

BRYCHEINIOG

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CYMDEITHAS BRYCHEINIOG A CHYFEILLION YR AMGUEDDFA
THE BRECKNOCK SOCIETY AND MUSEUM FRIENDS

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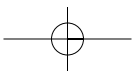
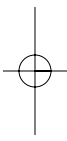
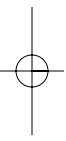
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GOLYGYDDOL / EDITORIAL

I would like to record the thanks of the Society to Brynach Parri for editing this journal for the last five years. Brynach's period as editor has been marked by a number of innovations. Firstly, he reintroduced to the journal poetry relating to Brecknock – both in English and in Welsh. And in connection with this, he developed the use of the Society's website (<http://www.brecknocksociety.co.uk/society.htm>) to provide English translations of poems and other items that had appeared in the journal in Welsh. He introduced the idea of a colour picture on the dust-wrapper and most importantly he worked effectively with the National Library of Wales over the digitisation of back numbers of *Brycheiniog* and their appearance on line at <http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/>. Our arrangement with the Library is such that an issue of the journal is available in hard copy for at least five years and that it is then digitised, although the speed of this latter process depends on resources available at the Library. At the time of writing, volumes 1 to 35 (2003) are available on line.

In preparing this volume for the printers, I have been greatly helped by a number of Society members, who have given generously of their time in reviewing manuscripts and, in a number of cases, helping to prepare them for publication. I think that we have gathered here a varied selection of papers, reflecting many different aspects of the historic county of Breconshire, and I very much hope that you will enjoy reading them. They include two on archaeology, one describing detailed evidence of 'multi-period' (principally pre-historic) activity on the moorland surrounding the upper reaches of the river Hepste, while the other describes research commissioned in conjunction with the establishment of the National Grid gas pipeline from Brecon to Hay. Then there are two papers dealing with ownership of land in Brecknock. One of these covers the events associated with the sale in 1915 of Breconshire part the Tredegar Estate, while the other uses the history of Brecon forest, near Llaneglwys, to evaluate the Forestry Commission's attitude towards rural employment and housing over an 80 year period. There are interesting links between these two articles and one on the impact on the local inhabitants of the creation of the reservoirs in the Cwmtaf valley on the southern slopes of the Brecon Beacons. There is a fascinating piece of detective work on the location of a lost inn in the Usk valley and a family memoir on the erstwhile Brecon and Merthyr Railway. Finally there is an examination of a recent acquisition by the Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery showing the way in which the water-colourist John Varley allowed his imagination to determine the appearance of the town of Brecon itself.

Since the publication of the first volume of *Brycheiniog* in 1955, the world has changed immeasurably. To reflect this the Executive Council of the Brecknock Society & Museum Friends has decided that a review of *Brycheiniog* is timely, to ensure that it continues to follow high standards of research and to make a significant contribution to the archaeology, history, geology, natural history, arts and literature of the historic county of Brecknock.

The issues being covered include:

- The purposes of the journal: Is it sufficiently comprehensive in terms of coverage of the various features of Brecknock as outlined above? Does it meet the expectations of existing and potential researchers and readers, as individual subscribers and as library users?
- The characteristics of the journal: for example, is there an appropriate balance between original pieces of research and review articles? Is the author base sufficiently wide?
- The design and layout of the journal: Are appropriate decisions being made in respect of matters such as the relative use of colour and B&W photographs, the use of appendices etc.

Other matters to be assessed include the continuing requirement (or otherwise) for a hard copy publication; If there is such a requirement, how long should it be before a volume goes on line?

How does *Brycheiniog* compares with other current publications with a focus on a particular geographical area? What is the scope for widening the non-member subscriber base?

The review will be conducted by a sub-group of Executive Council members and will report back to a Council meeting later this year. If you, as a reader, have thoughts on this matter, I would very much like you to let me have them. You can do this either by email at gibbs@keme.co.uk or by post to the Society's address for correspondence.

Finally, I would like to record the thanks of the Society for the financial help that it receives towards the publication of *Brycheiniog* from the Brecon Town Council and from Powys County Council.

CYFRANNWYR / CONTRIBUTORS

The late Anthony Bell was a long-standing and highly regarded member of the Brecknock Society & Museum Friends. He served on the Executive Council and held several offices, most notably that of Treasurer. His professional life was spent in education, ending as Assistant Director of Education for Powys County Council. A man of many interests, he was a distinguished local historian, as his article on the Tredegar Estate Sale bears witness.

Charles Gordon Clark, a former Anglican clergyman, began the study reported here as part of an OU "Changing Countryside" course while a National Trust trainee living in Llaneglwys. He subsequently worked from there as a dry stone waller, and now lives in Herefordshire where he is secretary of the Bromyard Local History Society.

Graham Cruse studied archaeology at Reading University and has subsequently worked in commercial archaeology both in the UK and abroad for nearly 20 years. Since 2006 he has worked for Network Archaeology, overseeing the field operations on a number of large infrastructure projects across the UK.

Gwyneth Evans is Secretary to the Executive Council of the Brecknock Society & Museum Friends. She has had a teaching career in Merthyr Tydfil and Brecon, while at the same time holding a number of voluntary positions. She was born on a farm in Cwmtâf, Breconshire and this has provided the background for her article on the drowning of the valley

William Gibbs was born in Crickhowell. Most of his life he has worked in schools and colleges overseas, in Sierra Leone, Zambia and the Solomon Islands before returning to teach in the School of Education at Leeds University. He now lives in Llangynidr and is Chair of the Brecknock Art Trust and of Walls of Llangynidr which is working to save the dry stone mountain walls on the surrounding hills.

Daniel Hounsell studied Archaeology and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool, gaining his PhD in 2000. He has worked as a full time archaeologist both in this country and abroad since then and now works as a Project Manager for Network Archaeology. Dan has overseen the archaeological work on a number of large scale infrastructure and development projects across the whole of the UK and has a particular interest in the Iron Age.

Peter Jamieson is, through his mother, a member of the de Winton family of Llanfrynach, founders of Wilkins Bank in Brecon now a constituent part of Lloyds Bank. He is an architect by profession with an interest in Britain's failed and now lost railway byways.

Nigel W Jones is the Senior Project Archaeologist for the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. He has undertaken excavation and survey on a wide range of sites over the last 30 years, including recent excavations adjacent to Pen y Gaer Roman fort, Cwmdu, and an internationally important complex of Neolithic enclosures in Radnorshire's Walton Basin.

Brynach Parri, a former editor of this Journal, is a native of Brecon and after a career in teaching and translation returned to Brecknock some 20 years ago. He has a special interest in the early history of the kingdom of Brycheiniog and in Welsh place names.

Geoffrey Williams is a geographer who was National Park Assistant to the County Planning Officer in Brecon, 1961–1962 before taking up university posts in various African countries. His last post was Director of Studies at the King George VI & Queen Elizabeth Foundation of St Catharine's, at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park. On retirement in 2001, he and his wife returned to Llangattock. He is Chairman of the Crickhowell District Archive Centre.

ADRODDIADAU / REPORTS

BRECKNOCK MUSEUM & ART GALLERY REPORT 2013

Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery has been closed since the 31st October 2011 and will remain closed until the facilities of the Museum are restored and expanded in 2016.

During the autumn of 2013, the Museum's redevelopment team have been hard at work developing the new layout designs for the Museum and Town Library. In liaison with CADW and the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, and through the process of public consultation, the designs have progressed substantially; we will soon be reaching the end of this process which will allow the planning application to be submitted and the construction work to commence. The design team includes Dr Mervyn Bramley, a stakeholder representative from the Brecknock Society Executive Council and his involvement throughout this process has been invaluable.

The Connecting Communities and Collections Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) project aims not only to see the restoration of the Grade II* listed Shire Hall and Assize Court but also the reinterpretation of the Museum collection. The project has allowed us to develop our volunteer programme and during 2013 1054 volunteer hours were given, assisting Museum staff in the care of collections and educational output of the Museum.

Volunteer projects have included supporting educational sessions for schools and for family orientated activities; sorting and repackaging the textile collection; scanning and packaging the photographic and ephemera collections and creating and updating records on the Museum's database.

Whilst the Museum galleries remain closed to the public, many of our normal operational tasks continue behind the scenes. As we progress towards the reopening of the Museum & Art Gallery, caring for and improving our knowledge of the collections continues, along with the acquisition of new objects for future displays. During 2013 the Museum has added over 1606 items to the collections including new archaeological objects, artworks, photographs, geological specimens and a number of social history and rural life items.

Three particularly interesting acquisitions include a collection of 65 letters written by Adelina Patti, which were gifted to the Museum by a lady visiting from Canada; 600 photographs and items of photographic equipment relating to Jack Clark and his Brecon photographic studio, gifted by the family, and two fossils, found and gifted by a local amateur collector in a disused quarry, dating to 420 million years ago.

The Brecknock Art Trust, together with the Art Fund and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund, supported the purchase of two paintings of Brecknockshire scenes:

a watercolour of Brecon by John Varley and an oil of Llangynidr Bridge by Sir Cedric Morris.

Late in 2013, the Museum appointed a new assistant curator, Mr Conan Daly BSc, who has joined us from Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. Conan has a background in geology and I am sure you will join me in welcoming him to Brecknock Museum.

We are very grateful that the collections and facilities at Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery are able to continue to develop through the enduring support of the Brecknock Society & Museum Friends.

NIGEL BLACKAMORE MPhil.
Senior Curator
Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery

POWYS ARCHIVES

During the years 2011–12 and 2012–13 a wide variety of researchers have used the Archives Service. They include social and family historians, officers and members of the Council, professional bodies such as CADW, solicitors, and school and university students. In 2011–12 around 1,400 visitors viewed around 1,450 original items. In 2012–13 we received 1,828 visitors who viewed 1,632 items. The number of physical visitors has increased over the past couple of years and may be explained by the increased popularity of family history online through commercial websites such as Ancestry and Findmypast. In terms of remote users, over two years we responded to 434 requests to our Research Service, and 1,743 letters and emails. Again over the two year period our website received 165,524 visits.

Powys Archives participated in the PSQG (Public Services Quality Group) national survey in October 2012 and a summary of the results are included below. The figures in brackets relate to the visitor survey undertaken in 2011.

- 92% rate the overall service as good or very good (96%)
- 96% rate the quality and appropriateness of staff advice as good or very good (100%)
- 28% feel our opening hours were the most important area to improve (29%)
- 38% recorded this as their first visit to Powys Archives (45%)
- 47% of visitors are female; 53% are male (45%, 55%)
- 46% are using local shops and services (61%)
- 83% rate our website as good or very good (89%)
- 85% think our catalogues (including online guides) were good or very good (94%)
- Around 95% of visitors who use the service live within a 117 mile radius of Llandrindod (95% within 140 miles)
- The average journey is 44 miles (48 miles)
- 94% come by car or motorbike (95%)
- 29% of visitors are staying in overnight accommodation (33%)
- 71% are eating out locally (58%)

Parish registers held by Powys Archives dating back to the 16th Century have been published online as part of a Wales-wide project. The project which has taken around 5 years to finish has been done with the permission of the Church in Wales, and includes records from thirteen Welsh Archive Services. In total around 893,000 images containing nine million baptisms, marriages and burials from across Wales have been digitised by FamilySearch International and are searchable on the family history website findmypast.co.uk. Access to all the online images and indexes for Wales are free to search at Powys Archives.

Details of accessions received during 2012–13 with particular reference to Breconshire are as follows:

Public and Official Records

Records relating to the Manor of Pencelli and related Commons, Breconshire, 16th–20th century [Acc 2075]

Parish records of Llanganten, Breconshire, including poor rate assessments 1852–1865 (with gaps); a Highways rate book 1848–1863; Overseers' accounts 1850–1867; and a Highways account book 1847–1867 [Acc 2085]

Breconshire County Council plans of Defynnog Police Station nd; Cathedine Voluntary Primary School and School House 1954; and land proposed to be acquired for extension of Builth Council School nd [Acc 2091]

Court leet book for Dinas Manor in parishes of Talgarth & Llanelieu; 1844–1906; manor court book for the Lordship of Cantreselliff and the manors of Dinas, Llyswen, Gelly Fanog & Gwenddwr, 1847–1885 [Acc 2115]

Ynyscedwyn School records, Breconshire: Log books, 1901–1998 (5 items, 2 in Welsh); admission registers, 1951–2006 (3 items); deposit books for Barclays Bank, 1956–1963; programme for school concert (in Welsh), C20th; Breconshire Education Committee certificates, 1941 (2 items); HM Inspector's report on school (in Welsh), 1958; Letter and photographs regarding school concert (in Welsh), 2009; CD of photographs of St David's Day Parade, 2009; comment books from pupils, 2012 (4 items) [Acc 2121]

Builth Wells Town Council minutes, April 2005–March 2011 (6 items) [Acc 2127]

Caehopkin School records, Breconshire: admission registers, 1911–2011 (4 items); Log books, 1911–1946 (2 items); medical log book, 1933–1976; punishment book, 1915–1924; photograph albums, 1987–2011 (24 items); plans of proposed school buildings, 1913; bundle of photographs of pupils, staff and school buildings, 1928–2012; book celebrating the history of the school, 2012 [Acc 2140]

The Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire and Breconshire Adult Baptist Choral Festival programmes, 1909–2012 (43 items) & The Radnorshire, Montgomeryshire and Breconshire Baptist Children's Choral Festival programmes, 1925–2007 (22 items) [Acc 2141]

Llanwrtyd Wells Town Council, Breconshire: deeds concerning property in Llanwrtyd Wells, 1949–1992; records concerning Abergwesyn Community Centre, c1989; records concerning a new community centre in Llanwrtyd Wells, 1980s; records concerning footpath from Dolecoed Terrace, Llanwrtyd Wells 1970s [Acc 2145]

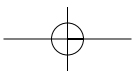
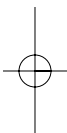
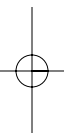
Non Official Records

'Map of the South East Circuit of the Principality of Wales Comprising the Counties of Glamorgan, Brecon and Radnor from an Actual Survey made in the Years 1826 and 1827 by C & J Greenwood' 26 Jan 1831 [Acc 2068]

- Ordnance Survey maps for Breconshire, 25" County Series, 2nd edition 1904 [Acc 2077]
- Photograph of Crickhowell Bridge 1937 [Acc 2088]
- Records of Harry Soan, radio broadcaster, comprising transcripts and handwritten notes relating to his broadcasts, along with newspaper cuttings and ephemera 1970s–1980s [Acc 2067]
- Additional records of Harry Soan, radio broadcaster, including tapes of his talks and broadcasts relating to natural history and farming 1960s–1970s, and a file of press cuttings c1930–1960 [Acc 2095]
- Files, including press cuttings and ephemera, relating to various properties, events etc in Talybont, Breconshire [Acc 2096]
- Copy agreement for renting Tylebychan farm, Defynnock [Defynnog], Breconshire, 27 Sep 1879 [Acc 2098]
- Receipts, promissory note, inventory of King's Head Inn, Brecon & will of David Davies of Brincoch 1774–1885 [Acc 2103]
- Scrapbooks containing newspaper cuttings of Llanwrtyd events c. 1963 to 2009 [Acc 2113]
- Folder containing various research notes on history of Brecknockshire including John Lloyd of Dinas, Henry Vaughan and standing stones of Brecknockshire, c. 1950s. Folder containing papers regarding the South Wales development area water supply survey from the Welsh Board of Health, c. 1949–1952 [Acc 2117]
- Deeds for properties in Llanerfyl, Llanspyddid, Llanbeder cum Partrishow & Defynnock, Breconshire, 1842–1875 (4 items); agreement to repay funds lost from charity, 1899 [Acc 2139]
- Hay on Wye Oxfam Shop: Minutes 1979–1990, 2000–2001, press release 2000 [Acc 2105]
- Records relating to the Brecon Boat Company: Various bills and accounts, 1800–1867; correspondence, 1806–1953; inventories of company properties, 1802–1813; leases of various properties, 1798–1865; printed notice of overspend on canal project, 1800 [Acc 2112]
- Bound volumes of handbills from Great Western Railway (GWR), 1932–1938 (7 items); bound volume of printed notices to the Central Wales Division GWR staff entitled 'Notice of Extra Trains', 1937 [Acc 2125]
- Map of Brecknockshire, c. 1840 [Acc 2149]
- Kaleidoscope Abercraf project DVD [Acc 2108]

CATHERINE RICHARDS

Principal Officer Museums and Archives



JOHN VARLEY AND THE COOKING OF BRECON

This paper presents some notes on the picture “Brecon on the River Usk” by John Varley, now part of the collection of Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery and purchased in 2012 with the support of the V and A Purchase Fund, The Art Fund and the Brecknock Art Trust. The term ‘cooking’ refers to the way in which the artist rearranged components of a view to suit his ideas of composition and design.

William Gilpin, apologist for and evangelist of the picturesque in art, visited Brecon on his trip through Wales in 1770. He spent only a short time here but was impressed by the opportunities that the town presented. He wrote “Brecknoc is a very romantic place abounding with broken grounds, torrents, towers and ruins of every kind. I have seen few places where a landscape painter might get a collection of better ideas”.¹ Gilpin enthusiastically promoted the cause of the importance of nature in a well-made picture. The straight and parallel lines of man’s artifice were not good for art but he realized that bridges and ruins could be arranged, with a little careful improvement by the artist, into pleasing and “picturesque” works.

Many of the leading picturesque artists of the late 18th and the early 19th century followed in Gilpin’s footsteps and included Brecon as part of their Welsh Tours: Thomas Jones, John Warwick Smith, Cotman and Turner have all left us pictures of Brecon bridges.²

John Varley was an important member of this fraternity. He first visited Wales at the age of 20, in 1798. In that year he travelled through North Wales, painting the castles of Harlech, Conway and Caernavon and views of Snowdon and Cader Idris. During the next three years he travelled in mid and South Wales, following the valleys of the Usk and Wye and making his way along the coast to Briton Ferry and Tenby. The sketches that he made on these trips to Wales in his early 20s acted as a source of inspiration for the rest of his life. There are, for example, at least nine versions of Beddgelert Bridge (Plate 1),³ a subject (with similarities to his view of Brecon) first sketched on the 1798 tour of North Wales. Over the following 35 years, Varley painted a variety of idealised views of Beddgelert, exhibiting them at the Old Water-Colour Society (OWS) in 1805, 1810, 1812, 1815 and 1834. It should be noted that in 1804 Varley had become a founding member of the OWS, showing there rather than at the Royal Academy. He shared the view of many watercolour artists that the RA did not appreciate this most delicate of media.⁴

On his visit to Brecon, Varley chose as his vantage point the southern side of the River Usk just upstream of the Usk Bridge. To find this point one must cross the bridge towards Llanfaes and step down to the right where a high wall now protects this part of Brecon from flooding. From a spot near here, Varley could have looked across to the Honddu brook as it entered the Usk under the

picturesquely-arched Honddu Bridge with mill and castle on the left. A naïve rendering of this view by an anonymous artist is in the Brecknock Museum collection (Plate 2). It remained a favourite vantage point for artists until 1853 when the great Honddu flood swept the bridge away and it was replaced by the functional but un-picturesque horizontal bridge which remains to this day. Then a few years later, with the coming of the Neath to Brecon railway line in 1867, a viaduct was built high across the stream and its severe parallel lines helped further to spoil the “picturesque” nature of the valley. Since then no artist has chosen to paint this particular view.

The earliest known painting of Brecon by Varley is dated 1800⁵ and is in the collection of the National Library of Wales. The main features of the view have been exaggerated and “improved”. The castle has been raised, the mill enlarged, the Priory is in clear view (though only the top of the tower was visible to other artists) and the bridge elongated over a wide river. In another version, in Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, entitled ‘Brecon Castle’⁶ (plate 3), the touch is more delicate. A fisherman is seated looking upstream and cows are drinking in the shallow water. A tree is introduced on the left and frames the picture. Two great elms grow beside the mill.

The Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery picture ‘Brecon on the River Usk’⁷ (Plate 3) is slightly larger than the Bolton picture and, signed and dated 1837, was painted almost 40 years after the artist had visited Brecon. By this time he had a long-established reputation as both an accomplished artist and as sympathetic teacher of watercolour painting. His pupils included “William Mulready, his brother-in-law, W. H. Hunt, John Linnell, F. O. Finch, William Turner of Oxford, and Samuel Palmer. Three others of the greatest of English landscape-painters, Copley Fielding, Peter De Wint. and David Cox, were greatly assisted by him in the formation of their styles”.⁸ Varley had favourite aphorisms when teaching. Two commonly recalled by his students were that he would urge his students that “*nature wants cooking*”, and that every picture should have a “*Look – there*”, a point of interest to which the eye should be carried.⁹ He is also reported to have said that each picture should be in the form of a cross, with interest at right and left and top and bottom of the picture.

Our picture is in many ways similar in composition to that in Bolton but has a grander, more idyllic feel. The hues are much warmer and Varley has rearranged some of the elements of his idealized composition: the ingredients are “cooked” a little further. A lone horseman crosses the bridge and his diminutive scale helps to expand the width and height of the bridge and the wooded vale behind it. To a viewer seeing this picture with no knowledge of the actual topography, it appears that a wide river, presumably the Usk, is flowing through the bridge towards the front left of the picture. Indeed in the catalogue entry written before this picture was acquired for the Museum, the writer assumes that this is the case

for the description reads “Beyond the *bridge over the Usk* (my italics) stands Brecon Priory”.¹⁰

All Varley’s precepts apply to the picture *Brecon on the River Usk*. The artist lets the Priory church of St John float like a great ark, the tower and reflection of the bridge pier together with the bridge parapet creating Varley’s “cross”. The single cow in the river shallows is the “*look there*” feature. No element of the universe is sacrosanct to the artist intent on creating an idyllic landscape for the sun is now setting in the north behind the Priory.

This picture is, I think, a great addition to the Museum’s collection. All the ‘*culinary*’ powers of the artist have been combined to create a rich and resonant image. This is not an image to refer to as an historical record of Brecon in 1800 but one which shows that every artist recreates and reinvents, both through addition and omission!

WILLIAM GIBBS

Notes

¹ William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye and several parts of South Wales, etc. relative chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, 1770.

² Other celebrated artists who visited Brecon chose other views of the Honddu valley to paint. Thomas Jones chosen a view across the Honddu to the Castle ruins, Cotman a view up through the arches of the Castle Brige with the Priory above and Turner had turned his back on the Priory and seated himself beside the Honddu brook just above the Castle bridge with a view downstream of bridge and castle ruins. The only notable artists to choose to paint the Usk bridge itself were Michael “Angelo” Rooker and Sir Richard Colt Hoare who both chose a point of view below the bridge.

³ Varley, John, ‘*Beddgelert Bridge*’, 1819 pencil and watercolour with scratching out, on paper (50.2 x 66 cm.) Christie’s Catalogue, 2009.

⁴ Varley was a prolific artist. In the years from 1810 to 1818 he exhibited no less than 344 works at the Old Watercolour Society Exhibitions. He never managed his financial affairs well, was often in debt, and with his studio burning down three times, ended his life in straightened circumstances. He was obsessed with astrology and frequently cast horoscopes of other artists including Constable and Cotman. He was a close friend of William Blake and together they created a book, *Visionary Heads*, written by Varley and illustrated by Blake. He died in 1842 aged 64.

⁵ Varley, John, *Brecon*, watercolour, 14.0 x 21.0 cm, ca 1800, National Library of Wales.

⁶ Varley, John, *Brecon Castle*, watercolour and gouache on paper, 35 x 48.1 cms, Bolton Museum, undated.

⁷ Varley, John, *Brecon on the River Usk*, watercolour over pencil heightened with bodycolour, scratching out and gum Arabic, 18.4 x 27.4 cm, undated.

⁸ Entry in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <http://www.oxforddnb.com/templates/olddnb.jsp?articleid=28115>

⁹ Redgrave, R., *A century of British painters* (1866).

¹⁰ Guy Peppiatt *Fine Art Catalogue*, 2002.



Plate 1 John Varley, *Beddgelert Bridge*



Plate 2 Anon, *The Honddu Bridge*, Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery

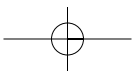
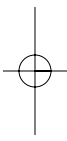
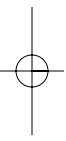
John Varley and the Cooking of Brecon



Plate 3 John Varley, *Brecon Castle*, Bolton Museum & Art Gallery



Plate 4 John Varley, *Brecon on the River Usk*, Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery



THE 1915 TREDEGAR ESTATE SALES IN BRECONSHIRE

Introduction

Professor John Davies, in an article published in *Brycheiniog* in 2004, based on his Sir John Lloyd lecture, analysed the landed estates of Breconshire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the background and impact of estate sales.¹ Such sales were to end the traditional political, social and economic relationships between tenants, agents and the landed families, which had been established over generations, and changed the nature of agricultural land tenure. This paper explores in greater detail the context, organisation and impact of the Tredegar estate sales in Breconshire in 1915, carried out on behalf of Courtenay Charles Evan Morgan, Third Baron Tredegar.

Courtenay Morgan

The *Brecon County Times*, to attract the interests of its readers, reported in March 1914 that 'Lord Tredegar's large steam yacht *Liberty* which his Lordship had



Plate 1 Courtenay Charles Evan Morgan (1867–1934) by William Mouat Louden,
painted in 1920.

National Trust (the picture can be seen at Tredegar House, Newport)

recently purchased from the executors of the late Mr. J Palliser of New York, left Cowes on Saturday for the Mediterranean. Lord and Lady Tredegar will join the yacht at Cannes.' The vessel at this date was the largest private yacht in the world.² Events unfortunately did not turn out as planned. Lady Tredegar fell ill, and was not able to make the journey, whilst later *Liberty* was requisitioned by the Royal Navy, as a hospital ship. Courtenay Charles Evan Morgan was the third Baron Tredegar and eldest son of the Hon. Frederick Courtenay Morgan and had fought in the Second Boer War.³ Instead of planning a pleasure voyage in 1914, Courtenay became Commanding Officer of his own yacht for the first part of the war, see Plate 1 for a portrait of him in the uniform of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. He had to wait until the end of the war before sailing around the world twice in his craft, visiting all the Empire's colonies.⁴

A keen yachtsman, such leisure activities would be a panacea against the future vicissitudes which confronted him. It was not the best of times to have come into his inheritance. With the death of his uncle, Godfrey Charles Morgan in 1913, the spectre of substantial death duties would face Courtenay for the remainder of his tenure of the Morgan estates. Death duties, which were introduced by the Liberal Chancellor, Sir William Harcourt, in 1894, had not troubled the Tredegar dynasty in the previous 250 years of its existence in Breconshire.

The Origin and Influence of the Breconshire Estates

The Morgans' first foothold in the County of Brecknock came in 1661, when William Morgan married his cousin Blanche, daughter of William Morgan of Therrow or Dderw, and acquired the Brecon lands, the last of which were disposed in 1921. The marriage settlement, drawn up in 1660, gave the Morgans the manors of Brecon, Defynnog, Bronllys and others, messuages in sundry parishes, 50 barns, 30 stables, 1,000 acres of land, 500 acres of meadow, 1,000 acres of pasture, 200 acres of woodland, 500 acres of furze and heath, as well as the Castle at Brecon, the Great House at Brecon, and the mansion at Dderw.⁵

Although the Morgans were not the largest landowners in Breconshire, their holdings were widely spread and they came to dominate Brecknock politics. Appendix 1 sets out details of their parliamentary representation in the Brecknock borough and county seats. Between 1723 and 1796, they held the borough for 52 years and between 1747 and 1806 they held the county seat for 59 unbroken years. Brecon borough provided a safe seat in the Commons for junior members of the Tredegar family, until they were able to attain the greater prestige of a county constituency in Monmouthshire or Brecknock. As Thomas comments, 'Since the house of Tredegar now reigned in both county and borough, changes in the representation of Brecknock henceforth occurred not at general elections but as the circumstances of the Tredegar family dictated.'⁶ In Monmouthshire they had even greater dominance representing the county from 1701–1906 for 180 years.⁷

Industrial Growth

Although the direct political power of the Morgans was waning by the late nineteenth century, the economic growth of their various interests was widespread and continuous, encompassing mineral exploitation, transport infrastructure and urban development, as well as agricultural land ownership in South Wales. Phillips records from the Tredegar papers,⁸ growth in annual income and agricultural rentals as:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Income</i>	<i>Rentals</i>
	£	£
1811	22,000	18,474
1856	52,000	22,214
1906	170,000	29,265
1917	319,000	37,500

The extensive industrial and housing developments during this period included wharves along the banks of the Usk in Newport and the Newport dockland area of Pillgwenlli. Freehold land owned by the Morgans in Newport and Tredegar and to some extent in Cardiff was developed by providing leasehold housing for rapidly increasing populations on a large scale.

The Morgans were closely involved in developing and organising canal, dock and railway infrastructure, for example, the first Baron Tredegar, Charles Morgan Robinson Morgan, was chairman of both the Monmouthshire Railway and Canal Company and Alexandra Dock (Newport) Company. He was also conscious that the 'greatest disaster that could overcome an aristocrat or gentry family in the late 19th century, was that it should be divorced from its land and every avenue was explored before the idea of selling was acceptable'.⁹ Indeed the reverse happened during his tenure, and purchases of agricultural land in the counties of Monmouth, Brecknock and Glamorgan were proceeded with, including the Vaughan houses in Brecon in 1849 for £6,400.¹⁰

The stewardship of this period of growth between 1800 and 1913 lay in the hands of only three successive members of the family, each of whom ruled for about thirty years or more: firstly, Sir Charles Gould Morgan, secondly Charles Morgan Robinson Morgan, the first Baron Tredegar, who was followed by Godfrey Charles Morgan, the second baron, who subsequently became Viscount Tredegar (Fig 1).

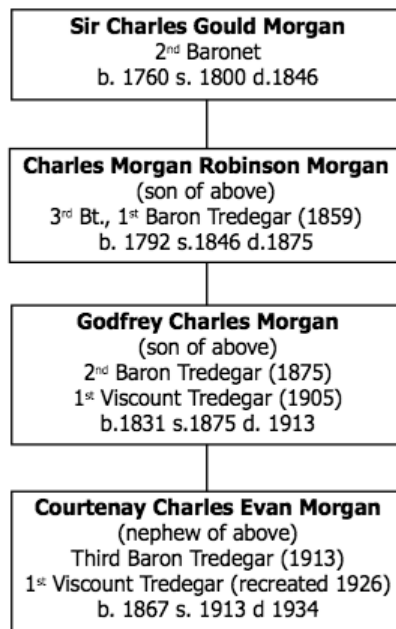


Figure 1 The Morgans of Tredegar, 1800–1934

The Breconshire Estates up to the First World War

In his biographer's view, 'the best known and most popular member of the modern Morgan family was Godfrey Charles of Balaclava fame',¹¹ although his stewardship coincided with a period when 'the blight of depression was felt in upland Wales. The price of store cattle fell 20% in price between 1877–80 and 1894–97, and fattened sheep and pigs by 18%'.¹² Returns from the land fell in consequence, and Wales recorded a drop in annual land values of 6.1% between 1879 and 1894, without taking into account rent abatements by sympathetic landlords such as the Morgans, who were conscious of their duties to their tenants and the wider community. Williams describes Godfrey as 'his Lordship dispensing the revenues of his great estates in his three counties with princely generosity'.¹³

As good landowners, the Morgans maintained detailed records of acreage, tenancies, boundaries and financial returns. The newspapers at Godfrey Morgan's death had commented in March 1913 'that certainly he owned over a thousand farms in three counties and gave away £40,000 a year'.¹⁴ In June 1915, at the time of the great sale, it was thought that '7,000 acres would be advertised within the county'.¹⁵ Records were kept in a variety of ways, although none show a single map of Breconshire with all the properties displayed. A list of estate maps from 1761 to 1880 is given in Appendix 2. Davies prepared a composite map for his 2003 Sir John Lloyd lecture and this can be found in *Brycheiniog* Volume 36.¹⁶

The 1915 Tredegar Estate Sales in Breconshire

25

In 1896, a description of the Tredegar Estates in Brecon was drawn up and this was used as the basis for planning the sales of 1915. The document is in three parts:

Firstly – Acreage of Land by Parish and individual tenant, the parishes where the Tredegar estate held land as follows:

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Roods</i>	<i>Perches</i>
Brecon St. David's	151	2	17
Brecon St. John's and St. Mary's Chapelry	1,103	3	14
Bronllys	95	–	2
Cantref	363	3	30
Defynnog	430	–	16
Garthbrenghy	464	2	18
Glasbury	664	3	23
Hay	42	1	37
Llanddew	438	–	2
Llandefaillog Fach	42	2	–
Llanfihangel Nant Bran	24	3	31
Llanfilo	166	2	25
Llanspyddid	38	1	14
Llyswen	306	3	12
Llywel	130	1	15
Merthyr Cynog	53	3	24
Penderyn	663	2	29
Talachddu	6	–	–
Vaynor	45	–	24
Ystradfellte	474	3	9
Ystradgynlais	2,230	2	14

The total acreage is 8,129. This did not include the extensive Sheep Walks associated with Palleg Manor, totalling 3,630 acres.

Secondly – The document refers to 'all that Great Waste of Containment of Land covered with water commonly called the Great Pool of Brecknock', referring to the area of Llangorse Lake.

Thirdly – The Tredegar estate is concerned with the Great Forest of Brecknock, claiming 'forming part of the Common Allotment containing between 7000 and 8000 acres situate on the West or North West side of the River Tawe and the remaining part of the Commons Allotment situate on the East side of the River Tawe containing nearly 10000 acres or thereabouts'.¹⁷

The Background to the Sales

Moore-Colyer, Morgan, Davies and others, using the information contained in the Agricultural Returns, observed the uneven distribution of land ownership in Wales.¹⁸ In 1887, landlords reigned supreme, only 10.2% of land was owned by the person who farmed the land, compared with 14.0% in Scotland, and 16.1% in England (The Breconshire percentage was 9.4%, although 28% of Breconshire was common land, the highest percentage in Wales, which distorts the Breconshire owner-occupation statistics.) Approximately half of all estates embraced between three and five thousand acres.¹⁹

Death duties are usually cited as the main reason for disposal of land in the early twentieth century. When first introduced in 1894, these were fairly modest at 8%, but during the First World War the rates increased to 30%. Other changes were taking place within our time period.²⁰ There was a gradual decrease in political influence arising from agricultural land ownership as a result of the broadening of the electorate. In many cases, this encouraged the great families to review their land holdings and to conclude that they were not necessarily competitive investments compared to other opportunities. In 1894, Joseph Russell Bailey, later the first Baron Glanusk, claimed that his annual return on land represented hardly 1% of capital value.²¹

In parallel, technical changes in land law made it easier for the great estates to be broken up and sold. Most estates had remained intact up until this period, because the legal device of entailment employed to prevent future generations from selling land ensured that it passed by operation of law to the owner's heirs upon death. These restrictions were lifted in 1882 under the terms of the Settled Land Act, giving landlords greater freedom to sell their entailed land.²²

A perusal of the *Brecon County Times* around 1900 shows a lively market in land sales, albeit on a small scale. For example, in August of that year, 24 Lots were advertised by Hugh Vaughan, a Builth solicitor, including properties in Llanddew, Pontfaen and Llanfilo. Lot 17, in Llanddew featured 'Smith's shop with dwelling house and large garden in occupation of John Phillips at an annual rent of £6 including tithes.²³ In Brecon in 1902, 13 Lots of shops and dwelling houses were advertised, including 'The Steps running from the Struet up alongside Mount St., including the shop, the Angel Inn (now the RAFA Club) and the Victoria Inn opposite the Town Hall.²⁴

The *Estates Gazette* in that same year reported on one of the largest land sales in Wales – the Beaufort Estates selling 27,000 acres in Monmouthshire by 428 Lots.²⁵ Within Breconshire in this decade, substantial properties also came on the market:

1903 Maesllwch at 2,363 acres	1905 Baskerville Estate at 1,000 acres
1905 Clyro Court	1907 Bronllys Castle
1908 Glyn Estate	1908 Heolfanog
1910 Garth at 1,826 acres	1913 Garth, again
1913 Ashburnham Estate 2,477 acres	1913 Tregunter Estate 992 acres

Appendix 3 sets out details of such sales between 1903 and 1924. The dates set out are taken from advertisements within the *Brecon County Times*, with the name of the owner, auctioneer, acreage and some detail of parts of the estate. How did the tenants view this situation, having regard to the fact that between 1900 and 1913 prices of agricultural produce in Wales had now risen by 18%, and the future prospects looked good? Davies considers 'that there is much evidence that where the landlord was benevolent the majority of tenants preferred to remain tenants rather than risk the hazards of a rigid mortgage'.²⁶ This was particularly true where landowners, such as the Morgans, had substantial income from industrial investment which could subsidise their investment in agricultural land.

Relations between Tredegar's agents and his tenants were good. The *Brecon County Times* regularly carried reports of the dinner accompanying the half yearly rent audits held at the Castle Hotel in Brecon. Although there was a certain amount of public relations in these, they did reflect the empathy engendered. In 1906, 'Mr E Dumaresq Thomas, Mayor of Brecon, a tenant of some 40 years and brother in law of H Edgar Thomas, an agent, found after all these years the same kind, generous, friendly feeling between the tenants and the agents. Mr Williams (Dderw) said he had been born on the Tredegar estate and he hoped he should die there. A better landlord than Lord Tredegar did not exist; he was a friend to everybody. Songs were sung during the afternoon and a very pleasant day was spent!'.²⁷ By 1910 tributes were still being made, Mr Rees Williams said 'Viscount Tredegar was one of the best landlords in England (*sic*) as well as one of the most generous'. His lordship's Breconshire tenants had merely to apply to his agents who at once always saw that everything suggested was carried out, and there was not a single tenant upon the estate in whom his lordship did not take a personal interest.²⁸

However, on this occasion everything was not sweetness and light. Mr H F W Harries, the chief agent spoke about the duties to be imposed under the new Finance Act 'what those duties will amount to I cannot tell you. But they are going to amount to a very large sum. In past years Lord Tredegar has been returning to Breconshire nearly every half penny he has received from his estates. Hardly anything has gone into his own pocket. In the years to come if these duties are as high as I anticipate instead of spending in Breconshire the money he receives in Breconshire, he will have to spend the money he receives in Monmouthshire and Glamorgan. If that should be I do not quite know what is going to happen because of course even the resources of Lord Tredegar are limited. But I am sure he will continue to do everything he can in the interests of his tenants'.²⁹

Phillips, as the son of a Monmouthshire tenant farmer in the 1920s, castigates the agents for engendering a false sense of security by the ready flow of wealth from the industrial and urban areas. 'The agents enjoyed the comfort of their rent-free superior residences which were staffed and maintained free of costs, as

well as seizing the sporting and social opportunities for which Tredegar was famed. So rents were not raised to meet increased expenses, as it was tacitly understood that the industrial sector would bear the burdens of the entire estate.³⁰ An idyllic situation if he was correct, which seems to have been borne out by future events.

The Succession of Courtenay Morgan

The watershed came with the death of Godfrey Charles Morgan, Viscount Tredegar, on the 11 March, 1913. Only five days prior to this and in all innocence, a good number of his tenants had assembled at the Castle Hotel for the half yearly annual rent audit under the presidency of H F W Harries. A sumptuous dinner was provided, afterwards the tenants enjoyed grog, cigars and tobacco. The principal business of the day was to mourn the death of the chief agent, H Edgar Thomas, who had been in post since 1878, and to welcome his successor, his son Gilbert Thomas. Members were in an ebullient mood, toasting his lordship's health, and acknowledging 'a better landlord it was almost impossible to find', Mr Harries expressed the hope that the tenants would have a good harvest.³¹

A more sombre mood prevailed at the audit in August. Harries, supported by his fellow agents Gilbert Thomas and J H Rosser, paid tribute to the late Viscount Tredegar. as he possessed 'uprightness of character, a strong sense of duty, unfailing courtesy, and recognised the great responsibilities which were attached to his position'. But now the King is dead, long live the King and Harries commenting on the new landlord, Courtenay Charles Evan Morgan, recognised that 'for many years to come he would be severely handicapped because of the enormous death duties, and consequently for a long time his income would be largely mortgaged'. The crunch for the tenants came when Harries expanded on a letter which had recently been sent out, that the rebate which was given the tenants in the disastrous year 1879–80 and which had been continued ever since, would be withdrawn. The concession however was to be extended to 1915, so that the tenants at the time of the sale could consider their position (the rents quoted in the sales particulars did not allow for the rebate).

In essence the rebate was meant only for bad times, and Courtenay Morgan faced with his liability had to hand on some of the pain to others. However, Harries had been given the reassurance by his Lordship, that 'if the withdrawal in an individual case caused hardship, then representations would be carefully enquired into and considered. On the other hand, if enquiries ascertained that the rent was too low, then it might be raised'. What was going to happen to the estate in future he could not say, 'but the death duties were so high that Lord Tredegar would probably be compelled to sell some of his property, but he did not know whether that would be in Breconshire, Glamorgan, or Monmouthshire'.³²

The decision was Breconshire, perhaps because the location and the percentage of income to the estate was seen as relatively marginal, compared with the other counties. Breconshire only accounted for 18% of the land, and 10% of the income of the overall Morgan estates. At the audit dinner in February, 1914, Alderman David Powell in submitting the toast of 'Our Landlord' commented on rumours 'that there was a probability that such a fine property as the Tredegar Estate in Breconshire would be broken up . . . as one of the greatest calamities the county has ever sustained'. He felt sure that there was no truth in these rumours. Mr Harries put him and his fellow tenants firmly in the picture and in describing his conversation with Lord Tredegar the previous night in London, he said it was necessary for financial reasons that the greater part of the estate was to be sold.

The important part of this announcement for the tenants was that:

- His Lordship's hope that the estate would not pass into commercial hands
- The tenants were to have the first opportunity of purchasing their holding
- If they could not find the purchase money his lordship would go as far as he possibly could to help them.

Two other points were made by Harries on behalf of himself and his fellow agents:

- It would be their duty as agents of his lordship to give every one of them notice to quit their holdings, this in his view only to be a legal formality
- It would be a considerable time before the properties were available for sale, and in the meantime it would be useful for both sides, for tenants to approach the agents to negotiate for the purchase of their holdings.³³

Having paid careful attention to Harries advice, tenants and others responded fully over the following months. Ann Evans, Pendre felt that she was 'unable to buy her fields'; Wm. Davies, 83, The Struet, Brecon, 'preferred to be a tenant, but will take advantage of the generous offer and will purchase his house'; Major Gillespie, Commander South Wales Borderers enquired 'is the land on which the Soldiers Cottage Homes stands to be sold and if so how much' as there was to be a meeting of the officers of the Regiment shortly.³⁴ John Evans, Pant Farm, Llywel, 'worried about the valuation of his buildings . . . but is prepared to borrow money from a friend on favourable terms'.

Edwin Jones, Saddle and Harness Maker, of 2/3 Ship St. Brecon, 'was surprised to receive due notice . . . after being a good tenant for 35 years. I should not care to have to give up possession'. A collective response came from the Local Anglers Association. Tredegar had given the fishing rights of the River Usk from Vennyfach down to the Lock free of charge to the Usk Board of Conservators. 'The charge now made for fishing (apart from licences), from Vennyfach to a spot just below Dinas is 5s p.a. and for the whole of the Usk down to the Lock is

only £1. It is feared that Brecon will suffer a diminution of visitors as the Usk Board has no available funds'.³⁵

An ominous enquiry as far as the tenants were concerned, came from Smyth and Daniel, Solicitors, 112 High St., Merthyr Tydfil – 'With reference to the announcement made . . . Lord Tredegar's intention to dispose of his Brecknockshire Estate we are under the impression that it is his Lordship's wish that the holdings should pass where desired to the Tenants, so that the property will not come into the open market. If otherwise however and the Whole Estate or substantially the whole of it should be in the market, a client of ours will be glad to have an opportunity to negotiate for purchase'.³⁶

The final event for the year was a circular letter from the Estate Office on the 12 November, 'Dear Sir, Referring to the Notice to quit served on you it has been suggested to us that it would be a convenience to some of the Tenants who do not wish to buy their holdings that they should be allowed to continue in occupation until the 29 September 1915. Will you kindly let us know if in, the event of your not buying you would continue your tenancy until that date'.³⁷

The Estate Disposals of 1915

In general terms, 1915 witnessed the continuing trend of landlords in Wales to dispose of part, or in some cases all of their estates. During the War agricultural prices rose steeply, in some cases up to 30%, but rents fell and on most estates net income declined though the value of the land increased steadily. 'Thus it was that the tendency to sell up portions or even the whole of estates already well advanced in 1910–1914 continued apace in 1915'.³⁸

The long awaited preliminary advertisement for the Tredegar lands appeared in the *Brecon County Times* on the 6 May. See Plate 2 for the sale particulars.

Although anticipated, it still came as shock to the tenants, even more so to Howell Powell, a well established Brecon auctioneer, who wrote to the agents on the 29th May, stating that 'he was not aware that negotiations are being entered into for the Tredegar property!' It also inspired a letter from Watkin Evans of Slwch Farm, in Brecon St John's in claiming compensation in respect of improvements carried out on his farm, namely:

'Laying down to pastures over 60 acres with clovers seeds and permanent grass; 7 rolls of barb wire; cleaning of ponds; hauling the mould on meadows; artificial manures; repairs of buildings and roads; planting fruit trees; and £250 of work in hours'.³⁹

The full advertisement appeared on the 3rd June, with the sale to commence on the 22nd June and the FOUR following days (unless previously disposed of by Private Treaty). The advertisement gave details of – Situation and Short Description, Area and Tenant; in a number of instances it also showed 'Sold to Tenant'. This reflected discussions held beforehand where 59 Lots had been

By direction of the Right Hon. Lord Tredegar and his Trustees.

PARTICULARS, PLANS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE,
OF
VALUABLE FARMS,
Accommodation Lands,
Ground Rents and Fishing Rights,
FORMING PART OF
THE TREDEGAR ESTATE,
in Breconshire,
IN THE PARISHES OF
CRAY, DEFYNOCK, GARTHRENGY, HAY, LLANDEW, LLANDEFAELOG-
EACH, LLANDILORFAN, LLANHAMLACH, LLANFIHANGEL, NANTBRAN,
LLANFILLO, LLANSPYDDID, L'LYWEL, LLANWERN, MERTHYR CYNOG,
PENDERYN, ST. DAVID, ST. JOHN, T'ALACHDDU, VAYNOR, VENNYFACH,
YSTRADFELLTE AND YSTRADGYNLAIS.

To be Sold by Auction by

MESSRS.
David Price, F.A.I., & Williams

AT
THE CASTLE HOTEL, BRECON,
ON
Tuesday, 22nd June, 1915, and following days at 2 p.m. precisely.

Further information and cards to view may be obtained from the Estate Agents or Auctioneers.

Solicitors:
Messrs. RIDER, HEATON, MEREDITH & MILLS,
5, New Square, Lincoln's Inn, London.

Estate Agents:
Messrs. H. F. W. HARRIES & G. THOMAS,
Tredegar Estate Office,
BRECON.

Auctioneers:
Messrs. DAVID PRICE, F.A.I., & WILLIAMS,
6, Balaclava,
BRECON.

Plate 2 Particulars of the sale

decided upon. The advertisement reappeared on the 10th June, and again on the 17th, the latter now stating that the sale would start on the 23rd June and two following days as:

First Day Wednesday	Lots 1-55
Second Day Thursday	Lots 57-117
Third Day Friday	Lots 119-196

The numbering was somewhat misleading, as by now only 67 Lots had been advertised, since discussions with individual tenants were proceeding apace. Many tenants recognised that with no legal security of tenure into the future, owner-occupation was a means of establishing a future for themselves and their families. As Davies commented, 'The increased prosperity of the immediate

pre-war years and more especially of the war years themselves probably enabled most farmers to raise 20% of the purchase price. It was the other 80% which was the cause for concern'.⁴⁰ On the 1 July, the *Brecon County Times* reported on many of the sale prices, but they could not report on all those sold beforehand.

Appendix 4 is the result of four separate documents, comprising all of the Lots, merged together for the first time. They are Duties on Land Values Record of Valuations Made by the Commission of Inland Revenue,⁴¹ a Sales Catalogue issued by the estate,⁴² the *Brecon County Times* Sale Advertisement⁴³ and a letter from the Surveyor of Taxes in Brecon to the estate with the authoritative list of purchases as approved.⁴⁴

The total amount declared for the 199 Lots was £104,788.12, of which the auction brought in about one quarter (£23,250).⁴⁵ Thus was realised Lord Tredegar's promise that priority where possible would be given to selling to the existing tenants

In addition the sale of timber in Vennyfach and Penderyn realised £4,865, among the purchasers being Benjamin Jenkins, Brecon, Jenkin Williams, Devynock, Jones and Son, Llangynidr, and Dickson and Co., Devynnock. The total amount of land sold was 3,501 acres, 11 roods, and 18 perches. Farms of over 30 acres amounted to 69% of the whole acreage at an income of £47,323. The ratio of rent to purchase for farms averaged around 25, and for house properties 35. A selection of properties showing these ratios is set out in Table:

<i>Lot</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Sale</i>	<i>Ratio</i>
	£	£	
1 Cefn Brynich Farm	131.7.5	3,676.12	28.1
2 Brynich Farm	249.2	6,500	26.1
3 Slwch Farm	35	4,700	20.0
4 Wern Farm	180	4,700	26.1
5 Pencaemelyn Farm	55	1,400	25.5
6 Crug Villa	10	525	52.5
7 Watton Villa	63.2.6	2,750	43.7
8 Slwch Villa	75	2,500	33.3
9 Sunnybank	60	1,100	18.3
10 Hunt Kennels	13.8.6.	250	18.7

The Brecon Town Council itself negotiated before the auction and secured the ownership of the sewage farm and the two public recreation fields adjoining Newton Pool, beyond the Promenade.

Subsequent Sales by the Tredegar estate and others

On the 1 July 1915, the *Brecon County Times* carried another advertisement for the Ystradgynlais area:

Valuable Freehold Farms, Lands and
Fully Licensed Public House Known as
The 'Old Tredegar Arms' Cwmtwrch.⁴⁶

Twenty-five farms and the public house were to be sold at the Masons Arms Hotel, Ystradgynlais, on Thursday, 5 August, unless previously disposed of by Private Treaty. The advertisement was repeated on the 15th, 22nd, and 29th July. Details of the Lots are set out in Appendix 5. The repetitive advertisements seemed to have succeeded, as the County Times reported on the 5th August that 'The agents are to be highly congratulated on the fact that following the general purchase of their holdings by the tenants, the auction was abandoned. Most of the negotiations were completed at Brecon last Thursday when the tenants appeared in a body in the Bulwark and made the generally quiet street quite busy looking. All except two have been sold to the occupier.'⁴⁷ The sale realised £18,510.

Sales also occurred elsewhere in the area. The *Estates Gazette* reported in November, 1915 that D T Alexander had sold properties comprising portions of the Duke of Beaufort's estate in the Duffryn Crawnnon and Glaisfawr valleys and in and around the villages of Llangynidr and Llangattock. The aggregate over two days was £48,333. The sale of the 38 Lots was held in the Angel Hotel, Abergavenny and included the Crickhowell Recreation Ground with the historic ruins of the castle and a Roman camp at 2a 2r 6p, originally a rent of £14 p.a. realising £280.⁴⁸ The same publication in 1916 reported that Sir Howard Frank had sold the Marquis of Abergavenny's Monmouthshire estates extending to over 3,000 acres, the bulk of which was the Sugar Loaf mountain. The family home, Nevill Hall, with its parkland of 94 acres and the Home Farm with fishing in the Usk was withdrawn at £7,400.⁴⁹

Funds must have been in short supply, as Tredegar himself in 1916 sold much of his urban land in the Monmouthshire valleys. Between 1916 and 1921, Tregunter, Maeskelyn, Buckland, Glyncelyn, and Llangoed followed. Overall, nearly 40,000 acres of Brecknock land were sold between 1918 and 1923, over 8% of the entire county. This caused the percentage of land owned by occupiers to rise from 9.6% in 1913 to over 16% in 1922.⁵⁰

Impact on Breconshire

In the view of the editor of the *Brecon County Times*, reflecting on the event, the breaking up of the Tredegar estate was a disaster for the county. 'It is safe to assume that there is not one who would not rejoice to see the old order restored . . . the tenants had a part of the capital required to work their business found by their landlord; and now they are put into the position of an ordinary investor and have to find all the capital required or borrow it, and must make a reasonable interest hereafter or go under.'⁵¹

This view was echoed recently by Moore-Colyer who saw that ‘to many of the new owner-occupiers who had purchased their farms between 1914 and 1920 when prices of agricultural outputs rose by some 300 per cent, the burden of a 4–6 per cent mortgage rate seemed hardly excessive. But they were to face a rude awakening in 1920, when the government repealed the legislative machinery which had promised a four year guarantee for selected items of farm output’.⁵² In the same vein, Morgan wrote ‘The tenant farmers who bought up their holdings during this social revolution were not necessarily fortunate. The value of capital invested in agriculture by owner-occupier declined sharply by over 20% between 1925 and 1931. Mortgage indebtedness became severe and debt charges more difficult to sustain.’⁵³

The disposal of such a large portion of the Breconshire estates meant the end of audit dinners at the Castle Hotel. The final one took place on Friday, 20th August, and was labelled by the *Brecon County Times* as ‘The End of the Old Custom’. The discussion that day was mainly as to the terrible war with three tenants having sustained family losses. H F W Harries, presiding, had received a message from Lord Tredegar to the effect ‘that his Lordship was greatly pleased that so many of his tenants had been able to buy their holdings and their farms.’ That was his Lordship’s wish from the start, and also of the estate agents Gilbert Thomas, Mr. Rosser and himself.⁵⁴

In 1921, the *Brecon County Times* had the sad duty of reporting on the last vestiges of the Tredegar estate in Breconshire, with the elimination of the Morgans’ seat in Breconshire, Dderw. ‘To the already long list of Breconshire agricultural and sporting estates sold (and for the most part broken up), has to be added the Dderw estate’. There was no bidding for the main estate, and the property was dealt with in lots. Every consideration was shown to tenants and nearly all of them wished to acquire their holdings, for example Brynnau Farm, 261 acre, was sold to the tenant Mr. Eric Gittoes for £4,750.⁵⁵ There was no longer any need for the Morgan Estate Office in Brecon and it was closed.

The sales ended the traditional political, social and economic relationships between tenants, agents and the Morgans which had been established over generations and changed the nature of agricultural land tenure in Breconshire.

It is, perhaps, worth noting here, that while the decline of the Morgan estate may have been seen as a matter of regret to contemporary sources in Brecknock, including many of the tenants, the ‘Land Question’ concerning a more equitable distribution of land was a live issue in nineteenth century and early twentieth century Wales and in the rest of Britain and Ireland. Some tenant farmers who had often farmed their land for generations believed that they should own the land they had nurtured, while nationalist leaders in Wales saw a link between Welsh identity and land ownership.⁵⁶

The Morgans of Tredegar – A postscript

Phillips described Courtenay Morgan as being ‘perhaps more interested in sport generally and in hunting in particular than he was in farming’.⁵⁷ His main interest remained in his yacht, and even this pleasure was lost when blindness overtook him in his thirties. He died in 1934, his wife in 1936, the Ritz Hotel, London, being their final place of abode. Their only son, Evan Frederick Morgan, the fourth Baron and the Second and last Viscount (1893–1949) was further removed from the land with interests in things social, literary, philosophical, and even mystical. He continued his father’s practice of allowing his expenditure to exceed his income and died of a throat infection in 1949, without an heir.

The Morgan estates passed to his uncle Frederick George Morgan, the Fifth Baron, (1873–1954), who immediately handed the estate over to his son, Frederick Charles John Morgan (1908–1962), the sixth and last Baron, to avoid future death duties. The principal Morgan seat, Tredegar House, near Newport, was sold in 1951 and the residue of the estate in 1956. John moved to live in Monte Carlo, but returned to hospital in the U.K. in 1962. He died childless, the third head of the family to do so in 50 years, thus ending 750 years of the family’s rule in South Wales, including 350 years of power and influence in Breconshire. Their motto was *Deus nobiscum quis contra nos* (God be for us, who can be against us?) – it might be argued that in the final fifty years or so, the answer was, at least partly, they themselves!

ANTHONY J BELL

Acting Editor’s note. The author submitted a manuscript of this paper for consideration for inclusion in *Brycheiniog* in the late autumn of 2013. At the time of his tragic death in January 2014, he had not submitted the final version of the paper, so it has been prepared for publication as a tribute to him and to his long interest in local history. While some of the material has been reorganised or modified to improve the flow of the narrative and to provide more context, it has been our aim throughout to ensure that Tony’s voice spoke through the final text.

Notes

- ¹ Davies, John, 'The landed families of Breconshire', *Brycheiniog*, 36, (2004), pp. 69–82.
- ² *Brecon County Times*, 5.3.1914.
- ³ Frederick's elder brother, Godfrey never married. Courtenay, created a Viscount in 1926, married Lady Katherine Carnegie, daughter of the 9th Earl of Southesk. Frederick, who initially was to be Godfrey's heir, died in 1909.
- ⁴ Cardiff Public Library LC: 394.4 (041) TRE.
- ⁵ NLW Tredegar Box 11, 146.6 and 146.7, 1665, Survey of the Manor of Brecon and Description of the boundaries.
- ⁶ *Brycheiniog*, Volume 6, p. 109.
- ⁷ For an analysis of Parliamentary Representation in Wales see – James, Arnold J. and Thomas, John E., *Union to Reform and Wales at Westminster* (1979), Gomer Press. Monmouthshire was a two member constituency, and in 1869 for example was represented by Octavius Morgan and Colonel P G H Somerset.
- ⁸ Phillips, Roger, *Tredegar: the history of an Agricultural Estate 1300–1956*, published by Tredegar Memorial Trust. I am indebted to this author for an overall understanding of the Morgans outside Breconshire. For such an important family in South Wales it is curious that this is the only publication relating to the Tredegar dynasty.
- ⁹ Davies, John, 'The end of the great estates and the rise of free-hold farming in Wales', *Welsh History Review* Vol 7, (1974) pp. 186–212, especially p. 188.
- ¹⁰ Tredegar Audit Books.
- ¹¹ Godfrey in 1909 was made a freeman of both Newport and Cardiff. His funeral in 1913 was an occasion of universal grief and mourning in the locality. Phillips p. 53.
- ¹² Morgan, K.O., *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880–1980*, Oxford (1981), p. 82.
- ¹³ Williams, W. R., *The Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales 1541–1885*, p. 26.
- ¹⁴ *South Wales Argus*, March, 11.3.1913.
- ¹⁵ *Brecon County Times*, 1.7.1915.
- ¹⁶ Davies, op. cit. *Brycheiniog*, p. 75.
- ¹⁷ NLW Tredegar Box 11 155/5. For an interesting account of the Morgans and the Great Forest, read Dewi Davies Brecknock Historian p. 56.
- ¹⁸ The National Archives, Agricultural Returns, 1887, pp. 80–81.
- ¹⁹ Moore-Colyer, R., 'The End of the Gentry Estates', *Planet* 172, (2005), pp. 73–82.
- ²⁰ A more detailed commentary on these factors can be found in my contribution to the March 2008 issue of *Hanes*, the Newsletter of the Brecknock History Forum, published by Brecon Library.
- ²¹ Davies, op. cit., *Brycheiniog*, p. 79.
- ²² Moore-Colyer, op. cit., p. 78.
- ²³ *Brecon County Times*, 31.8.1900.
- ²⁴ Powys Archives B/D/JGW/30/1.
- ²⁵ *Estates Gazette*, 7.6.1902.
- ²⁶ Davies, op. cit., *Brycheiniog*.
- ²⁷ *Brecon County Times*, 16.2.1906.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.8.1910.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰ Phillips, op. cit., p. 56.
- ³¹ *Brecon County Times*, 11.3.1913.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 14.8.1913.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 19.2.1914.
- ³⁴ NLW Tredegar–Breconshire Estate Correspondence (ABC 2/2/1–2,5,7–8,10). Correspondence, valuation and plans relating to Slwch Camp in 1914, and the purchase of land by the War Office from the Tredegar Estate can be found on NLW Tredegar Box 154/299–303.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Morgan, op. cit., pp. 170–1.

³⁹ NLW Tredegar–Breconshire Estate Correspondence.

⁴⁰ Davies, John, op. cit., *Welsh History Review*, p. 202.

⁴¹ Powys Archives B/LVR/1/14,15.

⁴² NLW Box 11 154/305); Newport Reference Library Haines Collection FM 463-631 TRE (H-C); Powys Archives (part) B/D/JPO/23/11–14.

⁴³ Copy in Brecon Library.

⁴⁴ NLW Box 11 154/305.

⁴⁵ For an analysis of the changing value of the pound over the twentieth century, see House of Commons Research Paper 99/20, *Inflation in the Value of the Pound 1750–1998*, (1999).

⁴⁶ *Brecon County Times*, 1.7.1915. Anyone wishing to investigate Tredegar Estate coal mining interests in Ystradgynlais between 1887–1924 should consult NLW Tredegar Box 158.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 5.8.1915.

⁴⁸ *Estates Gazette*, 27.11.1915, Powys Archives B/D/CL/2/73.

⁴⁹ *Estates Gazette*, 30.9.1916.

⁵⁰ Ashby and Howell, *Rents and Prices for Agricultural Land in South Wales 1915–1925*.

⁵¹ *Brecon County Times*, 1.7.1915.

⁵² Moore-Colyer, op. cit., p. 80.

⁵³ Morgan, op. cit., p. 96.

⁵⁴ *Brecon County Times*, 26.8.1915.

⁵⁵ Ibid 7.7.1921. A plan of the 23 Lots is held at NLW Stephenson and Alexander Plans 154/155 Plan No. 207. This Box also holds at Plan No. 234 Tredegar Lands outside Brecon in 1922. A map of the estate is at NLW Tredegar Estate maps Lot no. 62/3.

⁵⁶ For an unsympathetic contemporary view of anti-landlord agitation, see *Spectator*, 21 October 1893, p 7. For a recent analysis across the four countries, see *The Land Question in Britain, 1750–1950*, ed Cragoe, M and Readman (2010).

⁵⁷ Phillips, op. cit., p. 262.

For those interested in estate history within Wales, an excellent piece of research can be found in J G W Scheltinga *Gwydwr Estate 1814–1914* Ph.D thesis, Cardiff, 1993. Morgan op. cit., p. 96.

TREDEGAR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

BRECKNOCK

1747–1769	Thomas Morgan	son
1769–1787	Charles Morgan	brother in law
1787–1806	Sir Charles Gould	
1858–1875	Godfrey Charles Morgan	

BRECON

1722–1723	William Morgan	brother
1723–1734	Thomas Morgan	son
1754–1763	Thomas Morgan	brother
1763–1769	Charles Morgan	brother
1769–1772	John Morgan	brother in law
1772–1778	Charles Van	brother in law
1778–1787	Sir Charles Gould	son
1787–1796	Charles Gould*	
1812–1818	Charles Morgan Robinson Morgan	brother
1818–1830	George Gould Morgan	
1830–1832	C. M. R. Morgan	
1835–1847	C. M. R. Morgan	eldest son
1852–1854	Charles Rodney Morgan	

* assumed the name of Morgan in lieu of his patronymic Gould by royal license 16.11.1792.

Source:

Williams, W. R., 'The Parliamentary Representation of the Principality of Wales 1541–1885'.
James, Arnold J. and Thomas, John E., 'Union to Reform; and Wales at Westminster', Gomer
Press, 1979.

Appendix 2

TREDEGAR BRECONSHIRE ESTATES – MAPS AND SURVEYS, 1761–1896

- 1761 Wm. Morgan's estate maps of Breconshire within 1 volume of 51 leaves, which set out various holdings with proprietorial names.¹
- 1780–81 Charles Morgan estate maps and schedules prepared by Edward Thomas of Margam giving details of each individual holding, name of tenant, and acreage resulting in a total of 4,354 acres.²
- 1819 Description of the boundaries of St. John the Evangelist, and the Chapelry of St. Mary, Brecon.³
- 1835 Charles Morgan single map of the town of Brecon.⁴
- 1839–41 Tithe maps and schedules.⁵
- 1844 Manorial records of the county which were a detailed statement at the Court Leet between Sir Charles Morgan, Lord of the Manor and Philip Vaughan, steward. The detailed report commenced as 'The present that the Boundaries of the Manor of Brecon are as follows, namely the Boundaries commence at Llandefailog Bridge in the Parish of Landefailog fach within the said Manor from whence proceeding up the river Honddu to a place where a Brook called Cwmcoy runs into and under a Farmhouse called Cwrt-yr-heol . . .' There are no statistical details of acreage, nor an overall map of the estate.⁶
- 1872–3 National statistics appear in 1872–73 with the Inland Revenue exercise of 'Return of Owners of Land' categorising all owners of land of one acre and upwards in each county. Tredegar was assessed as 7,362 acres with a rental of £6,280 in Breconshire. Unfortunately this approximation did not include woodland nor common land, and was later tidied up by Bateman who again regrettably only gave a total of Wales for Tredegar of 38,750 acres.⁷
- 1880 In pictorial form a further plan of the boundary of the manor of Brecon appeared detailing properties, but with no individual name of tenant at 6,806 acres.⁸
- 1896 Reality was arrived at in 1896 with a 'Description of the Tredegar Estates in Brecon'. The document shows from the annotations, that it was used as the basis in 1915 as to what lands were to be put up for sale or not, but again with no overall map.⁹

References

- ¹ NLW Tredegar Estate Maps 152.
- ² Powys Archives B/D/BM/A112 catalogue of sales.
- ³ NLW Tredegar Box 11 154/183/184/185.
- ⁴ NLW Tredegar Estates Maps 257.
- ⁵ Brecon Reference Library.
- ⁶ NLW Tredegar Box 11 146/105
- ⁷ The Return of Owners of Land, Parliamentary Papers (1874) Vol. LXXII at Powys Archives B/LVR/1/14 and 15. Bateman, J., *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (1881).
- ⁸ NLW Tredegar Estate Maps 263.
- ⁹ NLW Tredegar Box 11 155/5. For an interesting account of the Morgans and the Great Forest, read Dewi Davies Brecknock Historian p. 56.

Appendix 3

BRECONSHIRE ESTATE SALES – 1903–1924

4.9.1903	Maesllwch Estate	2,363 acres	(Clyro, Llanbedr)
13.20.1905	Baskerville Estate	1,000	(Hereford, Radnor)
15.7.1910	Garth Estate	1,826	
31.7.1913	Garth Estate	1,829	(Treflis, Maesmynis)
14.8.1913	Ashburnham Estate	2,477	(Talgarth, Llangorse)
27.11.1913	Tregunter Estate	922	(Mansion House)
6.5.1915	Tredegarr Estate	3,501	(Brecon, Llywel)
8.7.1915	Tredegarr Estate	2,140	(Upper Swansea Valley)
4.11.1915	Beaufort Estate	3,250	(Llangynidr, Llangattock)
20.7.1916	Tregunter Estate	988	(Tregunter, Tredustan)
18.4.1918	Glanusk	2,500	(Peterstone, Trebinshwn)
11.7.1918	Maeskelyn Estate	3,064	(Maescar, Senny)
29.8.1918	Glanusk	1,800	(Aberedw, Builth)
29.8.1918	Glanusk	1,026	(Hay, Llanigon)
10.4.1919	Glanusk	no details	(Llanbedr, Crickhowell)
28.8.1919	Buckland	1,750	(Cwmdu, Llangorse)
20.5.1920	Glanusk	no details	(Bwlch, Cwmdu)
30.9.1920	Glanusk	2,500	Crickhowell, Cwmdu)
5.5.1921	Dderw	1,350	(Dderw Estate)
2.6.1921	Llangoed	2,150	(Gwenddwr, Crickadarn)
19.10.1922	Gwernyfed Park	3,173	(Gwernyfed, Three Cocks)
24.5.1923	Llangattock Park	400	(part of Beaufort Estate)
15.5.1924	Castell Madoc	2,266	(Lower and Upper Chapel)

The dates indicated are the advertisements placed in the *Brecon County Times*. Fuller details than above are set out there.

Appendix 4

TREDEGAR ESTATE SALE - JUNE 22-24 1915

<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
Parish of Llanhamlach					
1	Cefn Brynich Farm, Groesfordd Cottage	84 1 34	Wm. Prosser	Thos. and Sarah Prosser	3,676.12
2	Lock Cottages, inc. Timber				
1a	Freehold Chapel/House/Land	564 sq.yds	no details	Herbert C.I.Rich	15
1b	Trehillip, Defynnog	29 0 8		Jenkins Williams	2,700
Parish of St. Johns and Llanhamlach					
2	Brynich Farm, inc. Timber	198 3 28	David Williams	David Williams	6,500
2a	Brecon Sewerage Farm	7 3 9	Borough of Brecon	Borough of Brecon	1,000
Parish of St. Johns					
3	Slwch Farm	196 1 5	Watkin Evans	Josiah Williams, the Forge	4,700
Parish of Llanddew					
4	Wern Farm, Llanddew, inc Timber	273 0 33	David Davies & Bros	David Davies & Bros	4,700
Parish of Llanddew, Llanwern, Llanfillo					
5	Pentwyn, Cae sill, Troedyrallt Alltyronw, inc Timber	173 3 36	Wm. C. Davies	Wm. C Davies	4,000

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<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
Parish of Garthbengy					
6.	Drainduon Farm	83 2 13	John Williams	John Williams	1,350
7.	Llechach Farm	39 3 19	James Davies	James Davies	500
8.	Cilmanharen-Fach Farm, inc Timber	91 1 38	Thos. Probert	T H Scammell, Blaenrheon	1,337
9.	Glandwr Farm, inc Timber	112 2 21	Morgan Davies	Morgan Davies	1,860
Parish of Garthbrenny and Talachddu					
10.	Pencaemelyn Farm	139 0 12	Wm.Eckley /Ann.Jones	W.Eckley	1,400
Parish of Garthbrenny					
11.	Penishawaun Holding	6 2 36	James Morris	James Morris	40
12.	Freehold Cottages, Cwm-llecach	0 2 0	Betsy Lloyd/ Thos Meredith	H Coppage	50
13.	Freehold Land	1 2 10	David Price	David Pric	8
Parish of Llanvillo					
14.	Hillis Farm inc Timber	161 1 2	Elizabeth Price	Levi Phillips	2,600
Parish of St. Johns and Vennyfach					
15.	Crug Villa	4 2 37	Marquess Camden	Marquess Camden	525
Parish of Llandefaeleog Fach					
16.	Rose Cottage, Sarnau	0 0 7	John Williams	Abel Rowlands, 18 Watergate	75
17.	Ty-Ucha Holding	7 1 37	David Williams	David Williams	350
18.	Cottage/Garden Sarnau	0 0 15	Evan Owen	Evan Owen	50
19.	Land	8 0 29	J H Rosser	David Jones, Tairderwen	100
20.	Smallholding, Penycoedcae	1 1 17	F G Dickenson	J H Rosser	110
21.	Twynmoel	4 0 28	J B Prothero	JH Rosser	as 20

The 1915 Tredgar Estate Sales in Breconshire

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<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
Parish of Merthyr Cynog					
22.	Cwmfotty	3 0 35	James James	James James	20
23.	Blaenywcm, Penybanc, Pengenffordd	39 2 29	no name	J P Williams	300
Parish of St. Johns					
24.	Garden	0 0 10	Evan Jones	Evan Jones	10
25.	Rich Meadow Land	2 2 20	Mrs Powell Price	C P Price	276
26.	Rich Meadow Land	2 2 33	Fred Maund	Fred Maund	290
27.	Rich Meadow Land	4 1 2	Stanley Jenkins	G J Jenkins	1,200
28.	Rich Meadow Land	11 3 25	Breconshire Coal and Lime	P P Williams	975
29.	Rich Meadow Land	6 2 21	James Hargest	D Morgan	1,200
30.	Rich Meadow Land	2 2 37	James Hargest	D Morgan	as 29
31.	Rich Meadow Land	3 0 21	James Hargest	Lewis W H Jones	260
32.	Rich Meadow Land	3 0 27	Wm. Morgan	D Morgan	as 29
33.	Rich Meadow Land	2 3 14	Miss B Wilson	D Morgan	as 29
34.	Watton Villa	11 1 37	Mrs L Price/Mrs Evans	Louisa Price/W P Evans	2,750
35.	Rich Meadow Land	10 2 15	Mrs L Price/Mrs Evans	Louisa Price/C P Evans	as 34
36.	Rich Meadow Land	4 2 39	Mabel Williams	Louisa Price/C P Evans	320
37.	Hunt Kennels	2 3 16	Brecon Hunt Club	Lt. Col. S W Morgan	250
38.	'The Cricket Field'	5 1 1	no details	no details	
39.	Rich Meadow Land	6 3 16	Mrs Price/Mrs Evans	Louisa Price/C P Evans	as 34
39a	Valuable Fishing Rights	Northern	no details	J C Lloyd	1,000
39b	Valuable Fishing Rights	side of	no details	E Watts and others	500
39c	Valuable Fishing Rights	River Usk	no details	J Gunter, Glasbury	800
40.	Rich Meadow Land	1 2 12	Samuel Perry	John Price, solicitor	180
41.	NOT IN CATALOGUE				
42.	Slwch Villa	2 0 35	Mrs Hammond Spencer	W F Parry de Winton	2,500

<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
43.	Rich Meadow Land	2 2 5	Mrs Ferris	W F Parry de Winton	as 42
44.	Rich Meadow Land	3 2 0	Mrs Price and Mrs Evans	W F Parry de Winton	as 42
45.	Rich Meadow Land	5 2 37	same	W F Parry de Winton	as 42
46.	Rich Meadow Land	15 1 31	Mrs Price/Mrs Evans	W F Parry de Winton	500
47.	Rich Meadow Land	4 1 25	Wm. Williams	Wm. Williams	355
48.	Rich Meadow Land	37 0 35	War Department	no details	
49.	Rich Meadow Land	13 2 20	War Department	David Davies	1,950
50.	Rich Pasture Land	8 2 2	Mrs E Phillips	David Davies	as 49
51.	Rich Pasture Land	9 0 30	Mrs E Jenkins	Mrs E Jenkins	as 27
52.	Rich Pasture Land	9 1 7	Mrs E Jenkins	Mrs E Jenkins	as 27
53.	Rich Meadow Land	11 1 22	late J A Jebb	John Evans, Glanusk	405
54.	Rich Meadow Land	8 1 18	Mrs Price and Mrs Evans	W F Parry de Winton Glyngarth, Camden Road	290
55.	Sunnybank	6 1 29	Major Walker	Major Walker	1,100
56.	Rich Pasture Land	30 3 39	David Davies	David Davies	as 49
57.	Sunnybank Wood	3 3 16	in hand	reserved for Marquess Camden	
58.	Rich Pasture Land	16 0 2	S Davies	S Davies	600
59.	Rich Pasture Land	11 3 25	S Davies	S Davies	490
60.	Rich Meadow Land	7 0 9	Dr Valentine Rees	David Vaughan Price	330
61.	Rich Pasture Land	19 3 31	Samuel Perry	David Morgan	900
62.	Rich Pasture Land	9 1 30	T Richards	Alderman E A Wright	380
63.	Rich Pasture Land	15 3 36	David Thompson	David Thompson	800
64.	Rich Pasture Land	6 2 14	David Thompson	David Morgan	160
65.	Rich Pasture Land	7 3 19	Thomas Probert	Thomas Probert	225
66.	Rich Pasture Land	13 2 11	Thomas Jones	Thomas Jones	900
67.	Plantation Pennant Field	0 0 15	no details		
68.	Rich Meadow Land inc Timber	5 0 2	David Jones (reps)	Margaret Jones	368
69.	Rich Pasture Land	13 0 26	J H Rosser	Margaret Jones	2,000

The 1915 Tredgar Estate Sales in Breconshire

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<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
70.	Rich Meadow Land	12 3 20	Ann Evans	Margaret Jones	as 69
71.	Rich Meadow Land	6 2 27	J H Rosser	Margaret Jones	as 69
72.	Rich Pasture Land	9 0 0	Thomas Bufton	same	470
73.	Rich Pasture Land	12 2 19	W T Isaac/James James	James James	1,270
73a	Rich Pasture Land	4 1 0	James James	Brecon Burial Board	300
74.	Rich Pasture Land	3 1 23	W T Isaac	James James, Cemetery Road	240
75	Pasture Land	2 2 11	James James	James James	as 73
76.	Building Site, Cemetery Road	0 2 21	James James	Harry Coppage	100
77.	Rich Pasture Land	3 1 36	James James	James James	as 73
78.	Rich Pasture Land	2 3 38	J H Rosser	J H Rosser	1,217.10
79.	Court Cottage	0 0 10	T T Thomas	T T Thomas	208
80.	Court House	0 2 39	J H Rosser	J H Rosser	as 78
81.	Court Buildings, Timber Yard and Paddock	0 3 30	J H Rosser/Ann Evans	J H Rosser	as 78
82.	Pasture Land, Mill Green	0 3 27	Thomas Bufton	Thomas Bufton	60
83.	Freehold Garden, Mill Green	0 0 8	Rees Morgan	Rees Morgan	6.10
84.	Rich Pasture Land	3 1 36	J H Rosser	H Pritchard	150
85.	Rich Pasture Land	3 2 1	T Phillips	T Price, Tygwyn, Crai	190
86.	Rich Pasture Land	3 6 0	Howell Powell	Howell Powell	450
87.	Rich Pasture Land	5 1 23	Roger Williams	Roger Williams	330
88.	Meadow Land	13 0 38	Wm. Probert	Wm. Probert	1,050
89.	Meadow Land	6 1 33	Henry Pritchard	Wm. Probert	as 88
90.	Rich Meadow Land	2 3 15	Thos. Phillips	J H Rosser	as 78
91.	Rich Meadow Land	3 1 12	David Powell	David Powell	1,400
92.	Rich Meadow Land	7 0 5	J H Rosser	Ann Evans	480
93.	Rich Meadow Land	5 3 19	Wm. Powell	Wm. Powell	430
94.	Tithe Barn Cottage	0 0 29	Henry Pritchard	Henry Pritchard	117

<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
95.	Meadow Land	8 1 5	Mrs Brace/Mrs Harper J H Rosser	part Misses Wilson part T Price	140 400
96	Rich Meadow Land	2 2 29	David Powell	David Powell	as 91
97	Meadow Land	8 0 19	Brecon Corporation	Brecon Corporation	460
Parish of Vennyfach					
98	Meadow Land	4 1 21	Alfred Price	Dr. G P Francis	1,770
99	Vennyfach Farm	41 0 30	Wm. Probert	Dr. G P Francis	as 98
Parish of St. David's					
100.	Castle Farm/Cottage	84 2 23	W T Isaac	W T Isaac	3,500
100a	Castle Cottage		Eliz. Williams	Ann Williams/E T Williams	160
100b	Castle Cottage, Llanfaes		Brecon Steam Laundry	Morgan Morgan, Garrgaled	175
100d	Castle Cottage, Llanfaes		Morgan Morgan	W T Isaac, Castle Farm	187.10
100c	Castle Cottage		Mgt. Watts	Hannah Jones	160
100e	Old Tollgate House		E Jenkins	W T Isaac	as 100d
101	Penlan Farm	68 0 28	Thos. Williams	J D D Evans	1,300
Parish of Llanspyddid					
102	Ty-isaf	27 0 30	S W Morgan	Lt. Col. S W Morgan	800
103	Four cottages	2 1 15	J Prosser/G Jones/ E Edwards	David Jones	100
104	Caeaubach	3 3 3	David Jones	David Jones	as 103
105	Pant Cilygatws, inc. Timber	4 0 2.	Richard Price	R Price/P Williams	2,625
Parish of Devynnock					
106	Blaencamlais, Tirbach, Treforthy	186 2 5	Richard Price	R Price/P Williams	as 105
107.	Coedcae	5 1 38	Lewis Lewis	L Lewis	800

The 1915 Tredegar Estate Sales in Breconshire

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<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
Parish of Glyn					
108.	Land	7 3 34	Wm Perrott	Wm. Perrott	45
Parish of Devynnock					
109.	Ynisgron holding	7 2 13	David Davies	David Davie	140
110	Daire Bach	17 3 36	Mrs M. Jones	David Vaughan Price	200
110a	Pasture Fields	3 2 31	Edward Thomas	Edward Thomas	30
111	Tir y Meddyg	20 0 6	Charles Havard	C Havard	340
112	Tir Arglwydd	53 3 10	Walter Evans	W Evans	1,950
Parish of Ystradfellte					
113	Heolrhedyn	120 0 38	Evan Pritchard	E Pritchard	1,300
114	Nantycroen, Blaenlleiaf	81 1 1	James Jones	no details	
115	Bwlch Farm	46 3 10	James Jones	J & R. Powell	600
116	Carnycrochan Farm	154 2 15	E Walters	J & C Walters	900
117	Wood	54 2 8	Curtis & Harvey	Curtis & Harvey	350
Parish of Vaynor and Penderyn					
118	Tylmorgrug/Pentwyn	18 3 1	Rees Howell	no details	
119	Ty'r Danygraig	43 2 0	John Davies	part J Gould part L & J Williams	200 1,200
Parish of Cray					
120	Pasture Fields	11 1 26	Thos. Price	T Price	330
121	Treweren Fields	5 1 21	Samuel Griffiths	Mary A Griffiths	650
122	Treweren Fields	9 1 0	Dr. T P Thomas	T P Thomas	312.10

<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
Parish of Maescar					
123	Penentre	10 2 10	Lewis Lewis	L Lewis	as 107
124	Trinity Chapel Vestry	0 0 7	no details	Wm. M Davies	6
125	Land	3 1 6	Samuel Griffiths	Mary A Griffiths	as 121
126	Wern Cottages		Samuel Griffiths	Mary A Griffiths	as 121
127	Pasture Land	1 3 14	David Powell	David Powell	115
128	Athrawdy House	1,164 sq yds	David Powell	Rev. D Davies	12.10
129	Pasture land,	6 0 2	Evan Prosser	E Prosser	320
130	Land	3 2 24	Walter Evans/Evan/ Prosser	W Evans	as 112
131	Land	4 3 5	Walter Evans	W Evans	as 112
132	Land	1 3 35	Walter Evans	W Evans	as 112
133	Castle Farm	25 1 3	Walter Evans	W Evans	as 112
134	Land	2 0 11	Walter Evans	W Evans	as 112
135	Land	3 2 30	Walter Evans	W Evans	as 112
136	Pasture Land	5 0 6	Mrs Vaughan Powell/ Gwen V Powell	Gwen Powell	253
137	Pasture Land	3 0 26	Samuel Griffiths	Mary A Griffiths	as 121
138	Tanners Arms Field	3 3 0	Morgan Rees	Morgan Rees	112.10
139	Milestone Cottage	0 1 20	Usk Board of Conservators	Howell Phillips, Maskelyne	60
139a	Land	0 1 39	Miss Story Maskytene	Howell Phillips	40
Parish of Devynnog					
140	Almors Villas	0 1 18	Mrs V Powell/ Mrs D Williams	D Powell	50
140a	no details			M J Morgan	140
141	Forest View	0 1 16	Miss Rees Powell	J J Powell	95
142	Tredegar Row Cottages	0 0 22	R J Powell	no details	

The 1915 Tredgar Estate Sales in Breconshire

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Lot No	Property	Area	Tenant	Purchaser	Price £
142a	Sewage Lift		Brecknock RDC	Brecknock R D C	2.10
143	Castle Hotel Manchester House, 13 Cottages, Factory Warehouse, Workshop, Slaughtherhouse	2 0 19	Execs Dr Francis Elias	E G Johnson	400
144	Zion Baptist Chapel		no details	Wm. Williams	12
Parish of Llywel					
145	Pant Farm	8 3 8	John Evans	John Evans	275
146	Cwrt y gollen	3 0 12	Mrs Ann Morgan	J & S J Evans	80
147	Tan y Banc	1 2 13	Mgt A .Evans	Mgt A Evans	10.10
148	Dan y Twyn	12 0 28	Wm. Davies	W Davies	63.15
149	Pen Hendre	31 2 34	John Lewis	J Lewis	200
150	Llwyn y Foxen	10 3 20	F Maidment	F G Maidment	87.10
151	Land	6 2 36	Mrs C Jones	T Price	9
152	Ffrondeg/ Cottages	1 3 34	reps of late Morgan, Jones	J Williams	30
153	Ty John y Teiliwr Cottage	0 0 39	J Watkins	C Evans	13
153a	Tyr bach y Mynydd	9 2 30	O T Harrys Howells	O T Harry Howells	130
Parish of Llandeilo fan					
154	Cae Garreg	7 3 9	Mrs Powell	Capt. D Powell	20
155	Blaencyrnog Holding	18 2 5	Roger Thomas	Wm. Price	200
156	Glanrhyd	13 0 33	Richard Pugh	R Pugh	150
Parish of Llanfihangel Nant Bran					
157	Tyuchaf, Gilfynydd	5 0 22	Thos. Bevan	no details	
158	Ty isaf, Gilfynydd	5 0 5	Rees Thomas	S Richards	100
159	Cwr y Waun	6 1 20	Howell Powell	Howell Powell	55
160	Troedyrhiw/Waunarw	9 1 5	David Richards	D Richard	144.15

<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
Parish of Merthyr Cynog					
161	Brin y Bont Cottage	150 sq yds	no details	Howell Powell	as 159
162	Ffynnon ffridill	31 3 21	Marquess Camden		as 15
163	Caenewydd	6 1 8	A Gwynne Vaughan	A Gwynne Vaughan	50
Parish of Hay					
164	Field	2 2 2	Evan T Powell	E T Powell	2,500
165	Field near St. Mary's	3 0 9	Evan Powell	E T Powell	as 164
166	Field near St. Mary's	0 2 0	Hay UDC	E T Powell	as 164
167	Field near St. Mary's	1 2 39	Evan T Powell	E T Powell	as 164
168	Swan Hotel, Hay	35 0 39	Evan T Powell	E T Powell	as 164
Parish of St. Johns					
169	Ruperra House, St. Mary St		Mrs Isaac/ Mrs Jones Williams	KJ & WJ Williams	670
170	Shop/House/The Crown, Watergate		T T Thomas/ Lewis Jones	T T Thomas	450
171	Nos 2/3 Ship St. Brecon		Edwin Jones	part George Tudor	230
172	House/Shop 16/17 High St		part H Coppage	230	
173	Brewery/5 Cottages/Mineral Water Factory Struet		David Peregrine	D Peregrine	1,485
174	House/Shop 90 Struet		David Powell	D Powell	as 91
175	Bulls Head/Shop 87 Struet		John Jones	G Jones	300
			David Powell/ MH Uncles	D Powell	as 91
176	89 Struet		John Games	S E Games	225
177	88 Struet		Wm. Davie	W Davies	250
178	Corn and Grist Mill, Orchard Struet	1 0 20	T Richards	T J Elston	600

Brycheiniog

The 1915 Tredegar Estate Sales in Breconshire

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<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
179	House at Pendre		John Edwards	J Edwards	200
179a	House at Pendre		James Matthew	J Matthews	200
180	NO INFORMATION				
181	do.				
182	do.				
183	do.				
184	do.				
185	The Mansion House, Stables, Garden, Brecon		no details	part W J & K J Williams	50
186	Stables, Coachhouse etc opp Mansion House		no details	part J P Jones Powell	850
188	Brynglas, Cemetery Rd	0 0 30	T T Thomas	H F W Harries	260
189	Brynafon/Arfryn, Cemetery Rd.	0 0 30	J H Rosser	T T Thomas	as 79
190	Aneddfa Cemetery Rd	0 0 30	James James	J H Rosser	as 78
191	Penyfan/Brynhaul, Cemetery Rd	0 1 9	A&M Williams	James James	as 73
192	Bldg land Cemetery Rd	0 0 17	Mrd James/Mrs Price	A&M Williams	75
193	Land John St	0 0 18	no details	M E James/M Price	100
194	Plot adjoining canal bank		Mrs Harris/ Mrs Rowlands	James James	as 73
195	Plot adjoining canal bank		Mrs E Jenkins	Mrs Harris/ Mrs Rowlands	63
196	Plot garden Blue Boar Inn		J P Gwynne Holford	Mrs E Jenkins	
197	The Soldiers Homes'	0 1 17	David Williams	W F P de Winton	30
198	Gasometer	3,129 sq.yds	Commanding Officer 24th Brecon Gas Co	no details	25
199	4 houses, Dorlangoch	0 3 0	C J Large	Col. King Hunter	729
200	White Horse Inn, Abergavenny Rd		David Powell	Brecon Gas Co	175
				C J E Large	as 91
				D Powell	

Appendix 5

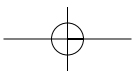
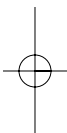
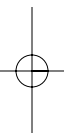
TREDEGAR ESTATE SALE – YSTRADGYNLAIS – 5 AUGUST, 1915

<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
1	Ty Roger	9 0 29	B L Thomas	B L Thomas	750
2	Penrhiw	93 3 17	David Williams	David Williams	2,040
3	Henglyn isaf	39 3 0	David Williams	David Williams	As 2
4	Henglyn uchaf	50 1 21	Lewis Daniel	Lewis Davies	1,525
5	Pensarn/Penybont	79 3 31	Lewis Daniel	Lewis Davies	As 4
6	Pencaemoel	80 1 20	David Williams	David Williams	As 2
7	Tir-Morgan Teilwr	53 0 30	David Griffiths	David Griffiths	575
8	Caemawr	65 3 30	Lewis Jones	Lewis Jones	700
9	Gelly	118 2 15	Wm. Morgan	Wm. Morgan	900
10	Bryn graenir	166 3 10	David Price	David Price	975
11	Penllwynteg	88 1 13	Thomas Jones	Thomas Jones	650
12	Tyr y gof	198 2 29	David Williams	Thomas Williams	1,075
13	Tircanol	70 0 18	Thomas Williams	T S Thomas	750
14	Pentwyn	30 0 39	A W Griffiths	A W Griffiths	675
15	Maespica	57 1 13	D S Griffiths	D S Griffiths	800
16	Glyn cyn waluchaf	67 2 19	reps of late W Griffiths	Mgt. Griffiths	1,050
16a	Glyncynwal Old Wood	19 1 31	J D Jeffreys	J D Jeffreys	100
17	Glyn cyn walisaf	93 3 4	Thos Evans	Thomas Evans	1,050
18	Gilfach	69 0 33	W D Griffiths	Evan Griffiths	540
19	Tredegar	191 1 33	Evan Griffiths Brynhenllys Colliery Co.	No information	

The 1915 Tredegar Estate Sales in Breconshire

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<i>Lot No</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Tenant</i>	<i>Purchaser</i>	<i>Price</i> £
20	Brynhenllys	68 0 39	Wm. Ambrose	Wm. Ambrose	650
21	Waunlwyd	89 1 3	Thomas Price	Thomas Price	970
22	Penywern	142 1 4	David Williams	No information	
23	Dorwen	130 1 17	Griffith Rees	Griffith Rees	580
24	Cwm fforchwen	28 0 16	Wm. Morgan	Wm. Morgan	As 9
25	Tynwydd	73 2 0	John H. Jones	John H. Jones	380
26	Old Tredegar Arms		Thos. Griffiths	Thos. Griffiths	775



THE PUZZLE OF THE 'SPITEFUL INN' AND A LOST FORD OVER THE RIVER USK

The record of tithe payments for Llangattock parish survive for the period 1828–32 and are held in the Crickhowell District Archive Centre.¹ The ledger lists annual payments of tithe to the rector, Lord William Somerset, by occupants of land within the parish (and also for the parishes of Llanelly and Llangenny also in his care at that time), made usually by tenants, sometimes the owners. I was puzzled to see that Llwynon farm, tenanted by William James, was entered throughout the period as 'Llwynon and the Spiteful Inn'. Although there are records of many inns which once served the community of Llangattock and which are now but a memory, this name did not feature among them. Where was the Spiteful Inn and what might account for its strange name?

My interest was heightened having read, in Foster Frowen's history of Hall's Tramroad in the Ebbw Valley of Monmouthshire, of the origin of the name 'Spiteful Row' in Cwmcarn.² He recounts how in 1808 Benjamin Hall (grandfather of Sir Benjamin Hall after whom Westminster's 'Big Ben' is thought to have been named) came into possession, through his father-in-law, Richard Crawshay, of Cyfarthfa, an extensive estate in the Ebbw valley, including a tramroad from a colliery in the upper Sirhowy valley for which he began planning a new link with the Monmouthshire Canal at Abercarn, and thence to Newport. Sir Thomas Protheroe, another colliery owner in the same area, also needed to transport his coal to the canal and on to Newport. Seeking to avoid the expense of using Hall's tramroad and wharf, then under construction, he decided to build a tramroad of his own to join the canal at Pontywaun, a little further down the Ebbw valley. Hall decided to thwart Protheroe and in 1810 purchased a strip of land running up the valley side across the line of Protheroe's tramroad (on which construction had already started), and started to build on it a row of houses. Incensed by this action, Protheroe ordered his workmen to knock down the houses in the way of his road. Hall took the matter to court which found in his favour and awarded damages. Protheroe's tramroad was never finished.³ The houses were dubbed 'Spiteful Row' and to this day that area, now a part of Cwmcarn, is known as 'The Spiteful'.

Could there be some interesting story attached to Llangattock's Spiteful Inn – and where was it? And as there seemed to be no memory of an inn of that name in the local area, was there a record elsewhere? Although the inn name had appeared in the tithe accounts of 1828–32, it is not found in either the map or the apportionment schedule of the tithe survey of the parish published little more than a decade later (1845). The schedule reveals that the owner of Llwynon is Osborne Yeats of Llangattock Court⁴ and it is tenanted by Anne James, the widow of William James. However, further examination of the Llwynon entry revealed that it comprised two discrete clusters of land – one of almost 54 acres

comprising 23 fields or other enclosed areas high on the valley side about the Llwynon homestead, and a smaller area of just under 16 acres divided into six adjacent parcels of land in the valley below, forming an elongated block running parallel to the river Usk. It seemed probable that the latter comprised the land earlier referred to as the Spiteful Inn and this was confirmed by other records.

Surprisingly, the internet provided a reference to the Spiteful Inn in a digitised copy of John Lloyd's *Historical Memoranda of Breconshire* (1903).⁵ In discussion of 'The Miarth Hill' [Myarth] Lloyd⁶ says:

There is a very interesting old drift way across the Usk between Gliffaes and Penmyarth at the Island, which deserves notice, and there are also large maen-hirs in the glade leading to the drift way, and higher up at Pantyfedwen,⁷ near Llangynider. This driftway, to which common land led down from the hill all the way to the water's edge, before the inclosure was made, enabled the Cwmdu-side people to cross the river, because in those early times there were no permanent stone bridges, to bring their lime and coal from the Llangattock mountain; and having crossed the Usk, they then found the Roman road to take them, either up or down the valley, and 'Spiteful Inn', as the hospitium or hostelry of ancient days, ready to receive them and to entertain both man and beast.

This reference to the Roman road is confusing as the Roman road between Gobannium (Abergavenny) and Brecon Gaer undoubtedly lay to the north of the river, passing through the fort at Pen-y-gaer to the north of Myarth. However, if one accepts that as an error, the passage clearly locates the Spiteful Inn on the south side of the river, to which access was gained by a 'driftway' [ford] between Gliffaes and Penmyarth. The reference to the island is also helpful in locating the ford as Ordnance Survey maps, as early as the First Edition One-inch to One-mile Map of 1832 (Fig. 3), show a small island in the river between these two large houses. It is there today. Elsewhere in the same work Lloyd confirms the inn's location south of the river, commenting in his description of the 'ancient' road up the vale of the Usk from Crickhowell to Brecon:

Near the Dyfnant we have 'Spiteful Inn' (Latin, *hospitium*, same derivation as Llanspythid), the ruins of which I have often seen, and where an ancient roadway led down to the island in the Usk, and so across to the Penmiarth side.

As Lloyd remembered the ruins of the inn on journeys along the road along the valley road during his lifetime (1833–1915), one assumes that they were still a feature of the landscape at least as late as the 1840s. The reference to Dyfnant is important – a land holding named after a small south bank Usk tributary of that name near the boundary between the parishes of Llangattock and Llangynidr and a short distance upstream of the 15 acre holding identified on the tithe map as that of the Spiteful Inn. There seems not to have been a farmstead at Dyfnant

but a building alongside the canal, which survives today, is thought to have provided stabling and feed for canal horses.⁸

The 'driftway' referred to by Lloyd we will here call 'the Island Ford' and the route which used it the 'Island Ford Route'. The route and its wider context is shown in Fig. 1, linking sources of limestone and coal on and beyond Mynydd Llangatwg with Tretower and Cwmdu – and quite possibly farther north. Tretower, it should be noted, with its castle (12th C) and court (early 14th C), would have been a settlement of greater significance in earlier times, making greater demands on local resources. It is possible, too, that the Roman fort (Vicus) at Pen-y-gaer, a little over a mile west of Tretower, also made use of this route. Here recent excavations have revealed industrial waste indicating a smithy utilising iron and coal, both conveniently available in the coal measures outcropping in the Beaufort area.⁹ Coal and lime especially played a key role in the rural economy until recent times, the former to provide domestic heating and cooking in addition to use in a range of small scale industry (wheel wrighting, blacksmithing etc), the lime being used for fertilising the fields, for making mortar, and rendering buildings. Fig. 2 shows in greater detail the area about the ford and the Spiteful Inn, as shown on the Llangattock tithe survey of 1845.



Plate 1. Going nowhere – Bridge 123. 'Spiteful Lane' Bridge in 1857 but today seemingly misnamed as 'Pen-y-bryn' Bridge. It now offers no road or field access (although does provide access to the towpath).

Photo: the author

There is one exception to the earlier comment that today all recollection of the Spiteful Inn seems to have been lost. Bridges along the canal all have names and these appear on the GEOprojects 2004 map of the canal¹⁰ and are also listed in a table in John Norris's current handbook to the canal,¹¹ the name for bridge 124 (Plate 1) being recorded as 'Spiteful Inn Bridge'. Indeed, records of the Brecknock Boat Company (set up in the early days of the canal's operation to conduct trading operations along the waterway) have references to the rental of a land holding, referred to as 'Spiteful Inn farm', presumably the river-side group of fields we have identified on the tithe map as those of the Spiteful Inn. The owner, of not only the Spiteful Inn land but also 'Dovenant' [Dyfnant] was John Powell of Brecon, a partner in the Clydach Ironworks, solicitor to the Canal Company and a partner in the Boat Company!¹² Both properties were listed together in the Brecknock Boat Company's accounts. The earliest record seen is for 1804 and the last 1815. Subsequent to that the Spiteful Inn land seems to have been acquired by Osborne Yeats of Llangattock Court, probably by purchase from Powell. It was probably at this time that Llwynon and the Spiteful Inn lands became linked, both in the ownership of Yeats. The sale might have occurred as early as 1816 as there is no mention of the Spiteful Inn lands in the Boat Company's records of December of that year or thereafter.¹³ The property eventually became incorporated into the Glanusk Estate.

The Location of the Spiteful Inn

Where exactly was the Spiteful Inn? The OS surveyor's drawing of 1814 at a scale of two inches to one mile (made in preparation for the first edition Ordnance Survey one inch to one mile map which did not appear until 1832) is helpful for it shows the pattern of roads of that time. It can be seen in Fig. 1, which is based on the surveyor's drawing, that to the west of Glanusk the turnpike road between Llangattock and Llangynidr took a route close to the river before climbing up over the canal at Dyfnant (Bridge 125 – note that bridge names and numbers are given on Fig. 2). Above Glanusk it ran along the riverwards edge of a terrace of fluvio-glacial deposits which narrows and ends at Dyfnant where a meander loop of the river forces the road to take a route higher up the valley side, crossing the Dyfnant by a well-constructed stone bridge.¹⁴ What is today called Pen-y-bryn lane, starts on the ridge crest at Penheolrhyn (where there is a typical walled funnel-shaped re-entrant at the mountain gate) and makes a steep descent of the flank of this spur of Llangattock mountain, in 1814 crossing the canal at Bridge 123, before continuing downwards to join the old valley road running along above the river bluff. This surely must be part of the route from the mountain described by Lloyd, indicated on Fig. 1 as the 'Island Ford route'. The Spiteful Inn was located near to the junction of that route and the old valley road. There is no clear indication of a building on the Surveyor's drawing – possibly the heavily-drawn representation of woodland

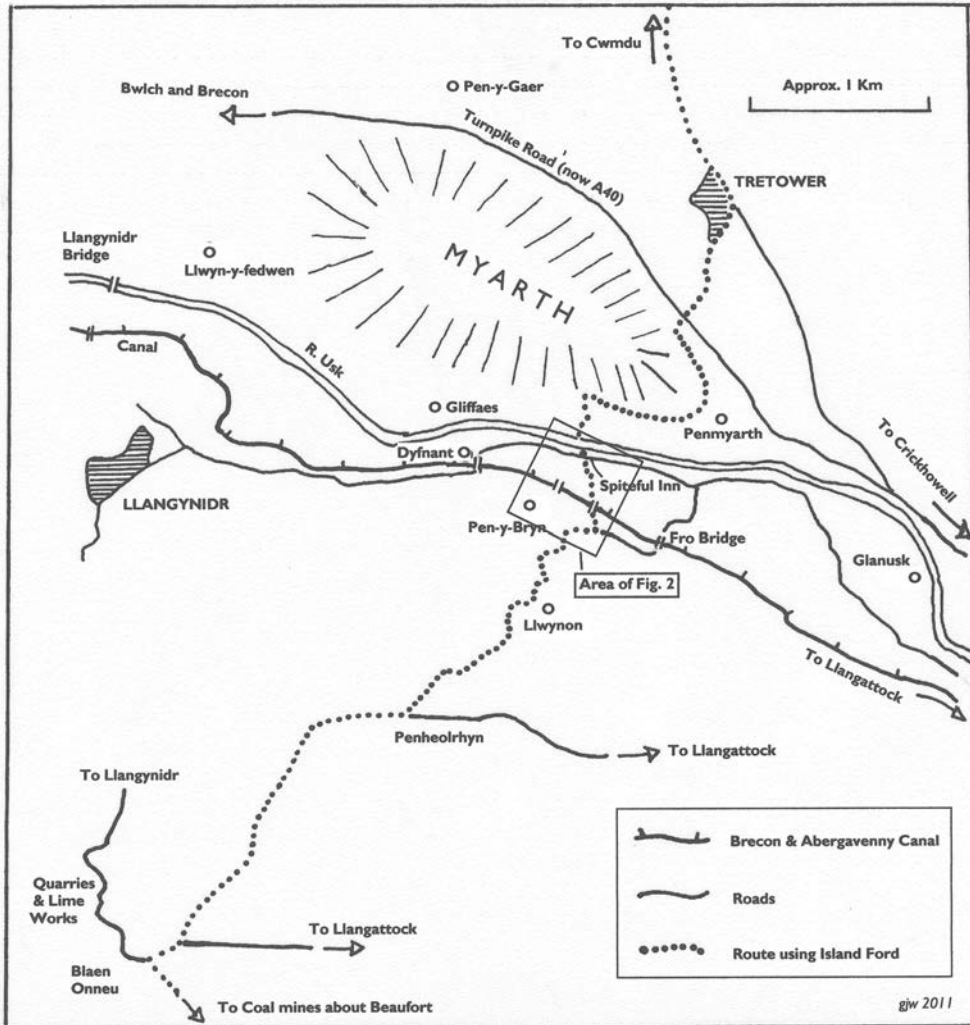


Fig. 1 The wider setting of the Spiteful Inn and the Island Ford route. The 1814 Ordnance Survey Surveyors' drawing has been used as the base for this map and shows selected roads as they were at that time.

between the river and old road obscures it. However, on the first edition (1832) of the Ordnance Survey one-inch map a solid black rectangle representing a building can be seen at this point (Fig. 3).

Pen-y-bryn lane is today tarred for only part of the way up the valley side, its continuation as a green lane to the mountain gate being used primarily for farm access to the common lands of Mynydd Llangatwg. Quarries on the Carboniferous Limestone outcropping on Llangatock escarpment and associated early lime



Plate 2 Blaen Onneu (SO158167). An 18th century waste landscape formed by early limestone quarrying and lime burning. 'Judging from the hummock-like nature of early spoil tips, dumping was normally by barrow, and occasionally as at Trevil and Blaen Onneu the single grooves cut by wheelbarrows can still be found' (J. van Laun, 2001, *Early Limestone Railways*, p. 8).

Photo: the author

kilns at Blaen Onneu (Plate 2)¹⁵ would have provided the lime sought by villages in the valley whilst coal was readily available from shallow outcrop workings along the north crop of the Coalfield in the Beaufort area across the mountain.

The continuation of Pen-y-bryn lane below the canal down to the river is not shown in the 1814 drawing (Fig. 2), which is perhaps not surprising as Lloyd suggests that the Island Ford was used before there was a stone bridge crossing of the river and the stone bridge at Llangynidr is said to have been built about 1701.¹⁶ However, as we shall see, traces of the track near the river are evident today and the O.S. 1st edition 25-inch map of 1889 shows it more completely, making a gradual descent to the river and the island ford from the suggested site of the inn.

Surprisingly there is no direct reference to this route in an exhaustive survey by Karl Martin of early routes between the Heads of the Valleys area and the Usk, although he has suggested that what seems to be the Island Ford ('the ford at Dyfnant') might have been used by drovers descending the valley side in what

is today a wooded area in the shallow valley of the Dyfnant stream, which takes on a funnel-shape as it approaches Dyfnant and the river.¹⁷ Of course, over the years a variety of routes were probably used to descend from the mountain to cross the Usk and it might well be that drovers favoured the route down the Dyfnant whereas drivers of mules, the most likely main form of transport on the Island Ford route, typically driven in procession, one behind another, would have preferred the Island Ford route, past Llwynon. We might note here that mule trains, which initially carried limestone, later timber, continued to be used

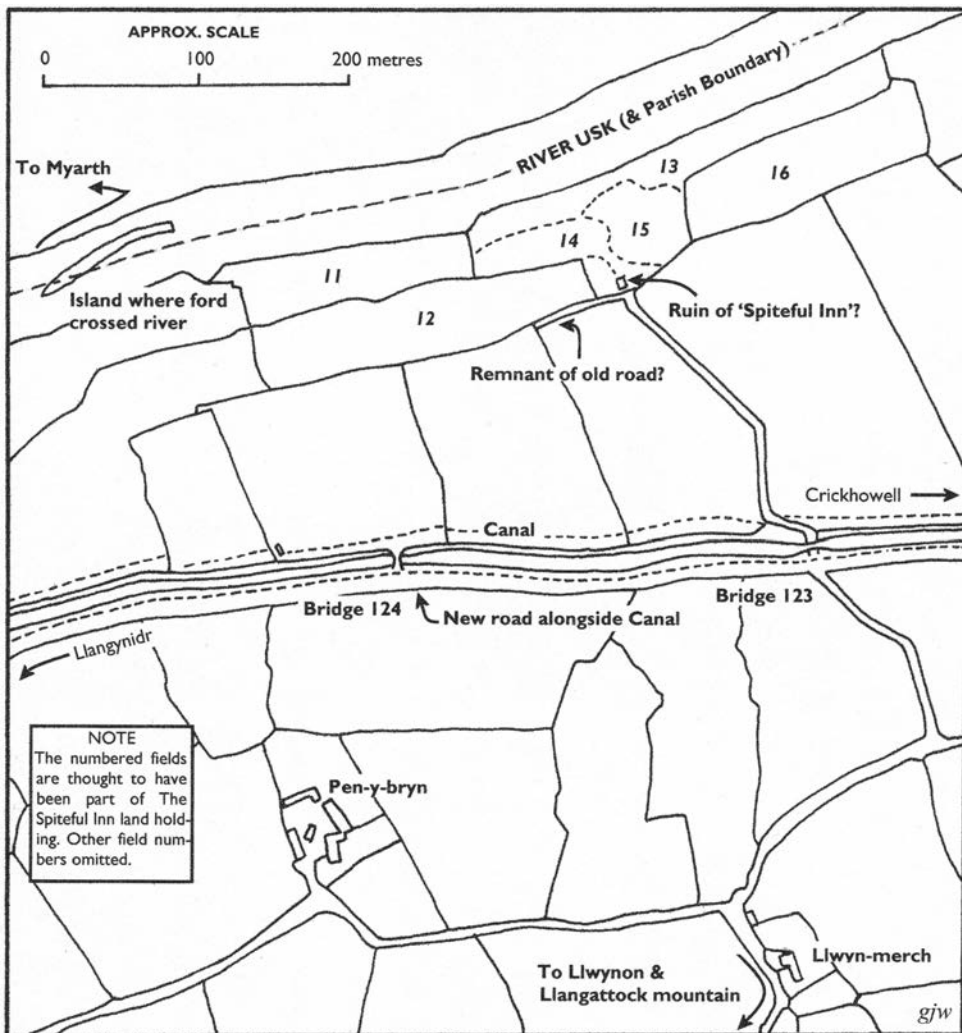


Fig. 2 Detail of the area about the Spiteful Inn as depicted on the Llangattock Tithe Map of 1845 (with annotation).

in the Llangattock area well into the 20th century, a mule train from the village being taken to North Wales by their owner in 1937 to feature in 'The Drum', a block-buster film of the day, set in India but filmed in Snowdonia.¹⁸

It is only the route passing Penheolrhyn which clearly links the Island Ford, the site of the inn and the (later) canal crossing at Bridge 123, and gives relatively easy access to a spur of the common land of Mynydd Llangatwg. It might be noted that at Penheolrhyn the cross-valley route also linked with another ancient route connecting Crickhowell with Merthyr and beyond via Mynydd Llangynidr and Milgatw (SO134117) in the upper Sirhowy valley to the north of Dukestown, Tredegar. At the end of the 18th century this was supplanted by the road which through traffic uses today, from Llangattock to Blaenonau and thence over the mountain to Beaufort, the Breconshire Turnpike Trustees reporting the completion of the road as far as Blaenonau in 1789.¹⁹

Let us now consider the valley route. The first edition one-inch map of 1832 (Fig. 3) indicates that by that time the road which ran close to the river had been re-routed, presumably with the encouragement of Joseph Bailey the Nantyglo



Fig. 3 Extract from the Cassini reproduction of the First Edition Ordnance Survey One-inch Map of 1832. A solid black rectangle is thought to indicate the Spiteful Inn, and can be seen at the junction of the road down from Bridge 123 on the canal and the old up-valley road. © Cassini Publishing Ltd and reproduced here by kind permission of the publishers. Maps of the whole country, at other scales and from other periods, are also available from www.cassinimaps.com.

ironmaster, who had bought the Glanusk lands in about 1825 and is likely to have been busy developing his new estate.²⁰ It was perhaps fortuitous that developments at Glanusk Park were taking place at the time when improvements to the turnpike road between Porthmawr (Crickhowell) through Llangattock and Llangynidr to Cross Oak beyond Talybont were also being carried out.²¹ The earlier route was replaced by a new road to approach the Fro bridge (No. 122) which in 1831 Canal company records show had been widened to a width of '30 feet over the parapet walls'.²² Beyond that bridge the new road ran along the south side of the canal to Dyfnant bridge (125), where it rejoined the earlier route, although most of the old roads between the canal and the river are still shown on the 1832 one-inch map.²³ The situation had changed by the time of the 1845 tithe map (see Fig. 2), which indicates only a short section of the old valley road remaining. Pen-y-bryn lane is, however, still shown extending below the canal to what is left of the old road and in enclosure 14 is an open rectangle indicating a structure of some sort, perhaps the remains of the inn, although the landuse description in the schedule ('brake') gives no indication of this. Strangely, the tithe map has no indication of a bridge where bridge 123 stands today, although there is a narrowing of the waterway as is normal for a bridge. However, earlier Canal Company plans²⁴ clearly show a bridge at this point, as indeed does the Ordnance Survey's drawing (1814) and first edition one-inch map (1832). The tithe map is at a very large scale (1: 2376, more than 26 inches to one mile) and presumably the work of surveyor Edward Davies was carefully carried out. The omission is inexplicable!

There is no indication of the remnants of any building at the presumed site of the inn on the first edition of the detailed Ordnance Survey 25 inch to one mile map of 1889. Pen-y-bryn lane no longer leads directly to bridge 123 but makes a junction with the re-routed valley road a short distance to the east of it. Bridge 123 seems now just a field access and a new field boundary below the canal, crossing the line of the old road, completes the re-landscaping of this section of the valley – which looks much as it does today.

The area of the Spiteful Inn and its environs today

Recent field examination of the area confirmed that no trace remained of the former road leading down from the canal bridge, and, disappointingly, that no trace could be found of any structure which might clearly be identified as a remnant of the Spiteful Inn. It was a surprise to find that most of the six enclosures identified from the tithe survey as associated with the Spiteful Inn are located on a tree-covered bluff dropping steeply to the river, with only two of them on reasonably level ground above it. Lloyd's account and map evidence suggest that the inn was most probably located just inside the boundary of enclosure 14 on the tithe survey where a short but quite well developed little re-entrant cuts back into the bluff. The inn must have stood at the crest of the

slope leading down into this little valley but today there is no clearly identifiable platform to pinpoint its exact location, although there is a concentration of stones. A track approaches it from the west, walled on one side, presumably once associated with the old valley road. Indications of a track cannot be identified in the valley immediately below the presumed site of the inn, although farther down, on the lower part of the river bluff west of the re-entrant, a clearly formed track can be identified, shown in Plate 3, first running along level then losing height as the the ford is approached (this track, as noted earlier, is clearly seen on the 1889 O.S. 25-inch map). It reaches river level at a point (shown by an 'X' on the map) where a natural weir crosses the river obliquely (formed by a low-angled south-westerly dipping bed of the Old Red Sandstone), breaking the flow and allowing an island to form – the only island in this part of the river and presumably that identified by Lloyd as the point where the river was forded (Plate 4). On the south side of the island the break in the river profile seemed at first to be boulder-formed, but on the north side a rock-formed ledge can clearly be seen, breaking the water flow. This combination of an island flanked on either side by shallow water over a rocky bed provided a suitable fording place.

On the northern bank a track, now incorporated into the private roads of the Glanusk estate, makes a zig-zag from the ford up to the lane on the Penmyarth side of the gateway to the grounds of Gliffaes Hotel. The route taken over Myarth Hill is less certain. Several 18th and 19th century large scale maps, including estate mapping of the Manor of Tretower for the Duke of Beaufort in 1760 which included the the eastern end of Myarth, the tithe map of the parish of Cwmdru of 1845, and the map accompanying the enclosure award of 1865 when the former comon on Myarth was enclosed, as well as the early smaller-scale O S maps, all show parts of what is clearly a through-way around the end of Myarth at a higher level than today's lane around the hill, descending to meet and cross the former Crickhowell – Brecon turnpike road (now the A40) at Heol Draw Cottage (SO 184206) and on into Tretower. This eastern end of Myarth once had a web of small tracks between small early encroachments – cottages with a garden or small field attached. That the continuity of this early route might have been broken where it passes through these cottage clusters, presumably after it had fallen into disuse, is not surprising. Fig. 1 shows the likely line of this route around the hill based on examination of these early maps.²⁵

The Origin of the Name 'Spiteful Inn'

Lloyd implies that the name is a corruption of the Welsh 'Ysbyty' (hostelry), giving the example of Llanspyddid which he claimed also had an *ysbyty* derivation. This has been rejected by modern place name study²⁶ and one might question whether an English word with such a direct meaning could result from the corruption of a well-known Welsh word. This was, of course, a predominantly Welsh-speaking area prior to the late 19th century.



Plate 3 Remains of the track through the trees, cut into the river bluff as it approaches the Island Ford. Note that the track is likely to have been wider as downslope soil movement would have significantly smoothed out its original profile. Photo: the author



Plate 4 The Island Ford from the south. Here the ford crosses to the downstream tip of the island. The north bank of the river can be seen top right, where the flow of water around to the north of the river can be seen merging with the flow from the bouldery southern channel (foreground). the southern channel (foreground). Photo: the author

Other examples of the name might be expected to throw light on its origin, and again the Google search engine proved useful, offering reference to a Spiteful Inn at 'Ffoothog in the parish of Cwmyoy in the County of Hereford'. This occurs in a transcription of the will of Mary Parry who died in 1833 at Ty Mawr on the west side of the Grwyne Fawr valley opposite Particio, now in Monmouthshire but at that time in Herefordshire. There is reference to the inn in McGrachen (1982) who questions the use of an English name in an area of otherwise wholly Welsh house names, and also in Eisel and Bennett's account of the inns of Hay on Wye and the Golden Valley,²⁷ which says that only ruins remain, high on the ridge between the Grwyne Fawr and the Llanthony valley, of 'the [former] Spiteful Inn, whose name . . . is said to have been given because when it opened another pub closed from lack of business'. This indicates a derivation comparable to that of Spiteful Row in Cwmcarn and one might wonder whether the explanation in the Llangattock example was similar.

Karl Martin²⁸ reports that in Merthyr Tydfil an inn properly called the Farmers Arms was locally called 'The Spite', commenting 'It is commonly thought that "The Spite" or "The Spiteful" inn was a name endowed on a premise that was perceived to have robbed another of its trade'. Another 'spiteful' incidence occurs in a contemporary account of the Chartist rising in the Pontypool area, in which there is reference to a mansion in the town known as 'Spiteful House', so called 'because it had been occupied by an irritable Irish gentleman named Stoughton, who was at loggerheads with his stepson, the late Mr Capel Hanbury Leigh, and used to play him tricks by turning off the water to his forge.'²⁹

Farther afield, Tavernspite in Pembrokeshire is a small village with a name of perhaps related origin. A brief discussion of the name on the BBC website³⁰ suggests it derives from the Welsh 'tafarn' (tavern, inn) and 'sbeit' (spite) ' . . . which seems to indicate a house or place which has been set up in contentious circumstances or to spite other public houses nearby. The place name could therefore refer to an unpleasant or unsavoury tavern. It is unlikely that this name derived from the Latin *hospitum* (lodging) as has been occasionally suggested.'

Transposition of Canal Bridge Names?

One peculiarity spotted in the course of this investigation concerns the names of canal bridges. At first it may not seem surprising that on maps of the canal in current use bridge 123, at the bottom of Pen-y-bryn lane should be called Pen-y-bryn bridge.³¹ It is surprising, however, that the next bridge up, number 124 below Pen-y-bryn farm, should bear the name 'Spiteful Inn bridge', for that bridge is an accommodation bridge, built to preserve access to fields separated from the farm by the construction of the canal, and seems never to have been used as a public road. It is surely that bridge which might be expected to bear the name of the farm? If this reasoning is correct, bridge 123, which once carried the route which led down to the Spiteful Inn, should be the Spiteful Inn Bridge.

Convinced that the names of these two bridges had been transposed, I consulted Ray Haydon, Archive Officer of the Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust, who was able to locate a report of 1857 made by John Kirk for the Committee of the Brecon & Abergavenny Canal on repair work carried out by a Richard Pruett,³² which appears to confirm that this had indeed taken place. At that time the bridges were numbered from Brecon, whereas bridge numbering today starts at Newport. The discrepancy between 1857 and today is evident in the list below:

CANAL BRIDGE NAMES AND NUMBERS

<i>1857, Kirk Report (Numbered from Brecon)</i>	<i>Current Usage (Numbered from Newport)</i>
35 Dwfynnant	125 Dyfnant Bridge
36 Penybryn	124 Spiteful Inn Bridge
37 Spiteful Lane	123 Pen-ybryn Bridge
38 Fro	122 Fro Bridge

The 1857 sequence of bridge names accords with the finding of this investigation, indicating that the routeway over today's bridge 123 once bore the name 'Spiteful Lane'. It might be suggested that at a point when memory of the former inn had faded, and with it the relevance of a particular bridge name, inadvertently the names of bridges 123 and 124 had been switched and the error had gone unnoticed. It is unfortunate that canal bridge names have not and do not appear on the detailed 25 inches to one mile Ordnance Survey maps (or at any other scale) and the use of this probably incorrect name in books published on the canal in recent years, and on the 2004 GEOproject map of the canal³³ has served to entrench the error.

In retrospect, what started as a search for a lost inn with a puzzling name has uncovered a 'lost' route linking Cwmdy and Tretower with sources of essential needs for the rural economy. It points clearly to use well before the industrial revolution brought the canal and tramroads, and probably back to the 12th century (when the Castle at Tretower was built) or earlier. It is probably one of a great number of such routeways would have enabled minerals from coalfield sources to be carried to agricultural communities in the Usk valley and perhaps the middle Wye, before tramroads and canals, and later railways and road transport, revolutionised transport patterns. In a small way it has also demonstrated landscape changes in the Usk valley brought about by canal construction and the investment of fortunes made by entrepreneurs in the industrial development of the north crop of the coalfield. Sadly, the explanation of the inn's intriguing name remains a mystery.

GEOFFREY J WILLIAMS

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I am particularly grateful to John Norris for discussion and sharing his documentation relating to the canal, and also to Ray Haydon, Karl Martin and Martin Redwood, all of whom have made useful comments on an early draft of this paper. Simon Walter advised on the digital cartography. Others who helped include Chris Hodges, Cliff Hendy, Ken Jones, Tom Maloney, colleagues at the Crickhowell District Archive Centre and the staff of Powys County Archives Office. The Glanus Estate readily allowed access to areas on both side of the river concerned in the investigation.

Notes

¹ AC3/2/19. The record includes also the tithe return for Llanelly and Llangenny, whose parishes were at that time linked together under the rector, Lord William Somerset.

² Frowen, F., 2007. 'Hall's Tramroad: Abercarn. Part One', *Archive; the Quarterly Journal for British Industrial and Transport History*, 55, 26–37.

³ However, Hall's grandson, also Benjamin Hall, later (1828) extended the tramroad, which by then had become a railway, along the route planned by Protheroe and through the same row of cottages, to join the Monmouthshire Railway at Crosskeys.

⁴ Only tenants were listed in the tithe returns and the owner of the land during the period of the surviving tithe returns (1828–32) is not known.

⁵ Lloyd, J., 1903, 1904. *Historical Memoranda of Breconshire*. Brecon. Available on: www.archive.org/historicalmemora01lloyuoft_djvu.txt. I am most grateful to Martin Redwood for first drawing this to my attention.

⁶ John Lloyd 'the Radical' (1833–1915). In addition to *Historical Memoranda of Breconshire* (1903, 1904), he is author of *The Great Forest of Brecknock* (1905) and *The Early History of the Old South Wales Iron Works* (1906). John Lloyd was the grandson of John Lloyd (1796–1818), a Captain with the East India Company who in later life was a partner with John Powell, Jeffreys Wilkins and John Peirce in setting up the Brecknock Boat Company. On the Lloyd family see Jones, K., 2007. 'Captain John Lloyd and Breconshire, 1796–1818', *Brycheiniog*, 39, 61–111.

⁷ Pantyfedwen cannot be located. Lloyd's reference to it being 'near Llangynidr' initially directed the search to the south side of the river in the area about that village. However, Martin Redwood has suggested that it might perhaps be associated with Llwyn-y-fedwen (SO157207) a farm not far from Llangynidr Bridge on the flank of the western end of Myarth – and where the 1st edition O.S. one-inch map indicates a 'Maen-hir' rendered as 'Standing stone' on modern maps. In this context, 'higher up' refers to the Usk valley, not the valley side. This seems a likely explanation but seems to be of little relevance to the island ford below Gliffaes, particularly as a short distance above Gliffaes there was another ford: from Llangynidr 'Cyffredin Lane [...] led to a ford across the River Usk and on via common land over the Myarth to Tretower' (Wibberley, M., Ed., 2000, *Shadows in a Landscape. Llangynidr, Evolution of a Community*, p. 55. Llangynidr Local History Society). Whereas this ford led into the village, the Island Ford provided a more direct access to the mountain.

⁸ Wibberley, op cit.

⁹ Jones, N. W. and Hankinson, R., 2012. Pen-y-gaer Roman Vicus, Cwmdy, Powys: Excavation and survey 2005–2012. Welshpool, The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, Report No. 1163 p. 11.

¹⁰ GEO projects (UK) Ltd., 2004. *Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal with the Crunlin Arm*. Map at a scale of 1:60,000. Reading.

¹¹ Norris, J., 2007. *The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal*. 5th ed., Hurstpierpoint, the author.

¹² Detailed notes on the Powell family also provided by John Norris. John Powell died in 1809.

On the history of the Brecknock Boat Company see Rattenbury, G., 1986. 'The Brecknock Boat Company', *Journal of the Railway & Canal Historical Society*, vol 28, 378–93.

¹³ Information from John Norris. Inventories of the Brecon Boat Company, 1811–1813, featuring 'Dovenant Farm' and 'Spiteful Inn Farm' are available at Powys County Archives (B/X/189/1/9–11).

¹⁴ This bridge, below the canal, which once carried the old valley road has been studied by Karl Martin (2013, 'Roads and tracks to the south of the river Usk between Crickhowell and Llangynidr' 2013, p. 7. Unpublished report in Crickhowell District Archive Centre). He reports that the structure of the bridge indicates extension upstream as a culvert to meet the needs of the canal builders.

¹⁵ The 1889 25-inch O S map shows four early limekilns at Blaenonneu in an area later covered by the huge quarry opened up in the 20th century by Richard Thomas & Baldwins to supply limestone to the Ebbw Vale steelworks. The early small-scale quarrying identified by John van Laun as 18th century (van Laun, J, 2001. *Early Limestone Railways*. The Newcomen Society, London), seen in Plate 2, is not shown on the map, probably because this area of small hollows and hummocks was considered unworthy of identification.

¹⁶ Wibberley, op cit, p. 74; Davies, Dewi, 1992. *Bridges of Breconshire*, p. 60. The author, Aberystwyth.

¹⁷ Martin, K. A., 2010. 'Tracks. Volume 1, Dowlais Top to the Usk. Update to 2011'. Unpublished report in Crickhowell District Archive Centre; pers. comm. A later report (Martin, 2013, op cit.) considers the tracks and fording points of the river between Llangynidr and Llangatock in greater detail.

¹⁸ Maggs, Roger, 'Clipity clopping along . . . mule train!', *Family Tree Magazine*, May 2003, 48–49.

¹⁹ Wibberley, op cit, p. 76.

²⁰ Davies T. E., 2009. 'Sir Joseph Bailey of Nantyglo Ironworks and Glanus Park', *Newsletter* No. 13, Crickhowell District Archive Centre, 6–9. The new roads in Glanus Park, including the new access to the Fro bridge, can clearly be distinguished on the 1832 one-inch map, suggesting alteration after the drawing had been completed. The new road on the south side of the canal between the Fro Bridge and Dyfnant is drawn in a noticeably unconventional way and also shows an incomplete junction at the Fro, suggesting an even later addition to the plate.

²¹ Wibberley, op cit, p. 77.

²² Lloyd's Mayberry Papers, National Library of Wales. Peter Prosser, mason of Crickhowell, had estimated for the work and the contract specified that it was 'to be widened to the breadth of 26 feet in the clear or 30 feet over the parapet walls at a cost of £38'. (Papers 1287 and 1300, vol 1, pp. 341 and 344, 1830.

²³ Lloyd's recollection of seeing the ruins of the Spiteful Inn as he travelled along the 'ancient' road along the valley seems to be at variance with the map evidence. It would be difficult to see any ruin on the site of the Spiteful Inn today from the road above the canal. However, it is possible that when the road was newly made and lacking the trees which line it today, particularly as it climbs up to the Fro bridge, visibility would have been better.

²⁴ 'The Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal. Plan No. XIV being Plan No VI above Clydach', B & A Plans Book, 1822'. (Information from John Norris).

²⁵ 'An Exact Plan of Part of the Cottages on Myarth Common . . .' drawn by Meredith Jones, for the Duke of Beaufort, 1760. Powys County Archives Office (BD/BM/E/14/113); Tithe Map for Llanfihangel Cwmdud, 1845; (Copies of both available at CDAC) and the map to accompany the Myarth Enclosure award of 1865. Powys County Archive Office (BD/BM/E/14/113).

²⁶ Morgan, R. & Powell, R. F. P., 1999. *A Study of Breconshire Place-Names*, p. 110. Llanwrst, Carreg Gwalch.

²⁷ McGrachan, I, 1982. 'Ancient ruined houses in the Ffwdog', *Gwent Local History*, 53, 3–9; and Eisel, J. & Bennett, F., 2005. *The Pubs of Hay-on-Wye and the Golden Valley*, p. 63. Almeley, Hereford, Logaston Press.

²⁸ Martin, K. A., 2010, 'The route of the Ogilby coach road from Pontsticill to Quakers Yard', p. 13. Unpublished MS in Crickhowell District Archive Centre.

²⁹ Greene, W. H., 1996. 'John Frost and the Chartist Rising, Part 2', *Gwent Family History Society Journal*, 43, 16–23.

³⁰ www.bbc.co.uk/wales/whatsinaname/sites.

³¹ Although use of the term 'Pen-y-bryn Lane' is probably recent, Norris (pers. comm.) has pointed out that bridges probably 'were not formally named but gradually acquired them, either obviously, as in Gilwern Bridge, or by the property or owner they served . . . or by their distinguishing features, as in Turn Bridge (where the towpath changed sides)'.

³² 'Report by John Kirk to the Committee of the Brecon & Abergavenny Canal'. Brecon, 28 January 1857. Available at the Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, Rogerstone, in the B & A Official Reports collection. This is the earliest comprehensive list of bridge names, which in official papers were generally referred to by their number (John Norris, pers comm.)

³³ *Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal with the Crumlin Arm. Map*, op cit.

A RAILWAY INHERITANCE: FAMILY MEMORIES OF THE BRECON & MERTHYR RAILWAY

My grandfather, John Jefferies de Winton, was a clergyman and it was natural that he should take an interest in railways, there being an unexplained affinity between them and 'The Cloth'. He was born at Maesderwen, Llanfrynach in 1875 and recalled travelling on Brunel's 'Broad Gauge' on his way to prep school at Worthing in the early 1880s. Indeed the Broad Gauge had only been abandoned in South Wales shortly beforehand (in 1872) and was to be finally laid to rest on the main line to Swindon and the West of England in May 1892. 'J.J de W' was a 'Great Western' man at heart but was for thirty years the vicar of Hay on Wye, which was then an outpost of the Midland Railway's empire. His family was closely associated with the construction of the Brecon & Merthyr Railway and one of the locomotives that pulled the first train on the opening day in 1863 was named 'De Winton' in recognition (Plate 1). His father William de Winton continued as Chairman of the company until his death in 1907; in the family the 'B and M' was a hallowed name and was spoken of with deep respect.

I was born in 1939 at the Rectory at Blandford St Mary in Dorset where my grandfather had his last living. Though far removed from the imbroglia of South Wales' competing railway systems, it was within earshot of the Somerset and Dorset Railway or 'Slow and Dirty' to the irreverent, which plied its bucolic cross country route between Bath and Bournemouth through stations whose names, such as Midsomer Norton or Charlton Marshall, sound like an imaginative marketing department's desire to conjure up a rural idyll. It was the first railway I came to know when, with my grandfather's help, I perched on the parapet of a nearby bridge while smoke wafted up from the Wartime 'Pines Express' roaring past below: but he could never explain satisfactorily to a perplexed child why it was that engines clearly marked 'LMS' on their tenders were to be seen passing through the Dorset countryside. Even I knew that the 'Big Four' had clear (or fairly clear) territorial boundaries.

In his later years my grandfather would reminisce and this, at times, would be upon railway matters. There were two events in particular, which were incorporated in the memoir that he later wrote in old age,¹ by then well into the 'Beeching era'.

From its opening in 1841, it had been the practice of the Great Western to stop all passenger trains at Swindon for a 'rest stop': a requirement of the contract with the privately-run refreshment room there. However, the practice ceased in September 1895 whilst my grandfather was out of the country. So, it happened that, on his way home to Brecon, he alighted to stretch his legs as usual and, to his consternation, the train departed without him! Things then happened: 'After a little altercation I demanded to see the station master and

asked why I hadn't been informed of the change . . . in the course of minutes I was put on the slow train to Gloucester where the staff met me and I was put on a train to Ledbury where the Birmingham and Hereford express was stopped and I was ushered into a 1st Class carriage. The Midland train to Brecon was held (at Hereford), I was again ushered across and, in a 1st Class compartment, arrived on time to be met by George Oldacre with the dog cart'.

The Brecon & Merthyr was graced by royalty on occasion, once when my grandfather was present, which he vividly recalled. His father as Chairman had to escort the Prince of Wales' royal train as it passed over the system from Tallylyn Junction to Merthyr and family tradition had it that not having a 'secretary', my grandfather assumed the role to add some status. He describes it thus:

It was in June 1896 that I came of age . . . the chief event I remember was the day before . . . Father and I drove over to Tallylyn Junction and were met by a number of all the chiefs of the Brecon & Merthyr Railway. We started along the track from the station platform to a point near where the Cambrian Railway joined the B & M. There was quite a crowd looking on. After waiting a little time a Cambrian train turned up with three ostrich feathers in front, the train consisting of several GWR saloon carriages. It pulled up just opposite my father's party and there was a good looking, rather elderly, bearded gentleman sitting at the window. My father bowed and took off his hat, which, of course, I did too. I was sent to the front of the train to see the Cambrian engine uncoupled and two B&M tank engines attached. I reported to my father and climbed into one of the coaches and set off down the long hill to Talybont. We didn't stop there (only time I ever knew not to do so) and we steamed up the Aber Valley (which is now mostly reservoir). It was a glorious scene and through the Torpantau tunnel at the top, which had had to be widened to give the necessary clearance. The chief engineer, etc., were relieved when we passed through. Needless to say all these Welsh bigwigs had plenty to say en route. My father, as chairman, was not in the compartment and so tongues were free. At Merthyr we drew up again outside the station and my father and I descended and stood on the track and I had to go to see the B&M engines uncoupled and the Taff engine attached. Again we bowed to the old gentleman, who now had his two daughters with him and the train moved off. HRH Prince of Wales had been to open the Elan Waterworks the previous day and spent the night in the Royal Train at Rhayader. Characteristic of my father, we walked to the platform at Merthyr with our phalanx of officials and went straight to the Booking Office and bought a 1st Class ticket for one (of course he had his pass for himself) back to Talybont where we were met. It was a great experience escorting the future King Edward VII.

But, graphic as this account is, we have a problem in that the Elan Valley dams were not opened until 21st July 1904,² by which time the Prince of Wales had ascended the throne and my grandfather was busy ministering to the needs of his parishioners in Hay. In any case, on this latter occasion, the royal train had come

from Swansea by the LNWR line to Builth Road and after the celebrations proceeded north to Welshpool never once venturing onto the 'B & M'.³ However, there is a record of the Prince of Wales passing through Central Wales on the 25th June 1896 when the Cambrian Railway conveyed him from Moat Lane Junction to Talgarth where he opened a sanatorium.⁴ He then appears to have continued his journey south over the B&M. This must be the occasion to which my grandfather is referring.

Almost exactly 60 years after my grandfather's encounter with the Prince of Wales it was my turn to be specially favoured – not by royalty but by the upper echelons of British Railways management. In July 1956 a relation of mine arranged for me to spend a few days in the company of the District Engineer at Neath, a Mr Henry. We met at Paddington where he had been on business. Here he ushered me into a first class compartment and flashed his pass at the ticket inspector to ease my passage on a third class ticket; a callow youth of sixteen I felt slightly out of my depth especially as I was dressed for a cycling tour of Wales with my bike in the guards van.

Now, because of his status, the District Engineer had his own inspection saloon in which he toured his empire. Though intended for his professional duties, with windows at both ends to inspect the track it was also fitted out sumptuously with a dining table and its own galley kitchen to provide necessary comforts. Coupled to a rather dirty tank engine this was to convey me on my first journey over the B&M.

The reason for the outing was as Mr Henry told me, to consider the possibility of routing more freight to and from The Midlands over the Mid Wales line in order to avoid congestion. This was an idea that had been a spur to the construction of the Mid Wales Railway in 1864⁵ and was in part an unsuccessful attempt to break the grip of the GWR and LNWR on the South Wales traffic. Sadly these lordly companies were invincible and their near monopoly remained, though, during the exigencies of the First World War, numerous coal trains known as 'Jellico Specials' were routed this way to feed the voracious appetite of the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow.⁶

Our party consisted of a number of 'officials' including the local manager in charge of timetables who had obviously come along for the ride (and lunch). We departed from Neath Riverside on a gloomy morning and wended our way up the Neath & Brecon passing Coelbren Junction in the murk. But as we gained the summit below the shoulder of Fan Gihirych and started our descent towards the Usk the sun broke through and a bright summer landscape was all about us. We paused to 'inspect' the bridge over the Usk at Sennybridge and following a brief stop at Brecon (Plate 2), where all was at peace, we continued our leisurely way to Talylyn Junction (Plate 3). Here we made a rendezvous with the District Engineer from Oswestry, who also had his own inspection saloon and had come by way of the Mid Wales line from Moat Lane Junction. It was an impressive

sight. As the two trains sat simmering in the sun, Mr Henry played host to his neighbour from Oswestry and lunch was taken in the Neath saloon with cutlery, plates and glasses emblazoned 'GWR' set on a white linen tablecloth.

Following luncheon we crossed to the Oswestry saloon and set off for Talybont and up the ferocious 'Seven mile bank' to Torpantau (Plate 4) venturing as far as Pontsticill Junction. Following a number of spectacular accidents on the 'bank' the B and M was irreverently referred to as the 'Breakneck and Murder Railway' in some quarters.

With the inspection complete we descended to Talylyn, where after farewells to the Oswestry party, we set off back to Neath. By now lunch and the warm summer afternoon were taking their toll and the timetable manager was dozing in one of the comfortable armchairs. Meanwhile I had jumped at the offer of a ride on the footplate of the engine. Such was my first encounter with the 'B and M'!

Alas Mr Henry's grand design came to nothing and within a few years the Beeching plan had bitten deep into the heart of the Welsh railway system. The Brecon & Merthyr, Neath & Brecon and Mid Wales railways all closed in 1962 and since then the coal and steel industries, which they served, have all but vanished too.

PETER JAMIESON

Notes

¹ My grandfather was long lived such that when he was born in 1875 major railways were still being constructed (the Midland Railway opened its Settle and Carlisle line in 1876) and he died in 1973 after the Beeching closures had taken their toll. A poignant reminder of the brevity of the Railway Age was that my grandfather was at school at Uppingham in Rutland in the early 1890s before the railway reached the town. By the time he was taken on a nostalgic trip to his school in old age, when he naturally visited the station, the railway had been closed and rails removed.

² Judge, C. W., *The Elan Valley Railway* (1987), Oakwood Press, p. 205.

³ Kidner, R. W., *The Mid-Wales Railway* (2003), Oakwood Press, p. 109.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 115.



Plate 1 B&M 'De Winton' which hauled the first train on the opening day.

(Image copyright Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery)



Plate 2 Brecon station with Neath District Inspector's train.

(Image copyright the author)



Plate 3 Tallylyn with Neath District Inspector's train.

(Image copyright the author)



Plate 4 Torpantau with Oswestry District Inspector's train.

(Image copyright the author)

THE UPPER HEPSTE VALLEY: A BRONZE AGE AND LATER LANDSCAPE

Introduction

The Afon Hepste rises on the southern slopes of Fan Fawr in the Brecon Beacons and flows southwards into the Afon Mellte, itself a tributary of the Afon Nedd. The moorland surrounding the upper reaches of the river is a landscape rich in evidence of multi-period activity, although it is the remains of prehistoric land-use and funerary practices which provides the principal interest.

An intensive archaeological and historic landscape field survey undertaken in the mid-1980s by the then National Archaeological Survey revealed the

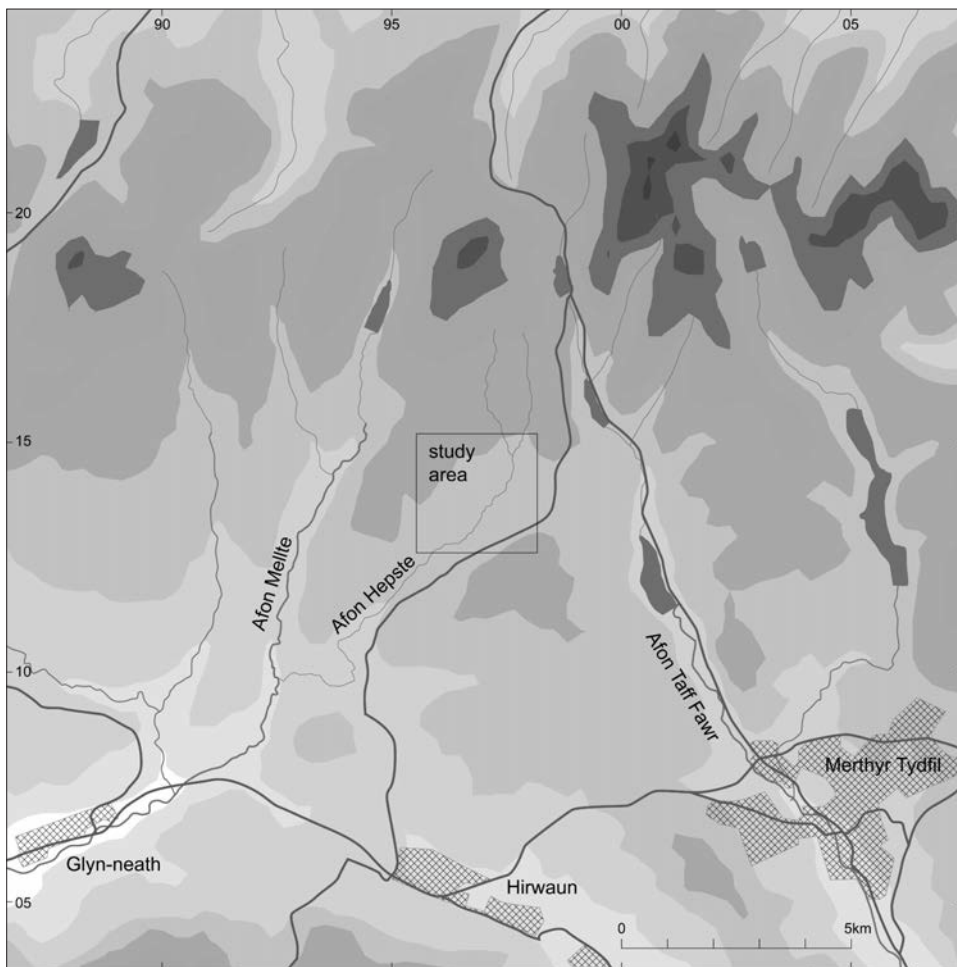


Fig. 1 The location of the study area in the upper Hepste valley

widespread survival of archaeological remains representing the recurrent, and at times intensive, occupation and exploitation of this area and its natural resources from the prehistoric period to the recent past. These remains include prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments, evidence of early agriculture and land allotment, and a range of settlements from the prehistoric and the medieval periods, the whole supplanted in parts by more recent remains of quarries, lime works and workings, and abandoned land intakes.

Further fieldwork was conducted in 2010 by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), with funding from Cadw. This included the field examination of remains relating to early field systems and settlement, first recorded during the 1980s, during which several previously unrecorded features were identified, together with a small-scale excavation designed to investigate a presumed Bronze Age burial cairn at Blaen Hepste. The opportunity was also taken to produce a detailed measured survey of a group of medieval platforms which form an integral part of this remarkable landscape.

The Hepste valley forms part of the East Fforest Fawr and Mynydd-y-glôg Historic Landscape, and more specifically the Mynydd y Garn character area.¹ This has been defined as an important area of early abandoned settlement and land-use which covers about 70 hectares, extending into the tributary stream valleys of the Nant Hepste-fechan and Afon y Waun and onto the sheltered east-facing slopes of Mynydd y Garn and Waun Tincer. These lower-lying traces of land-use and settlement appear to represent all-year-round settlement and agricultural activity during favourable climatic periods, and just beyond the modern limits of enclosure. Visible remains include numerous prehistoric round huts some of which are associated with irregular, rubble walls and banks, some forming curvilinear enclosures of 0.4 to 3 hectares in extent, and clusters of clearance cairns which appear to denote cultivation. In addition, there are groups of rectangular building platforms with the remains of stone-built long huts, clustered especially along the Afon Hepste stream and below the 380m contour, which probably represent settlement and land-use in the medieval to earlier post-medieval period.

Individual sites in the following text and accompanying illustrations are referred to by the italicised primary record number (PRN) assigned to them in the regional Historic Environment Record (HER), maintained by CPAT in Welshpool.

Prehistoric Burial Cairns

The stone-built burial cairns, which on analogous grounds are assumed to date from the Bronze Age, provide the only visible evidence for prehistoric burial and ritual practices in the Hepste valley. The cairns, around 30 of which have been identified, vary considerably in size with the largest measuring 18.5m in diameter and 1.2m high (839), while some are only 4m across. The smaller examples are difficult to distinguish from the many clearance cairns and there is often an element of doubt in their attribution as funerary monuments.

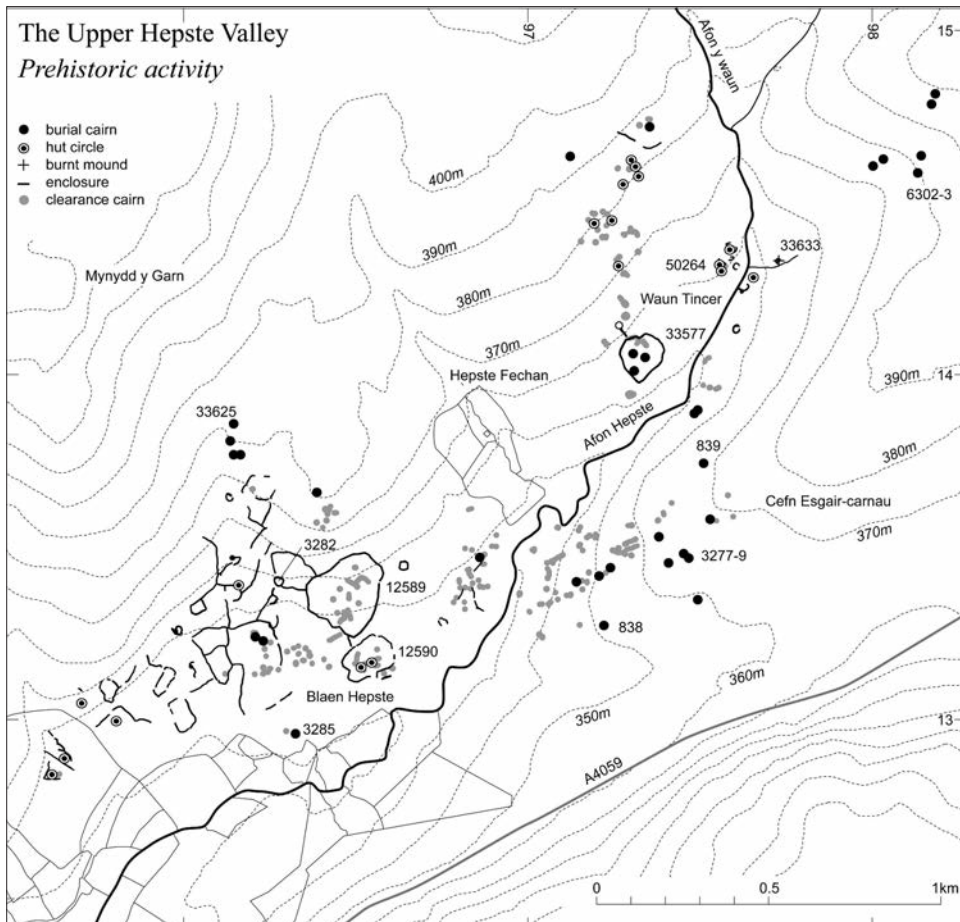


Fig. 2 Prehistoric activity

There are two notable concentrations of burial cairns, both on the broad ridge of Cefn Esgair-carnau. The main group comprises 13 cairns in an area around 400m across, which also includes a significant number of clearance cairns (Fig. 4). Although the cairns are scattered across the ridge, there are also several clusters of two or three cairns, which could perhaps have formed the burial places of family groups, as for example with the three prominent cairns (3277–9). The other grouping lies further to the north-east and comprises six cairns, of which two (6302–3) are noticeably larger at 10–12m in diameter, the remainder measuring 5–7m across. There is another apparent grouping on the north-west side of the valley, only one (33625) can be identified with any certainty as a burial cairn, while the other three cairns are all rather small and could relate to field clearance.



Fig. 3 One of the more prominent Bronze Age burial cairns on Cefn Esgair-carnau (838). The cairn, which measures 15m across and 0.8m high, is one of a group of six.

Photo: CPAT 3099-0001



Fig. 4 Blaen Hepste burial cairn under excavation in 2010. The outer bank is in the foreground, with the ditch behind and the end of the trench extending into the centre of the mound.

Photo: CPAT 3149-0062

It is significant that the majority of burial cairns are situated away from areas of settlement and agriculture. There are nevertheless several cairns which lie within rubble-walled enclosures, such as 33577. As already noted, some of the cairns are also in areas where clearance cairns are numerous, despite the lack of other evidence of agricultural activity such as field systems and enclosures.

Blaen Hepste excavation

A small-scale excavation was conducted during August 2010 to investigate an unusual earthwork which lies on a slight natural eminence at SN 9633 1296, at an altitude of around 324m OD. The site at Blaen Hepste (3285) is of a different form than the other cairns in the Hepste valley, which all appear as fairly simple mounds of stone, although some could have originally have had a kerb of larger stones around their perimeters. The cairn in question, however, consists of an outer bank of earth and stone up to 0.3m high and 2.0m wide, with an external diameter of 12.9m, and an internal ditch about 2m wide and 0.7m deep, surrounding a low central platform 5.5m in diameter (Figs 4–5). There is the suggestion of an original entrance or causeway on the eastern side where a break in the bank and ditch is flanked on one side by an edge-set stone. The bank sealed a peat deposit which was up to 50mm thick and extended beyond the bank to the north, where it merged with the peaty topsoil, clearly having been truncated by the ditch. Pollen and charcoal evidence from the peat suggests that by the time of the cairn's construction the surrounding landscape had changed from open hazel woodland to a mixture of heather and grass. There was also evidence to suggest a period of burning in the area before the construction of the monument; whether this was an attempt to clear the site or simply to manage the heather to improve grazing is uncertain.

A large pit in the centre which lacked any surviving skeletal remains, but did contain evidence consistent with the former presence of an inhumation which had affected the distribution of stones within the fill. A single radiocarbon date of 4550–4370 cal. BC (SUERC–32378) was obtained from hazel charcoal within the central pit; this is presumably residual material within the pit fill, but may indicate human activity within the area during the Mesolithic period. The form of the monument is unusual but not unique, and two similar sites are recorded at Carnau Gwynion, near Ystradfellte, around 4.2km to the west-north-west, perhaps indicating a regional variation in the general tradition of Bronze Age funerary and ritual monuments construction. Full details of the excavation are provided in the site archive and project report,² which have been deposited with the regional HER; the report on the palaeoenvironmental analysis and radiocarbon dating form an appendix to this article.

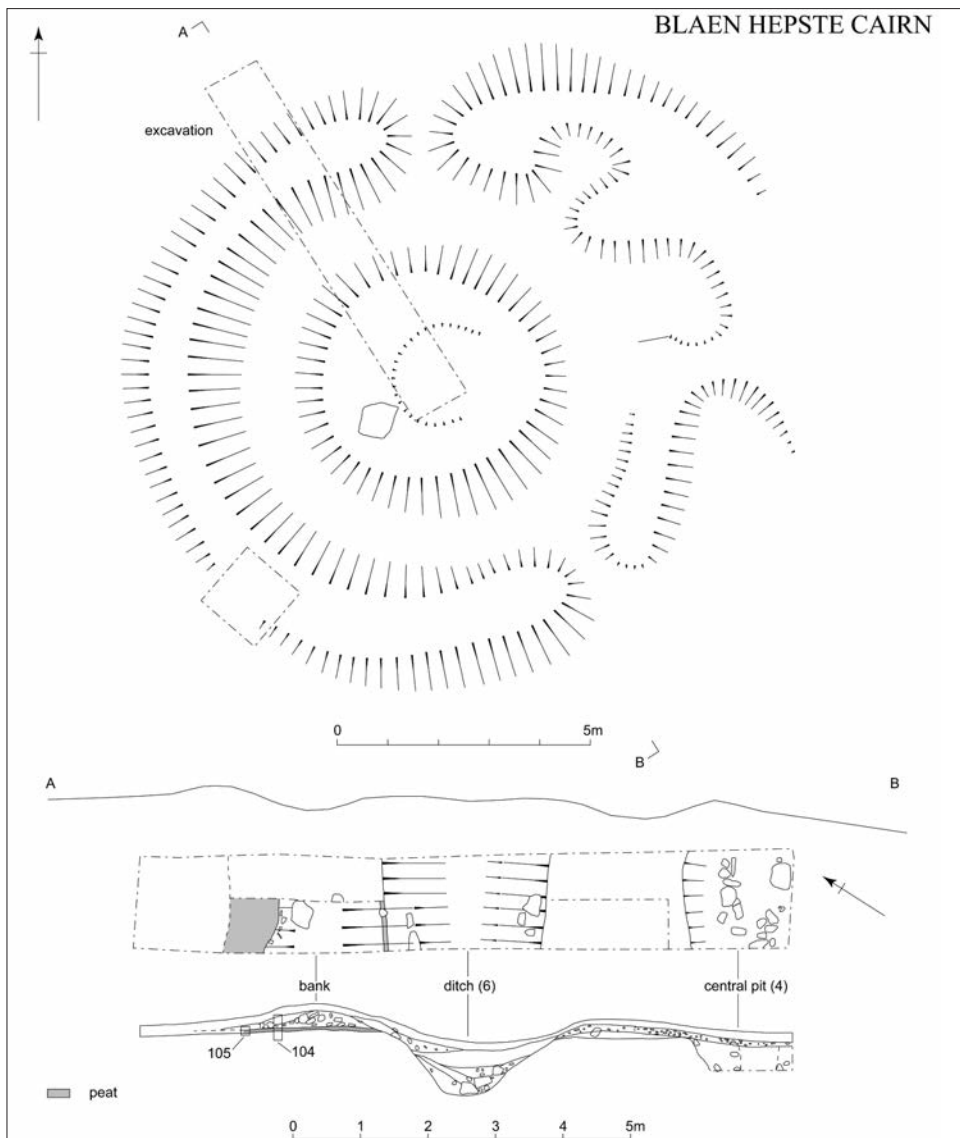


Fig. 5 Plan and section of the 2010 excavations at Blaen Hepste

Prehistoric Settlement and Land-use

An important area of early settlement and land-use has been identified in the upper valley of the Afon Hepste, extending into the tributary stream valleys of the Nant Hepste-fechan and Afon y Waun, as well as onto the sheltered east-facing slopes of Mynydd y Garn and Waun Tincer. The visible remains include hut circles, stock enclosures, abandoned field walls and clearance cairns. None of

these has so far been closely dated yet it seems likely that some at least date broadly to the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods. Others are also likely to be of medieval and post-medieval date.

There are around 20 presumed prehistoric hut circles which are currently known, appearing either singly or in small clusters and these may either indicate seasonal or all-year settlement during favourable climatic periods. These are sometimes associated with small stone-banked enclosures, where perhaps animals were corralled. The huts appear as circles of low, dry-stone walling, which measure between 4.5–10 metres in diameter, some of them having an obvious entrance.

In the area around Blaen Hepste one hut appears to be directly associated with a probable stock enclosure (3282), positioned immediately inside the latter's entrance and measuring perhaps 6m in diameter. There are also two hut circles within another enclosure (12590), but this is much larger and presumably had a different function. At Waun Tincer there are several groups of probable hut circles, including three conjoined huts (Fig. 2, 50264; Fig. 6) with a number of enclosures close by.

Another facet of early settlement and land-use is the presence of a burnt mound next to the Afon-y-waun, towards the head of the Hepste valley (33633). Burnt mounds, which evidence elsewhere suggests are likely to be Bronze Age in date, are represented by accumulations of burnt stones, ash and charcoal, usually sited next to a stream. Traditionally they have been thought to be associated with



Fig. 6 A group of three conjoining prehistoric hut circles at Waun Tincer (50264), each of which is around 5m in diameter. Other rubble walling in the area is likely to be part of an associated field system.

Photo: CPAT 3099-0023

cooking activities, although more recent theories suggest that some could have been used as a kind of sauna bath or even for brewing. Like the distribution of prehistoric burial and ritual sites these monuments appear to avoid areas of contemporary settlement and land-use which again suggests significant functional divisions within the landscape in the prehistoric period.

There are a number of enclosures which, by virtue of their size and form, have been classed as stock enclosures, perhaps the best example being Hepste Fechan Enclosure II (3282). The enclosure is sub-circular, measuring approximately 30m across and defined by a stone bank, which is generally 4m wide with an entrance gap on the north-west side. The interior of the site has been levelled into the natural slope and there is a probable hut just inside the entrance. The area has three other comparable enclosures (2301, 2289 and 12591).

As well as the smaller stock enclosures there is an extensive system of rubble field walls and banks, some of which combine to form larger enclosures, or perhaps more correctly enclosed fields, varying in size from 0.3ha to 3.5ha. The field system as a whole was clearly more extensive than the visible remains suggest and it is likely that stone was robbed for reuse in building the walls which surround the later, post-medieval fields, which lie beyond the unenclosed moorland land.

The field walls are all rather irregular, often with sinuous curves, and the fields which they form also lack any formal pattern. What is apparent, however, is that



Fig. 7 A large prehistoric stock enclosure (2298) on the slopes of Mynydd y Garn. The enclosure measures 21m by 16m and the rubble walls survive to a height of around 1.2m. Internally there are traces of internal subdivisions and a possible hut circle.

Photo: CPAT 3099-0045

the field system may have developed on a rather piecemeal basis. There are several instances where a wall or enclosure has been appended to an existing feature as, for example, with one of the larger enclosures near Blaen Hepste (12589) which has another enclosure (117907) adjoining the north-west side and a short length of wall on the south side which leads to a further enclosure (12590).

Some of the smaller prehistoric enclosures have seen more than one phase of activity, yet it is difficult to determine whether these are broadly contemporary or significantly later, perhaps indicating reuse of earlier structures during the medieval and post-medieval periods. One of the sites on Mynydd y Garn (2298), for example, is an irregular stock enclosure within which there are traces of internal subdivisions, and appended to the north-west side is a sub-rectangular, two-celled structure which appears to be considerably later. Another stock enclosure in the same area (12591) has the ruins of an irregular building or shelter built against the inside of the enclosure wall.

Other evidence for prehistoric and later land-use is provided by numerous clearance cairns, which often occur in extensive but loose clusters or cairnfields, and represent the collection of surface stone either for pasture improvement or to improve cultivated land. Most clearance cairns are simply small heaps of stone, perhaps 3–4m across, although some are more elongated. The enclosure and field walls will also have utilised stone cleared from the surrounding area. Clearance cairns exist both within some of the enclosed areas and also in areas with no obvious field systems, indicating that the exploitation of the Hepste valley for agriculture was widespread.

Medieval and post-medieval activity

Evidence for medieval settlement in the upper Hepste valley is, with one possible exception, concentrated in a small area on the north-west side of the river, near Hepste-fechan (Fig. 8). There are also a number of post-medieval buildings and structures, including the abandoned farmstead at Hepste-fechan, together with limestone quarries and kilns.

Medieval settlement

The medieval settlement at Hepste-fechan consists of three earthwork platforms, the rubble foundations of a building, and the vestigial remains of two other structures, all of which were surveyed in 2010 as part of the current study (Fig. 9). The platforms had all been cut into the slope, one of which also included a small fan of material to level up the front of the platform (93530), creating a flat area of around 9.5m by 7.5m on which a timber building would have stood. The original length of the other two platforms (12528–9) could not be determined. The rectangular building (12600) is 6.7m long and 4.3m wide, with rubble and earth walling which included some facing stone on the interior. The remains of

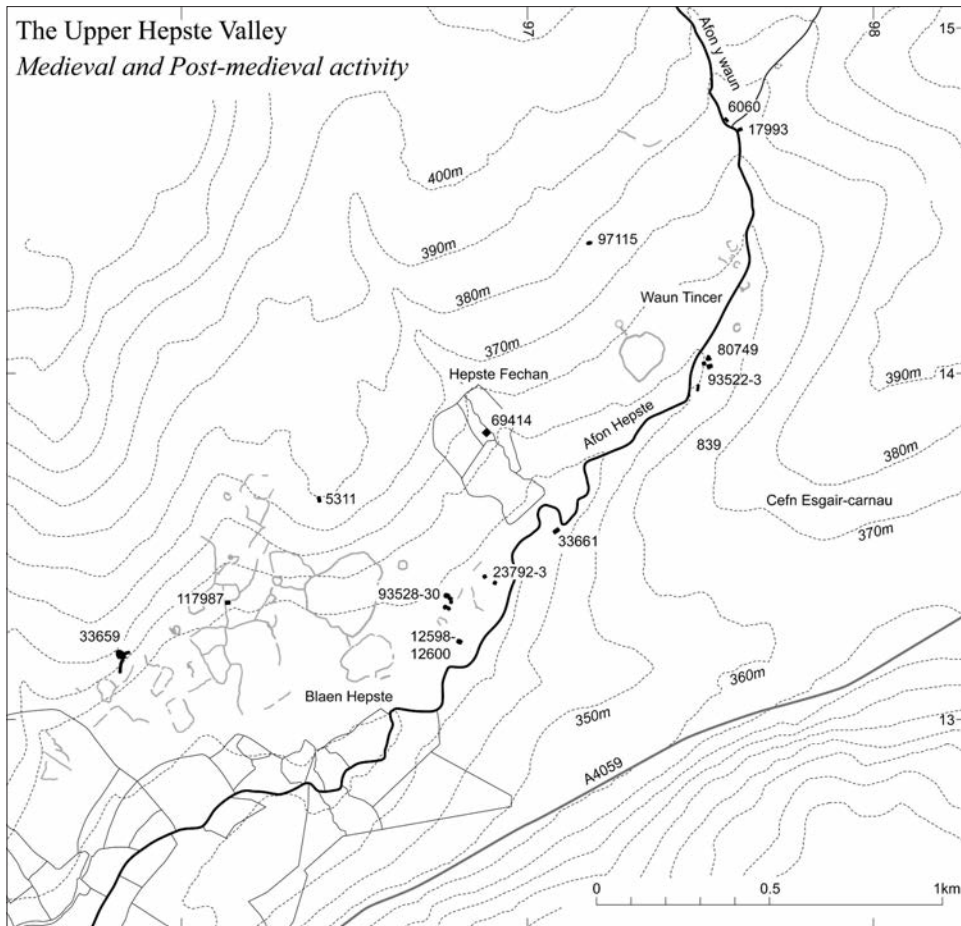


Fig. 8 Medieval and post-medieval activity

two other structures (12598–9) appear to be too small to have been houses and were, perhaps, ancillary buildings. The area to the north-east contains a number of clearance cairns of uncertain date, together with the earthwork remains of two possible structures which could be post-medieval in date (23792–3).

Some distance to the north-east, at Waun Tincer, an elongated cairn may be the remains of a long hut of medieval or later date with some suggestion of internal walling which has been obscured by collapse and field clearance.

Post-medieval settlement

Later settlement is largely focused on stream-side locations, the most northerly of which is on the eastern bank of Afon y Waun where there are the remains of two small rectangular buildings. The southern building (17993) measures 10m by

6.5m overall with an internal partition and is likely to have been the dwelling. The northern building (6060) is smaller and appears to have been open-sided, facing the stream.

Further south, on the east bank of the Afon Hepste and set amongst a limestone outcrop, are three ruined buildings, together with an associated enclosure and the ruined abutments of a bridge (80749 and 93522–3). On the same side of the stream, but further downstream, are the ruins of one or two longhouses and a third indeterminate structure. The more obvious longhouse (33661) has rubble walling defining a building measuring 11.5m by 4m internally, with traces of an internal partition. Immediately to the north-east are the vague ruins of a smaller rectangular structure (93524), possibly an outbuilding.

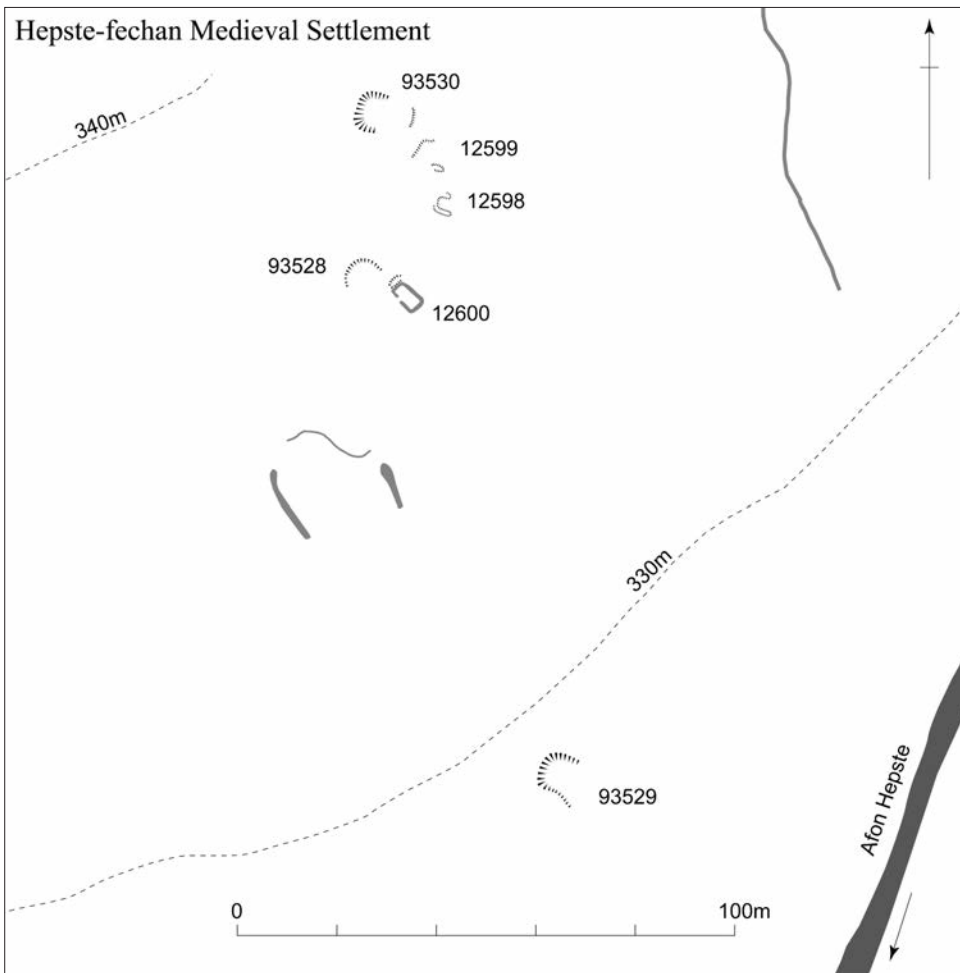


Fig. 9 The medieval settlement near Hepste-fechan

The north-eastern end of a second possible longhouse lies around 80m to the south-west (93525).

On the north-west slopes of the valley, away from the stream, are the ruins of a rectangular building (117897) divided into three rooms, the western end of which is formed by one of the meandering field walls that appears to be part of the prehistoric field system. However, there are suggestions that at least part of the field system, including some of the smaller enclosures, may have been reused in the post-medieval period and some of the walling may, therefore, have been rebuilt. This is particularly evident to the south-east of the building where the north-east corner of one of the large prehistoric enclosures, or fields (117905) appears to have been rebuilt and realigned using stone from an earlier enclosure (118053) which it now overlies. Overlooking the earlier field system and immediately to the south of a burial cairn (3521), are the foundations of rectangular building measuring 12m by 4.3m externally.



Fig. 10 Aerial view of the abandoned farmstead at Hepste-fechan showing the improved fields surrounded by dry-stone walls, with the farmstead itself alongside the small stream. The numerous depression to the left of view are sink holes which have developed in the limestone plateau.

Photo: CPAT 08-c-0033

Hepste-fechan

The most obvious feature that stands out in the landscape of the Hepste valley is the abandoned farmholding of Hepste-fechan, not so much the farmhouse itself but its surrounding intakes, which from a distance appear as an island of enclosure in the otherwise uninterrupted moorland (Fig. 10).

Hepste-fechan has every appearance of being an encroachment dwelling, constructed on the waste, as it would have been known to contemporaries, perhaps with, but possibly without, the consent of the lord of the manor and owner of the moors. What differentiated it from its nearest neighbours a little further down the Hepste valley was that it had been deliberately positioned to ensure there was open ground between it and the enclosed farm lands spreading up the valley as far as Tir-yn-onnen. It may even have originated as that legendary concept, the ty-unnos, the over-night house erected between dusk and dawn on which tradition, if not actuality, bestowed some protection from interference through squatters' rights (Silvester 2007). Whether this was the case we will never know and putting a date to the event is almost as difficult. What can be said is that Hepste-fechan was certainly in existence in 1780/1 when the Glamorgan surveyor, Edward Thomas, mapped the Breconshire estates of John Morgan of Tredegar House,³ and its appearance on his map in its final form, much as one sees it on modern large-scale maps, implies that it had been established as a small farmholding for several decades, perhaps longer.

To Edward Thomas the holding was known as Blaen Hebsta and its remoteness from the lower enclosed lands that he was accustomed to in his surveying was reinforced by a his note stating that 'the lands comprised in this map are situated NNE from Penderyn Church about 2½ miles'. The holding consisted of six conjoined fields or enclosures lying to either side of the Hepste fechan, (or 'fueltan' as Thomas termed it), and a seventh detached a short distance away beside the Hepste Brook. In total, Phillip Williams, the tenant at Blaen Hebsta, had a little over 17 acres in 1780. Possibly Thomas made a mistake with the name, for thirty years later (1813) when the Ordnance Survey first mapped the area they termed the farm Hepstefechan, and the label Blaen Hepste was attributed to a farm a kilometre down the valley.

The farm was approached by the track, still classed as a footpath, along the north side of the main valley following the contours up from Hepste Fawr, two and a half kilometres off to the south-west, and the lanes from the parish centre of Ystrafellte. This was not shown by Thomas, but a century later when the Ordnance Survey came to map the area in detail (1884), the track was shown, but unlike today it did not then curve across the Hepste to join the main road. At that date the farm was still in use and had precisely the same set of fields, though it can only have been a matter of a few years before one further enclosure, small in size, was appended at the northern corner of the holding. When it was abandoned, we have no idea, but we have been told that subsequently the

farmhouse may have been used as a shooting lodge by the Tredegar Estate. Its fields, however, are still used for grazing stock, and the wall that Edward Thomas referred to surrounding the property is still maintained.

Industrial sites

There are two disused limestone quarries on the slopes of Mynydd y Garn, one of which has the well preserved remains of a small stone-built limekiln (33659), while the other (33668) has associated earthworks which are suggestive of a limekiln. Small-scale lime burning would have been undertaken for use as an agricultural fertilizer.

Discussion

The landscape of prehistoric fields, enclosures and burial cairns which occupies the upper reaches of the Hepste valley is unique in Powys in terms of its extent and diversity. In most areas prehistoric activity is largely revealed by the presence of often numerous burial monuments and occasional ritual sites, such as stone circles or stone rows. There are other places in the Brecon Beacons where hut circles are evident and occasionally these may be associated with traces of field walls or enclosures, but these are not numerous and are on a smaller scale; Cwm Haffes and the upper Tawe valley, as well as Cwm Cadlan are notable examples.⁴ In the Hepste valley, however, a prehistoric landscape survives to a significant extent, with the remains of habitation and agriculture lying side by side with funerary sites.

Of course, the visible remains in themselves are not sufficient to determine any contemporaneity between the various elements within this prehistoric landscape. In particular, it is not possible to draw conclusions from the location of a number of burial cairns within field enclosures. There is, however, a general separation of burial cairns from areas which were obviously used for agriculture and this is perhaps best illustrated by the concentration of funerary sites on Cefn Esgair-carnau, a place where field walls and enclosures are generally absent. The presence of clearance cairns within this area does signify some farming activity, although these could have been simply the result of improvement for grazing.

The pattern of enclosures and fields provides some indication of development within the field system as a whole, however, and it is possible to identify a number of enclosures which were constructed at an early stage in the process and to which later elements were appended. Sadly, the visible remains are too fragmentary to permit a thorough analysis of the entire field system. The survival of prehistoric features varies according to their proximity to later, presumably post-medieval, activity; it is no coincidence that the vast majority of prehistoric remains lie on the unenclosed common land and that the level of survival increases with distance from the enclosed fields. The implication is that the earlier field walls were systematically robbed many centuries later to provide

walling stone for new enclosures. This is not universally the case, however, and in places there is evidence for the later reuse of some of the early enclosures, with the addition of small stone-built shelters and perhaps even the rebuilding of some sections of field walls.

Palaeoenvironmental evidence from the excavations at Blaen Hepste provide some indication of changes in the landscape during the prehistoric period. Residual charcoal from the central burial pit associated with the cairn reveals that there was oak and hazel woodland in the area during the Mesolithic, while pollen from peat sealed beneath the bank demonstrates a change to open hazel woodland sometime after the beginning of the Neolithic. By the time the cairn was constructed the landscape was dominated by a mixture of heather and grass which may well have provided grazing for livestock. It is a pattern of change noted at other sites in the uplands of South Wales.

While it is the prehistoric features in this landscape that are particularly prominent there are also important remains of later activity. Medieval settlement is apparent in the hut platforms and other structures concentrated in a relatively small area near Hepste-fechan. There is post-medieval settlement too, with three clusters of stream-side buildings, though whether these were occupied on a permanent or seasonal basis is uncertain; and there are the physical remnants of limestone quarrying and agricultural lime burning.

This is, therefore, a multi-period landscape which has evolved over perhaps four millennia, with recurring rather than continuous use, perhaps encouraged by periods of more favourable climatic conditions.

Acknowledgements

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NIGEL W JONES

APPENDIX

THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE FROM BLAEN HEPSTE
BURIAL CAIRNBy Astrid E. Caseldine, Catherine J. Griffiths and Roderick Bale⁵

During the excavations at the cairn samples were taken for pollen analysis, plant macrofossil analysis and charcoal identification with a view to ascertaining the environment contemporary with the construction of the cairn and, in particular, whether there was any evidence for human impact on the vegetation in the area. Samples for pollen analysis were taken through the bank and underlying buried soil, whilst bulk samples for plant macrofossil analysis were recovered from the ditch, the peat deposit sealed beneath the bank and the fill of a pit lying within the area of the central mound (see Fig. 5). Charcoal was identified from the pit.

The stratigraphies of the pollen columns were as follows:

Blaen Hepste 104

0–8cm Dark brown sandy silt.

8–13cm Dark reddish brown silty sand.

12–19cm Reddish brown fine sand.

19–23cm Compacted reddish brown stony fine sand.

23–24cm Black peaty silt.

24–29cm Dark greyish brown sandy silt, moderately stony.

29–30cm Reddish brown silt with occasional stones.

Blaen Hepste 105

0–6.5cm Dark brown fine sandy silt.

6.5–9cm Very dark brown peaty sandy silt.

9–10.5cm Dark greyish brown fine sandy silt with reddish-orange mottles, moderately stony.

*Pollen*Methods

Sub-samples were taken from the pollen columns and prepared following standard procedures,⁶ including acetolysis to remove cellulose and treatment with hydrofluoric acid and fine sieving to remove minerogenic material. *Lycopodium* spores were added as a marker and to enable pollen and charcoal concentrations to be calculated.⁷ Pollen and spores were identified using the keys in Moore *et al*⁸ and Andrew⁹ as well as a modern reference collection. A sum of 300 total land pollen grains was counted where concentrations were sufficiently high but where concentrations were low the count was based on 300 *Lycopodium* spores. The results are expressed as percentage total land pollen (TLP) for land pollen types, and other groups are expressed as percentage TLP plus the respective group. Microscopic charcoal was counted and is expressed as concentration data. Pollen nomenclature is modified from Moore *et al*¹⁰ using Bennett.¹¹ The diagrams were prepared using TILIA¹² and TGView.¹³ Stratigraphically constrained cluster

analysis using CONISS¹⁴ was used to aid zonation of the pollen diagrams. The results are presented in Fig. 11.

Results

Blaen Hepste 104

BH104.1 *Corylus avellana* type and Poaceae dominate. *Alnus* and *Quercus* values are low. Herb pollen is well represented, notably *Plantago lanceolata*, *Succisa* and *Stellaria holostea*. Ericaceae pollen increases in late zone. Spores, namely *Polypodium*, Pteropsida (monoete) indet. and *Pteridium*, are relatively frequent. Indeterminate values are c 5–15% TLP. Microscopic charcoal concentrations are low.

BH104.2 Ericaceae pollen increases markedly. *Corylus avellana* type and Poaceae values fall sharply. The range of herb taxa declines but *Plantago lanceolata* and *Succisa* remain frequent. Spores decrease. Microscopic charcoal concentrations are high.

BH104.3 Poaceae pollen values increase. Ericaceae pollen values are lower but still comparatively high. Arboreal values remain low. The range of herb taxa increases. Lactuceae and Rubiaceae values are higher. Spores remain low. Charcoal concentration values are lower.

BH104.4 Ericaceae values increase and Poaceae values fall. Herb taxa remain frequent, particularly *Plantago lanceolata*, *Potentilla* type and *Succisa*. Spores are scarce. Charcoal concentrations remain at a similar level.

Blaen Hepste 105

BH105.1 Poaceae and *Corylus avellana* type are the dominant taxa but Ericaceae is frequent. Herb taxa, especially Lactuceae, *Stellaria holostea*, *Plantago lanceolata* and *Potentilla* type, are quite well represented. Pteropsida (monoete) indet. and other spores are present in small but noticeable amounts. Microscopic charcoal concentrations are low.

BH105.2 Ericaceae values increase and *Corylus avellana* type pollen declines. Poaceae values are similar to previously and herb pollen slightly less frequent. Spores decrease. Charcoal concentration values increase slightly then peak sharply.

BH105.3 Ericaceae values decline and Poaceae values increase. Arboreal values are low. Herb taxa increase in frequency, notably *Plantago lanceolata*. Spores remains scarce. Charcoal concentrations values fall.

Discussion of the pollen results

Soil pollen records are complicated by the possibility of movement of pollen down the profile, biological re-working and differential pollen preservation. The pollen records from Blaen Hepste indicate a palaeosol with a later soil developing following construction of the bank. Although there may be some differential pollen preservation, the indeterminate pollen is not markedly greater in the lower levels nor are there significantly higher amounts of spores or pollen grains that are particularly resistant to

decay, such as Lactuceae (e.g. dandelion). Although the possibility of some movement of pollen down the profiles and differential pollen preservation cannot be totally excluded, comparison of the data with the thresholds of pollen assemblage properties which can indicate post-depositional biasing¹⁵ suggest that the palaeosol data is reliable.

Both records (BH104.1, BH105.1) initially suggest open hazel (*Corylus avellana*) woodland with grassland and heather and a range of weed species, including ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), buttercup (*Ranunculus*) type, devil's bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) and greater stitchwort (*Stellaria holostea*). Greater stitchwort is typical of woodland and shade, while devil's bit scabious can also be found in shady as well as open grassy places. Ferns (Pteropsida (monolete) indet.) and polypody (*Polypodium*) were also part of the flora. The herbaceous assemblage suggests pastoral farming was the main land use. The relatively frequent ribwort plantain pollen and scarce elm (*Ulmus*) pollen indicate the pollen records commenced post the 'elm decline', an event primarily attributed to disease and widely recorded in British pollen records c. 3800 cal BC.¹⁶ A decline in arboreal taxa, mainly hazel but also alder (*Alnus*), suggests clearance activity in the area. With the removal of woodland in the area greater stitchwort also disappears from the pollen records. An increase in heather moorland and increasingly acidic soils is suggested by increasing heather (Ericaceae) values (BH104.2, BH105.2) and the development of a peaty horizon above an eluvial (Ea) horizon. A peak in charcoal concentrations in both records immediately below the bank indicates local burning prior to its construction and an open moorland environment.

The remaining pollen records reflect later vegetation changes and soil development following deposition of the bank material, though may incorporate some older pollen. Both records indicate a continuation of open grass-heath communities in the area. A decline in heather and expansion in grassland (BH104.3, BH105.3) occurs before heather values begin to increase again and heather dominates locally (BH104.4). Later changes are not recorded.

Charred plant remains

Methods

The samples were processed using a flotation machine. The finest sieve mesh used to collect the flots was 250 µm and 500 µm to collect the residues. The samples were sorted and identified using a Wild M5 stereomicroscope. The remains were identified by comparison with modern reference material. The results are given in Table 1.

Results and discussion

The samples yielded only a few charred plant remains apart from wood charcoal. The central pit, assumed to have once contained a burial, produced hazel charcoal which gave a Mesolithic date of 4550–4370 cal BC and the charcoal is considered to be residual. Other plant remains from the same context included a hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) shell fragment and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) fruitstones. It is likely therefore that the other charred plant remains are also Mesolithic in date and that they reflect the burning of vegetation caused by either a natural fire or anthropogenic activity. Another possibility, although less likely, is that the charred remains represent the remains from a domestic fire in the area and represent wild plant foodstuffs that had been deliberately collected, or

The Upper Hepste valley: a Bronze age and later landscape

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collected incidentally along with wood for fuel. Bramble was also recorded from one of the ditch fills (samples 102, context 19) which was considered to be derived from the outer bank material, while the other (101) included a tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) type seed, possibly vetch/vetchling (cf. *Vicia/Lathyrus*) and grass (Poaceae) seeds and gorse (*Ulex* sp.) spine fragments. Tormentil and grasses were also recorded in the pollen records from the bank and palaeosol.

In keeping with the pollen evidence, heather remains were recovered from the buried peaty soil beneath the bank (sample 103, context 17) and suggest acidification of the soil and burning of the vegetation prior to construction of the cairn. Whether the burning indicates attempts at land management, primarily to increase browse, or whether the burning reflects activity associated with the construction of the cairn is uncertain.

Sample	100	101	102	103	Habitat
Context	22	19	19	17	Preference
Feature	Pit	Ditch	Ditch	Buried	
Sample size (litres)	4	6	6	Soil	
Sample size (litres)	13.5	9	2	8.5	
Taxa					
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L. (Hazel) – shell frags.	1	–	–	–	W
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i> (L.) Hull (Heather) stems	–	–	–	+	H, M, Wo, a, p, s,
cf. <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> (L.) Hull Flower heads	–	–	–	5	
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> L. agg. (Brambles)	5	–	–	–	D, G, W, o
<i>Rubus</i> sp. frags.	3	–	2	–	
<i>Potentilla erecta</i> typ (Tormentil)	–	1	–	–	G, H, M, R, a
cf. <i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> (Vetches/peas, vetchlings)	–	2	–	–	A, C, D, G, H, M, W (o)
<i>Ulex</i> sp. (Gorse) – spine frags.	–	2	–	–	G, H, Wo, p, s
cf. Poaceae Stem/rhizome frags.	–	1	–	8	D, G, H, M, R, W, d, o, w
Node	–	1	–	–	
cf. Bud	–	1	–	–	
Seeds indet.	–	–	1	3	
Charcoal	+	+	+	+	

Table 1 Charred plant remains from Blaen Hepste

Habitat preferences: A = arable & cultivated; D = disturbed ground, wasteland, rough ground; H = heaths; M = marshes, fens, bogs; R = road sides; W = woods, hedgerows, scrub; a = acid soils, calcifuge; d = dry; o = open ground; p = peaty soils; s = sandy soils; w = wet. + = present

*Charcoal Identification*Methods

A small amount of charcoal was randomly selected from the pit sample and fractured to produce clean sections (transverse, transverse longitudinal and radial longitudinal) to allow examination of the wood anatomy. A Leica DMR microscope with incident light source was used to identify the charcoal. Identification was by reference to standard texts.¹⁷

Results and discussion

The charcoal identified from the sample (100) from the pit (4) was largely oak (*Quercus* spp.), apart from one piece which was hazel (*Corylus avellana*). The hazel gave a radiocarbon date of 4550–4370 cal BC and the charcoal suggests oak-hazel woodland which is consistent with pollen records for this period.

Sample	100
Context	22
Feature	Pit 4
<i>Quercus</i> sp. (Oak)	24
<i>Corylus avellana</i> L. (Hazel)	1*
Total	25

Table 2 Charcoal identification from Blaen Hepste

*sample used for AMS dating

Palaeoenvironmental Discussion

The earliest evidence suggests oak-hazel woodland in the area during the later Mesolithic and charred remains indicate fire activity, either natural or humanly induced. Further evidence for fire events in the wider area during the Mesolithic, namely charcoal, has been recorded at a number of pollen sites in the Brecon Beacons including Waun-Fignen-Felen¹⁸ and Coed Taf.¹⁹ Increasing acidification of the soils and a change from open hazel woodland to a heather-grass-dominated landscape occurred prior to construction of the cairn some time after the beginning of the Neolithic. Pollen records from elsewhere in the uplands of south Wales also indicate a change from hazel woodland to heather-grass communities commencing as early as the Mesolithic on the higher summits,²⁰ though hazel woodland persisted at lower levels through into the Later Neolithic and Bronze Age. At Coed Taf it has been suggested that major human impact on the forest cover occurred in the Bronze Age and that by c.1250 cal. BC a predominantly open landscape had been established.²¹

Evidence from other cairn sites in south Wales include Pen-y-fan and Corn Du cairns on the summit of the Brecon Beacons where the pollen records from below the cairns and a nearby peat site suggest a contemporary environment of grass-heather communities and a reduction in extent, or proximity, of hazel woodland.²² Similarly a decline in hazel

and an expansion in grass-heath vegetation communities is recorded in the vicinity of the round barrow on the summit of Fan Foel, Mynydd Du,²³ while pollen evidence from beneath cairns at Nant Helen, Mynydd y Drum²⁴ indicate a much changed landscape dominated by heath or hazel scrub. Nearer to Blaen Hepste the pollen evidence from beneath a cairn at Nant-maden (SN 972106) also indicates the development of heathland prior to construction of the cairn.²⁵

The development of peaty soils at Blaen Hepste may reflect changing land-use practices and the effects of woodland clearance, burning activity and grazing pressure as well as climatic deterioration. Elsewhere in south Wales, as for example at Cefn Ffordd, Bronze Age activity appears to have resulted in peat initiation under a heather-dominated community, following woodland removal and stock grazing,²⁶ whereas at the moisture-shedding sites at Coed Taf blanket peat development did not occur until the Dark Ages though the pre-peat vegetation was *Callunetum*,²⁷ which is consistent with the evidence from Blaen Hepste.

Charred heather remains were recovered from buried soils at Fan Foel,²⁸ Corn Du and Pen y Fan,²⁹ comparable with Blaen Hepste, as well as in levels corresponding with the Bronze Age at various of the Waun Figen-Felen pollen sites where they were considered to reflect heather burning and the effects of sustained human pressure on the landscape.³⁰ Similarly the presence of microscopic charcoal and charred ericaceous remains below the cairns may represent deliberate burning of heathland as part of land management practices to increase browse for livestock or represent clearance of the sites prior to construction of the monuments. However, it is also possible that the use of fire to prepare the cairn sites may have had some ritual or symbolic significance.

Radiocarbon dating

A single sample of hazel charcoal from the central pit of the Blaen Hepste cairn was submitted to SUERC in East Kilbride from AMS dating, following identification of the charcoal by Astrid Caseldine. The calibrated age ranges are determined from the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program (OxCal3).

SUERC-32378

Context 22, fill of central burial pit

Material: charcoal, hazel

Conventional radiocarbon age: 5650±30 BP

Calibrated results at 68.2% probability:

4520–4450 BC

Calibrated results at 95.4% probability:

4550–4370 BC

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FORESTRY COMMISSION SOCIAL POLICY AS ILLUSTRATED BY BRECON (LATER BRYCHEINIOG) FOREST

This is an expansion of the latter part of the talk which I gave to the Brecknock Society on October 16th 2012 in Llaneglwys Village Hall on *The Welsh Lands of Dore Abbey*, and what became of them. The earlier part, the medieval history of the Cantref Selyf lands of Gwenddwr, Llaneglwys, and Trawscoed, given to Dore by Walter de Clifford in about 1170, is to be found in the 2013 *Journal of the Bromyard and District Local History Society*. The very interesting and significant contribution made by the Forestry Commission between 1924 and 1970 to the social fabric of the uplands of Britain has been little studied;¹ it so happens that Llaneglwys illustrates it extremely well.

Unlike Gwenddwr and, I believe, Trawscoed, Llaneglwys remained under one ownership after the dissolution of Dore abbey in 1535 right down to the twentieth century. By 'Llaneglwys' I mean the area which is still a detached portion of the ecclesiastical parish of Gwenddwr (it was transferred from the Gwenddwr to the Crickadarn ward of the Erwood community in or around 1974.) In 1926 it was in the ownership of Mrs Vaughan of The Skreen, across the river Wye from Erwood. She was known to be selling, and Evan Davies of Llaneglwys Uchaf borrowed the purchase price of his farm, £1 an acre, and went to her with the money in his pocket. But instead of buying the farm he found that he was now a tenant of the Forestry Commission.²

The Commission had come into existence in 1919, following the Acland Report of 1916, primarily to ensure a sufficient supply of home-grown timber. It is a *canard* that it was only concerned with timber for pit props and railway sleepers,³ but it is true that Mid and South Wales were natural areas for the Commission to look for their early purchases. They were near a declining industrial area which still had a significant need for timber; they were near areas of unemployment; there was much land significantly under-used and available for purchase. These factors continued to be relevant, and in some ways more so, after 1945. As a result, Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, and the counties to the north (Breconshire to a lesser extent because of the amount of land too high for afforestation) became remarkably tree covered.⁴

Integral to the Acland Report was the wider social concern. Large areas of upland Britain were 'waste' and depopulated, and trees would not only increase their productiveness but 'demanded a higher rural population' than sheep rearing. Direct profitability was not so important as 'the new values created – these values being expressed partly in terms of population and partly in terms of wealth.'⁵ This remained the philosophy to which the Commission subscribed for nearly fifty years, as when a high official wrote in 1946 of the employment created and the help of the Commission towards a solution of 'one of the most

baffling social problems of our time . . . to draw men and their families “back to the land” and to make the attraction permanent’, especially through the smallholding policy.⁶ This imaginative government initiative was devised by Lord Lovat, a member of the Acland Committee and later the first chairman of the Forestry Commission. It was the result of schemes he and other Scottish landlords like Sir John Stirling-Maxwell of Pollok had been cogitating for decades.⁷

So the Acland report recommended that a new state forestry agency should create smallholdings which ‘will be grouped together on the best land within or near the forests so as to economise labour in the working of the holdings . . . and to provide an ample supply of . . . labour for [forestry] work. Families settled on new holdings in forest areas will be a net addition to the resident rural population’.⁸

It took five years for the scheme to get going. It was eventually financed with money promised by the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Snowden, in 1923, and made available by Winston Churchill when he became the Conservative chancellor in 1924.⁹ (This was despite the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, having forbidden Churchill to fritter away money on lots of small romantic schemes.) It consisted of smallholdings of roughly 10 acres, known as Forest Workers’ Holdings. Originally the tenants were to be part time workers, giving 150 days each year to the forest. As elsewhere across upland Britain ‘In practice, of course, these small holdings attracted the cream of our men whom we were glad to employ full-time and who for their part wanted fulltime work, with only a few days off for hay-making and so forth’.¹⁰ Sometimes existing cottages were available for the workers in the new forests; more often new buildings were erected, as had been the practice in private forestry.¹¹

61 smallholdings were created in the first year, and the numbers climbed steadily to 1050 in 1930. The Depression of that year caused the rate of creation to slacken, but even so there were 1260 by 1936, when the ‘Special Areas’ programme for depressed regions, including South Wales, caused it to climb a little faster until the outbreak of war in 1939, by which time there were 1470 holdings across England, Wales, and Scotland.¹²

On the Eppynt there had been a story of rural depopulation long before the drastic removal of 53 households by the Ministry of Defence in 1940. The population of Builth Rural dropped inexorably from 4346 in 1901 to 3897 in 1931 and 2777 in 1971.¹³ There had been a shift from a mixture of pastoral and arable to the less labour intensive purely pastoral use.¹⁴ Over Breconshire 40.9% of males over 14 worked on the land in 1851, 35.7% in 1881, 23.9% in 1911.¹⁵ Upland areas like the Eppynt suffered proportionally worse in the great agricultural crisis of the later 19th century. Basically there was not enough work, and Breconshire was full of abandoned farmsteads and mortgaged properties. It was not necessarily the more able who had moved out; but many of the younger had.¹⁶ It was an obvious area for the Commission to look for land, and the large Crychan Forest was created at the west end of the Eppynt.

Forestry Commission social policy as illustrated by Brecon (later Brycheiniog) Forest 103

At the east end, from 1926 to 1931 the Forestry Commission built up a holding of 1867 acres in and around Llaneglwys to create the smaller Brecon Forest, buying the two farms of Llaneglwys Uchaf (682 acres) and Isaf (517 acres) in 1926, the smaller 'sheep walk' of Nant-y-mynach (287 acres) (these names referring back to the Dore holding)¹⁷ in 1928, and two mortgaged areas of rough grazing, Penwaun to the southeast (168 acres) in 1926 and Coygen to the southwest (213 acres) in 1931.¹⁸ Llaneglwys Isaf and Nant-y-mynach disappeared as independent entities, and Llaneglwys Uchaf and Coygen lost their rough grazing, Llaneglwys Uchaf becoming as said above a tenant farm of the Commission.

In the long run, as Evan Davies's son Peter told me in 1989, they 'did well out of it', buying Llaneglwys Uchaf in the seventies and first leasing and then buying the Llaneglwys Isaf fields which had not been planted with conifers, as well as

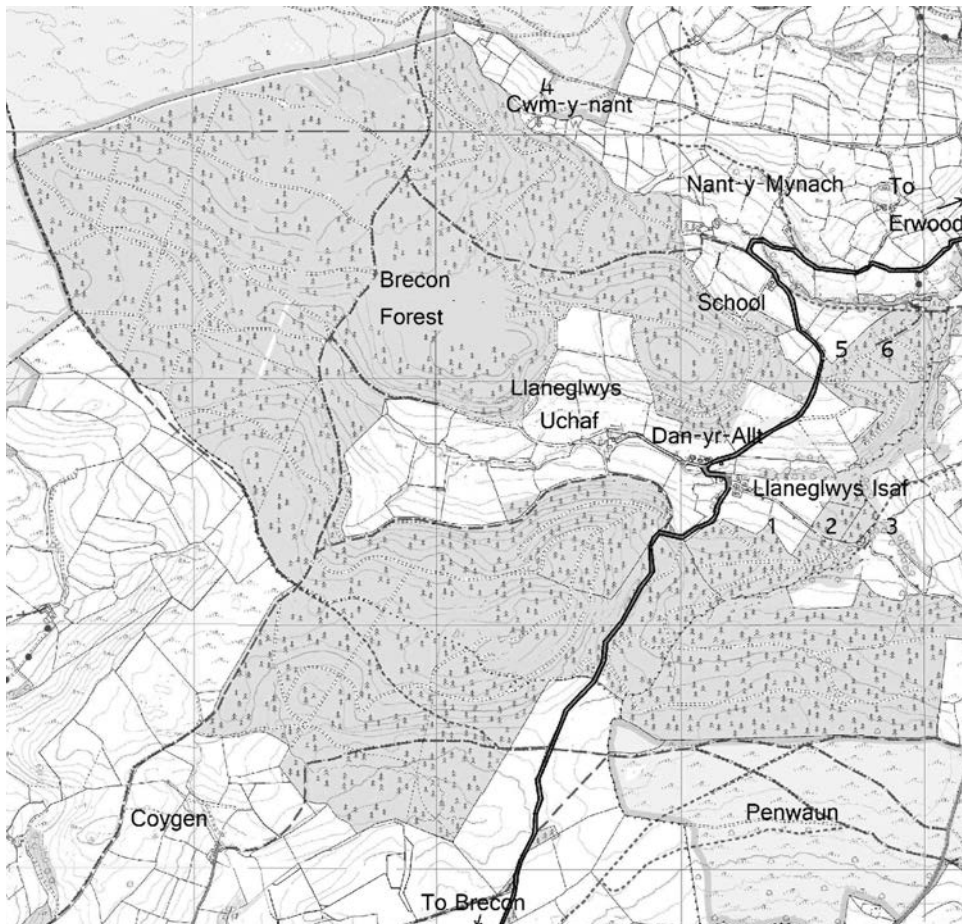


Fig. 1 Map showing Brecon forest and surrounding area. The numbers 1–6 refer to the approximate positions of the forest workers' holdings.

eventually more land east of the forest. So did two sons of forestry tenants: Jack Watkins eventually bought Nant-y-mynach which had been his father's holding, Geoff Lewis bought it from him and added some fields from his father's smallholding to make a tidy acreage on which to breed Welsh cob ponies.

The Commissioners were good landlords; the rent was low and they never interfered. There were other advantages, like fencing help, and when the trees became too large to be damaged by sheep the grazing on the forest rides was rented to the farmer. Shooting rights were preserved for 21 years, and made use of by local landowners, who were given lunch at Llaneglwys Uchaf, the local boys earning pennies holding the horses while the girls were trained in waiting on the gentry. As for controlling foxes, the forestry workers were useful in augmenting the local farmers' annual shoot.

The forest was imaginatively laid out, the Commission having been much criticised for planting insensitive rectangular blocks elsewhere during its first decade. What was planted was mainly the rough grazing, with some of the Llaneglwys Isaf fields. The forest took an attractive irregular shape, some fields being left to rise above trees to the horizon of the slopes. Beech rides intended both for amenity and as fire precaution varied the several kinds of conifer planted (mostly larch and spruce, with some pine and fir). Some rowans, thorns, birch, sycamores and oaks survived. In 1931 members of the Permanent Committee of the International Union of Forest Research Organisation visited to see how a modern conifer plantation could be made attractive. They planted six Sitka spruce on the pitch up from the hamlet to commemorate the event¹⁹ – these were 'not to be felled' but in fact were, fifty years later. Over the years, regeneration especially of the beech has colonised small areas where timber has been felled.

The social aims of the commission, the repopulation of the deserted valleys of upland Britain, were carried out in Llaneglwys as elsewhere before the war of 1939–45 by the smallholdings policy, and after the war by the forest villages policy. Six bungalows of a standard type ('Deepdene') were soon built for the forestry tenants, each with a holding of about 10 acres. Evan Davies put up the builders with typical hospitality: a Forestry Commission historian wrote that he 'not only looked after the men's comfort and fed them like fighting cocks, but had his own brewing plant and made free with such beer as was never served across the counter of any public house'.²⁰ One of these bungalows was the rebuilt Cwm-y-nant; this was particularly favoured because although it had only about 8 acres, the hill rights on the Eppynt allowed Ted Smith, the holder for many years, to have 'a tidy little flock' of 30 to 40 sheep, a great help as he had 8 or 9 children. Two of the other bungalows were on the former lands of Nant-y-mynach, the other three near Llaneglwys Isaf and on former land of that farm. Nant-y-mynach itself was given an unusually large holding of 26 acres so that the tenant could provide at least one horse for 'tushing', extracting timber from the forest, and later when the trees became mature and too heavy, a tractor



Fig. 2 Cwm-y-nant bungalow: One of six post-war bungalows which were built for tenants to operate as 'Forest Workers' Holdings': each had about 10 acres of land.

for the purpose. With the grazing rights for a holding that size, it supported 70 ewes. The other holdings also had various rights of grazing on the commons outside the forest.

All the former tenants I spoke to in 1989 agreed that the holdings were eagerly sought after, being cheaper than the county council holdings (they were originally only £15 a year and still only £18 after the war). The pension assured was another attraction. Emlyn Jones, who had been a farm worker on one of the Eppynt farms expropriated in 1940 by the Ministry of Defence, told me that the holdings were never vacant for any time. 'Valley folk' had no chance to take them on. Similarly Dewi Price said that he would not have had a bit of land otherwise; he called it 'hobby farming', but said that it 'showed a profit'. Even as full time foresters it was useful to have a few ducks and a cow and sell butter in Brecon market. At first they went in by pony and trap; then in a bus which ran on Fridays first to the forest edge and eventually to Llaneglwys.

The head forester lived at Llaneglwys Isaf (Lower Llaneglwys) Farm, and single woodmen were billeted there. A small forestry office was erected opposite, and a workshop down the 'parish road' leading to Llandefalle.

The demographic consequences of the creation of Brecon forest and the smallholdings are shown by the increase in population of Gwenddwr: 304 in 1921, 346 in 1931.²¹ As a result, the Commission started a school in Llaneglwys in 1931, which was taken over by the Breconshire County Council and given a

fine new building a few years later, with schoolmistress's house, on the Nant-y-mynach lands. This was a boon for the farmers, the road to Crickadarn school, 3 miles away, being very bad until after the war and 'a longish old walk' in the words of Peter Davies.²² The peak number of pupils, in 1938, was 32. It took them to the school leaving age of 14, and thus like many rural schools was hard hit by the 1944 Education Act which took away to secondary schools in the towns those over 11. Another advantage for the area was that Ramah Baptist chapel, in the dingle just off the Crickadarn road, was strengthened by the arrival of the forestry families.

In 1931, there were still those concerned about holdings for ex-servicemen from the Great War, and a parliamentary question elicited that there were some crown lands in Scotland which had been passed to the Forestry Commission for this purpose.²³ In 1943 a Scottish M.P. could still say that 'The idea of forest holdings with good conditions for the holders justifies to some extent the acquisition of a small amount of arable land in connection with these forest holdings, and I would not quarrel with the Commissioners in their aim to provide a composite living for these men in the spare-time cultivation of arable land and fully paid employment in afforestation at the same time. I think it is necessary to provide such ancillary occupations'.²⁴

An approving article in a religious newspaper of 1937 showed that not all holdings were 10 acres: 'Each forest has a number of small holdings: half an acre of ground and a good modern house (2 bedrooms, one living room, bathroom, scullery, and loft) which are let to the workers at £9 a year.²⁵ Rates (chargeable to one eighth of normal for small holdings) may be as low as 3s. 4d. a year'. The newspaper commented that 'housing and wages are material comforts, and it is surely the change of mental outlook which the forestry work conditions, which is most important'.²⁶

After the Second World War, several smallholdings planned but not brought into being were finished, and the peak number of holdings across the country was 1511 in 1948. But Forestry Commission policy then changed. The smallholdings had not been of *economic* benefit to the Commission, and though they 'were adequate during the early years of State forest development, when only a small nucleus of men was needed to plant and tend each forest . . . expanding programs of afforestation, new methods of fire protection, and above all, the greatly increased volume of utilization work that results as soon as the young woods reach the thinning stage, have made it essential, in most of the larger forests, to concentrate the building of new houses in villages or small community groups'.²⁷ So the policy of 'forest villages' replaced that of the smallholdings, as Britain embarked upon a massive programme of afforestation in the years following the Second World War.²⁸

Already by 1951 there were 1686 cottages, without agricultural land but in many cases with decent cottage gardens. In that year Llaneglwys was converted

into a more nucleated hamlet by the building of Dan-yr-Allt, three pairs of semi-detached houses. These were built in a far sunnier position than any of the bungalows. A photograph of them from the hill opposite was used by Ryle as a good example of recent building, with the caption: 'Mosaic of hill farm and forest with new hamlet of woodmen's cottages'. Finally came the head forester's house next to them in 1961. The clerk of the works insisted on such a high standard for Dan-yr-Allt (allegedly to Admiralty specifications) that the builders are said to have gone bankrupt. To improve the water supply for the larger number of properties, a hydram (hydraulic ram) was installed in 1951.

Other improvements had also been made in Llaneglwys: in 1947 the ford over the Scithwen was bridged and the road tarred; the needs of taking away the first thinnings of timber spurred the upgrades to the road. In 1950 a 'Social Centre', a Nissen hut, was erected, a great boon to the farming families as well as to the woodmen and theirs. The hamlet even acquired a telephone kiosk in 1957.

Across the land, the peak year for the cottages was 1955, by which time there were 2638 of these tenancies; but the number of smallholdings had already begun to decline as the Commission started selling them: only a little over 1200 were left. The *total* number of residential properties, however, was still rising, because of the building of detached houses, with garages, for the senior foresters. The peak year for these was 1967, when there were 1100 overall. The one in Llaneglwys, next to Dan-yr-Allt, was built in 1961, by which time electricity had arrived (1960). The harsh winter of 1962–3 caused improvements to be made to the Dan-yr-Allt houses, where the outbuilding opening from the kitchen of scullery, store room (for calor gas, wood, and coal), and WC had originally had no back door. In 1964 an M.P. was concerned that some of the holdings were still rather primitive, and elicited the reply that 'The percentage with water laid on is 95, with electricity 76 and with indoor sanitation 83 . . . The average rent paid by Forestry Commission workers for their holdings in the last three years was £37 a year. The Commission spent an average of £53 a year per holding on repairs and the average amount spent in a year on capital improvements was about £50 per holding'.²⁹

Despite this laudable aim to spend money on modernising, it had been 1955 when the Forestry Commission began to feel financial restrictions from central government.³⁰ The largest total number of residential properties was 1958, when the aggregate of the three categories of smallholdings, cottages, and foresters' houses, was 4627. But with the sales already under way of the first two categories, by 1963 the aggregate had fallen to about 4300. In Llaneglwys the trend was represented, not by a sale, but by the leasing outside the Commission workforce that year of Cwm-y-nant. This was followed in 1967 by the leasing of Llaneglwys Isaf farmhouse as a school outdoor centre.

In 1969 the Commission signalled a new direction: 'Technical advances in working methods and forest management . . . have enabled the Commission to

reduce its labour force considerably'.³¹ New forestry tools, chainsaws, mechanical harvesters, made a large workforce on site no longer so necessary. Increasingly contractors were used who had their own transport. Wives could drive and wanted jobs in towns, not the occasional work in the forest which Norah Bevan was the last to do in Llaneglwys in the eighties.

But the policy of 'forest villages' was coming under scrutiny from another direction. In 1970 a 'Sociological Survey of [Scottish] Border forest villages' was instigated. In 1972 it identified social concerns, especially in the Kielder Forest, the largest Forestry Commission scheme in England. In many areas, the villages had just not developed as planned. Further north from Llaneglwys, in Montgomeryshire, a large village, Llwyn-y-gog, was planned for Hafren Forest. Edlin had written enthusiastically about it in 1952: 'The houses were occupied as soon as they were ready; thirteen of the tenants are Welshmen, nearly all being Welsh-speaking, while the remaining seven have come from England. With their wives and children, they already make up a community of over seventy people; future extensions are likely to raise this figure to over 300'.³² Nothing like this number was ever reached; seventy was probably the maximum. It was impossible to find willing workers prepared to come to such a remote location, especially from the urban areas with high unemployment from where they were sought.

Such villages had been intended to have all the amenities that were then normal for villages. Tirabad, an expanded old settlement in Crychan Forest, acquired from the Commission a village hall, a school, and a shop. In the changing expectations of the 1970s, this was not enough.

In Scotland 'the remoter settlements have not always proved attractive because the services are too limited and poor or non-existent transport makes it difficult for younger members of families to attend school or employment outside the forest service. The empty houses at Dalavalich and Polloch (Lochaber), a phenomenon that arises partly from the decline in employment in forestry as a whole, underline the failure of the Commission's idealistic drive to repopulate the empty glens'.³³

But there was yet another direction from which the Commission's social policy was being undermined: the 'bottom line'. In 1972 the Heath administration received a 'Forestry Policy' report. That year the Commission for the first time recorded government policy as encouraging the disposal of 'surplus land and buildings'.³⁴

In fact, the first Llaneglwys houses had been sold the previous year, no. 3 Bungalow, with about half its holding, and no. 4 Dan-yr-Allt. No. 1 Dan-yr-Allt followed the next year (bought by John Birt, later to become Director General of the BBC, for twice as much as no. 4!) These three properties were all sold for holiday homes, as was no. 1 Bungalow (with its entire smallholding, leased thereafter to Llaneglwys Farm)³⁵ also in the 1970s and no. 2 Dan-yr-Allt and the Forester's House in the 1980s.

By the time the Thatcher administration came into office in 1979 the total of rented properties to woodmen was down to about 950. The Labour governments

Forestry Commission social policy as illustrated by Brecon (later Brycheiniog) Forest 109



Fig. 3 In a mosaic of farm and forest, the 1951 Dan-yr-Allt cottages are shown with (to the left) the senior forester's house of 1961. The building housing the hydraulic ram can be seen to the lower left.



Fig. 4 The Village Hall. This 1950 Nissen Hut was built as a Social Centre and has been refurbished in recent years to form a well-equipped and attractive building serving a wide area.

of Wilson and Callaghan had followed the Heath policy, and the steepest fall was in the last year of Labour. An important improvement in 1980 was that discounts were allowed to the surviving forestry tenants. At Llaneglwys, nos. 2 and 5 Bungalows and nos. 3, 5, and 6 Dan-yr-Allt were bought by the tenants. So was Nant-y-mynach; this was bought by the longstanding tenant, the son of the early tenant; on retirement he sold it on to the son of the last tenant of no. 5 Bungalow, who had himself bought 3 Dan-yr-Allt as a sitting tenant. Some original land of Nant-y-mynach was re-united from 5 Bungalow so that a decent smallholding of 35 acres was created. Likewise 1 Bungalow, when the owners retired to another area of the country in 1993, became again a smallholding, chiefly for the breeding of horses. By then the owners of 4 Dan-yr-Allt had come to live there, followed by those of the Forester's House. In the subsequent years the houses in the Scithwen valley have at times all been occupied full time. In 2012 only two of the 18 houses in Llaneglwys and Nant-y-mynach are holiday homes; one, Cwm-y-nant, is destined for a retirement home for the owners and reunited with its original fields.³⁶ 3 and 5 Bungalows are small smallholdings.³⁷

The school closed in 1978. The school mistress and her husband (who worked at Llaneglwys farm) were living in the detached school house and bought it and the school building. For some time after they sold it and retired to Builth a successful business was carried on there, first as a ceramic workshop and later by the same couple, moving with the times, to produce educational software. It is now used as a bookbinding workshop. The barn of Llaneglwys Isaf was imaginatively converted into a house, with ownership of the Scithwen dingle below, about twelve acres which had originally been planted with spruce and Douglas fir.³⁸

In 1984, at the height of Thatcherism, the Commission sold the forest itself to the Midland Bank pension fund,³⁹ which eventually sold it on to a private owner, Sir Laurie Magnus, an investment banker and, more promisingly, treasurer of the National Trust. The thirteen properties in the Scithwen valley had to form a community association to manage the water supply. They also became the joint owners of 'the Park', opposite Dan-yr-Allt, and 'the Plot', below the bridge, of the garages and private road, and of the social centre. This now venerable ex-Army Nissen hut had in the 50s and 60s been used for evening classes, prayer meetings, concerts, parties, and was a social focus for a wide area until the drop in population of the 70s and the rise in car ownership. Now it has been refurbished by much community endeavour and with the help of five grants from the Lottery, it has an ambitious programme of talks, concerts, and other activities, attended by people from a surprisingly wide area. The derelict equipment of the children's playground opposite Dan-yr-Allt was removed, and the beech hedge of the Park, which had grown into substantial trees, was reduced to a few along the Scithwen – not too many (particularly as the alders there have multiplied) in the interests of the native crayfish which still survive and make the

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stream an SSSI. The Plot has been left largely unused, except for occasional grazing by the farm animals, a goat owned by one of the inhabitants for some years, and recently a communal effort at pig rearing.⁴⁰

The disposal of the Commission's housing properties and the reduction of its workforce was regretted by many, as shown by a Northumberland M.P. in 1983: 'The Forestry Commission came to our villages to provide employment. We were told in those days that it would employ far more people than farming, that villages could be built up and that it provided a great hope for the future. Now the villages are empty and the whole fabric of life in them is disintegrating . . .'⁴¹ But it was surely inevitable, although very recently there seems to be a move in Scotland back to some smaller version of the holdings. The Scottish Rural Affairs Secretary announced in September 2012 'three new Forestry Commission Scotland 'starter farm' opportunities. New entrants to farming can now apply for a ten-year Long Duration Tenancy . . . These small farms build on an initiative piloted earlier this year by Forestry Commission Scotland to complement its woodland creation operations and its broader commitment to increasing the integration of land use on the national forest estate. The "starter farm" programme is design to enable new entrants get a foot hold into the industry".⁴²

And the subsidiary aim of the Forestry Commission, written into its title deeds, to bring back people to depopulated upland regions, was and remains successfully achieved in many areas, especially if like Llaneglwys they are not too far from towns. True, the present inhabitants of these properties, all over upland Britain, are rarely now forestry workers. Lord Lovat would have been surprised at the end result of the success of his 'back to the land' policy, with by the 1990s only one resident of Llaneglwys in forestry, and he never working in Brecon Forest. Now no one is in forestry. Most of the present population are those whom the tides of the later twentieth century would have washed out of other parts of Britain anyway, somewhere.

But the two little valleys of Llaneglwys and Nant-y-mynach were repopulated, and remain so. More, there has been less conflict over the 80 year process than is recorded from the years after the Cistercian monks of Abbey Dore took over Gwenddwr and Llaneglwys for sheepwalks eight centuries earlier. The sheep farming continues: Peter Davies' son Gwyn has about 700 sheep in and around the valley and on the rough grazing between Llaneglwys and Gwenddwr and Llaneglwys and Trawscoed. Dore's holding, in all three areas, is now a patchwork of separate properties, the ownership of this ancient block of land being fragmented after at least 800 years, but its memory lives on in the name of a hamlet that has only existed as such for 80 years.

CHARLES GORDON CLARK

Notes

¹ The fullest treatment is in K. J. W. Oosthoek, *The Logic of British Forest Policy, 1919–1970*, in: Klaus Kubeczko (ed.), *Transitions Towards a Sustainable Europe. Ecology – Economy – Policy*. Proceedings of the 3rd Biennial Conference of the European Society for Ecological Economics (Vienna, 2000). It was touched on in Judith Tsouvalis and Charles Watkins, *Imagining and creating Forests in Britain 1890–1939*, in *Forest History: International Studies on Socioeconomic and Forest Ecosystem Change* edited by M. Agnoletti and S. Anderson, CABI publishing, 2000, presentations given at the International IUFRO conference ‘History and Forest Resources’ at Florence in May 1998. The fullest contemporary exposition of the post-war aspect of the policy is by H. L. Edlin, of the Forestry Commission, in Britain’s new forest villages (Unasyuva, vol. 6, no. 4 1952–3).

² Reminiscences of Evan Davies’s son, Peter, in 1979. Unattributed facts are either from personal knowledge, or from what I was told by Mr Davies and other local residents in that year.

³ As alleged by Miles Saltiel in an Adam Smith Institute ‘briefing paper’ of 2012.

⁴ By 2002 the total area of coniferous woodland in Glamorgan was the quite high figure of about 7.6% of the county which had total woodland of 18.6%, and the Forestry Commission owned or rented 62% of woodland over 2 hectares. In Powys conifers were 6% of the county with total woodland of 14.8%, and the Commission owned or rented 41% of all woodland. *National Inventory of Woodland and Trees – Glamorgan, Powys*; Forestry Commission 2002. There was, for comparison, only 9.1% total woodland in the then joint counties of Hereford and Worcester, and less than half the proportion of coniferous woodland to broadleaf than in Glamorgan, with only 15% of woodland over 2 hectares being owned or rented by the Commission. *ibid.* Hereford and Worcester.

⁵ Quoted in George Ryle, *Forest Service*, 1969, p. 27.

⁶ W. L. Taylor, *Forests and Forestry in Great Britain*, 1946.

⁷ ‘The 50th anniversary of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society in 1911 was an opportunity for Lovat to use and increase his knowledge of forestry in the Highlands. To commemorate its anniversary the Arboricultural Society decided to sponsor and publish a forest survey of the Highlands. The purpose of the survey was to show that the Highlands would be suitable for forestry and its probable effect on other rural activities, the rural economy, and employment if the land were brought under wood’. Oesthook, *op. cit.* Stirling Maxwell, one of the original Forestry Commissioners, and who had pioneered the growing of conifers on land hitherto considered unplantable, wrote the land settlement section of the Acland Report. He considered that ‘the importance of the industry is naturally greater in a country which contains so large a proportion of hill land and has so great a difficulty in retaining a population in the Highlands’: *Forestry in Scotland* in *The Times*, 16 December 1937.

⁸ Acland Report 1918: 28.

⁹ S. Ravi Rajan, *Modernizing Nature: Forestry and Imperial Eco-development 1800–1950*, 2006, pp 124–5.

¹⁰ Ryle, *ibid.*

¹¹ Edlin, *op. cit.*

¹² Figures from Forestry Commission Annual Reports.

¹³ Census returns.

¹⁴ L. Dudley Stamp, ed., *Land Utilisation Survey*, Brecon volume, 1943, *passim*.

¹⁵ Trevor Herbert and Gareth Elwyn Jones, eds., *Wales 1880–1914*.

¹⁶ Robert Gant, *Oral History and settlement change – a case study of abandoned dwellings in the Black Mountains of Wales 1840–1983*, *passim*, in *Human Geography from Wales*, ed. Wayne K. D. Davies, Cambria 12.1.1984

¹⁷ Llan-eglwys is an early corruption of nant-eglwys, the valley belonging to the church; Nant-y-mynach, the valley belonging to the monk. There is also Nant-yr-offeiriad in Gwenddwr, the valley belonging to the priest. (Nant meant ‘valley’ until the 17th century, as opposed to its modern meaning of ‘stream’).

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¹⁸ I inspected the conveyances in the Brecon District Office of the FC in Talybont-on-Usk in 1989. I am not sure whether the deserted shepherd's cottage of Cwm-y-nant, upstream from Nant-y-mynach, was a separate purchase. It was, and is, in the parish of Crickadarn.

¹⁹ Letter of 10 August 1982 from FC Director of Research and Development in reply to query from new owner of no. 1 Bungalow, Llaneglwys, who had copied some of the plaques.

²⁰ George Ryle, *ibid.*

²¹ Census returns. It was nearly twice the increase from 1911 to 1921, that presumably caused by the expansion of the village of Erwood.

²² When Peter's father Evan was a boy the nearest school was in Gwenddwr, and the scholars had to lodge there. Peter's reminiscences, and census returns.

²³ *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates 20 May 1931

²⁴ *Ib.* 6 July 1943

²⁵ This smaller sum than the Llaneglwys holdings is presumably because of the much smaller amount of land on the holdings described by the paper's correspondent.

²⁶ *Catholic Herald* 31st December 1937.

²⁷ Edlin, *op. cit.*

²⁸ Cf the answer of the Minister of Agriculture to a question asked by Major Legge-Bourke (father-in-law of the present Lord Lieutenant of Powys): 'Owing to the acute shortage of housing accommodation for their employees, the Forestry Commissioners have, since the war, concentrated on the provision of houses as distinct from holdings'. *House of Commons Debates 12 April 1951.*

²⁹ *Hansard*, 21 December 1964

³⁰ Annual reports.

³¹ Annual report 1969.

³² Edlin, *op. cit.*

³³ David Turnock, *Historical Geography of Scotland since 1707*, Geographical Aspects of Modernisation, CUP 2005, p 253.

³⁴ Annual Report, 1972.

³⁵ The bungalow and the fields were actually put up for sale separately, but bought by the same couple.

³⁶ I gather that the other is now lived in by the owners.

³⁷ Personal knowledge.

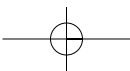
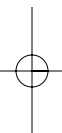
³⁸ Personal knowledge.

³⁹ It was renamed Brycheiniog Forest, and managed by Tilhill Economic Forestry; more recently by a firm in Brecon, Pryor and Rickett.

⁴⁰ Personal knowledge.

⁴¹ *Hansard*, 12 May 1983.

⁴² <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/newsrele.nsf/WebPressReleases/>



THE DROWNING OF CWMTÂF AND THE IMPACT ON THE WAY OF LIFE OF ITS INHABITANTS

Introduction

As travellers on the A470 from Brecon to Merthyr Tydfil pass through Cwmtâf, they look out over a series of reservoirs surrounded by forestry plantations. Yet only just over one hundred years ago there were two hamlets, Nantddu and Ynysyfelin, in a busy area comprising 37 farms, cottages, four public houses, a chapel, church and school, and described by a contemporary as ‘full of young people’.¹

Today, there are still two hamlets, Nantddu and Llwynon – created following the drowning of Ynysyfelin – but the whole consists of just four farms, twenty or so houses, a chapel, and Nantddu Lodge Hotel. This paper charts the changes that have occurred in terms of the lives of people who have grown up, lived and worked in the valley. To provide the context, I have drawn on Gillian Bale’s thorough and well-researched paper ‘Cultural Changes in Cwmtâf 1840–1957’, published by the Cefn Coed and Vaynor Local History Society.² I have also had access to a number of informative publications produced over the years by the Cardiff Corporation Waterworks (CCW). Particularly helpful has been ‘Cardiff Waterworks’ by C. H. Priestley³ and an anonymous booklet produced in 1950 to mark the centenary of the Cardiff Corporation Water Undertaking.⁴ Figure 1 taken from this last publication shows the catchment areas and the location of the three reservoirs. Figure 2 from Gillian Bale’s paper shows the progressive appearance of the reservoirs and forestry plantations and the associated loss of farmsteads.

It may be noted that until the 1974 Reorganisation of Local Government Act, the whole of Cwmtâf was in Breconshire. Following the Act it was split, Nantddu remaining in Breconshire/Powys and Llwynon becoming part of the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil.

The need for the Reservoirs and the timetable for construction

The area which is recognised as Cwmtâf stretches from the Penderyn/Hirwaun turn off immediately below the Beacons reservoir to the end of Llwynon village – map Appendix A. The three reservoirs, Beacons, Cantref and Llwynon (opened in 1897, 1892 and 1926, respectively) transformed the valley. In 1849 Cardiff was struck by a cholera epidemic, a disease caused by drinking water polluted by human effluent. The dire necessity for a source of clean water resulted in the formation of the Cardiff Waterworks Company which constructed reservoirs near the ‘town’ of Cardiff. However, the supplies were insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population. The 1881 Census records the population of Cardiff as 82,671 by 1891 it had grown to 128,915 and by 1921 to 202,700.

In 1884 the Cardiff Corporation Act provided for the ‘maintenance of works and the impounding and utilisation of streams in the Tâf Fawr valley’ – the total area covered some 10,400 acres of which top water surface totalled 238.5 acres.

In order to construct these reservoirs it was necessary for Cardiff Corporation Waterworks to make purchases of the Common and Great Forest Lands as illustrated below:

30 June 1890 Part of common of Modrydd parish of Llanspyddid	area 46 acres	£700
Part of common of Glyn Parish of Defynnog	area 14 acres	£217.10s
20 Dec 1890 Part of common of Cantreff (sic) County of Brecon	area 6 acres	£16
25 January 1895 Part of Great Forest	area 40 acres	£1,700
25 January 1895 Part of Cantreff (sic)	area 4 acres	£300
1 March 1895 Part of Modrydd	area 60 acres	£1,750 ⁵

Despite some opposition from residents of Merthyr Tydfil and other parts of the valley, who feared for the possible failure of the dams, Reservoir No 2 in the Act (Cantref) was constructed by forming an embankment called Blaentâf and opened in 1892. This necessitated the requisitioning of five farms namely Glan Crew, Crew Isaf, Crew Uchaf, Aber Crew and Blaen Tâf, (hence ‘Crew Pitch’ the local name for the hill alongside), all of which were primarily sheep farms with grazing rights on the Brecon Beacons (the word ‘Crew’ is derived from the Welsh word Carw – a male deer or buck).

Beacons Reservoir (No 1 in the Act) was completed in 1897, immediately south of the Storey Arms. No enclosed land was affected since it is at a height of 1,357 feet and above the limit of enclosed cultivated land.

The greatest change to the valley was effected with the building of the largest and lowest of the three reservoirs at Llwynon, covering an area under water of 144 acres. This was to have been completed by 1915 but, due to the outbreak of World War I, it was not completed until 1926. It involved the drowning of the hamlet of Ynysyfelin, the loss of many farms and the uprooting of the community.

There were plans for another reservoir. In 1957 Gillian Bale wrote ‘Future development will entail the drowning of the area between the Beacons Reservoir and the head of Glyn Tarell. This means that the Youth Hostel now standing will have to be removed and the present road diverted. Then the last traces of the “Storey Arms” (a famous Drovers’ Arms) whose name is perpetuated in the Youth Hostel will disappear’.⁶ This did not come about.

The lost hamlet of Ynysyfelin and the surviving hamlet of Nantddu

Ynysyfelin was situated to the west of the current A470, It comprised a cluster of five holdings and two public houses, the Farmers’ Arms (formerly known as Godrefedw) and the Red Lion. The landlord of the Red Lion in 1911 was John

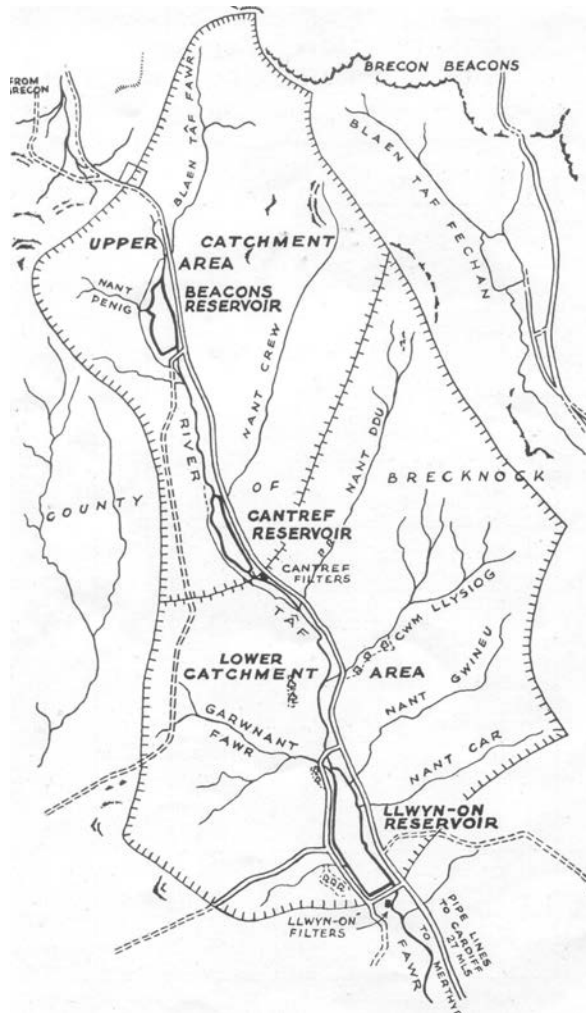


Fig. 1 Catchment areas and reservoirs in CwmTaf

(Map reproduced from the Cardiff Corporation Waterworks publication – Reference iv)

Rees Morse and had previously been Mrs Mary Jenkins. All the occupants of the holdings were involved in one way or another in agricultural activities. Very little in the way of artefacts or memorabilia remain of Ynysyfelin. There is a plaque inside the present Bethel Chapel which previously hung outside the former chapel (Plate 1a). There is a stone gate post now sited at the home of Menna and Colin Davies of Penderyn (Menna's father, Mr Dilwyn Roderick (headmaster of Ysgol y Graig Junior School, Cefn Coed 1951–1965) said the post came from the hamlet). Most notably there is the topographical feature, Pont ar Dâf, which comes to sight in times of low water level in summer (Plate 1b).



Plate 1 (a) The plaque from the original Bethel Chapel; (b) A views of Pont ar Dâf taken in 1976.



The hamlet of Nantddu originally consisted of the vicarage, two public houses – the Tredegar Arms and the Miller’s Arms, plus one/two small holdings, grouped around the Church, near Nantddu Lodge, the shooting box of Lord Tredegar. The land was fertile and provided a good living. This ensured that the rents were high and as a consequence the landlords re-invested their money, resulting in improved facilities of well-maintained farm houses and buildings. However many of the original dwellings were demolished and today there is a single house and a pair of semi-detached houses of brick. Between the hotel and Cantref Reservoir are two limestone cottages built for the reservoir ‘keepers’ in 1892; these are now in private ownership. Three bungalows of corrugated sheeting built in 1928 adjacent to Nantddu Church were at one stage lived in by John Rees Morse and family and Jinnie and Joe Williams. These, along with the Church of St Mary, have now been demolished.

Following the purchase of the land and Nantddu Lodge by Cardiff Corporation WaterWorks, officials who had occasion to visit the valley stayed at the Lodge. Mrs Maggie Thomas (grandmother of the Rev. David Thomas now

of Glasbury but formerly Vicar at St David's Church, Llanfaes, Brecon) was the housekeeper there for many years, and tended these officials with great care and diligence, as was her wont. It is now, adapted and expanded, the Nantddu Lodge Hotel.

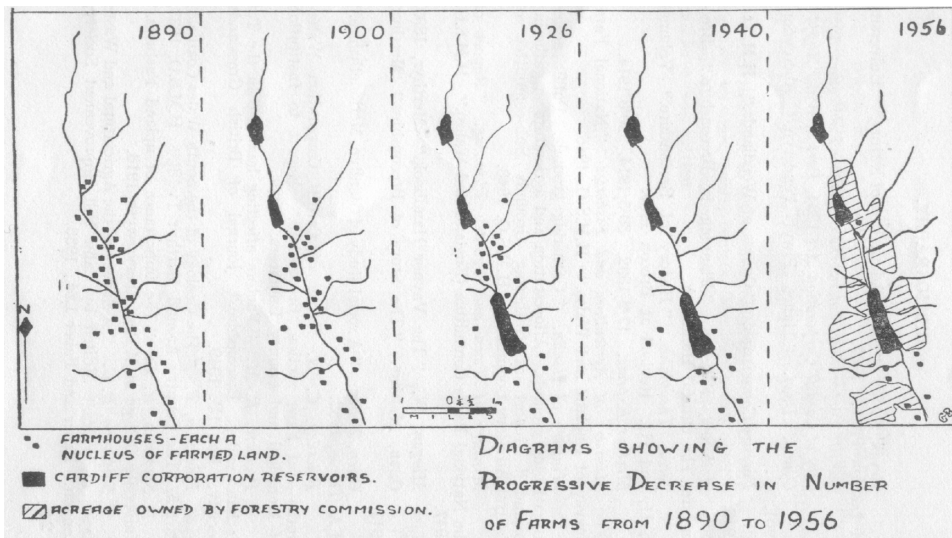


Fig. 2 The arrival of the reservoirs and forestry plantations and the loss of farmsteads.
(Map reproduced from Gillian Bale's paper – Reference ii)

Agriculture in the valley before and after the reservoirs

Prior to the construction of the reservoirs the total area of farm land equalled 1607 acres, bounded by the Llysiog (correct spelling Llysieuog meaning herbaceous plants) stream to the north and the Tâf Fawr to the west. The Tithe Map of Vaynor Parish in 1840 shows that in the Cwmtâf portion 75% of the farmland was grassland, 14% was arable and the remainder was wood, bracken and scrub.⁷ Each farm would have had an area of rough grazing adjacent to the river and rights-of-way to and grazing rights on common land on both sides of the road which is now the A470. Forage crops and corn were grown on the arable land and according to an article in the *Merthyr Express* dated 4th July 1914,⁸ quoting extracts from the diary of Rev D Davies Minister of Bethel Baptist Chapel, Ynysyfelin, 'most of the farmers in Cwmtâf some 80 years ago appear to have been prosperous, for it was not uncommon to sell 4,000 to 5,000 bushels of corn in a year'. Ploughing and cultivation was generally done by oxen and in February 1843 there is a note that two oxen were shod. Along with cattle, sheep also featured as part of the livestock economy and the wool crop is recorded as having 'reached a good price'. Supporting the valley's farming activities were two busy mills for grinding corn – Y Felin Goch, (the Red Mill) – near the site of the

old Bethel Chapel, the other near the Miller's Arms, (whose name of course suggested the presence of a mill) along with a fulling mill and smithy.

The majority of farms in Cwmtâf were in the ownership of Charles Morgan, Lord Tredegar, a wealthy magnate who took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade and who owned land in Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and Breconshire. He was at one time MP for Brecon and kept town houses in both Brecon and London and was one of the leading land owners in South Wales, having succeeded to his father's estates in 1875. It was he who made the deal with Cardiff Corporation to sell the farms – the tenants were not consulted and had no say in the matter – which allowed the valley to be drowned, creating the three reservoirs and the landscape which exists today.

Following the construction of the reservoirs Cardiff Corporation imposed restrictions on farming practice on all farms with land adjoining the reservoirs in order to safeguard water quality – restrictions best illustrated by reference to the terms of the tenancy of Coedowen Farm. There was to be no:

- livestock, except sheep, horses and dogs such as necessary for proper farming of the land.⁹
- ducks or geese.
- tillage of pasture – thus prohibiting ploughing and cultivation and the growing of corn to prevent the pollution of the reservoir by surface run-off.
- pollution.¹⁰

The restrictions resulted in many farms keeping goats to produce milk. Evidence of this is provided by the photograph (Plate 2) taken in 1932 of the author's mother milking the goats at the family farm, Wern Fawr.

World War 2 brought a fundamental change to the above policy, effected to support the war effort! The previous restrictions on farming practice in the area were suddenly reversed and each remaining farm was allocated a quota for tillage, specifically being required to produce cereal and arable crops for human and livestock consumption.

Most of the 37 holdings in Cwmtâf, numbered as per the map in Appendix 1 were less than 100 acres in size and were:



Plate 2 Photograph of Olwen Richards (the author's mother) milking goats on the family farm, Wern Fawr in 1932.

The drowning of Cwmâtâf

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1. Sychpant	14. Llwyn	27. Pentwyn Uchaf
2. Pentwyn Isaf	15. Fedw	28. Berthlwyd
3. Danygraig	16. Godrefedw	29. Llwyncrwn
4. Grawen	17. Penpont	30. Neuadd
5. Troedyrhiw	18. Abercar	31. Coedowen
6. Hendre	19. Pontardâf	32. Penycoed
7. Wern Isaf	20. Nantgwineu	33. Crew Isaf
8. Llwynon	21. Ynysfawr	34. Glancrew
9. Ynystâf	22. Garwnant	35. Blaen Tâf
10. Abernant	23. Wern Fawr	36. Crew Uchaf
11. Penrheol	24. Brynprydydd	37. Abercrew
12. Pentre Gellie	25. Llysiog Isaf	
13. Penpound	26. Llysiog Uchaf	

Of these, farms numbered 33–37 disappeared with the construction of Cantref Reservoir 1892 and the land which was not planted by the Forestry Commission was added to Coedowen Farm.

The farms submerged by the Llwynon reservoir were Abernant (Thomas Jenkins), Ynystâf, (Rev D. O. Davies (author's great x 3 grandfather) and D. Davies (father and son), Troedyrhiw (Edward Lewis – the author's great x 2 grandfather), Penpont (Septimus Jenkins), Pontardâf (Evan Roberts), Abercar (Robert Roberts) and the Farmers' Arms (old name Godrefedw). The tenants in most of these were descendants of previous occupiers over many generations. Information on occupants of some of these farms is contained in Appendix 2.

Of the original 37 holdings only four farms remain, namely:

Danygraig.¹¹ This is a holding of some 176 acres, including land of the now derelict Sychpant with grazing rights on the Brecon Beacons. It is the farm where the author and her siblings were born. The new farmhouse and buildings, currently occupied by Dilwyn John (who farmed with his late wife, Beth) are situated on the western side of the A470. The original, now derelict, Danygraig farmhouse was a longhouse of modest proportions. Jones and Smith¹² described the old farmhouse as 'the third true long-house in the district': that is houses which retain intercommunication between house and byre. To the right of the kitchen was a raised floor indicating where the dairy and possibly a small bedroom were in former days, a small original window lighting the attic at floor level and the entrance to the 'towlod' or 'taflod' (a loft) for storing wool, corn or quite often used as a bedroom for the servants.

Pentwyn Isaf Farm. This is a holding of 94 acres with hill rights, still owned by Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water, and currently occupied by Robert Watkins.¹³ This was a mixed farm, and because it was downstream of the Llwynon Reservoir, the occupiers were allowed to keep cattle, pigs and sheep. The author's grandparents,

father and uncle farmed this holding from 1933 to 1943 having moved from Nantllechau, Ystradfellte. They produced milk that was sold to Conways' Dairies of Merthyr Tydfil and the pigs were fed on the excess produced.

The **Grawen** (original name Carawen). This is currently occupied by Mrs Freda Pugh¹⁴ who farmed with her late husband, Gwynne. The ground extends to some 200 acres, part of which is still owned by Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water.

Former occupants were William and Charlotte Jones. Charlotte was a sister to William Rees Evans of Coedowen. Charlotte (Lottie) died as a result of a road accident near the entrance to the farm in 1958.

The current (occupied) house is built to the front of the original house (now used as a store) described by Smith and Jones¹⁵ as a Gentry House. The house was once owned by William Morgan (born 1747), who married Margaret Williams from the Bolgoed Estate, Libanus near Brecon. Descendants of the Morgan family still live there. William Morgan was an entrepreneur who purchased the estates of Gwaelod-y-Garth and Gwaunfarren in Merthyr Tydfil in 1785. His principal source of income was the provision of foodstuffs for the men working in the Iron Works of Penydarren and Dowlais, owned by the Homfray and Guest families. A Unitarian, he was a regular worshipper at Hên-dy-Cwrdd Chapel, Cefn Coed, still used as a place of worship today.

Coedowen. This is much the largest farm in the valley and the only existing one to lie in the catchment area of the reservoirs. It has been farmed by Baden and Netty Rees since 25th September 1995 who, in order to diversify and to ensure that income can be generated from sources other than agriculture, have invested a substantial amount of capital in converting farm buildings into high quality bunk-house accommodation.

After Cardiff Corporation and the Forestry Commission had identified the land that they required for their own use the land remaining from the other holdings was joined to Coedowen resulting in a progressive increase in the area from 45 acres in 1840 to a total of 600 acres in 1956. This comprised land previously belonging to Aber Crew, Crew Uchaf and Isaf, Fedw, Nantddu, Llwyncrwn, Llysiog Uchaf and Isaf, Nantgwineu and Neuadd and in 1953 Mr W. R. Evans, the then tenant was required to take over a further 75 acres which formed part of Wernfawr (The Wern) on the opposite side of the river thus creating the farm of today.¹⁶ A good description of the farm in the mid-1950s is provided by Gillian Bale. At that time there were 4,700 sheep (hardy Cross Cheviots) and 60 Welsh Mountain ponies which were sold as riding ponies 'to all parts of England for the gentry's children'.¹⁷

The Commons Registration Act 1965 required all holdings to register grazing rights on common land. The entry for Coedowen reads:

The drowning of Cwmtâf

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	<i>Ewes</i>	<i>Yearling</i>	<i>Ponies</i>	<i>Wethers (castrated male sheep)</i>
Crew Isaf/Uchaf	1700	650	60	125
Coedowen/Nantddu	500	100	15	25
Neuadd/Llwynrwn/ Llysiog Uchaf	1050	250	15	25

Perusal of documents provided by David Sivell and Baden Rees identify a loss of entitlement of 2,000 ewes and when queried by the author this was accounted for by loss of land to the Forestry Commission.

Former occupants of Coedowen included David and Jane Williams. David died in 1931 aged 65 years and Jane, died 1932 died aged 64 years (the author's great aunt). They had two children, Mary (who died aged 10 in 1900) and Edward. The author's mother as a child, would spend her summer holidays at Coedowen and travel to and from Brecon in a pony and trap with a trap umbrella for use on rainy days! Aunt Jane was a very competent horsewoman, rode side-saddle, frequently visiting Merthyr and Brecon and also drove the trap. On retirement they moved to Llanfihangel Court, Llansoy, Monmouthshire. Edward continued to farm at Llanfihangel Court after his parents' retirement.

As indicated above, they were followed into Coedowen by William Rees Evans and his wife Monica (nee Waters) who farmed there from 1929 until 1967. They had two sons, Tony and Terry, neither of whom wished to follow their father into the business and pursued their own successful careers.

David Sivell arrived in Cwmtâf from the Isle of Wight in December 1950 as a seventeen year old. He had placed an advertisement in *The Farmers' Weekly* seeking a position as a shepherd. Mr W. R. Evans responded and David accepted his offer as this was the farm with the biggest sheep flock. In 1964 David married Miss Betty Price from Llwydcoed, Aberdare. In 1966 Mr and Mrs Evans visited their son Tony in Australia leaving David and Betty in charge and on their return David was offered a partnership with W.R. who soon after retired to live in Cefn Coed. In 1967 David took over the tenancy of Coedowen on his own. He and Betty retired from Coedowen to Pontsticill in September 1995. David always had an ambition (unfulfilled) to go sheep farming in Australia and whenever he mentioned this to Mr Evans it was followed by an increase in wages!¹⁸

Wern Fawr (The Wern). This deserves description because it was farmed until the 1950s. The house (currently not inhabited) was where the Richards' family (the author's grandparents) and their four children lived. The Wern Farmhouse was well planned, with a bathroom in 1930 – three storeys at the back leading from the walled yard into the dairy and up into the kitchen, and two from the front into a hall. On the left was the parlour and on the right a larger sitting

room, perfect for family parties! The family moved from Wernlas, Cwm Cadlan Road, Penderyn in 1921 to Pentre Gellie (Pentre-cae-lleia) and subsequently to Wern Fawr in 1930. The family consisted of three girls and one boy – Annie, David, May and Olwen (the author's mother), who all worked at home until they married. They were members of New Bethel Baptist Chapel and it is due to their efforts that the Chapel has survived to the present day (see later). It was apparently on its 'last legs' in 1921 and currently their descendants, the families of May and Olwen, are maintaining their effort in keeping the Chapel open, thus perpetuating the beliefs and commitment of their forebears.

Despite not having a Minister in residence a service was held, in Welsh, every Sunday evening. The author's early experience of Chapel going was one of being surrounded by four siblings, seven first cousins and relatives, all from Cwmtâf, who were regular worshippers and whose social life revolved around New Bethel.

Activity associated with the building of the Reservoirs

Quarrying of limestone for the construction of the reservoirs took place at Penmoelallt Quarry at the lower end of the valley. From this quarry a mineral railway (commonly called 'the navvies line') ran up the west side of the Tâf valley to the base of the proposed Cantref reservoir (this line can still be seen today and forms part of the Taff Trail). The railway was extended from Cantref to the Beacons Reservoir, when the latter was built in 1897. Then after years of disuse it was re-opened for the construction of Llwynon Reservoir. This line was connected up to the main line at Cefn Coed Station and was used for carrying both men and limestone.

The 1891 Census records that, during construction of the Cantref reservoir, 28 'huts' were erected, housing 225 navvies with an extra seven, three and four being housed at Crew Isaf, Mission Rooms and the Store. The navvies came from places such as Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucester, Salisbury, Yorkshire, Manchester, Derby, as well as Sennybridge, Aberystwyth, Herefordshire, Penarth and Pontypridd. The fact Crew Isaf is named indicates that these huts were sited above Nantddu. A Navvies Newsletter kept them informed of employment opportunities in other parts of the country.¹⁹

During the building of the Llwynon Reservoir, Cardiff Corporation Waterworks (CCWW) built huts sited on Llwynon Farm to accommodate approximately one third of the navvies employed in its construction. The remainder were housed locally and were conveyed from Cefn Coed by the mineral railway. Subsequently the site occupied by the huts was developed into permanent residences for employees of CCWW. These are all now in private ownership.

Five 'navvies' lives were lost during the construction of this reservoir and they are buried in a communal grave at New Bethel:

George A Hull died aged 54 on 2nd January 1922
 William Brown died aged 50 on 24th May 1922
 John Churchill died aged 30 on 12th November 1922
 William Meekin died aged 62 on 12th August 1923
 George Martin died aged 50 on 21st February 1924.

In 1926 forty two men were employed at the quarry, twenty eight were stone masons with the rest working as engine fitters, drivers and general labourers.

The Water Industry – the Reservoirs in use

Cantref Reservoir

As described earlier, this reservoir was the first to be commenced under the Act of 1884. Work began in the spring of 1886 and it was opened for use on the 14th September 1892. This construction span of six and a half years was much longer than at first anticipated due to the contractor encountering financial difficulties. The embankment of the Reservoir was formed at a point in the valley immediately north of Nant Ddu, where the valley is narrow, the hills on each side rising steeply. The capacity was 323 million gallons and the top water level 1073ft above Ordnance datum. The 4,000 acres of watershed above this reservoir are composed almost entirely of very fine mountain pasture, rising from an elevation of 1,080 feet at the reservoir to 2,910 feet at the Brecon Beacons above.²⁰

In order to prevent contamination of the water entering the impounding reservoir, all the buildings within the catchment area were demolished with the exception of the former 'Storey Arms', which for many years had only been used as a shepherd's house – its subsequent demolition in 1924 resulted in the construction of a new combined youth hostel and café near the original site (see Plate 3). Prevention of pollution also prompted the erection of public conveniences at the extreme ends of the catchment area.



Plate 3 (a) The former Storey Arms (b) The current Storey Arms photographed in the 1940s.

Beacons Reservoir

'So rapid was the growth of Cardiff at this time that the Corporation were compelled to proceed at once, on the completion of the Cantreff (sic) reservoir with the construction of No 1 or Beacons Reservoir'. In April 1893 work commenced. In the meantime, from the passing of the Act of 1884, the Engineer found it would be advantageous to increase the size of the reservoir and powers to do this were obtained under the Act of 1894. The capacity of the reservoir is 345 million gallons, with a top water area of nearly 52 acres, and level of 1,340 feet above Ordnance datum and the depth of water 52 feet.

A diversion of the main road from Brecon to Merthyr Tydfil had to be made and a substantial masonry bridge of three arches was constructed to carry the Hirwaun Road over the Tâf Fawr River.

Llwynon Reservoir

'Under the Act of 1884 this was the third and lowest of the three to be constructed and would utilize the lower drainage area of 6,400 acres allocated for the supply of Cardiff in the Taff Fawr valley'. This reservoir, as originally proposed and authorised under the 1884 Act, was to have a capacity of 670 million gallons but the Engineer's report showed that a much larger reservoir could be constructed within a short distance of the same site. The plans were therefore designed to give a full capacity of 1,260 million gallons. The total cost of the works up to 1926 was approximately £550,000 and the completion entailed further expenditure.

The Filtration Plants

Initially water from Tâf Fawr was sent to Rhiwbina and Heath Reservoirs for storage and filtration. However, due to the acidity of the water it was found that the carrying capacity of the cast iron pipeline was reduced from 11½ to 7 million gallons per day (approximately).

In consequence, during the late 1920s, a second pipeline was laid and a system of rough filtration installed immediately below Cantref Reservoir. During the 1930s this policy was revised and the filters changed with the result that approximately 12 million gallons a day were filtered before the water entered the two pipe-lines for Cardiff.

A beneficial consequence of the construction of the Llwynon reservoir was a community hall built by CCWW for 'recreation and church' purposes. As a child, the author and family along with other local families attended social events there (Plate 4). The hall was demolished in 1981 following a very acrimonious meeting between the officials of the then Welsh National Water Development Authority (a precursor of Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water) and the villagers who wished to see this amenity retained for community use. Following its demolition the site was sold to private developers and two houses built.



Plate 4 Events in the Hall (a) Summer Tea Party 1948. The current place of residence of these four boys shows how the valley community has fragmented: Terry Evans (Sutton Coldfield), Peter Davies (California), David Williams (London), Bernard Morse (Langford, Beds); (b) Christmas Party 1949. The author, then Gwyneth Parry, third from the left, with her siblings and cousin.

Jack Morse

No description of the water industry in Cwmtâf would be complete without an account of the life of Jack Harold Rees Morse (see Plate 5). Most of his working life was spent in the valley and when he celebrated his 100th birthday on 12 November 2006, his son Bernard invited all those born in Cwmtâf to a celebration at Cefn Coed!

Jack's father, Jack Rees Morse, had been employed by Cardiff Corporation Water Works (CCWW) and had moved to Cwmtâf when the Reservoirs were being constructed. The Chief Engineer was Mr H W B Cotterill and Mr Morse senior was employed as his Clerk/Secretary, after a short period as the landlord of the Red Lion, Ynysfelin. Jack, the third youngest of 10 children and his family, lived at the corrugated iron bungalows in Nantddu. When he was 10 years old, his mother Lilla passed away, leaving his father and older children to bring up the younger ones. An entry in the Nantddu school Log Book details that the children had a half day's holiday from school to attend the funeral. He left school in 1920 and, being unable to take up his main interest of farming, joined CCWW as an apprentice/tea boy in the Fitting Shop.

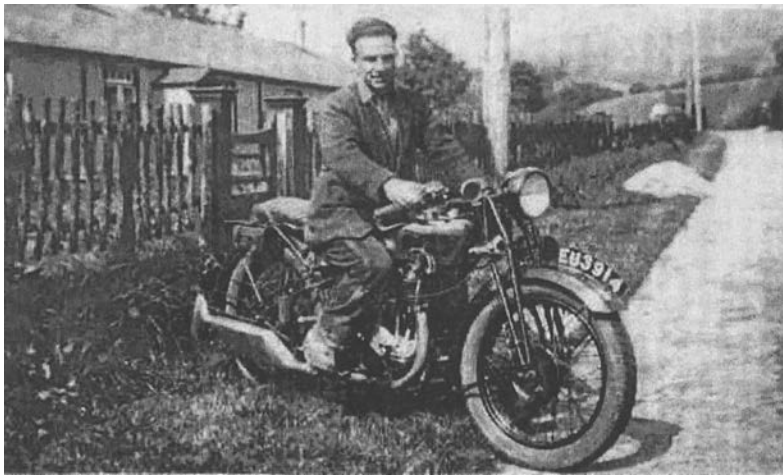


Plate 5 Jack Morse on his Connaught Blackburn motor bike outside the corrugated iron bungalows.

Llwynon Reservoir was completed in 1926 just as he completed his apprenticeship, so he was taken on as a fitter responsible for maintaining the engines and pumps and filter beds – all the mechanical items needed to keep the pumps and filter beds in working order and ensure a continuous supply of clean water. Jack married Elizabeth Cronin from Aberfan in 1938 and Bernard was born some four years later. Shortly after they were married, they moved from a small rented cottage in Cefn Coed to a new waterworks house in Cwmtâf, namely Homeleigh at Llwynon. Remaining with CCWW, Jack was made Pipeline Foreman in 1959 and moved to Coryton near Cardiff to take charge of two large diameter water mains bringing the water from the reservoirs for the storage reservoirs sited around Cardiff. He retired on 3 January 1972 having completed 51 year unbroken service with CCWW (he had received wartime call-up papers but these were rescinded as his was a reserved occupation).²¹

Forestry in the valley

After the water came the trees!

'At the same time as the final filtration works were being carried out and to ensure the purity of the water at the source, a number of farmhouses and buildings on the catchment area were demolished and the remainder modernised. These farms and lands have now been leased to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) for the purpose of extensive planting of coniferous trees. Cardiff Corporation however are fully protected should they desire to augment the works in the area'.²²

The lease was signed on 1st March 1949 between MAFF and the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of the City of Cardiff. The total area in the lease was 2,342 acres of land in Tâf Fawr and this included five tenancies, Fedw, Neuadd, Wern Fawr, Glanyrafon, Coed Owen (sic), Penrheol (See Appendix 3).

The following farms were listed for demolition:

Penyrheol Farm Buildings
 Pentre-cae-llia (Pentre Gellie) Farm Buildings
 Garwnant Farm Buildings
 Pentwyn Uchaf Farm Buildings
 Llwyn Crwn
 Nant Gwineu
 Llysiog Isaf
 Llysiog Uchaf
 Glanyarfion (Brynprydydd) – but actually Berthlwyd

Planting started in 1950 in the area around Pentre-cae-Llia (Pentre Gellie) and continued until 1966. The Species planted were: Sitka Spruce; Larch; Lodgepole pine; Douglas Fir; Scots Pine; Norway Spruce; Noble Fir and Beech. While protection of the water supplies and timber production were the driving forces behind the operation, the recreation (or 'amenity') value of the maturing plantations has been recognised in recent years, with the old farmhouse at Garwnant becoming a popular visitor centre. It may be noted that the larch in Cwmtâf is infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* and in the next 5–7 years the plans are to fell all of the remaining larch in the holding. The land will be restocked with broadleaf and conifers in the future based on position, soil structure and economics.²³

In 1952 houses for forestry workers were built below the Chapel on the road from Llwynon to Cwm Cadlan. In hindsight, this could be deemed to be unnecessary when so many farm houses had been demolished or allowed to fall into ruin. They could equally have served the purpose and at the same time preserved the character of the area.

Religion in the Valley*Bethel Baptist Chapel*

Plate 6 (a) The Old Bethel Chapel.

The hamlet of Ynysyfelin included a Baptist Chapel built in 1799 (Plate 6a) and sited on Penpound smallholding near Pwll Coch Mill, at the far end of the reservoir near the road over the mountain to Penderyn – Cwm Cadlan Road. Capel Bethel, was founded by David O. Davies, Edward Evans, David Jones and Ben Richards, four members of Seion Chapel, Merthyr Tydfil. The four had met regularly at Penpont Farmhouse, Cwmtâf from 1793, the ‘cause’ had prospered and on 25 January 1798, Mr D. O. Davies, a small-holder residing at Ynystâf, was ordained as Minister and Bethel Baptist Chapel was built the following year.²¹ Membership grew and by 1838 when Rev D. O. Davies’s son, David Davies, was ordained as assistant minister at Bethel, it numbered 60, reaching 80 at its maximum. The Rev David Owen Davies died in 1853 in his 88th year and was followed in office by his son who remained as minister until his death in 1869 aged 74 years. It has been said that they did not receive a salary and depended entirely on the income earned from their small holdings at Ynystâf and Abernant. Subsequent ministers who took over the pastoral care of Bethel in conjunction with their roles as Ministers of other Chapels in the area were from Carmel, Cefn Coed (Revs John Hughes and T. Salathiel), from Tabernacl, Brecon Road, Merthyr Tydfil (Revs D. L. Jones, William Davies, J. R. Evans) and from 1956 until 2000 Mr David John Hitchins of Penywern, Dowlais. Secretaries of Bethel in the last 150 years have been Herbert Davies, Yr Hendre (1869–1916), David Lewis, Nantgwineu (1927–1936), Evan J. Thomas, Maes-y-Coed (1936–1960), David Richards, Pantcefniffordd, Penderyn (1960–1977) and Margaret Griffiths, Cefn Coed (1977 to date).²⁴

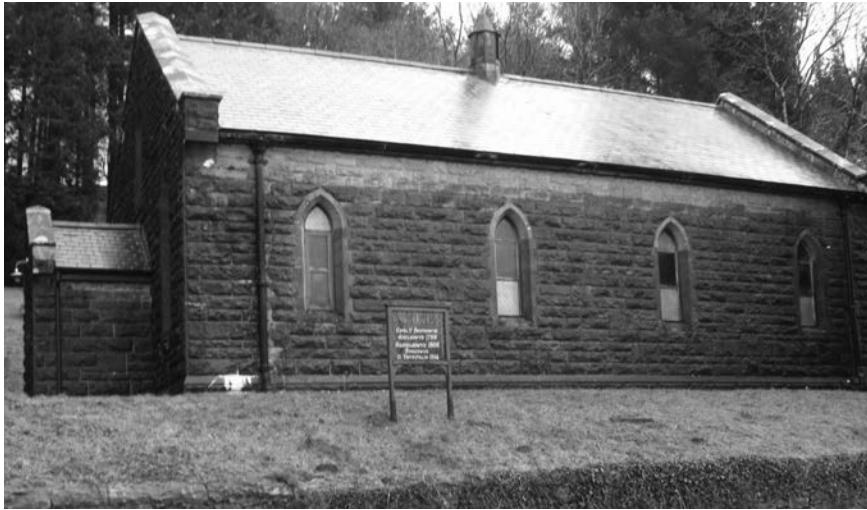


Plate 6 (b) The New Bethel Chapel.

In 1907 the officials of Bethel Chapel, Thomas Williams, Coedowen, David Lewis Nantgwineu (Secretary) and Evan Morgan, Penrheol (Treasurer) received their first warning that the Cwm Tâf Valley around Llwynon was to be flooded to become the third reservoir in the valley for Cardiff Corporation. This resulted in the demolition of Bethel Baptist Chapel, Ynysyfelin as well as all other buildings in the hamlet. New Bethel Baptist Chapel was sited diagonally opposite the old chapel across the valley and the construction and transfer of the graves cost £1,775, this cost being borne by Cardiff Corporation. Construction of the new chapel commenced in 1912 and the inaugural services were held on 8th and 9th July 1914. Gillian Bale quotes from an item in the *Merthyr Express* which described it thus: ‘The new chapel is a striking object on the slopes of the valley and is as conspicuous as it is pretty. Prim, compact and proportionate the little shrine looks a modern building which is an ornament and a worthy object to decorate the landscape’.²⁵ However, it should be noted that Chapel members were not consulted as to the style of the building (see Plate 6b) nor as to the stone in which it was built – the limestone used means the walls are very porous!

Due to the depopulation of the area, especially of the traditionally based families, the Chapel has struggled to continue as a place of worship: no more so than now when the average congregation at the monthly service is ten or less.

St Mary’s Church

The founding date of the Church in Nantddu is not known, but records show that there has been a church on this site since 1578 (Saxton’s Map of this date). The Church was built in Gothic style with chancel, nave, south porch and bell turret with one bell and accommodation for 80 communicants (Plate 7).

It was registered in 1813 for baptisms and burials and in 1858 for solemnization of matrimony. The records indicate that in 1895 the curate was Rev Thomas Harris who features as a frequent visitor in the Log Book of the Nantddu National School.

The 1851 Religious Census gives the following information – ‘Cantreff (sic) Parish consisting of Cantref and Nant Ddu Chapelry. Area 20,000 acres. Nantddu Chapelry Population 64 males, 53 females total 117’. Theophilus Jones in the *History of Breconshire* (1905) says of The Chapelry of Nantddu ‘the original endowment was very small being only 40s a year to the minister of Cantreff (sic) for his tedious ride and extraordinary duty’. This stipend was later increased by contributions from Queen Anne’s Bounty.²⁶

Its dedication to St Mary and not to a Celtic saint may indicate a Norman influence which, in this instance, is attributed to the de Bohun family. (Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Lord of Brecon, was reputed to have fought a pitched battle in 1290 at Maes-y-Faenor with Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester and Lord of Glamorgan).²⁷

The Church was incorporated into Cefn Coed Parish in 1939 and weekly services were held until 1984. The last wedding that was held was that of Felicia Jenkins (of Pantydŵr, Llwynon) and Robert Lloyd on 1 January 1977. The fabric of the Church was repaired in 1981/2 and a dedication service of the restored Church was held on the 3rd October 1982 and an anniversary service to commemorate the event held a year later in 1983. However within a year the Church was closed and fell into disrepair. It became prey to vandals and was demolished.



Plate 7 St Mary's Church, Nantddu.

Thereafter, Church members held services at No 2 Pantydŵr the home of Mr & Mrs Trevor Jenkins (parents of Felicia). The Harvest Festival on the 3rd October of 1985 was held at Coedowen, home then to David and Betty Sivell – there were 15 in the congregation – and the same year the First Sunday in Advent Service was also held at Coedowen. From 1st June 1986 (when Mr & Mrs Jenkins moved to Cefn Coed) services were held at New Bethel Baptist Chapel until 3rd January 1988 when the Rector, Rev David Walters moved to Talgarth.²⁸ The last burial at St Mary's was in May 2002 of Dr John Gross, former editor of *Merthyr Historian*. Powys Family History Group has published a complete record of the graves.

Between New Bethel Chapel and the former Church Hall a second burial ground was established and the most recent graves identified are: Simon Magnus Morgan Hallam aged 32 died 22 July 2006 along with Morgan Brinley Morgan, Honorary Canon of Chelmsford Cathedral 18 April 1979 (aged 74) together with other former Cwmtâf residents and members of the Morgan family whose descendants have taken steps to ensure that they have a continuing right of burial there.

Education in the Valley

Llysiog, Church of England School (also referred to as Nantddu National School and Nantddu Non-Provided School) was sited at Nantddu and all that can be seen now is a pile of stones on the western side of the road at the confluence of the Llysiog Brook and the Tâf Fawr on land owned by Coedowen Farm.

An advertisement placed in the *Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser* on the 25 August 1866²⁹ reads thus:

TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS. THOMAS FLOOKS, Hair Dresser, has a Vacancy for a Youth as an Out-door APPRENTICE. – TO BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS. PERSONS willing to Contract for the Building of a NATIONAL SCHOOL-ROOM in Nantddu, Cwmtâf, Breconshire, are invited to send in Tenders to the Rev LLEWELYN DAVIES . . .

The school was built at a cost of £200.

Although the school opened in 1868 the Log Book of Nantddu School only commences on 12th June 1893, completed by Miss Laura M Jones, Temporary Mistress, who records that there were 56 children on the books and that the late mistress had died on the last day of the school year on 31st May 1893.

23rd June 1893 – Entry by Miss Laura M Jones: 'William Branch sent home for bad behaviour – quite unable to restrain himself – I am convinced corporal punishment would have a bad effect and am determined to use it in no way whatsoever'. Yet she further states: 'children have become disorderly and careless – much time taken up in obtaining order'. Miss Jones left the school on 7th July 1893.

10th July 1893 – Miss Joanna Williams commenced as temporary mistress of Nantddu and her Log Book entry reads: ‘This little school has been under great disadvantage during the past year on account of the repeated changes of teachers. Making every possible allowance for these difficulties the condition of the school cannot be said to be higher than moderately fair. Reading and writing were on the whole satisfactory but spelling was poor and arithmetic (written and oral) was weak and wanting in intelligence. The result in Grammar was very inferior. The discipline needs attention and the indecent writing on the door of the girls’ offices should be at once erased.’

Joanna Williams remained at the school only until the 19th of September and on 25th September 1893 Miss Mary J. Harris commenced duties and remained until 1927, thirty four years later.

Although Welsh was the main language of communication in the area, English seems to have been the language of school. Perusal of the Log Book reveals that a selection of readings, songs and recitations to be learnt by the children are as follows:

1899–1900

Reading for Standards V, VI and VII were:

Swiss Family Robinson, Charles Dickens Reader, Sovereign Leader (a bright historical record of Queen Victoria’s reign).

Recitations to be learned:

Love at Home; Spring-time is returning; The Lass of Richmond Hill; The Skaters; The Cock Sparrow; The Child and the Bird; The Legend of the Heart of Bruce; On receipt of My Mother’s Picture.

List of object lessons for Lower Standards:

1. Animals – leopard, wolf, zebra, seal, giraffe, beaver, camel, reindeer, llama, bear
2. Birds – swan, pheasant, pigeon, cuckoo, goose
3. Fish – salmon, cod, herring, oyster, lobster
4. Geographical terms – rivers, mountains, oceans, a town map

Welsh was introduced into Cefn Coed School in 1890 and in 1894 as a school subject. A later entry reads that: Feb 1906 Breconshire Education Committee have instructed ‘Welsh’ to be introduced into the Schools following the 1847 Government Report on Education in Wales (The Blue Books). Clearly Miss Harris took no notice!

14th September 1892 – Opening of Cantref Reservoir Cwmtâf – poor attendance.

The Log Book also records that Mrs W. S. Miller of Forest Lodge, near Libanus, visited the school annually (in the summer), distributing prizes for the best written essays and giving the children an annual tea party. She also visited Llanspyddid CP School, Libanus every Christmas, presenting each child with a

Christmas gift. Her husband Mr W J Miller was the Chairman of the School Managers there for many years.³⁰

2nd Feb 1900 – no school – severe snow storm, reopened 16 February.

1st March 1900 records the singing of *Hen Wlad fy Nhadau* at Nantddu school – this is the first intimation that some Welsh has been introduced. (See later entry dated 1919).



Plate 8 This (poor quality) photograph was taken in 1900 of Miss Harris with 43 children two of whom are on horseback and is an indication of the number of families living in the valley.

16th March 1900 – no school – tradesmen painting and colouring the school.

There were many entries recording visits to the school by the nurses (Bowen and Lewis), dentist (I. J. Evans), Rector, the Rev T. Harris, who checked and signed that the registers were correct (on frequent visits) and the Diocesan Inspector Hilary M. Lewis.

16th October 1901 – Outbreak of scarlet fever, school closed for six weeks.

1st July 1907 – It has been decided to close the school as a large number of children are going to the Eisteddfod at Brecon.

28th August 1911 – Owing to the new school opened at Llwynon for the children whose parents are employed at the New Reservoir works the numbers have decreased. (Unfortunately no records can be found for this school, how long it lasted or where it was sited.)

And again on 8th September 1911 – New School opened at Llwynon for children of new reservoir workers, numbers have decreased at Nantddu.

Seemingly to celebrate St David's Day and Empire Day, a letter granting permission for a celebration to take place was received at the school from the Breconshire Education Committee. Examples of the programmes follow:

St David's Day 1st March 1913

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Hen Wlad fy Nhadau | 2. Address by Vicar on St David |
| 3. Recitation the Lay of the last Minstrel | 4. Song – St David's Day |
| 5. Song Nos Galan | 6. Story of Taliesin |
| 7. Song Hunting the Hare | 8. National Anthem |

Empire Day 23rd May 1913

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Assembly | 2. Hoisting of Union Jack |
| 3. National Anthem | 4. Saluting the Flag of Britain |
| 5. Short Lecture on Sir Robert Clive | 6. Lest We Forget and General Wolfe |
| 7. God Bless the Prince of Wales | 8. Hen Wlad fy Nhadau |

27th March 1914 – Owing to the progress made at the New Reservoir the families are leaving the Parish which is very prejudicial to the interests of the school – 5 children have left during the past week.

Nantddu School was inspected on 4th May 1914 and part of the report reads as follows:

There is much that is creditable in the work of this little school. Though some of the children are at first rather shy they gradually show more confidence and do themselves greater justice. The reading is clear and accurate and it was noted that among the senior scholars the better readers were those who not only hear Welsh at home but speak it. It will be well to consider how far it may be possible to make provision for instruction in Welsh or for greater use of Welsh in school to assist the general instruction. The proportion of children from Welsh speaking homes may be affected by the changes arising and likely to arise on account of the local waterworks . . .

The Inspector's Report also stated that : 'The sanitary arrangements will need to be dealt with in view of the fact that the new Cardiff Waterworks in course of construction are lower down the valley'.

12th May 1916 – Half day holiday for children to attend funeral of Mrs Morse. (Mrs Morse was Mrs Lilla Morse who died at a young age leaving 10 children to be cared for – see item on Jack Morse).

The only reference to World War I is made on 24th May 1916 – Empire Day when the programme for this event contained as Item 5 Belgium – The Battlefield of Europe. The Great War seems to have passed Miss Harris and Cwmtâf by!

12th December 1919 – Welsh was introduced this term – the children seemed interested.



Plate 9 Nantddu School in 1925. Miss Monica Waters (later Mrs W. R. Evans) with class of 8–10 year olds.

On 30th October 1922 Miss Olive Monica Waters from Pembrokeshire came to teach at the school and the photograph in Plate 9 is of her with her class of 8–10 year olds in 1925. She resigned her teaching duties on 1st April 1927 but obviously returned to the area, as in 1929 she married William Rees Evans of Coedowen Farm. They had two sons, Tony and Terry. Mr & Mrs Evans retired to Cefn Coed in 1966 where Mrs Evans died at the age of 96 in 2000.³¹

2nd June 1925 – Reopened after Whitsun Holidays owing to Merthyr Pageant and Fete only 7 children present.

16th June 1925 – Missionary Exhibition in Brecon – school closed to allow children to attend.

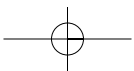
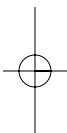
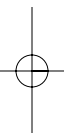
The story of education in Cwmtaf ends with an entry in the Cefn Coed School Log Book for Monday 4th April 1927 which reads: Transfer of children from Nantddu School. However, oddly enough there is a final line in the Nantddu Log Book which is dated six months later and reads: 28 October 1927 – Last Entry ‘I resign my duties as Head Teacher of this school today, a post I have held for 34 years – Mary J. Harris’. One would like to think that after this length of service, she had been granted six months on full pay to prepare for retirement!

Conclusion

No-one would wish that cities like Cardiff should suffer from inadequate or unsatisfactory supplies of clean water but it must be recognised that these amenities come at a large price! Gillian Bale wrote in 1957 that ‘the era when

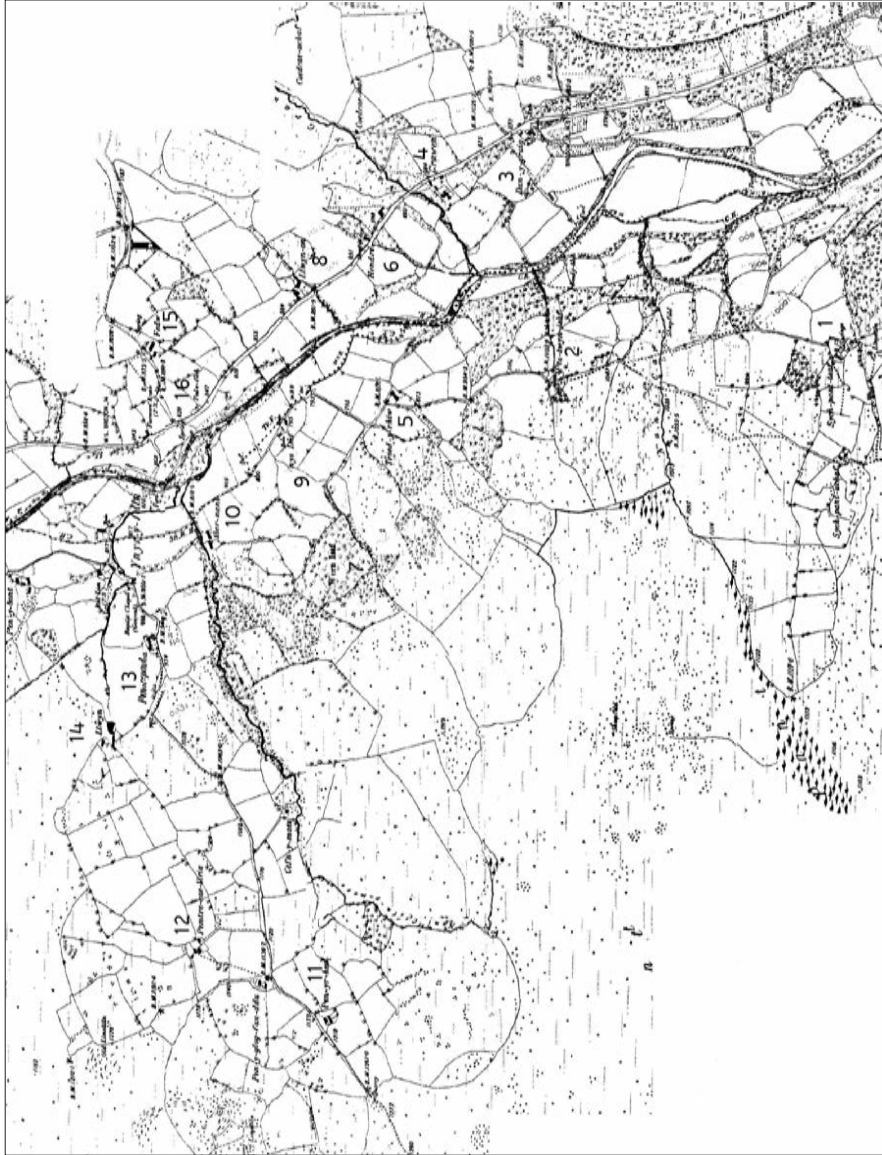
Cwmtâf may have been called a “family” territory has long passed and with it any hope of the valley becoming, once again, a self-sufficient, relatively rich agricultural region’. The subsequent half century has only served to emphasise the point about ‘family territory’: the cohesion which once characterized the community no longer exists.

With changes in farming practice, the number of people working on the remaining land has become smaller and smaller. At the same time family size has shrunk and many of the local young people have left the area in pursuit of educational and employment opportunities. For a time both the water industry and the forestry industry provided life and livelihoods in the valley but increasing mechanisation and changed patterns of working mean that this is no longer the case. Houses built for water and forestry workers have now been sold to people who have no or only tenuous connections with Cwmtâf. For the last century New Bethel Baptist Chapel has stood as a living tribute to the families who founded the cause in the valley back in 1799. One can only hope that it will survive another 100 years!



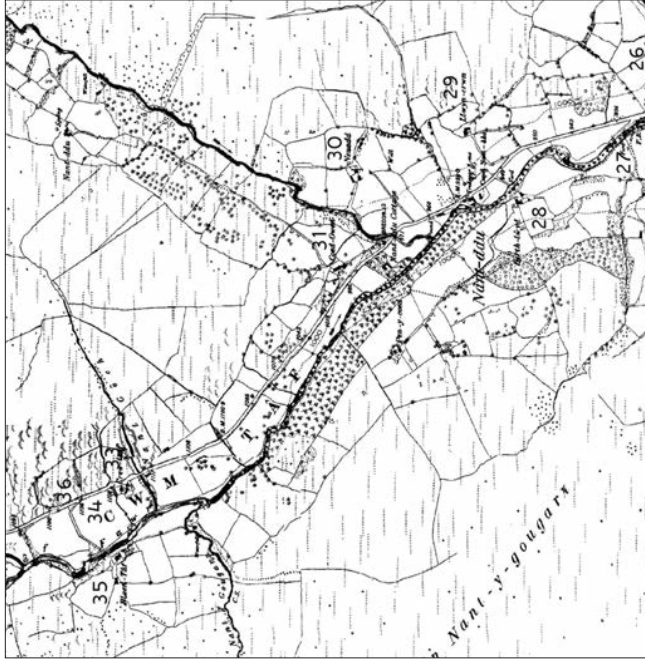
APPENDIX 1

Three maps showing the location of the 37 holdings in existence prior to the flooding of the Valley. The numbers, taken from the list in the body of the text, have been added to the OS Map of 1891.

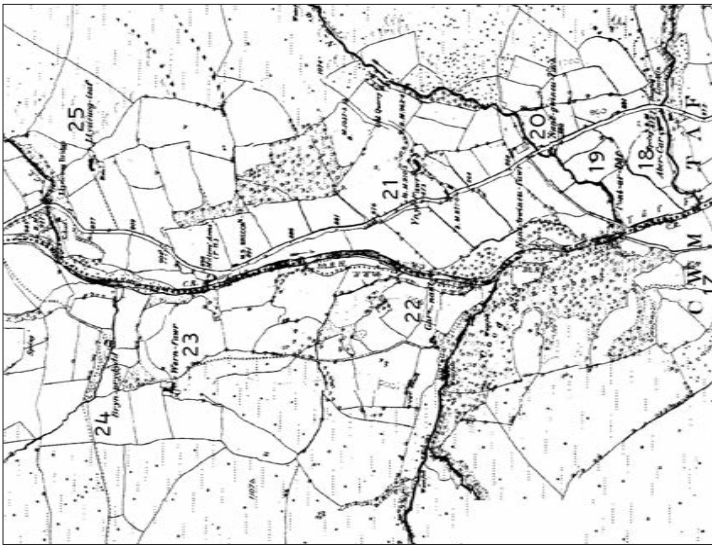


Map 1 Southernmost part of Cwmrtá, showing location of holdings 1 to 16.

The drowning of Cwmtâf



Map 3 Northernmost part of Cwmtâf, showing location of holdings 25–36. Holding 37 was approximately 0.5 km north of holding 35.



Map 2 Middle section of Cwmtâf, showing location of holdings 17–25.

APPENDIX 2

Occupants of former farms in Cwmtâf:

Brynprydydd – Evan Davies – 1854–1932 (later of Penwern Llanspyddid). Evan Davies was born at Pwlldu on the Eppynt. At the age of 14 or so he moved to Cwmtâf to work as a shepherd. He married Emma, moved to Brynprydydd, and had 10 children, the three youngest being Hilda (born 1902), Llywel (born 1903) and Enid (born 1904). Evan and Emma moved from Cwmtâf in 1906 to take on the tenancy of Penwern, Llanspyddid, purchasing the freehold of Penwern at an auction in Brecon in 1927. Llywel married Mary Jones, they had five daughters all born at Penwern where descendants of the family still live today. One of the five daughters, County Councillor Mrs Gill Thomas, was Chairman of Powys County Council 2006–2007.

Richard Harris of Hepste Fawr, Penderyn, married Hannah Davies sister of Llywel, in 1920 and moved to Brynprydydd in 1923, later moving to Wernfigin, Trallwng. Hannah died in 1986 aged 96 years.³²

Garwnant (now the Forest Centre for The Forestry Commission/Natural Resources Wales) was the home of Mr & Mrs Albert Drinkwater and their daughter Marjorie who later moved to Lower Chapel, Brecon. Jack Morse (see main text) gained a great interest in farming by spending much of his free time at this farm. Previous occupants of Garwnant (recorded as Garnant on the gravestones) were Thomas and Margaret Jenkins who lost 12 children to diphtheria in the 1870s not all the dates are recorded on the gravestone, the first aged 2 years died on 24 March 1872.

Penpont – Septimus Jenkins – 1846–1916 – lived at Penpont all his life. He was the seventh child the previous six being recorded on the grave stone as: 6, 4 and 7 years respectively the other three in infancy. He was for many years a faithful member of Old and New Bethel Chapel and Codw'r Canu (Leader of the Singing). Both his children, Mary and Hugh, predeceased him aged 15 and 20 years respectively.³³

Penrheol – The Morgan family lived here from the 1880s being members of both old Bethel and New Bethel Chapels. Morgan Morgans 1891 Census, Daniel and Gwennlian Morgan, 1901 Census, and Daniel, Gwennlian, Evan and Elizabeth Morgan 1911 Census. Evan was the first Treasurer of New Bethel Chapel.

The drouning of Cwmtdf

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APPENDIX 3

Record of the five tenancies involved in the lease of land to MAFF for the purpose of establishing conifer plantations.

<i>Date of Tenancy Agreement</i>	<i>Tenants</i>	<i>Property</i>	<i>Area in acres</i>	<i>Yearly Rent</i>
24th July 1943	William Richards and David William Richards	Wern Fawr Farm	383.5	£97.10s.0d
10th Feb 1941	Thomas Rees Evans	Neuadd Farm	290.7	£111
20th March 1947	William Richards and David William Richards	Glanyrafan (sic) Farm	271.8	£55
29th October 1935	Mary Roberts	Fedw Farm	383.4	£110
31st December 1935	William Rees Evans	Coed Owen Farm	455.7	£106. 12s.6d

Notes

- ¹ Personal Communication Mrs A Thomas (1907–2004) Resident of Cwmtâf until 1950.
- ² Gillian M. Bale, 'Cultural Changes in Cwmtâf – 1840–1957, Cefn Coed and Vaynor Local History Society' 1957 30 pp.
- ³ Priestley, C. H. Cardiff Corporation Waterworks 1923, Cardiff, *Western Mail* limited 96 pp.
- ⁴ Anon, 1850–1950 The Centenary of the Cardiff Corporation Waterworks 30 pp.
- ⁵ Unidentifiable piece of newsprint pasted into the Llanspyddid C.P School Log Book.
- ⁶ Gillian Bale, op. cit., p. 3.
- ⁷ The Tithe Map of Vaynor Parish 1840.
- ⁸ *Merthyr Express* July 4th 1914. Article Entitled 'Cwmtâf Past and Present Interesting Diary – Prosperous Old Time Farmers'.
- ⁹ Personal Communication Baden Rees and David Sivell – Coedowen October 21 2013.
- ¹⁰ It was the Croyden typhoid epidemic of the 1930s that led to the ban on cattle – Gillian Bale op. cit., p. 10.
- ¹¹ Personal communication David Sivell and Baden Rees – Coedowen October 21 2013.
- ¹² Personal Communication Dilwyn John – Coedowen October 21 2013.
- ¹³ Jones, S. R. and Smith J. T. 'The Houses of Breconshire Part VI – The Vaynor District: Long-houses and their derivatives, *Brycheiniog* 16, p. 8.
- ¹⁴ Personal communication R Watkins – November 27 2013.
- ¹⁵ Personal communication Mrs Freda Pugh – November 27 2013.
- ¹⁶ Jones, S. R. and Smith J. T. 'The Houses of Breconshire Part VI – The Vaynor District: Gentry Houses, *Brycheiniog* 16, pp. 27 and 30.
- ¹⁷ Personal Communication David Sivell – Coedowen October 21 2013.
- ¹⁸ Gillian Bale op.cit., p. 18.
- ¹⁹ Personal communication with David Sivell – Coedowen October 21 2013.
- ²⁰ Bowen, Elwyn, 'Vaynor, a study of the Welsh Countryside', 1992, p. 59.
- ²¹ Anon, op. cit., p. 19.
- ²² Information received from Bernard Morse, Langford, Beds – son of Jack Morse.
- ²³ Personal Communication, Paul Dann, Natural Resources Wales, Llandoverly Office.
- ²⁴ Davies, David (Dewi Cynon), *Hanes Plwyf Penderyn* (History of Penderyn Parish), 1905, p. 97.
- ²⁵ Bethel Chapel records.
- ²⁶ Gillian Bale op. cit., p. 9.
- ²⁷ Theophilus Jones, 'A History of the County of Brecknockshire, Vol Four Cantreff or Cantref', 1905. Page 49 describes Queen Anne's Bounty – a fund established in 1704 to augment the incomes of the poorer clergy in the Church of England (which included Wales). The bounty was funded by the tax on the incomes of all Church of England clergy.
- ²⁸ Morgan, W. 'The Illustrated Vaynor Handbook – History and Folk Lore of the Parish'. Pant 1893, p. 46.
- ²⁹ Rev Bev John, Vicar, at Cefn Coed and Mrs Margaret Griffiths – Church Records.
- ³⁰ *Merthyr Telegraph and General Advertiser*, 25th August 1866.
- ³¹ Llanspyddid CP School Log Book.
- ³² Personal Communication Terry Evans, Sutton Coldfield.
- ³³ Personal Communication William John Harris, Crai January 14 2014.
- ³⁴ Bethel Chapel records and gravestone in churchyard.

FINDINGS FROM THE BRECON TO TIRLEY GAS PIPELINE – ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES WITHIN WALES

Introduction

Between 2005 and 2012 National Grid oversaw the construction of the 316 km long Milford Haven to Tirley Gas Connection scheme. The pipeline was divided into three separate construction projects: Milford Haven to Aberdulais, Felindre to Brecon, and Brecon to Tirley. Part of the programme involved a monitoring of the archaeological sites affected by this operation and we describe here studies conducted by Network Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Murphy Pipeline Ltd. along that part of the pipeline that lies between Brecon and the Powys county boundary near Hay-on-Wye.

The construction process involved the removal of topsoil from within the pipeline easement, typically 44m in width, and excavation of the pipe trench (typically 2m wide), to a minimum of 1.2m below the modern ground surface, along the entire length of that scheme. Prior to this, a desk based assessment, field reconnaissance survey, field walking survey, geophysical survey, targeted metal detector survey and trench evaluations were also conducted along the entire pipeline route. The reports detailing the findings of these elements of work have been deposited within the HER-Maintained by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT), and can be viewed online via the OASIS (On Line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) website. Beyond the pipeline itself, the scheme required the establishment of a number of access roads and both temporary and permanent structures to enable the construction and management of the pipeline. All of this work was subjected to archaeological monitoring and, where necessary, excavation under the auspices of an agreed Archaeological Framework Document, which formed part of the generic written scheme of investigation for the project.¹

The Brecon to Tirley pipeline (Figure 1) crossed Powys from just north of Brecon, near Llandefaelog Fach, from where it climbed northeast toward Llandefalle and Ponde Common, then descended to Llyswen. From here it followed the Wye valley to Hay-on-Wye, where it crossed into England at Cusop. Along this section of the pipeline route five sites were investigated (Figure 2 – Sites 49, 110, 111, 111a and 160), whilst the watching brief discovered 28 further small areas of archaeological activity. These smaller areas predominantly comprised field boundaries and probable tree clearance of indeterminate date, and are hence not discussed in detail in this article. Two of them, however, were of greater significance – a spread of burnt human bone northeast of Llaneglwys (Plot 60) and some possible prehistoric pitting on the hill west of Llyswen (Plot 74/75). Summaries of these two smaller findings are included with the site summaries below. The remainder are summarised in the post-excavation assessment report.²

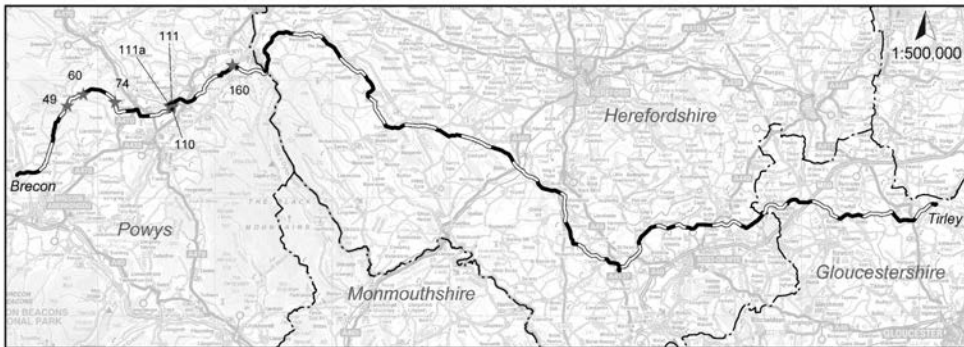


Figure 1 Location plan 1:500,000.

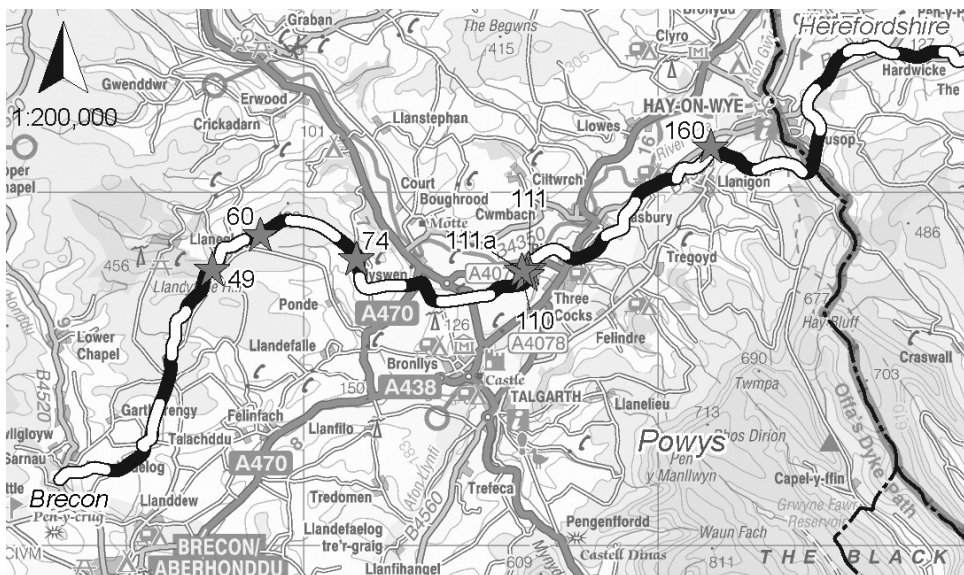


Figure 2 Location of pipeline in Powys 1:200,00.

A full technical account of the findings is presented in the Analysis report on the work,³ which can be accessed via the HER detailed above, and viewed online via the OASIS website. This article presents the results of the analysis of all phases of work within Powys as part of the pipeline construction.

Site Summaries

In this section we have adopted a convention whereby cut features are identified by numbers in bold typeface, whilst deposits are identified by numbers in plain type.

Werntoe Farm, Powys (Plot 49: NGR 30735 23785)**Background**

The site (Figure 3) was located next to a fork in the road opposite Werntoe Farm, near Llangoed and Llandefalle Common in Powys. The site was positioned on a moderate southwest facing slope, ranging in height from 344m to 348m OD. The Desk Based Assessment identified the existence of two post-medieval buildings, collectively known as Pen Yr Heol Emion House near the location, and earthworks representing the remains of a probable housing platform were also identified.⁴ The geophysical survey revealed several anomalies, identified as ‘possible linear features: cultivation’ similar to all the fields to either side of the plot, and as such no evaluation trenches were targeted over these geophysical anomalies.⁵

A post-medieval structure complex was discovered during the watching brief phase of the pipeline construction. This comprised wall foundations and flagged

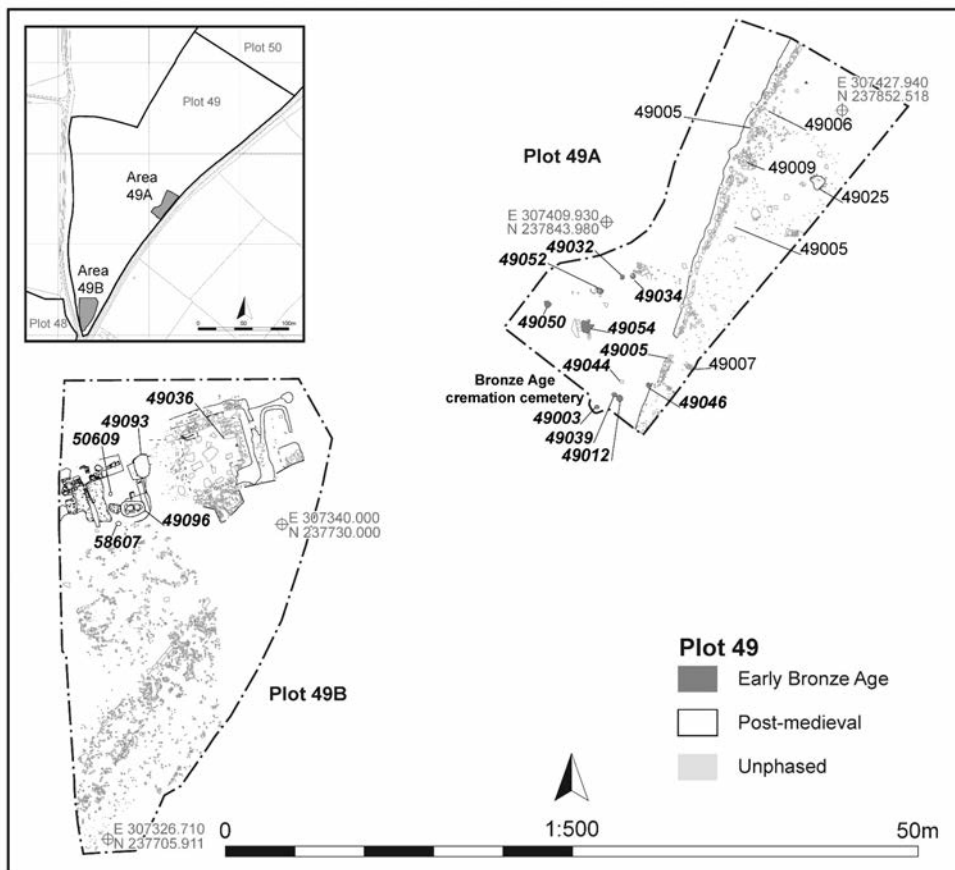


Figure 3 Phased plan of plot 49 (Llangoed, Powys).

stone floor surfaces, together with a metalled surface which may have been a yard or barn floor, and a possible well. Several urned and un-urned Bronze Age cremations were also discovered on the same site.

Phase 1 – Early Bronze Age (c.2200BC–1300BC)

Bronze Age activity on the site appears to be limited to a small cremation cemetery comprising eight pits in total, clustered around a sandstone outcrop and occupying an area 13m in diameter. The pits were no more than 0.5m in diameter, and averaged 0.1–0.2m deep, generally with a cremation fill and a capping backfill similar to the native subsoil. Three of the cremations were contained in urns, most notably in the case of **49050**, where the urn survived well enough to be visibly inverted. Cremation **49003** contained at least two urns, though both were heavily fragmented. All of the urns have been identified as early Bronze Age collared urns, though the two more complete urns, from **49050** and **49052** suggested a typologically later date, belonging to Longworth's secondary series and Burgess' late series. The urn from cremation **49050** had a use wear that pointed strongly to domestic usage, as it bore charred residue typical of starchy food, suggesting that the urn was not specifically created for the purpose of disposal of the dead, but had previously been utilised for cooking prior to being used to contain the cremated material. Only the bone from **49050** survived in sufficient quantities and preservation to be definably human, though analysis of this material was unable to identify the age or sex of the individual interred.

As the cremations seem to vary in style and content, it is suggested that the cemetery may have spanned a significant period throughout the Bronze Age and represented a number of funerary styles as traditions changed. In order to determine whether this is the case a radiocarbon date was established for one of the un-urned cremations, from pit **49034**, which returned a calibrated date of 1950 B.C. \pm 70 years, putting it within the early to middle Bronze Age and indicating that the lifespan of the cemetery may have been fairly long if the typological assessment of the pottery forms as closer to 1300BC is accurate, though the specialist comments that 'the Collared Urns were only partially preserved and so all comments on form must be made with reservation.'

Bronze Age cremation cemeteries are not uncommon in the uplands of Powys, and are perceived as a continuation of Neolithic funerary practices in the area. However, few collared urns have been retrieved from the Brecon area, though the surrounding landscape is richly littered with early Bronze Age sites and artefacts. The lack of a visible cemetery marker, such as a cairn, is by no means unusual, though given the exposed situation of the site any such marker may well have long since eroded or been removed, as unmarked cemeteries tend to be a feature of the later Bronze Age. A study on early Bronze Age funerary and ritual sites within the Severn valley, showed that although a good range of early Bronze

Age vessel types had been recovered from excavations along the valley, sites containing Collared Urns appeared to be restricted to upland cairns, such as Carneddau Cairn, Montgomeryshire.⁶

Roughly central to the cremation cemetery was a larger, ninth pit **49054** which contained similar burnt material, but lacked the evidence of burnt bone or pot. It measured 0.8m in diameter and was 0.33m deep. During assessment it was unclear as to whether this pit might have been related to the cremation cemetery or whether it related to the later post-medieval activity on the site. In order to ascertain its nature a radiocarbon date of its burnt fill was obtained, dating the feature to 2085 B.C. +/- 150 years. As such, it is considered probable that the pit was dug for the disposal of excess fuel-ash from the earlier funerary rituals. The presence of charred grain amongst those fills, which does not appear in the cremations themselves, might indicate that this pit also served for disposal of funerary feasts that accompanied the cremations.

Phase 2 – Post-Medieval (1500AD–1900AD)

Towards the eastern end of the site, northeast of the cremation cemetery, stood the foundations of a 28m long 0.3m high stone-and-turf wall (49005) which appears to continue into an adjacent field (to the east) where an L-shaped earthwork was observed, possibly suggesting a return to this boundary. As the two fields are separated by a road, it is impossible to say for certain that they are the same structure. A smooth cobbled surface, 8.7m wide, was exposed immediately east of the wall foundations. This may have represented either a barn and associated yard surface, or a walled yard. Set within this floor was a small stone lined pit; no finds were recovered from this feature nor could a definitive purpose be assigned to it.

A second structure was located a little downhill of the possible barn, at 344m Above Ordnance Datum, which appeared to be the remains of a small farmhouse, with a footprint of about 23m² (49036), incorporating a paved floor and possible hearth. Large amounts of post-medieval pottery, glass and iron objects (mostly horse trappings) were recovered from within the structure, in addition to roof slate, window glass and window leading. These finds, along with the cobbled yards and substantial walls, indicate that this was intended as more than a temporary shelter, despite its comparatively small size, and may have been part of a larger farm complex, probably relating to the Pen Yr Heol Einion House site mentioned in the Desk Based Assessment. To the east of the farmhouse were a number of linear gully features groups, thought to be contemporary with the farm house and to be representative of drainage features. A patchy metalled track appears to link the possible farmhouse and barn, bounded in places by a stone kerb. Near the western boundary of the plot were two large sub-oval pits (49096 and 49093). These were interpreted as rubbish pits as they contained a large quantity of domestic refuse. A soil sample taken from one of these produced

a small quantity of burnt material that appeared to have derived from burnt flooring or bedding material, suggesting that these pits were in use at the same time as the farmhouse, or were possibly in use during the demolition of the property. Two postholes (58607 and 58609) were located close to the sides of pit **49096** which suggested some sort of contemporary structure.

Coins were recovered from four separate deposits throughout the post-medieval structures, including a George III penny (from the third issue, 1799) found on the cobbled surface; a George III halfpenny (from the first issue, 1770–1772) from pit **49093**; what appeared to be an Irish George II halfpenny (1726–1760) from pit **49096**; and a James II halfpenny (1685–1688) from the subsoil layer covering some of the demolition debris from structure 49036.

Llaneglwys, Powys (Plot 60: NGR 308791 238861)

Background

This smaller site was located 2.6km east of Llaneglwys, 1.1km south of Rhiwiau and 1.9km north of Pentrenewbury, in Powys.

Early Bronze Age

The watching brief uncovered a spread of burnt bone, located toward the south eastern side of the plot. This layer was amorphous in plan with an uncertain extent and lay directly below the topsoil.

Assessment of the bone revealed it to be human, and may be suggestive of the scattering of ashes. The material was dated by Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) to the early Bronze Age, probably around 1850 BC, though analysis of the recovered bone did not provide any insights into the age, sex or nature of the individual, or individuals, cremated. The material was discovered during the removal of the modern field boundary, and was not near to any known or suspected settlement sites.

Llyswen, Powys (Plots 74–75: NGR 311480 238167 and 311530 237980)

Background

This smaller site was in actuality two separate discoveries in relatively close proximity to each other. The first was located 1.8km west of Llyswen, and 1.7km west of the River Wye, in Powys, whilst the second was located 1.7km west of Llyswen and the River Wye, and 500m north of Maesgwyr, in Powys .

The pits

The watching brief discovered a single, isolated, archaeological feature toward the centre of the western plot – a probable hearth, lined with heat-affected sandstone. Unfortunately no archaeological finds were discovered within the feature.

About 100m to the southeast the watching brief also uncovered two further pits: The smaller of these contained heat affected stone but no other finds, and

was interpreted as a waste pit. The larger was considerably more substantial, measuring 3.50m long, 2.2m wide and 0.40m deep. The pit contained two fills, the earlier of which produced fragments of pottery dated as 'earlier prehistoric', though no more accurate date could be ascribed. A palaeoenvironmental sample of the upper fill indicated it was most likely deposition of hearth waste. Whilst the exact function of either of these pits is not clear, they may have been used for the disposal of domestic waste and as such be indicative of earlier prehistoric settlement on the hill above Llyswen. Given the presence of hearth waste in the larger pit, and the presence of a hearth not far to the northwest, it seems possible that the two discoveries were related.

Pipton, Powys (Plot 110: NGR 31629 23774)

Background

The site (Figure 4) was located immediately south of a disused railway approximately 450m southwest of Pipton Farm, roughly 1km west of Aberllynfi, in Powys. It was at the base of a hill, on a river terrace of the river Wye.

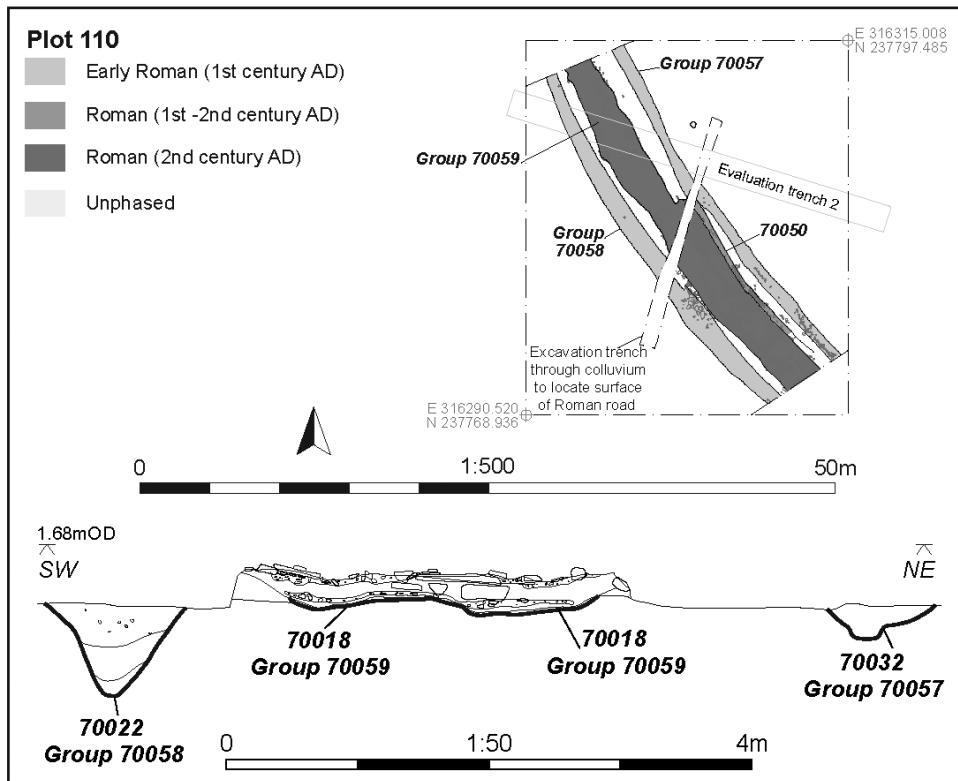


Figure 4 Phased plan and section of road, plot 110 (Pipton, Powys).

The Desk Based Assessment identified the presence of six Bronze Age ring ditches forming part of the Spread Eagle funerary landscape, and a post medieval or modern field system within the adjacent plot. An aerial photograph showed what appeared to be two parallel lines to the north-west, which was interpreted as a possible cursus monument associated with the Spread Eagle site. The geophysical survey revealed several anomalies,⁷ based on which two evaluation trenches were targeted on this plot. These revealed evidence of tree clearance in the northern end of trench 1 and a paved surface flanked by ditches, together with a pit containing burnt animal bone, in trench 2.⁸ Based on these findings it was decided that the area around trench 2 would be opened up for archaeological excavation in advance of construction.

The excavation identified a metalled Roman road, with what appeared to be several episodes of construction and maintenance, which ran NW-SE across the site, and continued in both directions under a protective layer of subsoil and colluvium. Dating based on the finds recovered suggested that the road was in use between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The road was flanked by two roadside drainage ditches, whilst a small number of discrete features were located nearby and may have been associated.

Early Roman (1st Century AD)

The dominant feature of the site was a NW-SE stretch of paved road exposed for 29m across the working width of the pipeline. The road curved northward at its north-western extent. To the northwest it appeared to have been cut into the hillside, and subsequently buried by colluvium. The earliest road surface was laid within a shallow cut (**70018**). Within this a series of four make-up deposits were built up to form a camber. Over the top of these was set a metalled stone surface of poor quality, comprising mainly small to medium stones with only a few larger cobbles, though the original surface may have been robbed to provide stones for later surfaces.

To the southwest of the road, and parallel with it, was a ditch (**70058**). It was wider and deeper to the northwest (averaging 1.15m wide and 0.75m deep), where a greater depth of colluvium had helped preserve it. Here, the ditch had two fills, neither of which contained finds, whilst the central portion of the ditch revealed three deposits, again lacking in finds. At its south-easternmost extent the ditch contained just one deposit which also produced no finds. There appeared to be no consistency between these deposits which suggested a piecemeal backfilling of the ditch rather than a single event that affected a wide area. On the northeast side of the road was a smaller ditch (**70057**). This disparity in size with **70058** may be due to heavier truncation as **70057** lay further downhill and so was afforded less protection by colluvium, or it may have been deliberately designed this way in antiquity, as the up-slope ditch would be expected to have experienced greater quantities of run-off from the hill slope. As with ditch **70058**

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there was no homogeneity to the fills, and it also seemed likely that it was filled in piecemeal fashion.

The two parallel cropmarks seen on an aerial photograph of the site taken in the mid 20th century which were interpreted as a possible cursus relating to the nearby Spread Eagle funerary landscape, are likely in fact to be the vestiges of the roadside ditches continuing to the northwest and southeast. The area to the north of the road site, where the road continued, and where the aerial photograph shows the parallel lines as running, was not impacted during the construction of the pipeline, and as such the presence, or absence, of the road in that field could not be ascertained. However, the photograph clearly shows the parallel lines entering the area of the Three Cocks mobilisation yard (see below – Plot 111a) in an area that was investigated, and no road was discovered here, though during the evaluation of that plot a ditch was identified at the very eastern end of the evaluated area, and this may have been a surviving roadside ditch. If so the road itself appears to have been entirely truncated at this point.



Plate 1 This photograph shows the Pipton Roman road as it curves northward towards the river Wye. In the foreground, before the baulk, are the patchy remains of the earliest road agger, whilst beyond the baulk can be seen the later road surface, with the ditches to either side.

Roman (c.1st/2nd century AD)

During this period the road was re-surfaced with a second surface which survived only patchily. A Romano-British T-shaped copper alloy brooch, of a kind notably found around the Severn estuary and dating from the 1st or 2nd century AD, was found on top of this new stone surface.

From roughly the mid-point of the exposed road there appeared to be evidence of an additional small drainage gully (70050), which ran on a NW-SE alignment down the eastern side of the roadway. It is likely that this feature represented natural erosion along the edge of the roadway – which had apparently undergone periodic repair. The evidence suggested that the road fell into disuse toward the end of the 1st century AD and into the early part of the 2nd century AD, gradually becoming covered in a natural deposit of colluvial material perhaps indicating a decline in the importance of the route, or possibly a shift in the course of the river Wye which made this particular crossing impractical.

Roman (c.2nd century AD)

Directly over the colluvial material, and the silting of the secondary drainage gully which probably only had a very brief lifespan, was laid the final cobbled road surface (Group 70059), from amongst which were gathered twenty-six 1st and 2nd century Roman potsherds, along with a pair of residual Mesolithic flints, probably transported unintentionally together with the road stone. Amongst the potsherds were fourteen Baetican olive oil amphorae fragments, imported from Southern Spain, perhaps indicating that the road was once again being used for trade of imported items.

Unphased

To the north of ditch **70057** was a small sub-circular feature. Its single fill was rich in charcoal, and assessment of the material suggested it was charcoal and charred wood from a single episode of burning. This feature may have been related to an animal cremation pit uncovered to the south during the evaluation of the plot, though no burnt bone was recovered from amongst the burnt material, and no date could be ascribed to either feature. Lacking any stratigraphical relationship with the other features on site, the pit remains unphased.

Spread Eagle Funerary Landscape, Aberllynfi, Powys (Plot 111: NGR 31635 23792)***Background***

The site (Figure 5) was located immediately north of a disused railway, approximately 400m southwest of Pipton Farm, roughly 1km west of Aberllynfi in Powys. It was situated on a river terrace of the river Wye, alongside the A4079.

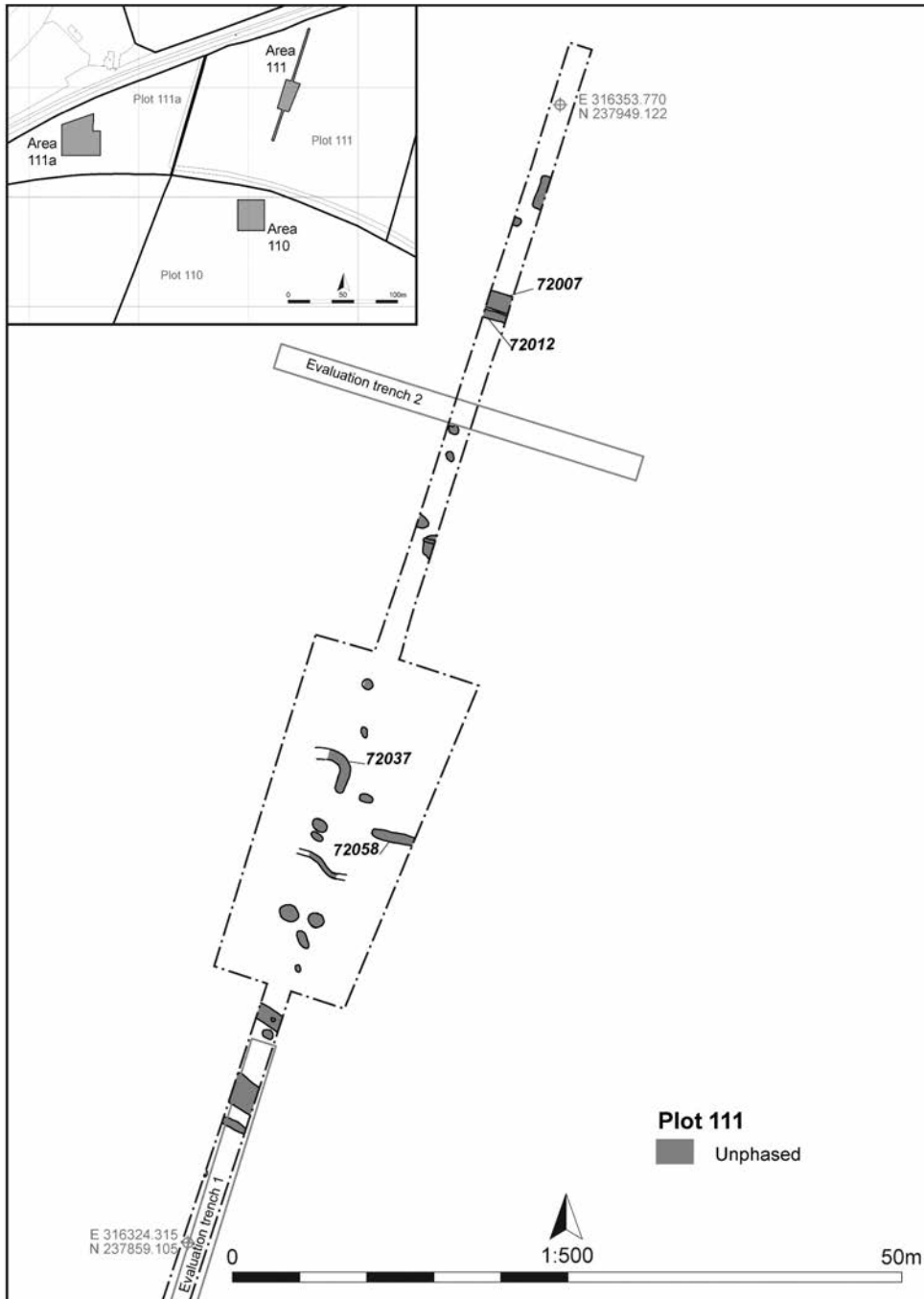


Figure 5 Phased plan of plot 111 (Spread Eagle, Powys).

The Desk Based Assessment identified the presence of six Bronze Age ring ditches forming part of the Spread Eagle funerary landscape, and a post medieval or modern field system within the plot.⁹ Evaluation of the plot was largely inconclusive, but given the potential highlighted by the Desk Based Assessment it was decided that a controlled strip of the entire plot should be undertaken.

Results

The controlled strip of the topsoil within the plot revealed a plot-wide homogenous layer of colluvial subsoil, which averaged 0.2m thick. In order to investigate this layer a 2m wide trench was excavated along the entire line of the pipe trench in advance of construction. This trench was then widened where features were discovered which warranted further study.

A total of 25 features were revealed within this trench, but only three produced any form of diagnostic material and a lack of stratigraphic relationships meant that the site resisted useful phasing; the majority appeared likely to represent natural or tree clearance related features. Three clear ditches were revealed (**72007**, **72012** and **72058**), though none of them contained any datable material, and all of them were interpreted as probable former field boundaries. A fourth linear feature had an irregular, meandering course suggesting that it might have been a naturally occurring water-worn channel. A fragment of a curvilinear ditch feature (**72037**) was also seen, which contained three flint flakes, including a shattered distal flake, though none of these could be dated. The location of this feature could not be correlated with any of the ring ditches as seen on the aerial photographs, but it was possible that this ditch formed part of a ring ditch associated with the Spread Eagle funerary landscape.

The majority of the pits uncovered were irregular, indistinct and amorphous features averaging between 0.2 and 0.7m in diameter and ranging from 0.05 to 0.5m in depth. These appeared to be most likely related to tree clearance, although three of them produced likely residual flint flakes of a probable Mesolithic or Neolithic date.

Three Cocks (Aberllynfi) (Plot 111a: NGR 31615 23785)

Background

This site (Figure 6) sat in the field to the west of the Spread Eagle Funerary Landscape (see above). It was located immediately north of a disused railway, approximately 450m southwest of Pipton Farm, roughly 1km west of Aberllynfi in Powys. It was at the base of a hill, on a river terrace of the river Wye, just south of the A4079.

The Desk Based Assessment identified the presence of six Bronze Age ring ditches forming part of the Spread Eagle funerary landscape, and a post medieval or modern field system within the vicinity. An aerial photograph from the University of Cambridge shows two parallel lines, which may represent the

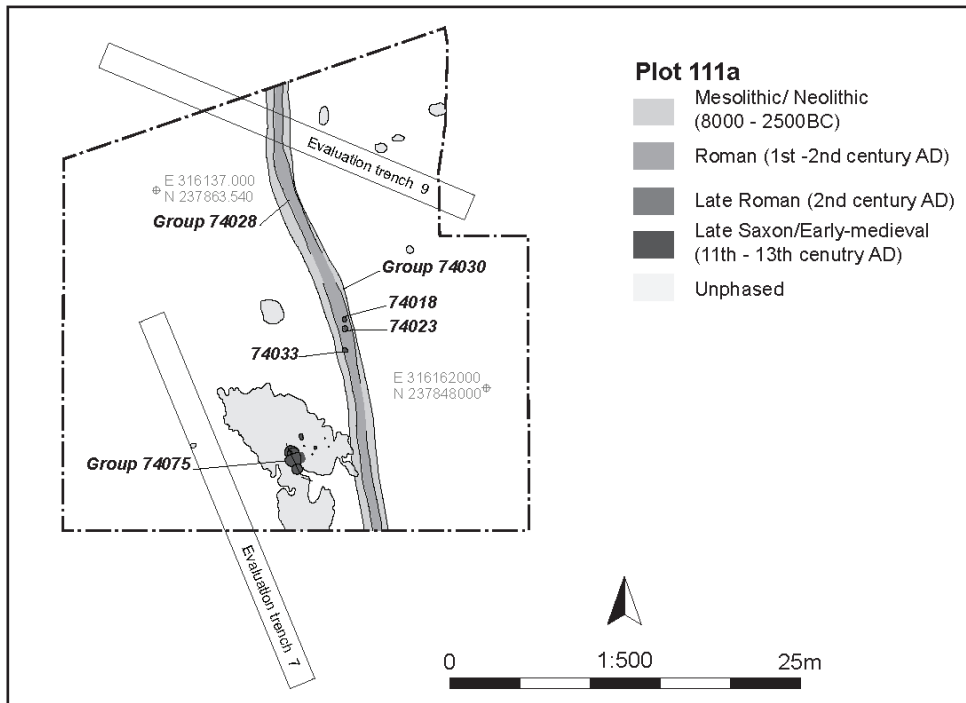


Figure 6 Phased plan of plot 111a (Pipton II, Powys).

Roman road discovered to the southeast (see above), continuing into the northeast corner of this plot.¹⁰ No geophysical survey was conducted on this plot, so a programme of trenching was devised to evaluate the plot comprehensively.¹¹ As such fifteen trenches were proposed, but the area available was reduced and only thirteen trenches were excavated. The majority of these trenches were either empty or revealed naturally formed features such as alluvial layers, interpreted at the time as individual palaeo-channels, or tree boles. Feature **74030** eventually recognised in the excavation, was not initially recognised as a genuine archaeological feature in the evaluation, despite being located within the bounds Trench 9. Trench 15, however, located in the north-eastern corner of the plot, contained a ditch at the eastern end of the trench, and whilst no finds were retrieved from either of the fills, this feature was interpreted as a possible continuation of one of the road-side ditches from the Roman road to the southeast (Plot 110). Despite the poor evaluation results, given the potential of the overall area it was decided that a controlled strip of the plot in advance of construction would be an appropriate mitigation strategy.

This revealed a large Roman boundary ditch, probably a field boundary, which divided this area. A gravel spread slightly overlying the earliest phase of

this boundary may indicate that a metallised occupation surface was constructed against this boundary at a later point. Below this spread were a cluster of fire pits and postholes cut into what appeared to be a prehistoric occupation layer, which may relate to the neighbouring Spread Eagle site. A number of irregular natural features of unknown date were also located around the site.

Mesolithic/Neolithic (8000BC–2500BC)

The earliest feature on site was a mixed buried soil layer. Excavations through these deposits showed them to be interleaved lenses forming a single layer. Finds were recovered from all the investigations, including crumbs of pottery that could not be dated, fifteen undated flints, seven Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flint flakes and three undated sherds of undecorated quartz-filled pottery. The latter fabric type is commonly found in pottery dating to the middle Neolithic and late Bronze Age.

It is useful to remember that undisturbed substrate was not located in plot 111a, as the construction works there were solely for the establishment of a mobilisation yard. As such only topsoil was removed. It is quite possible, therefore, that early elements of the Spread Eagle landscape remain preserved beneath this layer, and only the later ring ditches and Roman activity was visible as cropmarks.

Roman (1st–2nd Century AD)

Splitting the excavation area roughly in two was a broadly N-S ditch **74030**, 31m in length, averaging 1.3m wide and 0.6m deep, that weaved along its course, but broadly aligned NW-SE. The single fill of the ditch produced two sherds of Roman Severn valley ware and a fragment of unfinished shale bracelet, possibly originating from Dorset and brought to the site for finishing. The latter had parallels with similar bracelets found in Iron Age contexts in Somerset, though shale bracelets were also made during the Roman period. The ditch was interpreted as a field boundary, though a reasonably substantial one.

Later Roman (2nd Century AD+)

After boundary ditch **74030** had fallen into disuse and largely filled, it was apparently re-cut, or, more likely, a second, smaller, boundary ditch **74028** was excavated along the same alignment to re-establish the former field boundary. As **74028** followed the alignment of **74030** exactly, including its slight weaving, it was highly probable that the line of the earlier boundary was still visible to some extent. The fill of this ditch contained four small sherds of Roman Severn valley ware and a Neolithic flint core trimming flake.

Medieval (11th–13th century AD)

A group of five intercutting pits and a posthole (group **74075**) were excavated toward the southern end of the excavation area. Some of these pits were

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substantial – the largest measured 1.5m x 0.9m, though none was more than 0.31m deep – whilst the postholes averaged around 0.3m in diameter and less than 0.2m deep. Though these pits are clearly not contemporaneous, with each one apparently replacing the one before it after it had been backfilled, they have been grouped together as their nature and dating suggest a relatively confined time spectrum in which they were utilised. The pits contained a considerable quantity of charcoal, along with a small number of Neolithic and Mesolithic tools. As such the pits were initially interpreted as evidence of prehistoric activity on the site, possibly relating to the neighbouring Spread Eagle funerary landscape. However, radiocarbon dating of the charcoal from the pits revealed the date from the earliest pit to be 1095 AD +/- 75 years whilst that from the latest was 1120 AD +/- 90 years indicating a probable medieval date for the pitting. Assessment of the environmental samples from the pits suggested they were utilised for the disposal of burnt domestic waste, probably cooking waste. To the east of group **74075** was a collection of five discrete postholes and a group of stakeholes, though no obvious structure or pattern could be discerned from their location.

All of these features were sealed by a layer of brown silt sand and frequent gravels which also lay over a small part of the Roman ditch **74030**. Amongst the gravels were an undated flint flake and a single sherd of Roman Severn valley ware. It may have been a deliberate attempt to lay hard standing up to the boundary to the east, though this presumes the boundary was still extant into and beyond the medieval period, or it may have been a colluvial or alluvial deposit as the area was subjected to frequent flooding and standing water, even during excavation.

The fill of the later Roman boundary ditch **74028** was cut by three postholes (**74018**, **74023** and **74033**). Of these only the latter produced any finds: two undated flints. All three were interpreted as postholes, and the similarity in their natures suggested they were either part of the same feature, or were three consecutive attempts to achieve the same purpose, though this seemed unlikely. The three posts formed a line, perhaps indicating that they were a later demarcation of a similar boundary, though no other postholes survive along their alignment to corroborate that. This, however, may be due to the fact that the ditch fills would have provided less sturdy foundations for a post than the surrounding clays, and as such where the post-line crossed the ditch the posts were set much deeper to ensure stability. No exact date could be ascertained for these postholes, as the flint finds were clearly residual, but their stratigraphic relationship might indicate a contemporaneity with the smaller postholes discovered to the southwest.

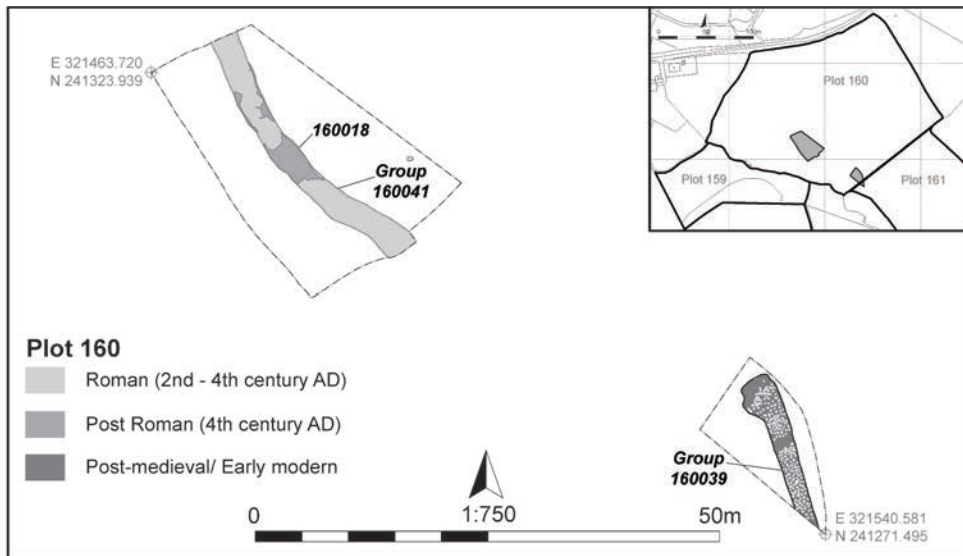


Figure 7 Phased plan of plot 160 (Hay-on-Wye, Powys).

Pen-y-Maes, Powys (Plot 160: NGR 32150 24135)

Background

The site (Figure 7) lay to the southeast of Pen-y-Maes in Powys, near Hay-on-Wye, on roughly flat terrain at 101m OD. The site was located just to the north of a small stream.

The plot lay on a re-route of the pipeline, for which a separate Desk Based Assessment was undertaken.¹² This showed no features of interest in the vicinity. The geophysical survey of this plot identified a wide curving linear feature which was interpreted as a natural feature due to its close proximity to the stream, and extremely strong geophysical response. As such no evaluation trenches were targeted over it,¹³ and the site was not identified until during construction.

Two areas of archaeological interest were discovered during the watching brief phase on the site. To the north of the stream was a large, multi-phase Roman ditch and to the southeast of that was a post-medieval pottery dump and stone trackway.

Roman I (2nd Century AD–4th Century AD)

Towards the western end of the site, just north of the small stream, was a large curvilinear ditch (**160041**) oriented broadly NW-SE and measuring 3m wide by 1m deep. Roughly 33m of the ditch was exposed. The ditch contained four fills, all of which included Roman pottery, abundant charcoal and slag. A single fragment of possibly later prehistoric pottery was recovered from the upper fill, but this was certainly residual. The lower fills contained material likely to be hearth sweepings.

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The slag recovered was indicative of domestic hearth linings. The large quantity of pottery found also hinted at substantial related occupation; however no structural remains were identified to either side of the ditch.

Only one feature was uncovered within the area to the north of the curvilinear ditch, this was a small pit containing 3rd century AD pottery, abundant charcoal and coal fragments. There was also a small amount of ferrous globules and hammerscale identified during an assessment of the deposit which indicated the presence of hearth or forge waste.

The size of the large, slightly curving, ditch suggested that it functioned as a substantial boundary, possibly as the stream to the south was small and easily passable. In the field immediately to the northwest of the plot some substantial earthworks were noted, though whether these were of archaeological or natural origin could not be determined during the course of this project as they lay beyond the scope of works. The pottery recovered from the Roman sub-phases of occupation, whilst a relatively small assemblage of 205 sherds, was quite diverse, including examples of fabrics not found elsewhere on the Brecon to Tirley pipeline, such as imported Moselle black-slipped ware, Southwest white-slipped ware and Mancetter-Hartshill mortaria. Most of the pottery assemblage was made up of jars and flagons (86.4% between them), with a smaller number of dishes, tankards and mortaria, and a single bowl. The assemblage is fairly indicative of domestic occupation on the site, and of one with moderate trade connections and longevity from the 2nd century AD through to the later 3rd/4th century AD, with the greater emphasis on the later Roman period.

A re-visiting of the geophysical survey data for the plot following excavation seems to suggest that further features lay outside the scope of the pipeline excavations, notably linears to the west and east of the excavated easement and a possible 'L' shaped feature to the southeast.

Roman III/Post-Roman (4th century AD+)

A small area of the Roman I phase ditch (above) suggested a later phase of occupation. Once the ditch had largely filled up a small area of it was truncated, and a layer of flat, compacted stones, was deposited (160018). The purpose of this deposit remained unclear; though it may have been a type of levelling layer because the deposits that filled the Roman I phase ditch were too soft to be easily traversed or constructed upon, and so the stone was laid to form a hard standing over the softer ground. Curiously, ceramic evidence from amongst these stones dated from the 1st or 2nd century AD, predating the ditch they cover, which suggested that the stones may have been re-used from an earlier construction nearby, and that the pottery was transported along with them accidentally as part of the make-up material. It is possible, therefore, that these stones were robbed from an abandoned structure associated with the ditch, or at least from the near vicinity. The ditch followed the same alignment as the nearby stream

suggesting that the stone layer may have been related to the crossing of an early stream course. Given the residual nature of the finds from this deposit, it was impossible to be certain of the date of this possible ford, other than that it post-dated the Roman boundary.

Post-medieval/Early modern

To the southeast of the ditch was a post-medieval dumping pit containing pottery, clay pipes, glass and a few iron objects dating to the 20th century which overlaid the remains of a northwest-southeast orientated trackway (**160039**). The finds recovered from the track included post-medieval pottery, charcoal and a fragment of slate roof tile. This was probably the remains of a post-medieval farm track, and the finds assemblage suggested that it was in use from the late 16th to mid 18th century. By the 19th century, and the earliest surviving maps of the plot, it was no longer in use.

Conclusions

The construction of the Brecon to Tirley pipeline provided a useful, if somewhat spatially limited (due to the narrow ‘snapshot’ nature of the work across landscape), opportunity to investigate a section of countryside not often subject to modern development. The discoveries made during the project, whilst generally small in scale, help expand our knowledge of the history and prehistory of eastern Powys.

Prehistoric

The discovery of a previously unrecorded Bronze Age cremation cemetery containing Collared Urns is particularly significant, given their rarity in the immediate locale. The nearest previously recorded Collared Urn site was at Llangynidr, Powys, about 15km to the south, which – like most sites that produced Collared Urns of this type – was an upland cairn site. Given the nature of the Werntoe Farm (plot 49) cemetery, being in close proximity to the remains of stone-built post-medieval farm buildings, it is possible that this cemetery, too, originally had a cairn, and the stones from it were robbed to build elements of the farm, such as the cobbled surface or turf-and-stone bank.

The nearby cremation dump found near Llaneglwys (plot 60) to the northeast was similarly unmarked, though as the deposit was just below topsoil it was again possible that the remains of any early monument may have been removed by later activity. Though unurned cremations are not uncommon in the early Bronze Age – indeed five were recorded at Werntoe Farm – the discovery of one in isolation like this is rare indeed, due to the inherent difficulties in identifying and locating such a deposit. The spread and amorphous form of the Llaneglwys deposit suggests three possible narratives for its deposition – it may have been a coherent dump which was disturbed by later activity; it may have been the result of scattered ashes which tends to result in Aeolian dispersion of the smaller and

lighter material, together with a more concentrated dump of the heavier bone and fuel ash, such as we have at Llaneglwys; or it may have been a dump of pyre waste rather than a deliberate interment of funerary remains. Either the first or third of those narratives would indicate the likelihood of further funerary remains in the near vicinity, whilst the second may well have been an isolated incident.

The pitting to the west of Llyswen (plots 74–75), on the high ground overlooking the Wye valley, may well represent the fringes of an early prehistoric settlement, though the sparse ceramic evidence makes such supposition a little tentative. The lack of significant prehistoric activity identified at the Spread Eagle Funerary Landscape, near Three Cocks (plots 111/111a), is likely to be the result of a determined effort to reduce the impact on the monuments and preserve as much of the landscape *in situ* as possible, rather than evidence of the absence of the ring ditches altogether, or a misinterpretation of the cropmarks.

Roman

The putative cursus monument identified from aerial photographs at the Spread Eagle site was believed to form part of the prehistoric funerary landscape. This ‘cursus’, now, appears likely to have been the roadside ditches from the Pipton road (plot 110) extending across the fields to either side.

This section of road does not match the orientation of the Brecon to Kenchester Roman road, which was projected to pass a short way to the south of the site, roughly on the alignment of the modern A438. Indeed the road at Pipton is broadly perpendicular to this and, given its route, appears to indicate a previously unsuspected crossing of the Wye to the northwest. The destination of this road is uncertain, though the fort at Castell Collen, 1.5km northwest of Llandrindod is one possibility. The fort was occupied from around 75AD until the end of the 4th century AD and notably the vicus, or civilian settlement, associated with that fort lay to the southeast of the fort and had a roadway through it. There seemed to have been two breaks in occupation at Castell Collen: From about AD80 to AD98, when the basic Flavian fort was reoccupied and developed under Trajan, and again during the Hadrianic period (117–138AD). This might correlate to the recorded disuse phases of the road during the later part of the 1st and the early part of the 2nd century AD, with ceramic evidence from Castell Collen suggesting the site was re-occupied by the later 2nd century AD,¹⁴ and ceramic evidence from Pipton suggesting that it, too, was back in use by the same period.

The road was relatively narrow, surviving just over 3m wide, and as the space between the two roadside ditches was no more than 6m it could not have been significantly wider prior to any post-use truncation. This, and the fairly poor maintenance, might suggest that the Pipton road was a comparatively minor or short-lived route, possibly a local access road from the Brecon to Kenchester road. However, the road from Castell Collen to Cardiff (Margary’s RR 621) has

recorded stretches as narrow as 2.5m¹⁵ (Sherman and Evans, 2004), and hence the Pipton road retains the potential to be of greater regional importance.

The large Roman ditch at Pen-y-Maes (plot 160), near Hay-on-Wye, was presumed, based on its slightly curvilinear nature, to form part of a fairly significant enclosure, in terms of size at least. It was also the most substantial of all the enclosure ditches encountered on the entire Brecon to Tirley pipeline, at an average of 3m wide, though it was only 1m deep. Roman enclosure ditches of this size are not particularly common outside of larger settlements, or high status and military enclosures, though the fairly shallow U-shaped profile did not appear particularly defensive in nature. As such, given its longevity throughout the later Roman period, and combined with the trade evidence from the ceramic material, it may be that this enclosure was one of reasonably high status, perhaps an affluent farmstead or, given the presence of possible forge waste in the associated pit, a metalworking site.

Post Roman

The post-medieval structure located near Wernhoe appears likely to be part of the remains of the Pen Yr Heol Einion House site mentioned in the Desk Based Assessment. The finds evidence suggests that the site may have been utilised for around two or three hundred years, from the 17th century to the end of the 19th century, with the majority of the recovered artefacts suggesting a predominantly late 17th–18th century occupation, followed by more irregular, smaller scale occupation into the 19th century.

Taken as a whole, the discoveries from the Powys section of the Brecon to Tirley pipeline help expand our knowledge of both the prehistoric and Roman utilisation of the area, but in particular the Bronze Age activity across Ponde Common and the Roman occupation of the Wye valley west of the fort at Clyro.

GRAHAM CRUSE and DANIEL HOUNSELL

(Illustrations by SUSAN FREEBREY and JACQUELINE CHURCHILL)

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Notes

¹ National Grid/RSK *Felindre to Tŷrley Natural Gas Pipeline: Archaeological Framework Document* (2006).

² Network Archaeology *Brecon to Tŷrley High Pressure Gas Pipeline: Post Excavation Assessment* (report 413, 2010).

³ Network Archaeology *Brecon to Tŷrley High Pressure Gas Pipeline and Tŷrley Feeder Connector: Analysis of the Archaeological Record* (report 478, 2013).

⁴ Cotswolds Archaeology *CA Report 05140: Felindre to Tŷrley Natural Gas Pipeline: Archaeology and Heritage Survey* (2006).

⁵ Bartlett-Clark Consultancy *Felindre to Tŷrley Gas Pipeline: Report on Archaeogeophysical Surveys: Revised with corrections* (2007).

⁶ Gibson, A. 'Earlier prehistoric funerary and ritual sites in the Upper Severn Valley' in *Montgomeryshire Collectors* vol. 90, p.1–40 (2002).

⁷ Bartlett-Clark Consultancy *Felindre to Tŷrley Gas Pipeline: Report on Archaeogeophysical Surveys: Revised with corrections* (2007).

⁸ Network Archaeology *Brecon to Tŷrley High Pressure Gas Pipeline: Archaeological Trench Evaluation* (report 390, 2009).

⁹ Cotswolds Archaeology *CA Report 05140: Felindre to Tŷrley Natural Gas Pipeline: Archaeology and Heritage Survey* (2006).

¹⁰ Cotswolds Archaeology *CA Report 05140: Felindre to Tŷrley Natural Gas Pipeline: Archaeology and Heritage Survey* (2006).

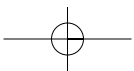
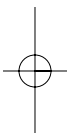
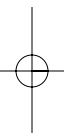
¹¹ Network Archaeology *Brecon to Tŷrley High Pressure Gas Pipeline: Ancillary Trench Evaluations* (report 395, 2009).

¹² Network Archaeology 'Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of Four Proposed Route Options around Hay-on-Wye, Powys' in RSK ENSR, *Felindre to Tŷrley Pipeline: Environmental Statement* (2006).

¹³ Bartlett-Clark Consultancy *Felindre to Tŷrley Gas Pipeline: Report on Archaeogeophysical Surveys: Revised with corrections* (2007).

¹⁴ Alcock, L. 'Castell Collen' *Archaeologica Cambriensis*, p.64–96 (1964).

¹⁵ Sherman, A. and Evans E., *Roman Roads in Southeast Wales: Desk Based Assessment with recommendations for fieldwork* (2004).



CROES HOWELL – LITTLE FREE STREET

In an article by Pamela Redwood which appeared in *Brycheiniog* XXIV,¹ mention is made of the Will of David John Llywellyn, or John David Llywellyn, Mercer, proved in the Prerogatory Court of Canterbury in 1598. In the Will, he refers to land he owned within the Borough of Brecon, in the area known as ‘Rhywryd’ viz:

My houses barns gardens and one parcel of ground called Yeardleys in Rhywrydd Ward, in length from the house of Jevan John David to the land of Thomas Meredith John Edmond to a street called Croes Howell, and in breadth from the lands of Watkin Powell John to a street called Rhywrydd.

It would be interesting, but impossible, to trace the lay-out of these and other estates within the Town, but some of the place-names mentioned give clues to their rough, but not exact locations.

Rhywrydd itself appears in various forms throughout early documents and maps, and is itself open to various interpretations.

The first element is unambiguously ‘rhiw’, here in South Wales with the meaning of a (steep) slope, but also listed in *Geiriadur y Brifysgol* as ‘road or footpath on a slope or hillside’.² Speed’s plan of Brecon on his map of Brecknockshire shows us precisely where this was, just to the east of the walled town, and known to us nowadays as ‘Free Street’. The translation may be fanciful, or merely mistaken – the other forms given could imply ‘free’ – ‘*rhydd*’, since earlier spellings in English made little differentiation between ‘d’ and ‘dd’, which represent different sounds in Welsh, the single ‘d’ corresponding to the same single letter in English e.g. Dinas, Defynnog, but the double ‘dd’ corresponding to the voiced ‘th’ in English orthography, as in ‘thou’, ‘though’, ‘that’. If ‘dd’ represents the original sound here, then the meaning would be ‘Free Hill’, and over the centuries this has been explained as being outside the town, free.

An alternative is ‘rhyd’, meaning ‘a ford’, since the extension of Rhiw ‘Rhyd’ does lead through Danygaer to a possible ford below Captain’s Walk and the old Town Wall.

If we take the second element to be Rhudd, then we are dealing with a more obvious place name element. Rhudd is a colour word, red, a cognate of the ruth in the Cornish Redruth – the Red Ford – but which is nowadays almost limited to use in poetry and a few compounds, and the rudd in this placename would refer to the colour of the soil: higher up, the same road becomes Cerrig Cochion – the Red Rocks.

Croes Hywel would appear to be what we know now as ‘Little Free Street’, a shortcut through to the Watton from Free Street, never a main thoroughfare.

Croes, or the English equivalent Cross appears as a frequent street name, in particular in the Dowlais and Merthyr Tudful areas, where it is frequently qualified with a name,³ as here in Brecon with Croes Hywel.

Notes

¹ Redwood, Pamela, *Life in Elizabethan Breconshire*, Appendix III, p. 66, *Brycheiniog* XXIV, 1990–92.

² *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, III, p. 3082, Caerdydd/Cardiff 1987–1998.

³ Cross Blanche Street, Dowlais	33 E3
Cross Francis Street, Dowlais	33 D3
Cross Houlson Street, Dowlais	33 D3
Cross Ifor Terrace, Dowlais	33 D3
Cross King Street, Dowlais	33 D4
Cross Mardy Street, Mountain Hare	33 D1
Cross Margaret St, St Tydfil's Well	32 B1
Cross Morgan St, St Tydfil's Well	32 B1
Cross Morland (?Morlais) Street	33 D3
Cross Thomas St, Twynyrodyn	51 F4.