

Notes from Local Interest Group 30th November 2017

Present: Maureen Lloyd (ML), Avryl and Roy Lloyd, Carole Gibbs (CG), Wendy and Dainis Ozols, Sue levers, Edwina Griffiths, Sue Farmer, Bill Johnson, John (JP) and Margaret Price, Richard Harris, Richard Thomas, Grace Davies.

Apologies: Richard Martin, Barbara Lloyd, Jenny Francis.

ML opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. She introduced Carole Gibbs who was our speaker for the evening.

Llewetrog, Llanbedr-Painscastle

CG has lived in Llewetrog since 2002 and has spent a considerable amount of time researching the history of the house and its owners over the centuries. This research formed the basis of her presentation for the evening.

The earliest record of the house that CG has so far found is on a plaque in Llanbedr church. This is a memorial for a Henry Williams and it mentions that he lived at Llawedrog and that he died in December, 1798. However, she has been unable to find out how long he had been living in the house. Records that she has found in books and on maps suggest that the house existed in 1610; however, a map dated 1598 (in the Caeberis Hotel) does not show the house.

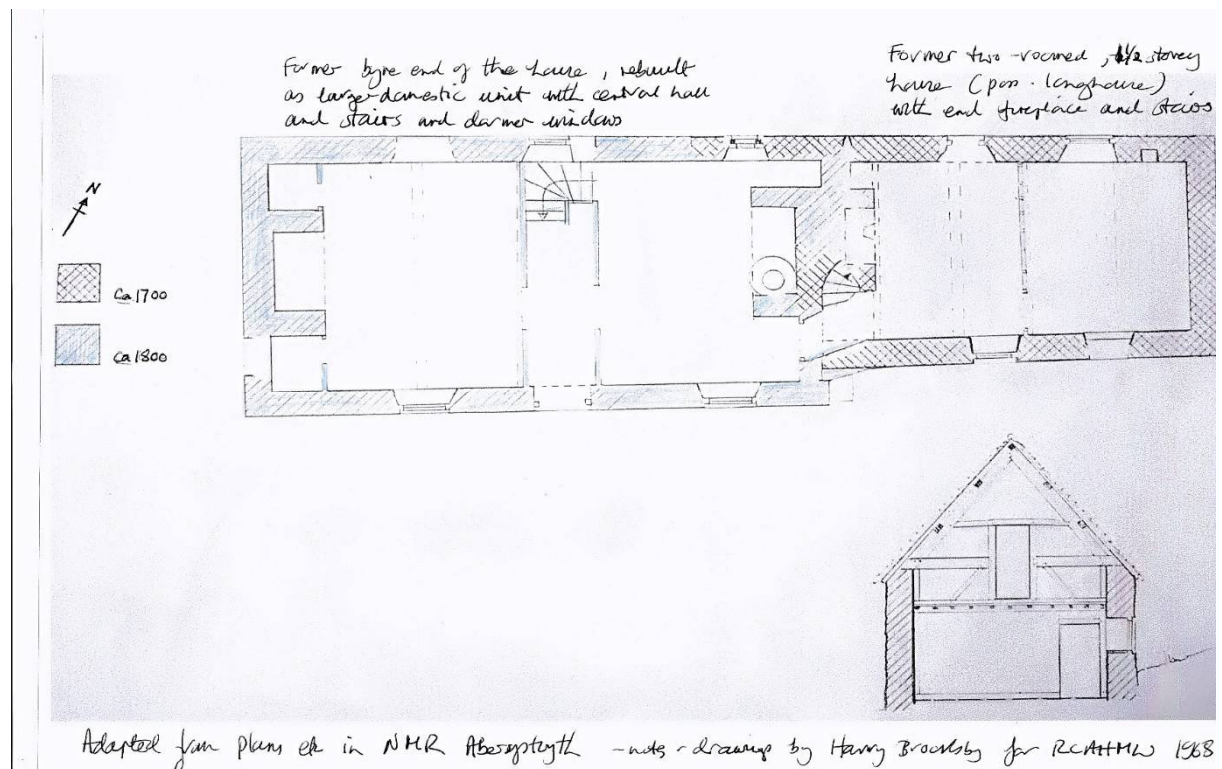
CG has also tried to ascertain what the name Llewetrog means. She has found some references to the name Lauder in the Scottish Borders (discussed by a man named Breeze) as being cognate with the middle Welsh Llawedrog. This means "heaped, loaded, uplifted" and, of land, "a mound". CG then showed us a photo of the house with a quite distinct "mound" – actually a low hill – behind it. Could this be the mound the name refers to? The name was later anglicised to Llawetrog, then Llewedrog and finally Llewetrog.

The next research that CG presented related to the ownership of Llewetrog, dating back to Henry Williams, who lived from 1732 to 1798. She showed us a very complicated family tree with the owners of the house highlighted. Henry passed the house to his son, John Williams (The Cwm), who was married to Fortune Beaven. Fortune was from a wealthy family, the daughter of Thomas Beaven of Crossfoot. When this John Williams died in 1818, the house passed to his oldest son, also called John. John did not outlive his father for long and when he died in 1822 the house passed to his brother, Thomas Williams, who owned Crossfoot (inherited from his Mother) and his mother, Fortune. John Snr and Fortune also had three daughters, Fortune, Mary and Elizabeth. Elizabeth married yet another John Williams who owned The Skreen. When Thomas Williams died in 1843 (intestate and without children), his sisters, Fortune and Elizabeth (The Skreen), inherited the house. Fortune had married a solicitor called Thomas Higgins. Fortune and Thomas had three children, Fortune Elizabeth, Emma and Thomas Williams Higgins, to whom Llewetrog passed on Fortune's death. Thomas had a son, also called Thomas Williams Higgins, and it is to him that the house passed on the death of his father in 1876. This Thomas was married to Eleanor Davies from the City of London. CG has found information about others who may be related to the family and who might be significant in the story of the house, but she still has many "mysteries" to clear up and there is much more work to be done.

CG went on to show us some information about the occupants of Llewetrog, dating from 1819 to the present day. Much of this information has come from census returns (in respect of the information pre-1917), and from Sylvia Abberley from 1917 onwards. Between 1819 and 1871, the house is listed as having belonged to John Williams Jnr and his descendants, down to Thomas Williams

Higgins Jr. During this period, the house was occupied by: 1819 – William Williams; 1841 to 1851 census – Morgan; 1861 to 1881 census – Price; 1891 to 1901 census – Jones; 1911 census – Williams. In 1917, John Thomas Abberley from Clyro came to live at Llewetrog and the house was bought by his son, Thomas John Abberley in 1937; he lived there until 1975, when it passed to his son, John Thomas Abberley. The house was subsequently sold to A N Allen, then John Wheeler and later Ian and Debbie Collins. The Collins sold the house to CG in 2002.

Next, CG told us about the structure of the house and how it had been altered over time; she has got this information from a plan that is kept in the National Library of Wales, dating from 1968. She was also able to show us some photos from the same date. The NE end of the present house dates from ca 1700 and consisted of a two-roomed, 1.5 storeyed structure, possible a longhouse. The ground floor (the original hall) was divided into two rooms with a partition. There is a bread oven and a fireplace with a stone staircase beside it. There was a byre attached to the west. The house was built of local stone, with framed partitions, and was built on a platform site.



In about 1810, the adjacent byre was adapted and incorporated into the house to enlarge it. A passageway divided this section into two and a staircase was added. To the west was a parlour and to the east a hall. Two fireplaces were also built, one on the western outside wall and the other in between the old and newer part of the dwelling. This part of the house had two storeys. CG showed us some photos taken in 1968 which showed what the house looked like before the more recent 20th and 21st century alterations. The north wall of the house may be original at foundation level, but there has been much rebuilding from just below the central chimney.



This photo of the "new" wing dates from 1968.

In the old part of the house, the original timbers of the partition still exist. Upstairs, there are three trusses, which are still visible, as well as chamfering and tie-on joints. There is also what appears to be an original door on the first floor, under the middle truss. From the outside, you can see that the "newer" part of the house is symmetrical at the front. The ground floor windows have stone hoods overhead. Many alterations have been made over the years, and CG showed us numerous photos to show these, using the 1968 photos for comparison. These 1968 photos have been a very important source of reference for CG in her investigation of the house and they are really fascinating to see.

ML thanked Carole for her most interesting and illuminating talk, the product of many hours of painstaking research on her part. Those who have known the house for some years could remember the way that it looked in the 1960s and were intrigued to see the transformation that has taken place in recent years. We all had a thoroughly enjoyable evening, which, as always, was rounded off with refreshments made by Avryl Lloyd.