones, Talysarn, &c.); John Williams, ei fab; John Jones, Tanycastell, (cyn iddo ddechreu pregethu), a hen chwær dduwiol o'r enw Nahws 'ch Robert, Car du.

Yn fuan ar ol cychwyniad yr achos ym Mhantyrhyddod, yr oedd Hugh Roberts, y pregethwr a grybwyllwyd uchod, yn cynnal cyfarfod eglwysig yno un tro, a gofynodd i'r rhai oeddynt bresenol pa beth oedd ffydd. Wedi methu cael ateb gan amryw, dywedodd un o'r enw Morris William ei fod ystyried mai CARIAD ydoedd. Ar weddi yn niwedd y cyfarfod, erfyniai Hugh Roberts am i'r Arglwydd roddi goleuni addynt, pryd y torodd lluaws allan i wylo yn hidl, gan dybied fod y pregethwr yn achwyn wrth y Brenin Mawr eu bod yn dywyll ac anwybodus! Arferai y merched gynol cyfarfodydd gweddio yn Ty mawr, a chaniateid i un neu ddau o frodyr a wahoddid fod yn bresenol. Yn un o'r cyfarfodydd hyn, tua'r flwyddyn 1805, torodd allan yn orfoledd; ac yn ddilyfhol cafwyd diwygiad yn y gymydoggaeth. Mewn un arall a gynhelid yn Ty isa' ar nos Sabboth, tua'r flwyddyn 1826, torodd allan yn orfoledd mawr, yr hyn a ddilynwyd gan ddiwygiad grymus. Tua'r adeg hon y derbyniwyd meibion John Owen, Ty isa, yn aelodau o'r eglwys, — sef Robert, John, a Joseph Owen; ac hefyd Hugh a David Jones, — y cyntaf yn fab, a'r ail yn nai, i Robert Jones, Ty mawr, (yr hwn oedd yn flaenor dylanwadol yn eglwys Bettws-y-coed); yr oll o ba rai fuont, neu ydynt, yn swyddogion eglwysig.

Wele restr o rai fuont ffyddlon gyda'r achos yn y lle, ag ydynt erbyn hyn wedi cyrhaedd yr orphwysfa :—

- HUGH ROBERTS, Pantyrhyddod, fu farw pan tua 22ain mlwydd oed.
- ROBERT JONES, Ty mawr, fu farw Gorphenaf 24, 1858, yn 86 ml. oed.
- JOHN OWEN, Ty isa, fu farw yn 1859, yn 79 mlwydd oed.
- ROBERT WILLIAMS, Ty ucha, fu farw yn 63 mlwydd oed.
- THOMAS WILLIAMS, Cwmdreiniog, fu farw Gorphenaf 11eg, 1862, yn 85 mlwydd oed.
- ELIAS JONES, eto, fu farw Gorphenaf 27, 1862, yn 58 mlwydd oed.
- ROBERT HUGHES, Henefail, fu farw Mawrth 16, 1864, yn 63 ml. oed.
- OWEN JONES, Ty mawr, fu farw Medi 28, 1871, yn 53 mlwydd oed.
- GRIFFITH ROWLANDS, fu farw yn Ffestiniog Mai 5ed, 1874, yn 72 mlwydd oed.
- HUGH HUGHES, Wyddfyd, fu farw Mai 15, 1875, yn 54 ml. oed.

Yn y flwyddyn 1864 y sefydlwyd Achos RHEOLAIDD yn y lle mewn cysylltiad a'r eglwys yn Mettws-y-coed, pryd y dewiswyd Owen Jones, Ty mawr; David Owen, Ty isa; a Griffith Roberts, Graig Forus, (yn awr o Miners' Bridge), yn flaenoriaid; o ba rai y mae y ddau plaf a enwyd yn aros, ac yn parhau yn dra ffyddlon yng ngwasanaeth eu Harglwydd. Yn 1869, ymsefydlwyd yn achos ar wahân, ond yn parhau yn daith Sabbathol ynglyn a Betws-y-coed.

Yn y flwyddyn 1867, trwy garedigrwydd boneddwr o'r enw Mr. Chambers, perchenog eiddo tirol yn y gymydogoeth, agorwyd Ysgol ddyddiol yn y lle o dan ofal Miss Ann Roberts, Cwmlanerch, (y ddiweddar Mrs. Rawson Williams); ac yn Chwefror 1869, cymerwyd gofal yr Ysgol gan yr athraw presenol.

Adeiladwyd yr Ysgoldy yn 1860—1. Adgyweiriwyd yn 1878 gyda thraul o £17 5s. 1½c.; ac yn 1885 gwariwyd y swm o £11 10s. oc ar yr adeilad, pryd y derbyniodd yr ysgrifenydd £5 at y draul oddiwrth y diweddar Joseph Evans, Ysw., Haydock, perchenog y lle ar y pryd. Yn Chwefror 1887, cafodd yr ysgrifenydd feindrau newyddion (reversible) i'r adeilad, ar draul o £7 10s. a gyfranwyd gan y personau canlynol:

	£	s.	c.
Mr. Edward Jones, (cyn-faer Pwllheli),	5	0	0
„ Wm. Hughes, Wyddfyd, (America yn bresenol)	0	17	6
„ Thomas Roberts, Miners' Bridge, eto	0	17	6
„ John Jones, Cwmdreiniog	0	10	0
„ Griffith Jones, Bootle	0	5	0
	£7	10	0

Yn ngwanwyn 1892, dechreuodd yr ysgrifenydd symud gyda golwg ar gael yr Ysgoldy yn feddiant i Gyfundeb y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd; ac ar yr 21ain o Fehefin, ar gais Cyfarfod Misol Arfon, aeth y personau a ganlyn fel dirprwyaeth at Mr. Richard James, Cyfreithiwr, Llantwst, (perchenog y tir a'r adeilad), i geisio ganddo ei werthu,—Parch. T.

Gwynedd Roberts, (Ysgrifenydd y Cyfarfod Misol); Meistri. David Owen, Ty isa; ~~William Owen, Watchmaker, Llanrwst; a'r ysgrifenydd.~~ Canlyniad y drafodaeth fu i Mr. James gyflwyno yr adeilad yn rhodd i'r Cyfundeb. Darparwyd Gweithredoedd y cyflwyniad gan y Meistri. Richard James & Humphreys, Cyfreithwyr, am y swm o £6 6s. 4c, a phenodwyd y personau canlynol yn Ymddiriedolwyr (Trustees).

1. David Owen, Ty isa, (Farmer).
2. Griffith Roberts, Miners' Bridge, (Labourer).
3. Griffith Hugh Jones, Rhiwddolion School, (Schoolmaster).
4. William Hughes, Henefail, (Green Grocer).
5. Rowland Roberts, Henefail, (Miner).
6. John Robert Jones, Ty Mawr, (Farmer).
7. Rev. Henry Rawson Williams, Bettws-y-coed, (Minister of the Gospel).
8. Rev. Griffith Roberts, Yron, Carneddi, Bethesda, (do.)
9. Rev. Thomas Roberts, 20, Ogwen Terrace, Bethesda, (do.)
10. Matthew Roberts, Llugwy Terrace, Capel Curig, (Butcher.)
11. Richard O. Williams, Treffys, Gerlan, Bethesda, (Slate Inspector.)
12. Wm. Owen, British School, Llanllechid, (Schoolmaster.)

Yn ddilynol, penderfynwyd ail-adeiladu yr Ysgoldy; tynwyd y cynllun gan y Parch. David Williams, Cwmyglo, a gwnaed y gwaith gan Mr. David Evans, Dolwyddelan. Darparwyd cerrig at y gwaith yn ddi-dâl gan gyfeillion o'r lle, sef Rowland Roberts, Henefail, a John Roberts, Ty newydd, yn cael eu cynorthwyo gan James Hughes a Robert W. Hughes, Henefail; Elias Owen, Ty coch; Thomas Owen, Brynderv; a John R. Jones, Ty mawr. Cludwyd y defnyddiau yn ddi-dâl gan y personau canlynol.—David Owen, Ty isa; Ann Hughes, Wyddfyd; John Jones, Cwmdreiniog; Thomas Jones, Hafodlas; Evan Evans, Cwmcelyn; William Hughes, Henefail; Robert Griffith, Cae gwyn; John Williams, Hafotty; Owen Griffith, Frongoch; William Roberts, Glyn Llugwy; Theophilus Jones, Cae'n-ycœd; Parch. Eli Evans, Dolwyddelan; a David Pierce, Maesnewyddion.

Dechreuwyd ar y gwaith y 27ain o Ewyrth, 1893, ac agorwyd yr adeilad yn flurfiol Gorphenaf 9fed (Dydd Sul) yn un flwyddyn, pryd y gwasanaethwyd gan y Parchn. T. J. Wheldon, B.A., Bangor, a Thomas Williams, Gwalchmai, Mon, fel y canlyn,—

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Am 10. | Parch. T. Williams, | 1 Petr, v. 10. |
| „ 2. | Eto, | Ephesjaid, iii. 16—19. |
| „ „ | Parch. T. J. Wheldon, | Isaiah, vi. 1—8. |
| „ 6. | Eto, | Ephesjaid, iv. 7—8. |

“AI GWIR YW, Y PRESWYLIA DUW AR Y DDAEAR?”—ETTO EDRYCH AR WEDDI DY WAS, AC AR EI DDEISYFIAD EF, O ARGLWYDD FY NUW, I WRANDAW AR Y LLEF A'R WEDDI Y MAE DY WAS YN EI GWEDDIO

HEDDYW GER DY FRON DI: FEL Y BYDDO DY LYGAID YN AGORED TU
A'R TY YMA NOS A DYDD, TU A'R LLE Y DWEDAIST AM DANO, FV
ENW A FYDD YNO."

G. H. JONES, (GUTYN ARFON.)

Tanygrifiadau.

(*Dechreuwyd casglu Medi 1892, gorphen yn Rhag. 1895.*)

	£	s.	d.
1. William Rathbone, Ysw., Liverpool	21	10	0
2. Robert Davies, Ysw., Bodlondeb, Menai Bridge	20	0	0
3. Mr. G. H. Jones (Gutyn Arfon), Rhiwddolion School	6	0	0
4. " Richard Evans, Cwmcelyn	4	10	0
5. " a Mrs. Rowland Roberts, Henefail	3	7	6
6. " a Mrs. David Owen, Ty isa	3	0	0
7. " a Mrs. Thomas Owen, Brynderw	3	0	0
8. " a Mrs. Elias Owen, Ty coch	3	0	0
9. " John Jones, Cwmdreiniog	2	10	0
10. Mrs. Hannah Evans, Church Street, B. Ffestiniog	2	2	0
11. Mr. a Mrs. James Hughes, Henefail	2	0	0
12. " a Mrs. Robert W. Hughes, do.	2	0	0
13. " a Mrs. Daniel Jones, Frondeg, Bettws-y-coed	2	0	0
14. " a Mrs. O. Lloyd Jones, Llugwy Cottage, do.	2	0	0
15. " W. B. Lloyd, Metropolitan Bank, Llanrwst	1	10	6
16. " W. McFarlane, Colorado, America	1	10	3
17. Miss Mary Jones, Cwmdreiniog	1	10	0
18. Parch. John Jones, Penmachno	1	10	0
19. Mr. a Mrs. John Hughes, Henefail	1	8	6
20. Parch. John Owen, Bettws-y-coed	1	7	6
21. Mr. a Mrs. Richard Roberts, Ty uchaf	1	5	0
22. " a Mrs. William Hughes, Henefail	1	3	0
23. Mr. John R. Jones, Ty mawr	1	0	0
24. " Robert J. Hughes, Henefail	1	0	0
25. Miss Margaret Jones, Cwmdreiniog	1	0	0
26. Mr. a Mrs. David Pierce, Maesnewyddion	1	0	0
27. Samuel Smith, Ysw., A.S.	1	0	0
28. Mr. J. Cwellyn Roberts, Eagle's View	1	0	0
29. " Griffith Griffiths, Cwmanog	1	0	0
30. " John Hughes, Fronheulog, Bettws-y-coed	1	0	0
31. Miss Pierce, Bronyrhaul	1	0	0
32. Mr. a Mrs. Owen Williams, Pantyrhyddod	0	15	0
33. " Griffith Roberts, Miners' Bridge	0	15	0
34. " John Jones, Wyddfyd	0	15	0
35. " O. Isgoed Jones, Y.H., Llanrwst	0	13	0
36. Miss Mary A. Hughes, Henefail	0	12	0

Liverpool Daily Post
 dates not known



Eighty-one-year-old Mrs Mary Morris, of Pant-yr-Hyddod, sitting by her fireside in her old-fashioned Welsh village, in a village, sitting by her

GHOST VILLAGE IN WELSH HILLS

Woman of 81 recalls old days

BY A "DAILY POST" REPORTER

HALF a mile from Rhiwddolion, a ghost village in the hills above Bettws-y-Coed, a woman who remembers the days when it was a thriving, happy community. She is Mrs Mary Morris, who has lived at Pant-yr-Hyddod, a lonely farmstead just off the winding mountain road, for seventy-seven years.

Mrs Morris went to school at Rhiwddolion for nine years, and was taught by Gutyn Arfon, who was the "Scul" there for half a century. She worshipped in the little Presbyterian chapel which served as a schoolroom too.

When I visited her yesterday, Mrs Morris, who will be eighty-two soon, told me: "In those days you had to be very punctual, otherwise you would not get a seat in the chapel. In the morning there used to be a Sunday School, a sermon in the afternoon, and prayer meeting at night. There was always singing.

"No services are held in the chapel now. Rhiwddolion was a very happy community, and there used to be a shop where they sold tea and sugar and other things. When I went to school the older children had a week and the younger ones had a day. The headmaster was a very kind and talented man."

The people who lived in the village were small farmers and garrymen who lived at Ffestiniog. Regularly June under Gutyn Arfon staged a gain day.

Took horse to meet minister

There was a tea party in the school-room-chapel and a concert in a small marquee in a field nearby. At Christmas time the children gathered there were presented with apples, oranges and nuts.

On Sundays a valley farmer took a horse down to the main road to meet the minister from Bettws-y-Coed who tended the little flock in the mountains. Mrs Morris told me that the first Sunday School in the valley was held many years ago at her home by her grandfather's mother's brother. Apart from visitors who live in some of the cottages during the summer there is only one permanent resident in the heart of the village itself nowadays.

She is Mrs Kate Owen, of Bryn Derw, Mr W. R. Bright, a retired Liverpool man who has taken over Ty Coch, has dammed a stream to make a swimming pool near his house. This is the only Twentieth Century touch about the village.

For all that remains of it now are tumbled down crofts, and derelict houses, with empty windows looking out blankly on the autumn-tinted valley.

In some houses, there are the frames of old iron bedsteads and remnants of floral decorated wallpaper. In most of the old-fashioned gates have weathered the storm. In one house there were traces of egg-shell blue distemper. A massive boulder above the fireplace of another bears the date 1687.

Sheep wander through the houses and nettles grow in what were once comfortable rooms, but the chapel, with its benches, pulpit, organ, oil lamps, and collecting boxes still remains in good condition.

Rhiwddolion died many years ago, and some who lived there emigrated to Patagonia. The rest went to live in nearby townships.

Mr W. Ogwen Williams (archivist for Caernarvonshire) told me there were about nine children in the school when it closed down in 1922. It was taken over by the education authority in 1917. Gutyn Arfon went there as headmaster in 1869 and he died in 1919. In 1922 there were seventeen houses within reach of the school which at one time had thirty-five scholars.

Everyone knows the story of Gutyn Arfon, or Griffith H. Jones, who was christened Heintges and was christened Heintges in Llanberis, and attended the Welsh school at Bettws-y-Coed. He was the first to go to the school and was established there. He was at a number of places at Bettws-y-Coed.

The school was run entirely by voluntary contributions until the education authority took it over. He helped raise money, the headmaster taught his pupils to take part in operettas. He was also an adjudicator and a conductor at singing festivals. He wrote many anthems and hymn tunes, one of which, "Llef", is the most popular in Wales.

They say that no records remain to tell the full story of Rhiwddolion. Be that as it may, one thing is certain. It is that the village is a memorial, however dilapidated, to a great Welshman—Gutyn Arfon. It is a cultured "Gwerin," the like of whom perhaps we shall never see again.