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**Darganfod Hen
Dai Cymreig**



**Discovering Old
Welsh Houses**

Tyddyn Sais
Trawsfynydd, LL41 4UP



Researched and written
by Paula Burnett
2018

HOUSE HISTORY RESEARCH
Written in the language chosen by the volunteers
and researchers & including information
so far discovered

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TYDDYN SAIS

TRAWSFYNYDD

NGR: SH70863338

Height: c.600ft/200m

HOUSE HISTORY: SUMMARY

Constructed at the middle of the sixteenth century, Tyddyn Sais, a substantial house, would have been built for a high status family. The earliest documentary record of it dates from 1595, but where that document was held gives a clue to the possible scenario of the house's genesis half a century earlier. It seems likely that it was built as a dowry for the bride of Evan Lloyd of Rhiwgoch, the manor house of Trawsfynydd, and may therefore have been the birthplace of one of Merioneth's most prominent citizens, Robert Lloyd, repeatedly MP and Sheriff throughout his long career in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Principal gentry families of North Wales were involved in its early fate, as it changed hands grouped with other nearby farms, often in connection with marriage. By the end of the seventeenth century it seems it had been swept up into the extensive Welsh holdings of the Parry family, some members being parish residents. Parry trustees sold Tyddyn Sais in the nineteenth century to form part, eventually, of the Wood estate in Trawsfynydd, acquired with wealth derived from Lancashire's heavy industry. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that Wood descendants sold the freehold to the local people who actually worked the farm, completing the cycle where freeholder and resident were one and the same. The tenants' stories can be documented in detail. A series of wills enables the house's eighteenth-century history to be traced through several generations of one family of yeoman farmers. In the nineteenth century a remarkable local story of longevity, amid an intricate network of familial and work connections, in a context of increasing social mobility, leads on to the twentieth century's even closer links and continuities, right up to the present. A great many individual lives have been touched by Tyddyn Sais. From the beginning its story was connected with that of nearby houses¹, with tight family ties binding lives together and newcomers forging links with places further afield, and that is how it has remained. The history of Trawsfynydd, its relationships with neighbouring parishes and the world beyond, can be read from it, with the backdrop of wider social change across more than four centuries as the foil to a foreground of continuity.

Owners: Seimon and Epyllt ab Iorwerth

Author: Paula Burnett © 2018

Meirionnydd (formerly Merioneth)

¹ There is considerable overlap between the history of Tyddyn Sais and that of Brynmaenllwyd, its neighbour to the south. My 2012 history of Brynmaenllwyd is available in this series and readers are advised that there is some necessary repetition here (sometimes condensed), particularly from the late nineteenth century onwards.

HOUSE HISTORY

‘a spacious horizon is an image of liberty...’ – Joseph Addison²

Location

The huge parish of Trawsfynydd³ has no lowland and is often regarded by outsiders as bleak, but its better lands have long proved their worth as pasture. Although upland, it is not generally steep or hemmed in, but is typically an open rolling countryside with long views to a mountain skyline in all directions. At the intersection of bronze-age trackways across the mountains, it had attracted human settlement at least from the Iron Age; several prehistoric metalworking sites nearby have been explored by archaeologists. The local landscape bears witness to intensive Roman activity but this eventually gave way to communities under the sway of the early Welsh princes, some of its locations portrayed in the ancient Mabinogion stories, and then to the medieval social organisation by parishes introduced by the Normans.⁴

In the Tudor period in particular it was known for its cattle,⁵ and several of the region’s most prominent families held land in it. However, it differed from some of the richer – and smaller – lowland parishes, particularly those along the coast, where the gentry from the big house often controlled a majority of the parish. Unlike those, Trawsfynydd parish, part of Arduwly east of the Rhinog mountains, had a great diversity of land-holders or crown tenants, as the 1623 Crown Rental demonstrates.⁶ It may not have been first on the list for those seeking profitable holdings in the county of Merioneth⁷ but it was certainly not dismissed.

The farm known as Tyddyn Sais⁸ is on a gentle west-facing slope, between the village which grew up round the parish church a mile to the north, and the principal manor house, Rhiwgoch, a similar distance south, the seat of the family who came to dominate the parish and who seem to have adopted the surname Lloyd at about the time it was erected.⁹ The earliest documentary references to Tyddyn Sais so far located are two deeds transferring land

² *The Spectator*, 23 June 1712, quoted in Anna Pavord, *Landskipping*, London: Bloomsbury, 2016, p.44.

³ Pronounced ‘tr-ow (as in cow) -s-vun-ith’ it means ‘across the mountains’ and was the point of intersection between ancient routes north-south and east-west, all of them high.

⁴ The parish church is dedicated to St. Madryn, identified with St. Matrona, portrayed as a mother with several children. Garn Fadryn, a mountain on the Llyn, seen from the south across Cardigan Bay, suggests a ‘mother’ surrounded by smaller hills. (It later gave its name to the local manor house which in turn led to the S. American destination port of the C19 Welsh emigrants to Patagonia, Puerto Madryn.) Both mountain and church may bear very ancient names. Given the extent of Roman remains in Trawsfynydd and the Latinate names it is not impossible that village and church derive from the early days of British Christianity in the late Roman period.

⁵ The historic and prestigious holding close to Tyddyn Sais named Brynlllefrith (Milk Hill, see below) is a reminder that the district was long known not just for beef cattle, as it is today, but also for dairying.

⁶ Rhian Parry, ‘An Arduwly Crown Rental of 1623’, *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society*, 15.iv, 2009, pp.365-389.

⁷ This is the form used here as it was standard in historical records, but Meirionnydd is the usual spelling today.

⁸ Also historically Tythyn/Tythin y Sais. Pronounced ‘T-u (as in cup)-th (as in this)-in S (like z)-ice’.

⁹ Many leading families in Wales took on English-style surnames in this period, though the use of patronymics continued until the taking of census records in the nineteenth century eventually killed it off at all levels of society. That said, the farm’s present occupant, in 2017, has reversed the pattern by adopting a traditional patronymic surname. Seimon’s father was Ned Evans but he uses as surname the patronymic Iorwerth (Edward in Welsh) rather than Evans.

in 1595 and 1618, but the house which is still there today was built several decades earlier, in the mid-sixteenth century. It would have been an impressive house at the time. ‘An early storeyed “Snowdonian” house’ of substantial construction, it was no doubt built for a resident of substance.¹⁰ It is not known for certain who it was built for but there are certain pointers to a plausible theory, outlined below.

Dendrochronology demonstrates that the present house, roughly at the centre of the holding, was built probably between 1547 and 1557. However, the name Tyddyn Sais – meaning the Englishman’s (‘Saxon’s’) land-holding – may either pre-date or follow this in the period to 1595. There could have been a farm of that name in the middle-ages or earlier.¹¹ The most likely scenario may be that the name dates from the early Tudor period when loyal supporters of the crown were often rewarded with land-holdings in Wales, not infrequently in remote situations of marginal profitability as here, but it is certainly possible that it dates from the middle Tudor period with the surviving house. It is also worth noting that although the name of the house denotes Englishness, the people who have lived in it since the sixteenth century have, it seems, been almost exclusively Welsh speakers. This continues into the twenty-first century as Trawsfynydd remains a stronghold of the Welsh language and its culture.¹²

The farm’s situation in the parish is relatively congenial. The land is mostly well drained and although high (about 200m above sea level), benefits from the warmest afternoon sun. While the wide, shallow, glacial valley seems exposed, the Rhinog mountains to the west interrupt both prevailing wind and rain coming in off Cardigan Bay. There is often a window of good weather over the district which does not extend north, east or south. The Tyddyn Sais fields slope westwards to a narrow boundary with the river Eden, a modest stream which starts a mile or so to the north and makes its growing way southwards along an open, predominantly boggy upland – the Cors Goch, or Red Marsh – running parallel with the range of mountains to the west, to its confluence with the river Mawddach at Abereden to the south.¹³ Much of the valley is now a Site of Special Scientific Interest, including the most westerly Tyddyn Sais land, because of the rare freshwater pearl mussels which breed in the river gravel.¹⁴

¹⁰ Coflein 2002/2016: description, plan and photographs of Tyddyn Sais by the architectural historians Peter Smith and Richard Suggett.

¹¹ A cursory search has identified only two others with this unusual name today in Wales (near Caernarfon and Llanfyllin), although just beyond the northern boundary of Trawsfynydd parish is a holding named Cae’r Saeson - the Englishman’s or Saxon’s field - which may at one time have run with Tyddyn Sais. See also 1794 below. Trawsfynydd parish includes not only numerous Roman sites but several farm names which derive from the Roman period, particularly in nearby Cwm Prysor, so this name could potentially date from any time from the fifth-century start of the Saxon incursions into Britain which followed the Roman withdrawal. While Wales was not brought under Saxon control, the name indicates ‘Englishness’ in one form or another, possibly a marker of an early English settler or owner. The appellation ‘Sais’ is held by some authorities to denote either an English-speaker or possibly one who held lands from an English lord. That it could be used of a Welshman is demonstrated by the title of the eleventh-century lord Rhys Sais ap Ednyfed.

¹² This account is necessarily in English, its author’s language, as were all the official records until the late twentieth century, but in mitigation it is to be hoped that it will thereby be available to a wider readership than would otherwise be the case.

¹³ The river name Eden is from a British, i.e. old Welsh, word, a name shared by rivers in Cumbria, Kent and Fife. The earliest record of the Merioneth name is ‘Aberydon’ in 1370, but the Cumbrian ‘Itouna’ was recorded by Ptolemy in c.150 AD. It probably comes from the root word ‘pi,’ ‘to be full of sap, to gush forth,’ as in Greek ‘piduo.’ Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 4th ed., 1960, p.160.

¹⁴ The Eden Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest was set up in 2002 between the southern edge of Llyn Trawsfynydd and Abereden where the main road crosses the Eden by Coed y Brenin to protect a special habitat,

The Eden rises at the watershed between the Glaslyn/Dwryd catchment area to the north and that of the Mawddach, south. Rain at that watershed will reach the sea at either Barmouth or Porthmadog. The village of Trawsfynydd sits on raised, defensible ground immediately to the watershed's north, in a loop of the river Prysor after its exit from Cwm Prysor. It seems both river and valley acquired their names from the medieval Castell Prysor, apparently meaning a castle built in a hurry (cf. French *pressé*), of which only the mound remains.¹⁵ Naturally boggy, with exceptionally deep peat, the river plateau at the watershed was dammed in the twentieth century for the reservoir of Llyn Trawsfynydd¹⁶ which drains northward from the main dam into the gorge leading down to Maentwrog and the river Dwryd.¹⁷ Just south of the village, water coming down from Cwm Prysor might as readily have turned south, as the watershed area was in the past relatively level and boggy throughout, but since construction of the low dams south of the lake all its flow has been directed northwards. Thus the water which seeps from the bog southwards to reach the sea eventually at Abermaw, or Barmouth, forms the little river Eden, a shallow stream barely four metres wide where it skirts Tyddyn Sais land, creating the boundary with Bryn Re.

SIXTEENTH AND EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

As noted, the earliest documentary references to Tyddyn Sais so far uncovered are two deeds transferring land, dated 1595 and 1618, found among the papers of the Bachymbyd estate in Denbighshire, a seat of the Salusbury¹⁸ family, so the name was certainly in place by 1595, leaving a gap of about forty years since the building of the house. Both deeds refer also to other holdings neighbouring Tyddyn Sais, the land packages being transferred probably covering several hundred acres and a handful of farmhouses, though it seems that Tyddyn Sais may have been the most significant building of each grouping. A will of 1608 helps to elucidate the individuals named in the Bachymbyd deeds. All these are discussed below, but to begin, an examination of links between the Salusbury family and the Lloyds of Rhiwgoch, Trawsfynydd, in the mid-sixteenth century may suggest why a house of such substance as Tyddyn Sais was built in Rhiwgoch's vicinity at this date. The key figure is a young woman called Elin Salusbury.

Elin Salusbury

The story of how Elin (or Ellen) Salusbury became the bride of Trawsfynydd's most prominent citizen Evan Lloyd, heir of Rhiwgoch, about the middle of the sixteenth century is a reminder of how money and power worked in Tudor Wales, and for women. While being born a woman to a gentry family carried high status, it was no guarantee of independence.

in particular a site of European importance for the fresh-water pearl mussel which breeds in the river's gravel beds. It affects Tyddyn Sais land where it borders the river.

¹⁵ Edward I wrote a letter there during his conquest of Wales. It is not unusual for rivers to acquire names relatively late, from other topographical markers, man-made or natural; see Ekwall, *passim*.

¹⁶ Built to serve the power station at Maentwrog, it later cooled the nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd.

¹⁷ The Dwryd merges with the Glaslyn to the west of Penrhyndeudraeth (or Two-beach Headland).

¹⁸ Sometimes, and by different branches of the family, spelled Salesbury or Salisbury. In Welsh the vowel u is pronounced like i in English. The spelling with u thus seems to be an adjustment for Welsh speakers.

The story involves not only the Lloyds of Rhiwgoch in Merioneth and the Salusbury family of Bachymbyd in Denbighshire and elsewhere, but also the Wynns of Gwydir, and others. The peak of the Salusbury rise to power came at the start of the century, that of the Wynns about the middle, and the Lloyds' influence was at its height at the end of the century and the start of the seventeenth. The only firm link with Tyddyn Sais in the following suggestion is the fact that deeds to do with the house survive amongst the records of the Salusbury family, but if we look carefully at events it seems more than coincidental that the building of the present Tyddyn Sais close to the middle of the sixteenth century coincides with a key marriage between the two houses of Salusbury and Lloyd.

A plausible hypothesis is that the surviving house was built at the expense of the Salusbury family as part of the bride's dowry on her marriage to the Lloyd heir, as a home for the young couple. It is even possible that the name 'Sais' was allocated to the house in the following decades by local people in response to what was seen as an 'English' family having built it: the name Salusbury would have had strongly English associations, being of course the name of a prominent town and bishopric, and the family, though by then thoroughly established in Wales, followed the English practice of using surnames, unlike the Welsh patronymic names in normal use elsewhere in the region, at the mid-sixteenth century even among the gentry, most of whom were only just beginning to adopt English-style surnames.¹⁹

First, who were the Salusbury family? Bachymbyd in the Vale of Clwyd is a former seat of the Salusburies three miles north-west of Ruthin, Denbighshire. Thomas Salusbury (Hên/the Elder) of Lleweni in the Vale of Clwyd, killed in battle in 1471, left five sons who established the family fortunes across North Wales. His heir Sir Thomas Salusbury (d.1505) was knighted by Henry VII, Ffoulke became Dean of St. Asaph (d.1543), and their three brothers set up their own estates, Henry at Llanrhaeadr, John at Bachymbyd, and Robert at Plas Isa (or Issa), Llanrwst, which he acquired by marriage. However, it is Robert Salusbury, the grandson of this Robert ap Thomas,²⁰ who features in this story.



Bachymbyd. Thomas Pennant. Late C18. NLW.

When this Robert Salusbury of Plas Isa, Llanrwst, died, his two daughters Gwen and Elin were under twenty-one, and therefore legal minors. Their father was careful to make financial provision for them, knowing that a woman without a dowry, however well born, would not marry well. His will made them co-heiresses, Gwen of his Berth Ddu estate, and Elin of Cae Milwr. The young king Edward VI appointed Sir John Puleston as the daughters' guardian. However, Sir John's brother-in-law, John Wynn ap Meredith (also Meredydd or Maredudd)

¹⁹ It is worth noting that the surnames Lloyd for the house of Rhiwgoch, and Wynn for the house of Gwydir were only adopted from about the mid-sixteenth century, with the families concerned using patronymic names exclusively beforehand, and often continuing with them in parallel afterwards.

²⁰ i.e. Robert son of Thomas.

of Gwydir, purchased the wardship from him.²¹ It was a valuable commodity in that the marriages to be arranged for the under-age heiresses, now his wards, could be profitable to him, but John Wynn had perhaps been a friend as well as a neighbour of Robert Salusbury, Gwydir being just across the river Conwy at Llanrwst and not far from Plas Isa, ‘the mancione place of llan Roste.’²² Eventually both young women (and their lands) were brought into the family of the Wynns of Gwydir by marriages to his sons, though Elin was first married elsewhere, to the Lloyd heir of Rhiwgoch.

There was already a link between the Salusburies of Plas Isa and the Merioneth gentry in that Robert’s aunt Elin (or Ellen) had as her second husband Howel Nanney, Lord of Nannau, the manor of the parish of Llanfachreth to the south-east of Trawsfynydd, and after Corsygedol, Llanddwywe, the most important house in the county. After her death Howel then connected his family with the nearby Lloyds of Trawsfynydd by marrying as his second wife Lowry, daughter of William ap Griffith ap Ieuan of Rhiwgoch.²³ It was their son Richard who founded the branch of the family known as the Nanneys of Cefndeuddwr, a hilltop house at the southern extremity of Trawsfynydd parish, not far from Nannau. It is therefore perhaps not surprising to find Elin Salusbury the younger being married to William’s grandson Evan, who was of the same generation as Richard Nanney – and Richard is one of those named in the earliest surviving legal documents for Tyddyn Sais.

Precise dates for these events are obscure but the years about the middle of the sixteenth century seem likely. Edward VI’s reign from 1547 to 1553 indicates the period within which Robert Salusbury died, triggering his daughters’ wardship. Their marriages may not have followed immediately but it is likely that they would not have been long delayed. In Tudor times girls were commonly married at much younger ages than now, and before the age of majority, twenty-one, young people could not marry whom they chose but had to accept the spouse chosen for them by their menfolk. Arranged marriages, particularly for the gentry, were the norm, and while girls were normally seen as a liability because of the need to provide a dowry, those who were heiresses in their own right were a different matter.

John Wynn would not have lost much time in disposing of his two wards in marriage to his own family’s advantage. His second son Griffith (or Gruffudd) married Gwen, becoming known as Griffith Wynn of Berth Ddu. Elin, whose lands were at Cae Milwr (or Cae’r Milwr, ‘Soldier’s Field’) south of Llanrwst, was married off first to Evan Lloyd, the heir of Rhiwgoch, Trawsfynydd, then later as a widow to Owen Wynn, Griffith’s brother. The time of maximum influence for the house of Gwydir was just beginning. Morris, the heir, was repeatedly M.P. and Sheriff for Caernarvonshire from the 1550s until his death in 1580, his last wife being the famous Catherine of Berain, while Robert Wynn the third son was building Plas Mawr, Conwy (1576-80), a house even more important than Gwydir itself, and followed Morris as Sheriff in 1591.²⁴

Dates when the men in the story held public office survive, and help to flesh out the events. In 1544 and 1547 Robert Salusbury, whose family controlled Rug (or Rhug) in Merioneth as

²¹ John Wynn’s sister Jonet married Sir John Puleston as her second husband: Griff.Ped. 281; for the purchase, see John Gwynfor Jones, ‘The Wynn Estate of Gwydir: aspects of its growth and development c.1550-1580,’ *National Library of Wales Journal*, 22.2, 1981, pp.141-169.

²² Jones, *ibid.*

²³ J.E. Griffith, *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families*, 1914, 165, 200, 221.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 280-81.

well as lands in Denbighshire, was appointed Sheriff of Merioneth. He was also Sheriff for Denbighshire in 1546. It is possible that he had already negotiated with Evan Lloyd and/or his father for a marriage settlement for his daughter Elin, which may have been instrumental in the allocation of the office of Merioneth Sheriff. At this early date the Salusburys were much more influential in national affairs than the Rhiwgoch family, and the Merioneth gentry would have been pleased with the union with such a distinguished family as that which controlled Bachymbyd and Lleweni, as well as Rug in their own county.²⁵

It should not be forgotten that at a time when most people had no access to education, families like these prioritised the education of their children in preparation for their (usually) high office, particularly as the sixteenth century progressed. Tutors were employed at home for the young, often girls alongside boys as an educated daughter was more likely to marry well. Music in particular was important for girls.²⁶ Boys were sometimes sent to schools like the ancient foundation at Ruthin, or other schools further afield, then on to university. Merton College, Oxford, enrolled a high proportion of young Welsh gentry, but some also went to other colleges in Oxford, and also to Cambridge. Many went on to the Inns of Court in London for legal training, equipping them for responsibilities in parliament and local administration. It was of course an education very different in compass from today's, with an emphasis on Latin, plus sometimes Greek and Hebrew – the Welsh students would also first have to learn English - and on the classical texts, with mathematics and philosophy as well as religious education. North Wales at this date, though remote, produced scholars of national and international renown, equally at home in Wales, the universities (England had only two) or London, as well as court officials who served as ambassadors in continental Europe. It was a member of the Salisbury family, William Salesbury (as noted, branches of the family spelled the surname differently) who first translated the New Testament and Prayer Book into Welsh (published 1567), while William Morgan (1545-1604) of Wybrnant, Penmachno, a few miles north of Merioneth, who received his early education at Gwydir, produced the first complete translation of the Bible in 1588. Educated at Cambridge, ordained at Ely in 1568, and while serving as vicar of Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant, Montgomeryshire (now Powys), he was invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to London's Lambeth Palace to complete his great work, though in the event he stayed with another Welshman, Gabriel Goodman (b. Ruthin), Dean of Westminster. He had the assistance (among others) of his contemporary at

²⁵ The Salusburys were keen to develop their status in Merioneth. After Robert Salusbury's death (by 1553), in 1559 and 1578 it was his brother John Salusbury, designated as of Rug, Corwen, and Bachymbyd, Denbighshire, who followed him in the office of Sheriff, as, in 1569, 1585 and 1600, did John's son Piers Salusbury, namesake of an ancestor who had brought the Merioneth mansion of Rug into the family by marrying its heiress Margaret Wen in c.1490. W. Ferguson Irvine, 'Notes on the History of Rug,' *JMHR*, vol. I, 1949-50, p.80.

²⁶ A music tutor was employed for eighteen months at Brynkir to teach a daughter to read music and play the virginals (a keyboard instrument), then went on to Humphrey Jones's seat at Craflwyn (see below), and possibly to Gwydir: 'The [Brynkir] daughter was now to go to Chester to work at her spoken English, but Humphrey Jones had decided to retain the music tutor at Craflwyn for a further week in case Sir John would like him at Gwydir to "trayne vp" one of his own daughters or his granddaughter, Mary Bodvel, "in any of those sciences."' Musical accomplishments of this nature were clearly highly desirable for young ladies in Wales, even if it involved crossing the border to acquire them.' Sally Harper, *Music in Welsh Culture before 1650*, London: Routledge, 2017, 306. Sally Harper also reports family correspondence in 1597 from a Westminster-educated Wynn about sending a nephew to Bedford School; *ibid.* Of the three Welsh houses she cites as most prominent in musical education, two are the seats of families connected with the Tyddyn Sais story, Llewenni (the Salusburys) and Gwydir (the Wynns); the third is Chirk Castle; *ibid.* 298. Rhiwgoch, Trawsfynydd, no doubt also employed and fostered musicians, and was clearly careful to educate its sons to hold high office.

St. John's College, Cambridge, Edmwnd Prys (Edmund Price, 1544-1623), Archdeacon of Merioneth, who lived at Tyddyn Du, Ffestiniog, close to the northern limit of Trawsfynydd parish, himself famously the translator of the Psalms into singable Welsh verse (1621). Published with the Prayer Book, it was the first Welsh book to include music, and was reprinted many times. Although William Morgan had begun as 'a Welsh country parson' he was to become a bishop and 'the single most important figure in the history of the Reformation in Wales.'²⁷

The present Tyddyn Sais was most probably built not during Edward VI's short reign but when Mary Tudor was queen (1553-58). Her fervent re-establishment of Catholicism included favouring the gentry who had secretly maintained their faith through the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI, and it may be that the Salusburies and the Lloyds both prospered during her reign for this reason. In fact, members of both families were later put to death for the pursuit of their faith by Protestant monarchs. Thomas Salusbury (elder son of John Salusbury and Catherine of Berain, born 1564) was executed in 1586 for his part in the Babington plot to kill Elizabeth I and replace her with the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots, and in 1610 under James I, Trawsfynydd's saint and martyr John Roberts, a cousin of Robert Lloyd the son of Evan and Elin, born 1576/7 at Rhiwgoch, who became a prominent Benedictine monk, was also executed in London for persisting in holding Catholic Mass.²⁸

While these events were in the future, it may be that the wealth which would have been required to build a house such as Tyddyn Sais in the 1550s had something to do with Mary's favouring of loyally supportive households. The queen had long associations with Wales. She had been sent by her father in the 1520s to preside over the Council of Wales and the Marches and established her own court at Ludlow. She even became known as the Princess of Wales. In the sixteenth century many of the gentry of North Wales were known for their Catholic sympathies, as in the following century's civil war for their royalism. They tended to be traditionalists who had not adapted readily to Protestantism, and many would have welcomed the restoration of a Catholic monarch, which is not to say that they were not careful to maintain the favour of the Protestant Tudor monarchs: 'Most of the Welsh gentry had built up their estates in the fluid conditions of the fifteenth century and were dependent on Tudor benevolence. They were hard-headed and realistic; of strongly dynastic bent, they had already gained advantages for themselves and their families since 1485, and they discerned the possibility of gaining many more by close co-operation with the king and his ministers. Order, stability, prosperity, and influence were becoming synonymous in their minds with being *en rapport* with the Crown.'²⁹

It seems therefore possible, likely even, that the building of Tyddyn Sais as we know it may relate to a marriage contract at about this date between the two houses of Lloyd of Rhiwgoch, and Salusbury of Bachymbyd, Lleweni, Rug and Llanrwst. As suggested, it is even possible that the naming of the holding dates from this time, as the name Salusbury would have seemed to Merioneth ears distinctly un-Welsh, however entrenched the family may have been in the principality. Though a modest farmhouse to modern eyes, at the time it would have

²⁷ Glanmor Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997, 342-351, and *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, NLW, online.

²⁸ A. Lloyd Hughes, 'John Roberts (1576/7-1610): Mynach, Merthyr, a Sant,' *JMHR*, vol. XVII.iv, 2017, 354-61, which includes a summary in English.

²⁹ Glanmor Williams, 38-9.

been a high status dwelling. It could well have been built for the young couple as part of Elin's dowry, Rhiwgoch itself presumably being occupied by Evan's father, Ellis. Since Robert, their son, was to rebuild Rhiwgoch more grandly in the early seventeenth century, it implies that the house which was standing at Rhiwgoch in the mid-sixteenth century may have been much smaller. The Salusburys would not have wanted their young heiress to be consigned to an inferior position. Evidently Elin retained control of her own lands at Llanrwst despite her marriage, as they became the residence of her second husband later.

The birthplace of Robert Lloyd, Rhiwgoch?

If this line of conjecture, that Tyddyn Sais was the first home of Evan and Elin, is accurate, their son Robert would presumably have been born there. We cannot know, but the dates are about right. Robert Lloyd was probably born in the late 1550s as he was MP for the county by 1586, and in the 1630s was again considered for parliament but rejected as 'very old.' The most eminent member of the family, he was to become MP for the county for three periods from 1586-8, 1601-4 and 1614-20,³⁰ and was appointed Sheriff of Merioneth for 1596, 1602, 1615 and 1625;³¹ and of course he was the son of a Salusbury.

Evan and Elin lived together long enough for her to bear him two children, Robert first, followed by a daughter Catherine. Then Evan died, but the fortunes of his family continued to be enhanced by marriage. Elin, now a widow though probably still really young, went on to marry John Wynn's fourth son Owen, so the house of Gwydir, by now the most important in the region, gained again.³² As step-father to the young Robert, Owen pursued his interests.³³ Owen Wynn in his turn became Sheriff of Merioneth in 1570, which implies that by that date Evan Lloyd had died and Owen by marrying his widow Elin Salusbury was taking up a key role in the affairs of the county, having expanded his estate not only with his wife's paternal lands at Cae Milwr, Llanrwst, but also with her share, as widow, of the Lloyds' Trawsfynydd holdings – probably the conventional 'widow's third' of the estate. If the theory outlined above is correct, it would make sense that the house built at her family's expense as her marital home, Tyddyn Sais and its land, would have been included in her inheritance.

The earliest documents citing Tyddyn Sais also relate to another powerful local dynasty, the Nanney family of Nannau, Llanfachreth, one of the most important houses in the county, second only to the Vaughans of Corsygedol. By the time these documents were created Evan's son Robert Lloyd was married to Margaret, daughter of Hugh Nanney of Nannau,

³⁰ There is some doubt over this: the History of Parliament website has his son Ellis for this last period.

³¹ Griffith, 165, cf. last date as 1626 p.180; here, son of Evan Lloyd, but given as *ap Jenkin Lloyd* on p.200.

³² Elin had four more children with Owen: John Wynn Owen, Gwen, Elin and Griffith. *Griff. Ped.* 221. The Wynns of Gwydir were extending their land holdings in a number of neighbouring parishes in Merioneth. For instance in 1562 the youngest son John Gwynn 'purchased tenements called Cwmorthin in the parish of Ffestiniog for £40,' and in 1575 Morris, the heir, 'leased lands called Cwm Mawr in Llanfair, Ardudwy... for 15s a year.' John Gwynfor Jones, "The Wynn Estate of Gwydir: aspects of its growth and development c.1500-1580," *National Library of Wales Journal* 22.ii, 1981, 148-9. The family's mining interests in its Conwy valley estate were being extended with the Cwmorthin purchase, later to form part of the major slate-quarrying centre of Blaenau Ffestiniog. It was to be a long-lasting relationship: the public house, the Wynnes Arms, on the main street has just closed, in 2017. Further afield, in the Shropshire village of Cressage the pub known as The Eagles displayed on its sign the Wynn arms of three spread eagles in gold on a green background until 2016, when it too closed. The Eagles by the river in Llanrwst, however, which also displays the Wynn arms, is still thriving.

³³ National Archive (NA) C3/118/39.

grandson of Howel Nanney.³⁴ Robert Lloyd went on to have a long and profitable career, negotiating the pitfalls of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras with skill, though not without criticism. By the time of the 1623 Crown Rental he controlled thirteen holdings in Trawsfynydd parish and sixteen in the parish of Llanbedr.³⁵

The link with the Salusbury family, consolidated with the mid-century marriage of Elin and Evan, continued. As MP for Merioneth in 1586 their son Robert was succeeded in 1588 by his maternal relative Robert Salusbury (1567-1599). Given the ties between the two families it is perhaps not surprising that the documents of 1595 and 1618 relating to the transfer of lands in Trawsfynydd, including Tyddyn Sais, ended up among the Bachymbyd estate papers.

Early Records

Relevant surviving documents of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries link Tyddyn Sais with neighbouring farms in land packages which were handed between local families in financial transactions, sometimes to do with marriage. It is not easy to be sure who some of the signatories are, but it is safe to say they were all prominent citizens of Trawsfynydd and some neighbouring parishes, with recurring connections to the Nanney family and the Lloyds of Rhiwgoch. While it is likely that Tyddyn Sais was built to be lived in by the Rhiwgoch heir Evan and his family, it seems equally probable that after his early death it was passed on to family members and within a few decades was occupied by under-tenants, as the holders of the Crown Lease disposed of it to other gentry interests as part of a parcel of local land-holdings.

The holdings itemised in the two Bachymbyd documents are all close to Tyddyn Sais and within a couple of miles of Rhiwgoch. Crawgyll (now Crawcwellt, also recorded as Crawgallt) is the name surviving as the designation of common land today, the east-facing slope – below the Rhinog range – of the northern part of the Eden valley, drained by two fast-flowing tributaries of the Eden, both OS mapped under the name Crawcwellt.³⁶ Bryn yr Ef, now Bryn Re, abuts the Tyddyn Sais land on the west side of the Eden, and Bryn Crwn is adjacent to the north, accessed by the old pre-turnpike road through Tyddyn Sais, now truncated by the lake. The location of Ynys yr hayad is obscure.³⁷ In the 1618 document the damaged ‘Bryn[]nogod’ may relate to a ffridd holding also on the west side of the Eden valley, as although there is now no holding with a similar name, the summit on the skyline above these farms is Moel Ysgyfarnogod (bare hill of the hare).

³⁴ A doorway survives at the rebuilt Rhiwgoch with ‘M R Ll 1610’ for Margaret and Robert Lloyd. Their eldest son Ellis forged a new family link by marrying Jane, daughter of Griffith Vaughan of Corsygedol.

³⁵ The village is on the coast, just across the Rhinog mountains, but several coastal parishes, Llanbedr among them, also included lands east of the range, a reminder that although today the pass known as the Drws Ardudwy (*Ardudwy Door*) is only used by mountain walkers, in the sixteenth century there would have been regular travel through it, between the two halves of the Ardudwy district, the coastal strip to the west and the inland area east of the mountains – the ‘two farm-tracts, or plough-lands’ suggested by the name in Welsh.

³⁶ The document’s Crawgyll may either relate simply to land or to a lost farmhouse, as the name is not in use today for a building, or possibly to the farm on its northern edge, later known as Wern Cyfrdwy, south across the hanging valley from Cefn Clawdd. Wern Cyfrdwy has a house which appears to be early and relatively substantial. However, the 1623 Crown Rental (see below) specifies holdings named both Crawgell and Gwaen y Kyfrdwy, as well as Frith Grawgell.

³⁷ Possibly it could be ‘ynys y rhayadr,’ or island by a ford, and could relate to a humped island-like pasture by the Eden, now on Brynmaenllwyd land neighbouring Tyddyn Sais and Bryn Re, which is still known as ‘yr ynys’/ ‘the island’ and would have been adjacent to a shallow ford before the first bridge was built.

1595, Oct. 31. Feoffment – Bachymbyd Estate Records

FEOFFMENT³⁸ to uses from **Evan ap Robert ap Ieuan ap Hoell**³⁹ of Trausvynyth, co Merioneth, gent., and **Robert Evans**, his son and heir apparent, to **Edward ap Ellise** and **David Nanney**, gentlemen, of messuages, houses, etc., called **Tythyn y Sais**, Crawgyll, ynys yr hayad, Bryn yr ef, and Bryn Crwn, in the vill of Trausvynyth. [*Emphases added, et seq.*]

It is not clear who Evan ap Robert ap Ieuan ap Hoell of Trawsfynydd was, as discussed below in connection with other relevant documents. It emerges from his will that he lived at Goppa – an intriguing link in that the Parry Estate in the parish in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was centred on Goppa and included Tyddyn Sais. Probably he was connected in some way with the Lloyds of Rhiwgoch. Not many people in Trawsfynydd parish would have been regarded as ‘gentlemen’.

The patronymic lineage repeating the names Evan and Robert with a son known as Robert Evans precisely suggests the dynasty later using the surname Evans at Tanybwllch, Ffestiniog (formerly known as Bwlch y Coed Dyffryn), but that lacks a Howell ancestor and a relevant marriage. However, there does seem to be a link with Tanybwllch in that Margaret, a sister of the heir Evan ap Robert ap Evan ap Iorwerth (whose son was known as Robert Evans), married Evan ap Robert ap Evan ap Howell (Jeun ap Robt. ab Jeun ap Howel, as recorded in 1588 by Lewys Dwnn, and later in the form Ifan ap Robert ap Ifan ap Howel by Griffith.)⁴⁰ This matches the lineage in the Feoffment, though disappointingly neither genealogist gives any further information about who this Evan was or where he was from. It is possible that the Nanney family’s Howel is the ancestor in question, though a son Evan is not recorded.

Interestingly the Salusbury family of Rug and Bachymbyd also has a Howel ancestor. Margaret Wen, who brought the Rug estate to the Salusbury family when she married Piers Salusbury of Bachymbyd, was the daughter of Ieuan (or Evan) ap Howel, descended from Owen Brogyntyn, so there could be a possible lineage here.⁴¹ This would place Tyddyn Sais clearly in the control of the Salusburies at the end of the sixteenth century.

Another intriguing possibility which has far-reaching implications in the subsequent story of Tyddyn Sais is a link with the gentry family at Craflwyn, Beddgelert, just across the mountain from Tan y Bwlch, whose descendants, the Parry family, certainly owned its freehold later. Ann (or Annes, d.1619), daughter and heir of Evan ap Robert ap Evan of Craflwyn, was the wife of Maurice (or Morris/Morys/Morus) Jones (d.1604), Baron of the Exchequer of Carnarvon and Clerk of the Peace for Carnarvonshire.⁴² The properties she

³⁸ In English law, feoffment was a transfer of land or property which entitled the new holder to sell it as well as to pass it on to his heirs as inheritance. It was total relinquishment and transfer of rights in a land holding from one individual to another. In feudal times it had functioned differently. Wikipedia.

³⁹ (Names in bold are those directly associated with Tyddyn Sais.) Evan was also spelled Ieuan, Jevan and Jevann as well as Ifan (see below), and while ‘ap Ieuan’ meant ‘son of Evan’ so did ‘Evans.’ It is evident that the family concerned, like many at the time, alternated two Christian names for the heirs across the generations, in this case Evan and Robert. Hoell was also spelled Howel.

⁴⁰ Lewys Dwnn, *Heraldic Visitations...*, vol.2, p.224; Griffith, 252. Griffith perhaps chose the Ifan spelling to distinguish this lineage from the principal one at Bwlch y Coed Dyffryn, given the close and confusing parallel.

⁴¹ Griffith, 59.

⁴² Stirnet.com, which also has Morris Jones as Bishop of Bangor; Lewys Dwnn, p.234, editor’s note. There is also a link with the house of Gwydir through the history of Ty Mawr, Nanmor, which is not far from Craflwyn. Rhys ap Thomas ap Dafydd Lloyd of Nanmor married Gwenhwyfer, daughter of Richard ap Rhys and Elin,

brought to the marriage were significant, as their son and heir Humphrey Jones (d.1649) was designated as of Craflwyn before going on to Penrhyn. A very rich landowner, Sheriff of Merioneth and King's Receiver for North Wales, he later funded a mortgage for Tyddyn Sais (see 1635).

In 1595 it was being sold to others, however. It is not known who Edward ap Ellis was.⁴³ David Nanney was the son of Richard Nanney of Cefndeuddwr in the south of the parish, an offshoot of the Nanneys of Nannau in Llanfachreth. All the scions of the expanding gentry families needed places to live and raise their families, and an income which these perhaps quite recently established farms could provide.

Two other documents relate to Evan ap Robert ap Evan ap Howell of Trawsfynydd. The earlier is a deed from 1580 transferring land including Bryn Re, and the other is a will of 1608 which suggests that he lived at Goppa and used the surname Lloyd.

Cf.a: 1580, May 14. Grant - Bachymbyd Estate Records, ref. 684.

Grant from **Ievan ap Robert ap Ievan ap Howell**, free tenant of the Queen in the vill of Trawsvynyth, commote of Ardudwy, co. Merioneth, to Robert Elice, gent., of a tenement and parcels called bryn yre, bryn melyn, and y ddol g..., in the said vill.

Affected by damp. Latin.

This earlier document provides a parallel to the feoffment of 1595. The holdings specified in the damaged portion of the text can only be guessed. 'Y ddol g... [lacuna]' may be Dolgwn (a short distance to the north near Bryn Crwn), a significant holding at the time, now lost under Trawsfynydd lake. One of the Bryn Re fields is still known as Bryn Melyn.⁴⁴ Robert Ellis may be a brother of Edward Ellis in the 1595 document.

Cf.b: 1608 Will of Jevan Lloyd ap Robert ap Jevann⁴⁵

The 1608 will of Jevan [i.e.Evan] Lloyd ap Robert ap Jevann⁴⁶ of Trawsfynydd provides further relevant information, presumably about the same person though the name is given without the clinching ancestor Howel. The surname Lloyd added to the triple patronymic of the two preceding documents is an important identifier, suggesting a direct link to the house of Rhiwgoch, so prominently led at this date by Robert Lloyd. Crucially the testator refers to a marriage agreement made with Richard Nanney, the first item mentioned in the will, for his daughter with Nanney's son, as he makes provision on his deathbed for the dowry payment of £100, which he owes, to be met from the proceeds of his land holdings. How long it had been owing is not stated, but possibly a long time. It seems likely that the 1595 document

natural daughter of John Wynn ap Meredith of Gwydir and sister to Moris Jones of Craflwyn (d.1604). Margaret Dunn, House History of Ty Mawr, Nanmor (Dating Old Welsh Houses Group website).

⁴³ Ellis was the name of Robert Lloyd's grandfather and of his own son and heir, though no Edward is recorded. In the 1623 Crown Rental Elis (Ellis) Edward, possibly the son of Edward ap Ellis, held lands in Trawsfynydd.

⁴⁴ Conversation c.2010 with Elfyn Owen, son of the late Aled Owen, Bryn Re, in which he said that for the first time he had seen it to be yellow – melyn – as he had not noticed it before. Robert Lloyd's grandfather was Ellis, whose son was Evan. Although he is not down as having a son Robert, the recorded lineages were often not exhaustive, particularly where illegitimate children were concerned. If this is the case, Robert Ellis would then be Robert Lloyd's uncle.

⁴⁵ NA PROB 11 111 423.

⁴⁶ Transcribed in error as Jevam.

represents an earlier stage in the financial settlement for this marriage. Evan Lloyd ap Robert evidently had a crown lease on Goppa, a principal holding just north of Trawsfynydd village, the proceeds of which he left to his wife – unnamed, though presumably Margaret, the sister of Evan ap Robert ap Evan ap Iorwerth of Bwlch y Coed Dyffryn (Tan y Bwlch), as outlined above – and after her death to his son John, one of two sons, both identified as ‘base.’ It was not unusual at this date for illegitimate children to be acknowledged and to inherit in accordance with the ancient Welsh laws of Howel Dda, particularly where a marriage produced no surviving sons, meaning that a son and heir was ‘needed,’ as here.

As well as Goppa his bequests include other properties in Trawsfynydd (Dolhaidd in Cwm Prysor) and Ffestiniog (Reteilie⁴⁷ – Teiliau Mawr, one of three houses with the Teiliau name today, in Cwm Teigl.)⁴⁸ In 1608 their proceeds are to go eventually to the two sons, Evan’s principal heirs. After John comes ‘my base sonne Robert ap Jevann’ who is to share the proceeds of the Ffestiniog holding with Evan Lloyd’s son-in-law William ap David (possibly David Nanney). John, who is to be executor, was evidently still quite young as his father appoints his nephew John Roberts to be his overseer and ‘his good Tutor.’⁴⁹ It was quite common for the youngest son to be appointed executor, which may be the case here, leaving Robert as the elder – which would fit with the family pattern of alternating the names of Evan and Robert for the heirs, and with the 1595 document’s description of ‘Robert Evans, his son and heir apparent.’ Although he does not name them it seems his legitimate children were daughters, both already married, one to David Nanney, probably living at Craigddu Isaf,⁵⁰ and the other to William ap David. He mentions also his sister Ann verch Robert (i.e. daughter of Robert ap Jevann) who is to receive a bequest of cattle and sheep. Unusually the will specifies also that a maid and manservant are to receive the wages owing to them, in the maid’s case covering several years. He was clearly wanting to set straight some long-neglected obligations before he died.

The will goes on to mention a string of sums owing to him, including payments due for butter and cheese from people as far afield as Tallyllyn, and several bequests of horses, a couple of them named and their colours given, one of which grazes near his house. Of particular interest are the bequests of his own ‘wild horses’ on the Migneint common and elsewhere (presumably including the Trawsfynydd common of Crawcwellt, where there are wild horses still). Both David and Richard Nanney were witnesses to the will. David was the son of Richard, presumably the one married to Evan’s daughter. Since David was one of the

⁴⁷ The form ‘Reteilie’ in the will reflects the Welsh definite article ‘yr’ before a vowel, as in the last named, the ‘r’ often attaching itself to the name, as, commonly, in ‘Rodyn’ for ‘Yr Odyn,’ or, as spoken today in Trawsfynydd, ‘Raber’ for ‘Yr Aber,’ a farm just a mile south of Tyddyn Sais. Bryn Re which neighbours Tyddyn Sais was originally Bryn yr E.

⁴⁸ By the time of the 1623 Crown Rental, Dolhaidd (Dolydd Brysor) was held by Ellis Edward (possibly the son of Edward Ellis in the 1595 document), and Atteylie in Ffestiniog was held by John Wynn (great-grandson of Robert Lloyd, whose granddaughter married Henry Wynn of Gwydyr), who was also proprietor of the neighbouring holdings of Tyddyn Gwyn and Ffrith yr Atteylie.

⁴⁹ It seems unlikely that this could be the Lloyd family member later canonised as St. John Roberts, as he was at this date likely to be either on the continent or working with the London poor and plague victims.

⁵⁰ The Nanney family’s holdings in the 1623 Crown Rental include the Greigddu properties below and east of the Bwlch Ardudwy which fall between the parishes of Trawsfynydd and Llanbedr, with Lewis Nanney holding Greigddu Isa in the former, while William Vaughan of Corsygedol held Greigddu Ucha and David Lloyd Nanney held Greigddu Isa in the latter parish. The double surname of Lloyd and Nanney makes it almost certain that this is the David Nanney who married Evan Lloyd ap Robert’s daughter. Other Trawsfynydd properties were held by Richard Nanney, including Cefndeuddwr itself. His two sons Lewis and David were allocated the more demanding mountain holdings at Greigddu.

recipients of the holdings transferred in the 1595 feoffment, this perhaps was a preliminary phase of the marriage settlement with Richard Nanney referred to in the will.

1618 Marriage Settlement - Bachymbyd Estate Records

Grant from **Ieuan ap Robert Evans** of Trawsvenith, co. Merioneth, gent., and **Robert Evans**, his son and heir apparent, to **Evan Lloyd ap John the younger** of Maentorock, co., Merioneth, gent., and **Cadwalader ap David** of the same, yeoman, in consideration of the marriage of Robert Evans and **Jane**, his wife, one of the daughters of **John ap Ieuan Lloyd ap John** of Maentorock aforesaid⁵¹, of a capital messuage or tenement called **Tythyn y Sais**, y Bryn crwn, and Bryn[]nogod, in Trawsvenith. Mutilated.

The deed again transferring Tyddyn Sais demonstrates that in 1618 it was in the control of the descendants of Evan Lloyd ap Robert ap Evan (d.1608), whose heir Robert Evans now has a grandson of the same name, and was being passed to the Maentwrog family in which the beneficiary Evan Lloyd ap John also bears the same name as his grandfather. Twenty-three years on from 1595, Tyddyn Sais and Bryn Crwn are still grouped together, but Bryn Re⁵², Crawwellt and Ynys yr Hayad are now absent (though given the mutilated state of the document it is possible that it originally included a similar list of holdings as in 1595).

⁵¹ This unlocated Maentwrog family, perhaps connected to the Evans lineage of Bwlch y Coed Dyffryn, evidently alternated the names of Evan and John across the generations. In the 1623 Crown Rental John ap Evan Lloyd appears as crown tenant in Maentwrog (at this stage a daughter chapel for Ffestiniog parish) for two properties, Llech y Cwn and Kefnfaes (the former features at a later point in the Tyddyn Sais story). The 1638 will of Hugh ap Evan Lloyd of Ffestiniog (NLW) includes a bequest to Evan Lloyd of Kefnfaes (his father?) and mentions other family members, including his wife Ellin verch John. It may also be relevant that an Evan Lloyd ap John had been co-defendant in an Exchequer Court action brought by Morris Lewis of Pengwern, Ffestiniog, in 1594 (36 Elizabeth I) in relation to lands in Trawsfynydd parish. Morris Lewis claimed that he had been granted the lands by the queen the previous year for a period of 21 years, but found himself up against Evan Lloyd ap John, Rowland Thomas and John Lewis Gwyn who maintained they held the freeholds. Their alleged offences were 'Seizure and detention of deeds' and 'Intrusion by them into premises, and ouster of compl.[ainant]; defacement by them of meers [Welsh *mur* pronounced 'meer' means 'wall'], which divide premises from def.[endants]' own freeholds.' The holdings are reported as 'in the township of Uchkeven y Klawdd, in the commote of Ardudwy.' Several 'gwely' holdings are mentioned: 'Wele Dilris, Wele Penloyn, Wele Eignion....., and Wele gwyn hessan.' These presumably represent eastern holdings in the areas of Llech Idris in the Gain valley, and Penllyn over the mountains towards Llanwchllyn, (Eignion is unlocated, though cf. Cae Einion Alun at Gellilydan), and, at the southern extremity of the parish, the holding overlooking the upper Mawddach, where today a farm known as Cwmheisian is opposite Gwynfynydd (the white or *gwyn* rock which gave it its name is a gold-bearing quartz, as had been, it seems, known to the monks of Cymer Abbey a few miles downriver; it became the site of significant gold-mining operations in the nineteenth century). However, since there is evidently a gap in the document's listing of the holdings, others were involved which cannot now be identified – possibly including Tyddyn Sais. *Exchequer Proceedings (Equity) Concerning Wales: Henry VIII – Elizabeth*, compiled Emyr Gwynne Jones, Cardiff: U. of Wales Press, 1939, p.232, 61/18. NB Trawsfynydd was and is in Ardudwy, although in recent times the name has tended to be associated only with the lands west of the Rhinog mountains to the sea, where the settlement known today as Dyffryn Ardudwy gives it currency. Cefn Clawdd was one of the three townships of the parish itemised in the middle ages. Today it simply designates a farmstead in a glacial hanging-valley above the Eden valley, barely a mile west of Tyddyn Sais, but from the Exchequer report Uwch Cefn Clawdd evidently covered a large part of the extensive parish, perhaps all the rest beyond the broad valley of Cwm Prysor, and the village itself (which was perhaps once protected by a defensive embankment, as 'uwch' means beyond, 'cefn' means back, and 'clawdd' bank or boundary, cf. the phrase 'beyond the pale').

⁵² It should be noted that by the Crown Rental of 1623, Bryn Re features alongside Brynmaenllwyd (which neighbours both Tyddyn Sais and Bryn Re), both being held by Richard Evans who emerges later as the brother and heir of Robert Evans (see below, 1635).

This is unusual in that the groom's family is making over land holdings to the bride's family, rather than the other way round which the dowry system typified. It was perhaps agreed between the two families to enable the young couple to have a place to live and an income, though why this would not remain in the control of the groom's family is not clear. Perhaps the relative social standing of the two families was not equal, the bride's position being superior to that of the groom. They would presumably live at Tyddyn Sais while Cadwalader ap David (his status as yeoman indicating he was an under-tenant not a crown tenant) would occupy Bryn Crwn.

1623 Ardudwy Crown Rental⁵³

Trawsfynydd parish...

Evan ap Robert Vaughan pro Tyddyn y Sais

1s 2d

The appearance of the Vaughan surname here is intriguing. The Vaughans of Corsygedol, the most important family in Merioneth at this date, had become linked to the Lloyds of Rhiwgoch when Ellis, Robert Lloyd's heir, married Jane, the daughter of Griffith Vaughan. Frequently families adopted the new more prestigious surname in such circumstances. This would tend to confirm the centrality in the Lloyd family of the lineage under consideration. However, it is possible that Evan ap Robert (presumably the grandson of Evan Lloyd ap Robert of Goppa, d. 1608) or his father (Robert Evans) had also married a Vaughan – one of the Vaughans of Gelli Iorwerth (now Plas Capten) perhaps, a neighbour east of Tyddyn Sais.

1635 March 25 Brogyntyn Deeds⁵⁴

Receipt from Cadwalder Jones of the parish of Llanlluchid, Co.C., gent., to **Richard Evans**, brother & heir of **Robert Evans** of Trawsvenith, Co.M., late deceased, to the use of **Humffrey Jones of Penrhyn**, Esq., of the sum of £100, in discharge of a deed of mortgage of **Tythin y Sais**, in Trawsvenith aforesaid.

The connection between Tyddyn Sais and the family in question continued to this point and possibly beyond, if Richard did not have to sell the Crown lease to redeem his brother's mortgage. Robert was no doubt the son and heir of Evan ap Robert Vaughan who held it in 1623. A mortgage of £100 demonstrates how valuable a holding it was, though the need to take out that mortgage suggests that Robert Evans' fortunes had not been wholly secure. Richard Evans held the neighbouring farm of Brynmaenllwyd in the 1623 Crown Rental.

Humphrey Jones was a major landowner and King's Receiver for North Wales, who lived at Craflwyn, Beddgelert,⁵⁵ from 1604, but by 1623 resided at Penrhyn House, Caernarvonshire,

⁵³ Rhian Parry, 'An Ardudwy Crown Rental of 1623,' *JMHR* XV.iv, 2009, [365-389], 378.

⁵⁴ Vol.iii, p.44, MS 2181. NLW. Local estates which were eventually incorporated in the huge land-holdings of Brogyntyn were Glyn Cywarch, Talsarnau, and Parc, Llanfrothen, either of which may account for the location of this document. I am indebted to Margaret Dunn [M.D.] for suggesting the link to Craflwyn and sharing her research on the Jones – Parry lineage.

later replaced by the present Penrhyn Castle.⁵⁶ At the time of the 1623 Crown Rental he held several properties in Ardudwy, including the Crown Lease on two significant Trawsfynydd holdings: Aber, about a mile south of Tyddyn Sais, and Goppa, a mile or so north. By loaning money for a mortgage on Tyddyn Sais he may have hoped that he would end up controlling a third Trawsfynydd property, but when Robert Evans died, his brother and heir Richard paid off the mortgage, so Humphrey Jones's hold on Tyddyn Sais ceased. Evidently Humphrey Jones had acquired the Crown Lease on Goppa since Evan Lloyd ap Robert ap Evan had left it to his widow fifteen years earlier in 1608, perhaps on her death. It is possible that she had brought it to the marriage, as suggested above, and that it reverted to the control of her family on her death, a family now dominated by the powerful figure of Humphrey Jones. The story of Tyddyn Sais's relationship to Humphrey Jones's family lasted to the nineteenth century.

C17 COMMONWEALTH AND RESTORATION

After 1635 no references to Tyddyn Sais occur for a long time. Its story is obscured during the upheavals of Civil War, Commonwealth and Restoration, re-emerging in the C18.

However, Trawsfynydd is mentioned in a contemporary account of the Civil War, written from a Royalist perspective as the Parliamentary troops were imposing taxes on Merioneth:

[1646] April 6. – Between 300 and 400 of my Lord Biron's men, horse and foot, came to Dolgelle, under the conduct of Colonel Vane. / The 9th day, in the morning, 100 of them marched to Mowddu [Mawddwy], and robbed and plundered all their way, and returned with a rich booty by eleven o'clock. Then they received £28 10s. being one month's contribution, falling on Uwch Cregennan, and demanded the second contribution to be paid in white cloth, at Harlech Castle, on the 16th day of April aforesaid, which was undertaken by the inhabitants. The day following, having plundered all the town, and many places in the country, returned to Trawsfynydd [sic], and thence to Festiniog and Maenturog.

The people at Tyddyn Sais would have heard and seen this troop of soldiers as they returned on the old road from Dolgellau to Trawsfynydd a few fields away. The account then mentions the Parliamentary troops being quartered at Ffestiniog and Maentwrog, but fleeing over the water (the Glaslyn) to Caernarfonshire on intelligence that a Royalist force was after them.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ The Trawsfynydd/Beddgelert connection is evident also in the fact that Catherine the sister of Robert Lloyd, Rhiwgoch, who was perhaps born at Tyddyn Sais, married Robert Griffith of Sygun [Sygyn], Beddgelert. He may have built the present Sygun Fawr, where a cupboard inscribed '1626 RG & K' was recorded in 1899. Their son Griffith Roberts, who married Jane Glynne of Dinam, Llandrillo, was known as of Rhiwgoch. Sygun Canol [Fawr?] and Bach were part of the Craflwyn estate by 1770 until sold in 1869. [M.D.]

⁵⁶ "... Penrhyn House, wherein Humphrey Jones, sometime king's receiver, a very rich man, dwelled...." From a contemporary account of a Civil War skirmish in November 1647 when a clever ruse by Jones resulted in several parliamentary troops being sent from Penrhyn as prisoners to Caernarfon Castle. "A Short Account of the Rebellion in North and South Wales, in Oliver Cromwell's Time," *The Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repertory*, vol.1, 1829, 69.

⁵⁷ *The Cambrian Quarterly Magazine and Celtic Repertory*, vol.1, 1829, 66.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It is evident that the house that may once have been lived in by members of the leading local families was by the C18 tenanted by yeoman farmers, possibly themselves direct descendants of those earlier residents. It is a pattern familiar from the story of its immediate neighbour, Brynmaenllwyd.⁵⁸ The increasing prosperity of tenant farmers during the Georgian period meant that they could accumulate sufficient assets to warrant leaving a will. Not only livestock but household furniture begins to be bequeathed. The three wills here demonstrate the continuity of one family's holding.

1725 Will of **Evan Ellis**, Yeoman, of **Tyddyn y Sais**, Trawsfynydd.

[Written 22 December 1725, probate 4 February.⁵⁹ Inventory.]

His wife Jane was to receive £15 3s, daughter Lowry £5, son William Bevan (a form of ap Evan / son of Evan) £15, daughters Ellin, Susanna and Gwen £3 each, and son Daniel Evan £4. Daniel was to be executor and residual legatee. Witnesses were Hugh Nanney (the link with the Nanney family continuing), William Roberts and John Lloyd. Evan Ellis was not literate: he signed with a mark approximating to an E on its side. His assets were modest (just 2 cows, for instance, worth £3 10s, sheep worth £1 10s, 'household stuff' valued at £2 and 'implements of husbandry' at 8s) but there is an intriguing dimension to this, in that of an estate valued at £39 15s, ready money accounted for £32 7s. Valuers were Humphrey Rowland, Hugh Nanney and William Roberts, the last two literate.

It seems Evan Ellis was 'careful' as we might say, or perhaps he had largely retired from active farming but had the proceeds of a lifetime's hard work stowed under the bed. It is worth noting, however, that the bequests exceed the total value of the estate.

There is probably a connection here with the family at Brynmaenllwyd, the adjacent farm. In 1699 it had been tenanted by Ellis Lloyd, great-grandson of Robert Lloyd, Rhiwgoch, and related to the Nanneys of Cefndduddwr (see my history of Brynmaenllwyd). Evan Ellis means 'son of Ellis', quite possibly this one, given the way brothers and sons tended to be installed in neighbouring holdings. The story of the area is a story of intricate familial links.

1730

8 May Marriage: Daniel Evan et Ellina Morgan. [Trawsfynydd Parish Register, in Latin.]

1733/53 Will of **Daniel Evan** of **Tythin y Sais**, Trawsfynydd.

Written on 4 March in the sixth year of George II [1733], Inventory dated 1740, Document cover (and modern record) dated 1753, while a note added in the ecclesiastical court on 8 February [no year] reports: 'adm[inistrat]ion of the goods etc. of the deceased Daniel Evan & which were left unadministered by Ellin Morgan the Ex.x within named was granted to

⁵⁸ Cf. my history of Brynmaenllwyd which is online in the same series (or Google brynmaenllwyd).

⁵⁹ From 1155 to 1752 the official New Year began on Lady Day, 25 March, so probate was also in 1725.

Humphrey Cadwalader lawfull husband of the said Ellin Morgan (he being first personally sworn as the Law directs....’

[A tricky sequence, but it seems that Daniel having written his will in 1733 probably died early in 1740, his widow arranged for an inventory to be taken but did not seek probate, at some point remarried, and died in 1750, q.v., leaving as widower Humphrey Cadwalader, who married again a year later, and probably was sworn in as Daniel’s executor in 1753, thus regularising his position. The will had perhaps been lost in the interim.]

Brother William Evan, sisters Lowry, Ellin and Gwen to receive 2s 6d each; to the children of his sister Susanna 5s to be shared between them; his wife El[I]in Morgan to be residual legatee and executrix. Witnesses are John William, Ellis Morgan (both make their mark, Ellis probably being brother to the widow Ellin, and cf. below) and John Garnons,⁶⁰ who signs with a fluent hand.

The inventory drawn up on 17 January 1740⁶¹ values the estate at £79 1s 6d, so it seems that although Daniel may have been residual legatee of his father’s estate under a will allocating more bequests than it was theoretically capable of meeting, he did quite well in the end. Furniture tops the list of assets: a ‘dressar with its appurtenances’ is worth £2, a ‘dis[h]bo[a]rd with all the wooden vessals’ is valued at £1, two bedsteads with appurtenances at £1 15s, a table, benches and stools 9s 6d, and three chests £1 18s. As well as household equipment there are thirteen hobbets⁶² of oatmeal valued at £8, but the bulk of the value of the estate is in the livestock. He has thirty cattle, twenty-two sheep and two horses, valued at over £50. Ellis Morgan (who makes his mark) and Robert Roberts are witnesses of the valuation carried out by John Evan and John Roberts, whose mark is a neat J R.

The names are reminders of the close family networks in the area. Ellis Morgan was tenant at the next-door farm of Brynmaenllwyd (d. 1789), and Robert Roberts of Goppa was his son-in-law (d. 1798). Ellin (or Elin) Morgan was probably sister to Ellis Morgan of Brynmaenllwyd (d.1789) and Robert Morgan of Ty Cerrig (d. 1795), west across the river Eden from Tyddyn Sais. They were the sons of Morgan William (d. 1755) of Hendre Fawr,

⁶⁰ The Garnons family had taken over Rhiwgoch (see my history of Brynmaenllwyd, Trawsfynydd). Many were lawyers, including John Garnons senior (d.Apr. 1784) who may be the signatory here, but his son John Vaughan Garnons (d.Feb. 1784) was parish curate in the 1770s when the parish register was kept in a beautiful hand.

⁶¹ Why this date is not clear, though it must indicate roughly when Daniel Evan died.

⁶² ‘The hobbit (also hobbett, hobbet, or hober, from Welsh, *hobaid*) is a unit of volume or weight formerly used in Wales for trade in grain and other staples. It remained in customary use in markets in northern Wales after Parliament standardized the Winchester bushel as the unit of measure for grain, after which courts gave inconsistent rulings as to its legal status. According to George Richard Everitt, Inspector of Corn Returns for Denbigh, when examined by the House of Commons in 1888, grains were sold by the hobbit, measured by weight. A hobbit of oats weighed 105 pounds, a hobbit of barley 147 pounds, and a hobbit of wheat 168 pounds. There was also a hobbit of beans at 180 pounds, and in Flintshire, a 200-pound hobbit of old potatoes, or 210 pounds of new potatoes.... Already in 1863, the hobbit was used as an example of the “customary confusion in our British weights and measures.” An anonymous contributor to Charles Dickens’s journal *All the Year Round*, arguing in favour of the decimal metric system, noted that, “If [I buy wheat] at Wrexham, [I must order] by the hobbet of one hundred and sixty eight [pounds]. But, even if I do happen to know what a hobbet of wheat means at Wrexham, that knowledge good for Flint is not good for Caernarvonshire. A hobbet of wheat at Pwlheli contains eighty-four pounds more than a hobbet at Wrexham; and a hobbet of oats is something altogether different; and a hobbet of barley is something altogether different again.” Wikipedia. This is so remarkable as to merit inclusion at length, I feel. Those scratching their heads at the time cannot have imagined what the word hobbit has now come to mean today, though JRR Tolkien probably chose the word with a knowing smile.

the home farm of Rhiwgoch and the next farm southward beyond Brynmaenllwyd.⁶³ Ellin's relatives would have wished to ensure that her assets were given a fair valuation.

1750 May 24 Burial of **Elin Morgan** of **Tyddyn y Sais**. (Traws.Par.Reg.)

Ellin evidently remarried after her first husband Daniel Evan died, with her second, Humphrey Cadwalader, eventually (after her death) taking over her role as Daniel's executor. She died long before him, and was possibly significantly older. She retained her own name.

1751 Marriage

Humphrey Cadwalader of ye. Parish of Trawsfynydd and **Anne Lloyd** of the Parish of Llanfair were married by Licence November ye. 2d. (Llanfair, Mer., Par. Reg.)⁶⁴

1776 Burial of **Evan** son of **Humphrey Cadwalader** of **Tyddyn Sais** and his wife **Anne**.

(Trawsfynydd Par. Reg.) After 25 years of marriage Anne cannot have been young.

1783 14 August - Baptism of **John & Evan** 2 Sons of **Ellis Jones** of **Tyddyn y sais** & **Elizabeth** his wife.

22 August - Burial of John & Evan. (Traws.Par.Reg.)

Ellis Jones was presumably a farmhand at Tyddynsais. Humphrey Cadwalader, his employer, who had experienced the loss of a child himself, was hopefully able to offer some support to his neighbour and workmate on the farm over the loss of his infant twins.

1784 Burial of **Cadwalader Humphrey** of **Tyddyn y Sais** (Traws.Par.Reg.)

Presumably the father of Humphrey Cadwalader, he was buried on 20 November, four days before Cadwalader Williams (probably of Cefn Clawdd and father of Cadwalader Williams, later of Brynmaenllwyd, or perhaps his grandfather. See my Brynmaenllwyd history, 1788.)⁶⁵

1794 Will of **Humphrey Cadwalader** of **Tyddyn y Sais**, Trawsfynydd.

⁶³ See my history of Brynmaenllwyd.

⁶⁴ For some inexplicable reason the online record is filed as of Llanbrynmair, Montgomeryshire, clearly wrong.

⁶⁵ There was probably an infectious illness at the time as not only the elderly but the young were dying. Owen Richard a poor labourer lost three children, on 23 November and 13 and 15 December. Three other children were buried in December. On 29th David Davies of Rhiwgoch 'Gent' also went to his grave. Cf. parish records include the burial of Jane wife or daughter of Cadwalader Humphrey in January 1714 ('Janna vch. Cadwaladr Humphrey sepulta fuit 24 of January 1713/1714', misrecorded online as Cadwalader Humphrey's burial).

Written 24 June 1791, and signed with a firm H by Humphrey Cadwalader. The witnesses were John Pryce, John Jones and Euan [Evan] Ellis, all evidently literate though to varying degrees. Probate of the will was granted to Evan Edward on 1 May 1794. No inventory.

The first bequest is to Catherine wife of John Humphrey of Caeyrsaison (Cae'r Saeson) in the parish of Maentwrog £2. Then £2 to Margaret wife of Robert Richard of Yscwrn (Ysgwrn), Trawsfynydd. John son of Richard Ellis of Llan, Trawsfynydd, receives £5. Likewise to Catherine wife of Richard Ellis of Llan £5. 'I also give and bequeath unto Jane Evan now living in llanffestiniog ... Daughter of my Late Sister Ann ... the sum Three pounds of Lawfull British Money.' Ann wife of Robert Ellis of Llanffestiniog is given £2, as is William Evan of Mur Llwyd, Maentwrog (possibly a brother-in-law of Humphrey's late wife Ellin Morgan). Residual legatee and executor is **Evan Edward of Tyddynysais**.

It is possible that the Evan Edward of Tyddyn Sais⁶⁶ who is residual legatee of Humphrey Cadwalader was in direct line of descent from Evan Ellis, perhaps through his daughter Susanna who had children. From Ellin Morgan's husbands' wills it seems that there were no surviving children of either her first or second marriages. The forty years which elapsed between the will of Daniel Evan and that of Humphrey Cadwalader was a long time. It is possible that John Humphrey was a son of Humphrey Cadwalader, though he is not designated as such in the will, and it is his wife Catherine who is legatee (and not a widow). If he was the son, it may be that in being established at Caeyrsaison (Cae'r Saeson today, the English/Saxon Field) a few miles north in the neighbouring parish of Maentwrog he was regarded as already having received his share of the family's assets. The name of his farm suggests it had perhaps long been part of or associated with the Tyddyn Sais holding. Richard Ellis's family who it seems were not farmers as they lived in Trawsfynydd village (Llan, or 'church') receive the largest legacies, but nothing is known of them other than that a Richard Ellis aged 63 of Dolau was buried at Trawsfynydd in September 1827. There may of course be a direct line of descent from Evan Ellis at the start of the century, as names were so often alternated from father to son across the generations, functioning much as surnames did later.

The Jones / Parry Estate

It is not certain when control of Tyddyn Sais was acquired by the Jones / Parry Estate, though it was before 1703. As noted above, there is continuity with the house's history of the early seventeenth century, in that the landowner who funded a mortgage on it for Robert Evans in 1635, Humphrey Jones of Craflwyn and Penrhyn, though he did not take it over then, formed an extensive estate which descended eventually to the Parry family. Margaret Dunn's research into Craflwyn, Beddgelert, summarises the history: 'Humphrey Jones acquired a large scattered estate and his descendants married into powerful North Wales families. In 1703 their line died out and their estates passed to a Parry cousin who already owned vast estates. In 1773 Richard Parry married an English heiress, moved to Warfield Hall near Windsor and enjoyed London society life. He died in 1828 leaving a small part of his estate, including Craflwyn [Beddgelert] in trust to his four maiden daughters.' It was during the Jones dynasty, she says, that properties in Merionethshire were added to the estate, including

⁶⁶ An Evan Edward married Barbara David at Trawsfynydd on 15 May 1804. Neither was literate. On 19 October 1784 Evan Edward farmer of Tu yn y twll [Tyntwll] had been buried, possibly a relative.

those in Trawsfynydd parish. Tyddyn Sais was demonstrably part of the family's estate by the end of the seventeenth century (see below 1744 29 September re 1703).⁶⁷

While it is not clear when the Parry family became freeholders of Tyddyn Sais, given the final remark in what follows it may be that descendants of the Salusbury family were continuously in charge from the construction of the present house in the mid-sixteenth century until Richard Parry's Trust and the eventual Goppa sale in the nineteenth: "The Parry's, of Llwyn Ynn, Llanrhaidr, and Plas Newydd, and more recently of Warfield, were the owners of considerable property in North Wales, up to the present generation, inherited from remote times.... the present representatives of the Parry's, of Llwyn Ynn, can trace back their descent uninterruptedly to the 11th century. On the rich shield of arms of the Parry's may be traced some of the alliances of the family in the 16th and 17th centuries, with the Mostyns of Mostyn, and of Talacre, with the Puleston's, Bagot's, Herbert's, Bulkeley's, Goodman's, and at an earlier date with the Salisbury's, Wynn's, etc."⁶⁸

When Richard Parry the younger died in 1834 he was a significant landowner in several counties. His will⁶⁹ mentions the Merioneth parishes in which he held lands as Ffestiniog, Llandecwyn, Beddgelert, Trawsfynydd and Maentwrog. His estate passed to the control principally of the Mostyn family (he was godfather to the second son of Edward Mostyn Lloyd Mostyn), who were, like the Parrys, major landowners with significant holdings north of Snowdonia in Denbighshire as well as others in Merioneth, where they had controlled the Corsygedol estate since 1766. However, the Trust established by their father in relation to part of the estate to secure an income, including either by sale or mortgage, for his maiden sisters, which included the Trawsfynydd holdings, continued in the sisters' names until 1867. The Trawsfynydd properties became known locally as the Goppa Estate. In the eighteenth century Goppa itself was officially noted as their principal seat in the county as successive heads of the family held the office of Sheriff of Merioneth, Robert Parry of Goppa in 1746 and Richard Parry of Goppa in 1771.⁷⁰ A new, more substantial Georgian house was built in front of the (probably) C16 one. Evidently the Trustees took a decision in the 1840s to dispose of the Trawsfynydd lands which included Tyddyn Sais, though in the event this seems not to have taken place at that date (see below).

1703 27 November

Will of **Maurice Jones** of Llanrhaeadr, Denbighshire: all his lands (including Tyddyn Sais, see below, 1744 29 September) are to be inherited by **Jane Jones** his widow for her lifetime, then by his cousin Humphrey Parry, his heirs and assigns for ever.⁷¹

⁶⁷ The Craflwyn estate's lineage: 1604-1649 Humffrey Jones I of Craveloen; 1649-1653 Maurice [Morys] Jones II; 1653-1676 Humphrey Jones II; 1676-1703 Maurice Jones III; 1703-1730 Jane Jones; 1730-1744 Humphrey Parry; 1744-1751 Catherine Parry; 1751-1759 Robert Parry; 1759-1828 Richard Parry I; 1828-1834 Richard Parry II; 1834-1867 Ann(e) Dorothy Parry and sisters. (Margaret Dunn, revised Paula Burnett.)

⁶⁸ E. Powell, 'The History and Antiquities of the Parish of Llanfair D.C.', *Cymru*, 23 May 1914, p.8.

⁶⁹ PCC Wills PROB 11 1833 450.

⁷⁰ Robert also served as Sheriff of Carnarvonshire in 1747 and of Flintshire in 1757, Richard for Carnarvonshire in 1772 and Denbighshire in 1775. Humphrey had been Sheriff for Denbighshire in 1735 and Flinshire in 1736, but not for Merioneth. Their relationship to Goppa was no doubt secondary to other roles and seats.

⁷¹ NA PCC Wills PROB 11/469/409. Cf. 1703 23 November NA PROB 11/473/82 Sentence of Maurice Jones of [Llanrhaeadr in] Kimerch, Denbighshire (In Latin. Probate to Jane Jones).

The medieval parish church of St. Dyfnog's in Llanrhaeadr has 'an imposing marble monument to squire Maurice Jones of Llanrhaeadr Hall, shown reclining in his "Queen Anne" periwig amid weeping cherubs.' (medieval-wales.com)

1730 Death of Jane Jones.

Margaret Dunn reports: the widow Jane Jones was benefactress to many parishes including a bequest of £80 to minister & churchwardens of Tranfynnid (sic), Merioneth, for 10 poor householders. In 1800 (1/2 Jan) Ty'n y Fynwent otherwise Tynllan (also called Cae'r Plwyf & Ty'r Plwyf) was bought in trust for the poor of the parish for ever at cost of £180. Cottage garden added to churchyard in 1853. Also 2.5 acres field adjoining the turnpike road, later (1869) sold. (Charities Commission report 1819-39, pp.538-9)

A *Cambrian News* survey in 1873 of Merioneth charities has a section on the Parish of Trawsfynydd and Jane Jones's Charity: 'Mrs Jane Jones, widow of one Maurice Jones, Esq., of Llanrhaiadr, by her will, supposed to be made circa 1703, gave unto the minister and churchwardens of this parish £80; and her desire was that the said sum... should be laid out in the public funds, or in the purchase of lands, mortgage, or other substantial securities, so that the yearly interest and produce thereof should be annually distributed on St. Thomas's Day amongst the poorest families... nominated by the minister and churchwardens.' Jane Jones's daughter-in-law added a further £100 to the original bequest, which was used in 1800 to buy from William and Jane Wynne of Peniarth⁷² a freehold house and field in the centre of the village, Tanyfynwent (or Tynyllan), transferred to the rector William Williams and churchwardens, Morgan Lloyd and David Richard, and their successors 'in trust for the poor of the said parish for ever.' It adds: 'The usual rent received from these messuages was £8 10s annually, and was applied in doles of small sums to the poor, and in apprenticing a poor boy of the parish. This latter application has not been regularly adhered to.'⁷³

1730 Humphrey Parry (1686-1744, buried at Cwm, had 13 children) inherits on the death of Jane Jones. He had succeeded his brother to the Craflwyn estate in 1713. (Griff.Ped.p.387) He was the son of Richard Parry (1650-1708) who was descended from a namesake (1560-1623), bishop of St. Asaph and author of the Revised Welsh Bible, 1620. He married Jane, daughter of Maurice Jones of Plas yn Ddol, Corwen, forging a key link with the Jones family.

1733-1744 Humphrey Parry of Goppa (and of Llwyn Ynn, Plas Newydd & Pwllhalog / Pwllhalawg) was a JP for Merionethshire until his death. (Merioneth Quarter Sessions 1733-65, p.292.)

1743 28/29 September

Lease and Release: yearly rent charge of £300 from lands in Trawsfynydd granted by Humphrey Parry to Catherine his wife for her natural life.

1744 12 September

⁷² Trawsfynydd's Gelli Iorwerth estate (later known as Plas Captan) became part of the Peniarth estate in the C17 (see my history of Brynmaenllwyd). It presumably included this holding.

⁷³ *Cambrian News*, 18 April 1873, p.7. The article refers to a will of Jane Jones, later withdrawn (not traced).

Grant of messuages by Indenture 14/15 1737 conveyed to **Catherine Parry** in jointure by Humphrey Parry in several parishes including these in Trawsfynydd:

*Tyddyn y ffelin uchaf; *Tyddyn y Ffelin Issa, ***Tyddyn y Sais**; Bryn Crwn; *Fron y Gheiliog; Gwern Bach; *Llwyn Derw; *Goppa; occupied by Hugh ap Owen, Evan Ellis, Hugh Davids, Robert Williams, Humphrey ap Robert, Robert Roberts. (NLW Rawley 33)

Further evidence of the role of women in relation to Tyddyn Sais – which was to continue.

1744 29 September: Deed enumerating some of the lands devised to Humphrey Parry (his first cousin) by the will of Maurice Jones of Ddol and Llanrhaiadr (d. 1703). Trawsfynydd holdings include all those above marked with a *, plus Aberffryth⁷⁴ (Powys Fadog V, p.219.)

1744 14 November: Probate of Humphrey Parry's will (PCC PROB 11 736 143, written 1 July 1744), granted in London to his eldest son **Robert Parry** (1723-1759), with his co-executrix Catherine his mother noted as yet to be sworn in. The will is chiefly concerned with provision for his surviving children (three sons and seven daughters), with reference to documents of 30 May 1724 and 29 September 1743 in which all his lands in the counties of Merioneth, Denbigh and Carnarvon are held in a Trust (derived from the bequest from Maurice Jones) to provide a huge income of '£5000 or £7000.' The transfers to Catherine in 1737 and September 1744 would have secured her financial independence.⁷⁵

1751 Death of Catherine, widow of Humphrey Parry. Son Robert now takes over her share.

1759 Robert's son, **Richard Parry I** (1744/6-1828) of Llanrhaeadr Hall, inherits.

1770 19 March:

Lease for 1 year of messuages... in the parish of Trawsfynydd: Tyddyn y felin uchaf; Tyddyn y Felin Issa, **Tyddyn y Sais**; Bryn Derw; Vron Ysgello, Gwern y Cyfidwy; Gwern bach, Llwyn Derw; Goppa; Aber & Ffridd, Corsewen, Bryn Teg, Y Bryn Crwn (NLW Rawley10)⁷⁶

1828 Richard's son, **Richard Parry II** (1775-1834) inherits all but the Trust lands. He dies in 1834 leaving his estate to his nephew Francis Haygarth, Colonel in the Scots Fusiliers.

1828-1867 Some of Richard Parry I's lands including Tyddyn Sais (of the Craflwyn estate) held in Trust for his unmarried daughters **Ann(e) Dorothy Parry and sisters Caroline, Laura and Amelia**. (Three other daughters married. He had ten children. Griff.Ped.p.387)

1867-73 Richard Parry III (1826-1873), nephew of Richard Parry II, owner of part of the Parry estate 1867-73. Griffith has: 'Richard Parry, Captain of the Scots Greys, inherited Craflwyn &c. on the death of the Misses Parry, of Warfield, as heir at Law.'

⁷⁴ Since Aber was one of Humphrey Jones's holdings in Trawsfynydd in 1623 its omission was probably error.

⁷⁵ 1748/9 Jan 27/28: Robert Roberts of Goppa, Trawsfynydd, mentioned re mortgage (Mostyn D/M/2302, 2303). 1749 March: Robert Parry of Plas yn Ddol (& Pwllhalog & Llwyn Ynn) became a JP for Merioneth until his death. (Merioneth Quarter Sessions 1733-65, pp.293, 295, 296). £100 p.a. income was a prerequisite. 1760 Feb 6/7: Lease and Release for 1 year of messuages in the parishes of Trawsfynydd, Festiniog, Maentwrog, Llandecwyn and Corwen (18 tenants listed) (NLW Rawley 8-9) - Thanks to Margaret Dunn for these.

⁷⁶ Also 1770 9 April: Transcript of Recovery re many lands including in Trawsfynydd. (DD/DM/703/1)

1873 Llewelyn England Sidney Parry his son inherits; sells part of the estate (see below).

(I am indebted to Margaret Dunn for most of the Jones / Parry estate story.)

Map c.1800 (cf. 1845)

Maps dating from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries held in the Dolgellau archive, one of which, D., includes **Tyddyn Sais**,⁷⁷ are thought to be those of the Parry estate's holdings in Trawsfynydd, Maentwrog and Ffestiniog parishes, or possibly relate to purchases by that estate. Since information on the maps includes neighbouring landowners, it is possible to estimate when they were drawn up.⁷⁸ Reference on Map 7 to Lord Newborough means that it must have been drawn after 1776 when the title was created. The absence from the maps of the turnpike road built in the early 1820s narrows it further.

1798 Merioneth Land Tax Assessment

Tyddyn Sais, Trawsfynydd.

20th March 1799

Proprietor: **Richard Parry Esq.**

Occupant: **John Hugh**

18s

The history of Tyddyn Sais takes a sharp turn at this point. The freehold had long been part of the estate of the Parry family, the inheritors of Humphrey Jones who had come close to taking charge a century and a half earlier, but as to tenants, not only with the death of Humphrey Cadwalader did a long era of continuity through most of the eighteenth century come to an end,⁷⁹ but also with John Hugh or Hughes a new even longer era was beginning which was to last for seventy years.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

Ownership of Tyddyn Sais stayed with the Parry Estate for more than half the century, while the tenancy of John Hugh or Hughes, who was in place by 1799, lasted until his death at almost a hundred in 1869. His family's story is central to what follows, but so also is the story of other residents at Tyddyn Sais, which evidently accommodated more than one household, as becomes clearer with the census records from 1841. The later part of the

⁷⁷ Meirionnydd Archive Dolgellau (MAD): ZM/1055/1-5. 'Map 6' covers A. Aber, B. Bryn-teg, C. Gorswen, D. Tyddyn y Sais, and E. Bryn-crwn. Other Trawsfynydd holdings are Gwern Cyfrdwy, Wernbach and Ddolwen on Map 5, Goppa, Llwyn-derw and Tyddyn y felin isa and ucha on Map 4. Pant Mawr land neighboured Goppa to the south, west was 'Peter Price Esq.', Coed Cae Du was to the north-east, and to the north-west 'Mr Lloyd of Brynhir's Lands.' It may be relevant to the subsequent story of Tyddyn Sais that to its north Berth Ddu was 'Mr, Lloyd of Bryn llefrith's Land,' to the east is 'Mr, Anwyl's Land,' and to its west, Bryn Re land is marked as 'Ellis Rowland.'

⁷⁸ 'Sir Watkin's land' south of Aber relates to current ownership of the Rhiwgoch estate but is not particularly helpful as several Wynnstay heirs were known as Sir Watkin Williams Wynn.

⁷⁹ Evan Edward evidently did not take over the lease despite the 1794 will, possibly because a 'three lives' tenancy had been exhausted.

century saw a series of new freeholders and new tenants, and the start of relationships which would last into the twentieth century.

John Hughes 1771-1869

John Hugh (or Hughes) farmed at Tyddyn Sais during more than half of the nineteenth century, and was already in place as the farm's yeoman tenant before the end of the eighteenth, as the 1798 Merioneth Land Tax Assessment (dated 1799) demonstrates. It seems he was born less than a mile away.

1771 Dec 27 Baptism of John son of Hugh Richard⁸⁰ of Bryncrwn and Jonett.⁸¹

(Traws.Par. Reg.) This is presumably Tyddyn Sais's John Hugh/es.⁸² In 1768 the family had been at Wern (presumably Wern Cyfrdwy, a substantial farmhouse also known today as Wern Fawr to distinguish it from the much smaller and later Wern Bach nearby, just west of the Eden valley and south of Cefn Clawdd) where John's sister Jane was born, which fits with her being about 82 at the 1851 census (q.v.) The family moved to Bryn Crwn, the next farm after Tyddyn Sais along the trackway north, where not only John was born but also his brother David in 1774. David was to take over their parents' tenancy of Bryn Crwn, while John became their near neighbour at Tyddyn Sais. When John married Bryn Crwn was still in his parents' hands, so it was a stroke of luck that tenancy of the nearby farm of Tyddyn Sais became available on the death of Humphrey Cadwalader in 1794 and that though young he was in a position to be allocated it. The lineage at Bryn Crwn continued down the generations. David son of David Hughes, farmer of Bryn Crwn and Jane Jones his wife was baptised at Trawsfynydd on 20 November 1813.⁸³ Known as David Pugh⁸⁴ he continued to farm at Bryn Crwn into the 1870s. As with the previous generation he was not the eldest, but perhaps as a younger son was the one best placed to wait to take over from an elderly father. He had two older half-brothers, John baptised in 1805 and Richard in 1807, and one full brother, Robert David, born 1811.

1814

On 3 May 1814 John Hugh/es married **Jane Williams** from Llanbedr,⁸⁵ a parish mainly across the Rhinog mountains on the far side of the Drws Ardudwy but also including land on the Trawsfynydd side such as Cwrt. They were married by the Llanbedr curate David Evans 'with consent of parents' indicating that at least one was under twenty-one. The witnesses

⁸⁰ It is possible that the John Richard who died in old age at Tyddyn Sais in 1850, q.v., was brother to Hugh and therefore uncle to John Hugh/es. Cf. also the burial on Christmas Eve 1775 of Hugh Richard of Tir y Felin isa, Yeoman, who may have been father, or more likely, grandfather to Hugh Richard of Bryn Crwn.

⁸¹ Cf. 1815 Nov 9: Burial of Jonet David, Bryncrwn, aged 82. As normal at this date she kept her own name.

⁸² The register also records: 1793 Nov 8 Burial of John Hugh, evidently not the one born in 1771.

⁸³ The register records the wife's name as Jane Jones but this seems to be an error, as Anne was born to 'David Hugh and Anne his wife' in 1809 and Robert David to 'David Hughes (Bryn Crwn) and Anne his wife formerly Anne Jones' in 1811. After Jane died David had married Anne, but Jane's name crept into the 1813 record.

⁸⁴ Pugh is ap Hugh, son of Hugh, an alternative to Hughes (and useful to distinguish son from father).

⁸⁵ Llanbedr Parish Register, Merioneth Record Office.

were Richard Lewis and Evan Williams⁸⁶ who both signed their names (Richard spelling his name phonetically as Richart). While Jane made her mark, a cross, John wrote his initials, his 'letters,' in the register, IH, with a firm hand. Intriguingly, however, the parish register records John Hughes of Trawsfynydd as a widower. Jane was young enough to need parental consent, but John was already over forty.⁸⁷

1793

In fact, the Trawsfynydd parish register records that more than twenty years before this Llanbedr marriage, on 31 December 1793 a John Hughes of the parish of Ellesmere, Shropshire, married Lowry Robert of Trawsfynydd in her parish church by licence.⁸⁸ While John Hughes is a not uncommon name, this is likely to be his first marriage as it situates him in Trawsfynydd, and marrying at the age of 23 which would be plausible, particularly if he was well placed for the tenancy of a significant farm such as Tyddyn Sais, which he probably took over after Humphrey Cadwalader's death, possibly in 1793/4 since probate was granted in May 1794. If there had been a three-lives tenancy finishing with Humphrey Cadwalader, John Hugh may have struck lucky with a good farm falling vacant next door to the family farm of Bryn Crwn. His father Hugh Richard lived at Bryn Crwn until 1819 when he died aged 89,⁸⁹ so John was no doubt pleased to establish himself as yeoman farmer of Tyddyn Sais while still quite young. It was his younger brother David who stayed on at Bryn Crwn, where his son David Pugh was born while his grandfather was still alive.

That John had resided in Shropshire was not improbable. Ellesmere in the north-west of the county had ready access to North Wales, with large estates linking the locations. It was only a few miles from Brogyntyn near Oswestry, the centre of an estate which included significant lands in Merioneth.⁹⁰ Also, the ancient route from Oswestry up the Tanat Valley and over the Berwyn mountains via Llangynog to Bala passed the Watkin Williams Wynn estate at Llangedwyn before continuing to what had become by this date another Wynnstay estate, Rhiwgoch in Trawsfynydd. There would no doubt have been a lot of travellers between these estates, and jobs to be had, including the droving of cattle. There was also another link between Ellesmere and Merioneth. In the 1790s Thomas Telford, the ground-breaking engineer, from his office in the town began work on the Ellesmere Canal to link the rivers

⁸⁶ No doubt Jane's father, who at the 1841 census was of independent means, living alone in Llanbedr, aged 85.

⁸⁷ At the first census in 1841 they recorded their ages as 70 and 50, though it may be that John was already 71 and Jane, if she was under 21 in 1814, was probably no more than 48.

⁸⁸ Bishop's Transcripts, Trawsfynydd (www.genuki.org.uk). Parish of residence was recorded, not that of birth.

⁸⁹ Trawsfynydd Parish Register. Longevity was surprisingly not unusual in this period, with the parish seeing the burial of people in their nineties several times a year. Next in the register was Robert Hughes of Tyn'carleg, also 89, while Catherine Thomas of Muriau bach, just across the river Eden from Tyddyn Sais, died on Christmas Day at the age of 91. The next summer Jane Williams of Berthddu, adjacent to Tyddyn Sais, died aged 90, while deaths that autumn included Catherine Roberts of Dolgain, and Anne Roberts of Plas Capten (also nearby), both aged 84. In 1827 Mary Jones, Tyndrain, was buried aged 98, and in 1838 another Mary Jones of Ynys Thomas was buried at 102, but the most remarkable case was recorded in 1817 by the Rector William Williams: Feb 10 Burial of Edmund Morgan, Dolymynach isa, aged 109. There is a marginal note in a different hand: 'See tombstone aged 113.' There were young deaths too, of course, including two at Tyddyn Sais (see 1820, 1841).

⁹⁰ These included Parc (Llanfrothen), Glyn Cywarch (Talsarnau), Harlech, Sylfaen (Llanaber), etc., and Brogyntyn became a familiar name in the county in its anglicised form, Porkington, e.g. Barmouth's Porkington Terrace on the Mawddach. Cf. the Brogyntyn link with Tyddyn Sais itself explored above, for 1635.

Severn, Dee and Mersey, which led him to work in Merioneth.⁹¹ Perhaps John had gone to Ellesmere to work for Telford and had saved enough to gain a farm tenancy back at home.

Although Lowry Robert evidently died, the continuing role of the Robert/Roberts name in connection with Tyddyn Sais may indicate an ongoing family connection.⁹² There is no record of any children from this marriage. The death of young wives in connection with childbirth and other hazards was of course a sadly common phenomenon, and it would be expected that a widower would marry again. It is evident, however, that John did have children from a marriage to a wife called Elizabeth, as the Trawsfynydd parish register records the birth of Elizabeth in 1795, Jane in 1797 and Robert in 1804. When Jane died in 1820 aged just 23 she was recorded as of Tyddyn Sais, so she was definitely this John Hugh's daughter. No other information about this marriage has been traced, or of the death of Elizabeth, necessarily before 1814 when John married again in Llanbedr. Whatever his early history, it is clear that John's marriage to Jane Williams lasted more than half a century, produced many children, and facilitated a remarkably long residence at Tyddyn Sais.

1795

3 November: Baptism of **Elizabeth** daughter of John Hugh and **Elizabeth** his wife. (Traws.Par.Reg., et seq.)

1797

21 October: Baptism of **Jane** Daughter of John Hugh and Elizabeth his wife. (Cf. 1820)

1804

April 8: Baptism of **Robert** son of John Hugh and Elizabeth his wife. (Cf. 1821)

1814

3 May: John Hughes of the Parish of Trawsfynydd Widower and Jane Williams of this Parish Spinster were married in this Church by Licence with Consent of Parents this Third Day of May in the year One thousand eight hundred and Fourteen by me David Evans Curate. (Llanbedr, Mer., Par.Reg.)

1815

3 September. Baptism of **Lowry** daughter of **John Hughes**, Farmer, and **Jane Williams**, **Tyddynsais**.

⁹¹ Although few may now be aware of Shropshire's Ellesmere, the northern end of the canal in Cheshire is better known. Formerly known as Netherpool it acquired the name Ellesmere Port, and is now a substantial industrial town. The projected canal, which includes the famously elegant and vertiginous Pontcysyllte aqueduct near Llangollen, was never completed (the Llangollen Canal is now a World Heritage Site), but it drew Telford to work in Merioneth. In order to improve the water supply for his canal he raised the water level of Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake), building sluices at its outflow at Bala into the river Dee, work which could well have drawn a 'navvy' back to Merioneth.

⁹² See Nov. 1817 and 1841. It is likely that the John Roberts who died at Tyddyn Sais aged 75 in 1817 was a relative, probably father of Evan (1841), and possibly also the father of John Hughes' putative first wife Lowry Robert. That Lowry was affectionately remembered after her death may be supported by the naming of John and Jane's first child Lowry.

1817

23 February. Baptism of **William** son of **John Hughes**, Farmer, and **Jane Williams, Tyddynsais**.

29 November. **John Roberts, Tyddyn Sais**, 78, buried at Trawsfynydd.

1819

Merioneth Quarter Sessions, Michaelmas.

Examination taken before Richard Hughes; **Ann Parry** swears that she was removed from Dolgellau to pa.[rish] Trawsfynydd the previous March, having been in service at **Tyddyn y Sais** for 1 year after May 12.⁹³

1820

14 July. **Jane Pugh** of **Tyddyn Sais** buried, aged 23.

Jane was John Hugh's daughter from his marriage to Elizabeth, sadly dying as her stepmother Jane Williams was pregnant again. That she should be recorded as Jane Pugh not Jane Hughes is interesting, as her younger brother Robert used the name Hughes, as did their half-siblings.

19 November. Baptism of **Jane** daughter of **John Hughes**, Farmer, and **Jane Williams, Tyddynsais**.

There were two good reasons for naming the baby Jane, after her mother and her late aunt.

1821

Llangelynin Par.Reg: Robert Hughes Bachelor of the parish of Trawsfynydd and Gwen Davies of this parish Spinster were married in this Church by Banns with Consent of Parties this fourteenth day of July in the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty one. (He signs, she makes mark, witnesses Evan Williams/mark and Jane Lewis/signature.)

Robert (see above 1804) was marrying at only seventeen on the first anniversary of his sister Jane's burial at twenty-three. His father had remarried in 1814 and his stepmother Jane was rapidly establishing a new family. It must have been a difficult time for him. Often marriages for those not of 'full age' were by 'consent of parents' who would be the witnesses, but it was also acceptable for others, 'parties', to stand in for them as here. It seems John Hughes did not attend his son's wedding, perhaps was not aware of it. By the time of the 1841 census Robert was working in Bala as a mason, had a different locally born wife called Margaret who was two years older and 5 children aged from 14 to 2. In 1851 he was still a Bala mason, Trawsfynydd-born, living with the same wife, a daughter of 20 and new son aged 7.

⁹³ Merioneth Archive, Dolgellau (MAD), XQS/M1819/22. The phrase 'was removed' suggests a forcible removal such as usually related to the destitute, paupers dependent on parish relief who were sent back to their original parish. What had happened to Ann Parry who had recently supported herself in employment at Tyddyn Sais can only be guessed. She may have gone back to Dolgellau as the 1841 census records an Ann Parry living alone in Meyrick Street as a pauper aged 40. There was, however, another Ann Parry, born in Trawsfynydd, who married a Dolgellau copper miner and weaver and had 2 children by 1841, a dressmaker daughter of 20 and a son of 11.

1822

15 September. Double baptism of **Robert** son of **Evan Roberts**, Labourer, and **Gwen Roberts, Tyddynsais**, and of **Sarah** daughter of **John Hughes**, Farmer, and **Jane Williams, Tyddynsais**.

The double baptism of the farmer's daughter with his farmhand's son on the same day presents an appealing image of the closeness of ties on yeoman farms. (See also 1854.)

1824

Eleanor the daughter of **Evan Roberts** by **Gwen** his wife of **Tyddyn y sais** in the Parish of Trawsfynydd Labourer was baptized April 11th. 1824 / By me Edwd: Davies.

(Baptismal Register of Independent Chapel, Penystryd.) The move to nonconformism was typical of the time. At the 1841 census Gwen, 55, and Ellenor were living together in Trawsfynydd village. In 1851 Evan Roberts, 60, still an agricultural labourer, was at the same address, Gwyndy, with Gwen his Llandenddwyn-born wife.

1820s Construction of the turnpike road between Llanelltyd and Trawsfynydd

The turnpike cut through the Tyddyn Sais land a little way east of the house, on a straight north-south trajectory. The old road south from Trawsfynydd village had climbed gradually to Penystryd (it is still there as a back road) and then taken a hillside route to Dolgellau, but this new road was dead straight from Fronoleu southwards, intersecting the farm's fields, and requiring a new access lane to the house at right angles. The old 'low' road linking Bryn Crwn with Tyddyn Sais which had formerly joined the Bronze Age track from the mountains through Brynmaenllwyd's fields, now lapsed into local use only for farm purposes.⁹⁴

1830 19 November

Craflwyn Estate, inherited by **Richard Parry II** (1775-1834) in 1828:

Appointment of receiver for the rents of properties in the parishes of Trawsfynydd ...

Tyddyn Sais	John Hugh	£30
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For comparison, Goppa was £80, Robert Roberts; nearby holdings were Bryn Crwn £25, David Hughes; Bryn Teg £36, Owen William; Gorswen & Wernfawr £10, John Humphrey; Wernbach £6-6-0, Cadwalader Williams. (NLW Rawley, 20)

1835 The Start of the Tudor Dynasty

8 March. Baptism of **David Edwards** son of **Edward Tudor**, Labourer, and **Lowry Davies, Tyddynsais**. (Traws.Par.Reg.)

⁹⁴ With increasing and faster traffic on the road in the twentieth century, the Tyddyn Sais land east of the road, which was in any case rough and rocky, became difficult to access and its freehold was eventually separated.

In 1835 the parish register records the baptism of David Edwards (later known as **David Tudor**), the son of Edward Tudor, at that time a labourer at Tyddyn Sais, and his wife Lowry Davies (later Laura Tudor), who had married in November 1832. Edward and Lowry were to found the Tudor family of Cefn Clawdd which has played a large part in the district. At the 1841 census they were at Hafod Cynfal, a small moorland holding of 33 acres south of Cefn Clawdd, aged 35 and 30, with two children David, 6, and Lowry, 2, plus a female servant. They were still there in 1851 with a growing family but by 1861 they were at Cefn Clawdd, the old farmhouse now a ruin above the new house built by their son David c.1900. William Davies, probably Lowry's brother, was farming Wern Cyfrdwy, the adjacent farm across the river Crawcwellt from Cefn Clawdd. He had been there already in 1841, aged forty, with a wife Lowry aged thirty, and small child also Lowry, and his eighty year-old mother, Lowry William, of independent means (the 230-acre farm's formal tenant, no doubt a widow – see 1845), plus two young servants. They were evidently quite prosperous. The two families came together to create the dynasty of the Tudors, who were – and remain – dominant in the district. Farming was not the only source of the family's prosperity as they set up manganese mining in the hills above the farm, and opened a small slate mine on the side of the glacial hanging-valley of Cefn Clawdd. Their grandson Ellis was to farm at Tyddyn Sais from c.1930, where his widow and descendants remained until the 1990s (see below).

1840 Tithe Survey

Owners: The Trustees of the late Richard Parry Esq.

Occupier: John Hughes

Acreage: 102

Rate: £2

Field names (acres): Garw bach (2) / Cefn y ddwy ffordd (9) / Gors fawr (18) / Pen isa'r cae coch (1) / Cae'r yd (4) / Cae'r lloi (2) / Buarth y lloi (1) / Buarth garw (1) / Gwaith pladur (1) / Cae'r nant (3) / Buarth bach (1) / Rofft (2) / Rofft fach (<1) / House Yard and Garden (<1) / Cae coch (5) / Wern fraith isaf (5) / Bryniau rhuddion (21) / Gwaith pedair pladur (16) / Ffridd yr hafodty (1)

The farm's location between old road and new turnpike gives rise to the 'ddwy ffordd' or 'two roads.' The combination of arable land with pasture ('Cae'r yd' is 'cornfield,' and 'pladur' means 'plough'; 'buarth' is 'yard' or 'fold' for livestock; 'lloi' is 'calves') was typical of the district into the twentieth century, though now all is pasture. Several names indicate the terrain or its vegetation, a reminder of how much land has since been improved by drainage and reseeded: 'gors,' 'wern' and 'garw' all indicate boggy, coarse or rough land; 'coch' and 'rhudd' (pl. 'rhuddion') both mean red or reddish (sphagnum moss seasonally has a ruddy tint which gives its name to the 'cors goch' of the Eden valley); 'fraith' is 'speckled.' 'Rofft' is probably a contraction of 'grofft' or 'croft' and may explain why there are two census entries in 1841; presumably a smallholding within the farm, or separate from it, housed the second family. The final name relates to the high common land ('ffridd') where local farms had (and have) summer grazing and gathering rights and where a basic building ('hafodty' or summer house) accommodated the farmhands for the season. It is possible that

land east of Tyddyn Sais near Penystryd is in question (given the 1841 census sequence), or the Crawwellt common west across the Eden, where the tenants of Tyddyn Sais and its neighbour Brynmaenllwyd built barns for storing rushes enclosed within small fields (see below: c.1840 Commons enclosure). That of Tyddyn Sais was bigger than Brynmaenllwyd's.

c.1840 Commons enclosure (cf. 1910 Valuation Office Survey)

During the 1840s a small area of the Crawwellt common across the river Eden from Tyddyn Sais was enclosed, and a **stone barn was built for the storage of rushes** used for cattle bedding. Cadwalader Williams was at the neighbouring farm of Brynmaenllwyd. Both men were well established, John born c.1770 while Cadwalader was younger, born c.1788. They were probably friends, perhaps rivals. Cadwalader built a similar barn in a smaller walled enclosure nearby on the boggy common, with the date of 1847 carved in the doorway,⁹⁵ and it is likely that the Tyddyn Sais barn was of similar date, though possibly built first if it is this which is listed in the tithe survey. In the 1910 farm survey these enclosures were officially recognised and each was mapped and attached to its holding farm by number. Both farms had – and have – rights of pasture on the common, in the case of Brynmaenllwyd for ponies as well as sheep. These rights were used by these farms until recently with flocks driven up for the summer, but in the last couple of years they seem to have fallen into disuse (as of 2017). However, wild ponies still graze there.



⁹⁵ See my history of Brynmaenllwyd.

1910 Valuation Office Survey: shows the commons enclosures each with barn for rushes in a walled enclosure. They are clearly designated as belonging to Tyddyn Sais (the larger oblong, east) and Brynmaenllwyd (the small square, south of it). The small-holding west, marked 65, also enclosed from the common, is Wern Bach.

1841 15 March Burial of **William Lloyd, Tyddyn Sais**, aged 23 weeks.⁹⁶

See 1841 Census for John Lloyd and Lewis Lloyd at Tyddyn Sais.

1841 Census 6 June

There are two entries headed Tyddyn Sais, separated by one for Penystryd. Clearly like many farms in the area Tyddyn Sais accommodated not just the tenant farmer and his family but others as well, and the idea of each dwelling requiring a unique address had not yet arrived.

The main house list has John Hugh[es], 70, the farmer, and Jane his wife, 50, with their children Jane, 20, Sarah, 15, who was actually about nineteen, and a son **Hugh**, 14, plus presumably lodgers, **John Lloyd**, 25, a joiner, **Lewis Lloyd**, 30, a basketmaker, as well as **Robert Edward**, 30, a quarryman (all Merioneth-born).

John Lloyd, presumably father of baby William who died shortly before the census, was possibly the son of John Lloyd, a joiner, and Anne, who was baptised at Dolgelley in August 1814.

Lewis Lloyd the basket-maker can be traced to his seventies. Baptised in Llanfrothen in 1808, he did not marry, and spent his later years in Llanfihangel y traethau. Having moved on from Tyddyn Sais, by 1851 he is there with his unmarried elder sister Gwen, 48, a former servant, and her one year-old nephew. Lewis is recorded as a basket-maker aged 46. Ten years later he is down as head of the family, a basket-maker aged 59, living with his sister Gwen, 60, proudly recorded as 'Basket Maker's Sister.' A decade on he is living alone aged 61 at Penshilff in the same parish, recorded as a pauper, born in Llanfrothen. The 1881 census shows him as one of five boarders with a 29 year-old widow at Tanrallt. Though now down as aged 74 he is recorded as a basket-maker still. On 25 June 1881 he was carried back from the Penrhyndeudraeth workhouse where he had died, presumably as a pauper, to be laid to rest in the churchyard of Llanfihangel y traethau, where so much of his life had been spent.⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Traws.Par.Reg. NB There was another William Lloyd of very similar age, baptised in September 1840, the son of Richard Lloyd, a weaver, and Jane Williams his wife, who lived in the village, but their William survived.

⁹⁷ His story is of particular interest as a footnote to a watercolour by Curnow Vosper, the artist of the nationally famous painting of a chapel interior, *Salem*. Although his *An Old Welsh Basket Maker* was painted at the start of the twentieth century, too late to be a portrait of Lewis Lloyd from life, it gives a lively idea of the craft and the lifelong dedication to it which he exemplified. It illustrates the making of the kind of strong baskets used among other things for peat and often mounted as panniers on ponies. Vosper's most famous portrayals of traditional Welsh life, *Salem* and *Market Day in Old Wales*, were painted in the parish of Llanfair which neighbours that of Llanfihangel y traethau. His biographer Jolyon Goodman comments that *An Old Welsh Basket Maker* 'strongly suggests another Ardudwy setting, again with colouring typical of the local stone.... No basket makers are listed in local census returns around this time, and so for him it may have been a secondary occupation, or perhaps he was an unrecorded itinerant craftsman working away from home.' [Jolyon Goodman, *Curnow Vosper: His Life and Works*, Talybont, Ceredigion: y Lolfa, 2015, 35-6. The painting, exhibited in 1908, is now in Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, CCM 71.991.] It is of course possible that the painting is based on a photograph of Lewis Lloyd himself from two decades earlier. Vosper's paintings often detail practices and styles which were already

Robert Edward/s in 1861 was still working in a slate quarry in Trawsfynydd, one of six men living in the barracks at Braichdu. All were born in Caernarvonshire, Robert at Llanllefni. He was the eldest at 52, married, as were the two men in their forties, one a blacksmith, alongside three lads, one 18, and two fifteen year-olds, one of those down as a blacksmith too. It was a pattern which could be seen throughout North Wales, where men left their families, carrying their provisions for the week, to live in basic accommodation alongside the mountain quarries which gave them their hard-won income.

Elsewhere at Tyddyn Sais (listed first, before Penystryd and before the main house), perhaps the occupying the ‘rofft,’ though there is no evidence or memory today of an outlying cottage (a building across the yard from the main house is a possibility), was a different family:

Richard Roberts, 25, a stone-cutter, and **Gwen Morris**, 25, a mantuamaker (dressmaker), with their daughter **Gwen Roberts**, 2 (again, all born in Merioneth).⁹⁸

Richard and Gwen had married in Trawsfynydd parish church on 21 November 1835 with the consent of parents, indicating they were under twenty-one. They were both residents of the parish, and were illiterate, making the mark of a cross. Witnesses were Morris Lewis and Robert Roberts, no doubt their fathers. Morris is listed in 1841 as an agricultural labourer of 45 at Dugoed (not far from Tyddyn Sais between Brynlllefrith and Cefngellgwm) with Elizabeth Roberts, 50, probably his wife, plus a grown son of 20 and two daughters, 11 and 6, all named Roberts. In a different household at the same address, however, is John Hugh’s sister Gwen, 75, a further link (see below 1851). Robert Roberts, 55, is an agricultural labourer at Ty’n y felin, also close to Tyddyn Sais, with Ellin, 50, and Margaret, 20.

1851 census. The family was at Ty Gwyn in the village, Richard, 38, Ag.Lab., Gwen, 35, b. Llanfachreth, mantuamaker, daughter Gwen now 12, plus son Morris, 8, scholar (unlike Gwen), probably named after his maternal grandfather, and daughter Anne, 3.

1861 census. Richard Roberts was now living in the village in Church Square, but putting his stone-cutting skills to use again as a slate quarrier, with a new wife, Jane (Gwen having

vanishing (including the women’s tall hats, for example), so he would perhaps have been drawn to such an image if one were shown to him. David Cox had portrayed similar baskets in c.1850 so the design was well-established. The old maker’s beard may also suggest a nineteenth- rather than twentieth-century style. Had Vosper visited this part of Wales by 1880 (which is theoretically possible), Lewis Lloyd himself must have presented just the kind of local figure to kindle his artistic and social interest. By way of comparison, in 1851 a 76 year-old basket-maker Owen Parry (b.Beddgelert) and his wife Ellen (b.Llanfrothen, like Lewis Lloyd) were lodging with an elderly widow in Trawsfynydd parish at Fronwen (listed between Graigddu and Caenycefn in the Eden valley). It seems it was a craft skill which did not fade with age.

⁹⁸ The use of the surname Roberts for little Gwen is interesting. She might as readily at this date have been Gwen Richards. There may be a family connection to Evan Roberts (see above), possibly Richard’s uncle.

A mantua maker was a dressmaker. The term had come into English in the seventeenth century from French *manteau*, influenced by the Italian city name of Mantua, and was used in the early period particularly of a very grand form of silk court dress, but later it was in use more generally for a woman’s outer garment: a robe, or perhaps, following the original French meaning, a cloak. Quite what sort of garment would have been made in 1841 at Tyddyn Sais can only be guessed, but it is not hard to imagine that acquiring the materials and in particular the skills would not have been simple matters. At this date all the work would have been done by hand in domestic production as the early sewing machines were very expensive and were only purchased by manufacturers. Presumably a highly skilled dressmaker would have been able to command a significant fee. The 1841 census records another woman with the same role, Cath[erine] Richards, 55, Mantu[a]maker, living alone in Trawsfynydd village, between a potter, a weaver and a mason – a glimpse of a craft community.

presumably died), a daughter Jane, 10, and Catherine, 9, all born in Trawsfynydd. Richard's son Morris Roberts, now 18, is shepherd on a farm in Cwm Prysor, Caerynghylliad, for a widow of 72. Margaret Griffith worked the farm with her two sons in their thirties, John and Evan (see 1869), a dairymaid and Morris. His subsequent story is typical of the time, illustrating the pull of Blaenau Ffestiniog's industry on the whole district.

1871 census. Richard and Jane are still in the village at Tynllan. He is working as a carrier, presumably having retired from quarry work. He is down as 58, she as 62. Two unmarried children live with them, Richard, 27, an agricultural labourer, and Jane, now 20, who does not have an occupation listed. Richard senior's son Morris now heads one of the two families living in Ffestiniog at Hen Capel (probably the old chapel in Cwm Teigl, as it is listed before Llety Fadog). Now down as a labourer, he has a wife Mary, 29, b. Rhiw, Carnarvonshire, and two children, Robert, 2, and Elizabeth, 6 mths., both b. Ffestiniog.

1881 census. Morris is a general labourer living at Conglywal, Ffestiniog, with Mary, Robert now 12, (Elizabeth had died before her first birthday), but now with William, 8, Sarah, 5, and a new little Elizabeth, 2.

1891 census. Morris is a Welsh-speaking labourer of 48, living below Manod, Ffestiniog, at Bron Ffynnon (between Ffynnon and Tryfal), with Mary, 49, sons Robert and William now quarrymen, Sarah at 15 working as a servant, and Elizabeth, 12, not noted as going to school.

1901 census. They are at the same address, he as a retired slate quarrier, with a 19 year old son John, also a slate quarrier, living with them, who is the first of the family to speak both Welsh and English.

1906 Morris Roberts died at Ffestiniog, aged 63.

1909 Mary Roberts, his widow, from Rhiw on the Llyn peninsula, died at Ffestiniog, aged 66. The family's story encapsulates the era.

1845 Goppa Estate including Tyddyn Sais for sale by Richard Parry's Trustees⁹⁹

Although widely advertised in such outlets as *The Shrewsbury Chronicle* (5 Sept 1845, p.3), *The Liverpool Mail* (30 August 1845, p.3) and *The Law Times* (vol.V, No.127, p.108, 6 September 1845), the sale of the estate of over 2,000 acres in Trawsfynydd seems not to have taken place after all at the Golden Lion, Dolgelly, on 7 October 1845, as the Parry Trustees were still freeholders of Tyddyn Sais and the other holdings known as the Goppa Estate in 1849 (q.v.). It must have been unsettling for tenants such as John Hughes to have their premises open to inspection by potential buyers, and to be unsure what the future would hold. The estate comprised Goppa itself (288 acres, tenants J. and E. Jones), Llwyn derw (89 acres, Griffith Richards), Tyddyn y felin Isa (86 acres, Richard Davies), Tyddyn y felin Ucha (178 acres, John Jones), Gwern Cyfrdwy (230 acres, Laura Williams), Wern Bach (19 acres, Evan Thomas), Bron-ysgellog (253 acres, Richard Jones), Aber and Ffrith (203 acres, Evan Williams), Bryn Teg (166 acres, O. Williams and William Nicholas), Gors Wen (30 acres, C. Humphreys), Bryn Crwn (114 acres, David Hughes), **Tyddyn y Sais (101 acres, John Hughes)**, Tyddyn y Garreg (213 acres, Evan Thomas), and Bryn Ysguboriau (246 acres, Morris Roberts).

⁹⁹ 1845 maps of the Goppa Estate: NLW MS Estate Maps, Map 7422 134/1/35.

The farms are praised as “most respectably tenanted,” but the advertisement goes on to claim, “The Rents are very moderate, and, in many instances, would admit of a considerable advance without any injustice to the tenants....” Those tenants must have been really worried. It continues:

This Estate presents to capitalists and others, desirous of a safe investment, a most favourable opportunity, as the land abounds in MINERALS, and the certainty of unlocking the resources of the country by the projected Railways, enhances its prospective value to an incalculable extent.

The Mansion-House of Goppa, on lot 1, with a trifling outlay, would form a suitable residence for a gentleman of fortune; several trout streams pass through and adjoin the property; and the covers are notorious for early woodcocks.¹⁰⁰

Every lot on the Estate has the advantage of having extensive Sheepwalks attached, and on most of them are Labourers' Cottages....

1849 Tithe Apportionment – Tyddyn Sais, Trawsfynydd

Owner: **Trustees of the late Richard Parry**, Esquire
(+ 13 other holdings in the parish, as in the 1845 advertisement)

Tenant: **John Hughes**

1850

The Will of John Richard of Tyddyn Sais is discussed after the death of John Hughes.

1851

The 1851 census shows John Hughes aged 79, with Jane now down as 63, and their unmarried daughter Sarah living at home aged 28. There was also a grandson of 4, **John Pugh** (from the patronymic John ap Hugh or John Pugh he was presumably the son of Hugh who was 14 a decade earlier), and two elderly spinster sisters of John's, **Gwen Hughes**, 84, and **Jane Hughes**, 82, who is recorded as blind. Both are down as paupers, meaning they were in receipt of parish relief. Ten years earlier Gwen had been living alone not far away at Dugoed. There was also a farm servant, **John Evans**, 14, the son of Robert Evans, gamekeeper at Darngae, and Martha. After Tyddyn Sais is a record of another house, uninhabited, before the list continues with Ty'n llain (a smallholding east of the turnpike).

1854

Oct 9th **Jane** daughter of **Zachariah and Sarah Evans of Tyddyn Sais**, Labourer
(Traws.Par.Reg. Baptisms)

In spring 1854 Sarah, John Hughes's third daughter, married Zechariah Evans.¹⁰¹ She was thirty-one, and eight years older than him, a pattern familiar to him as his mother was a full

¹⁰⁰ Woodcocks have been seen at Brynmaenllwyd since 2000 but not in the last few years.

decade older than his father. Zechariah was the son of a Llanwchllyn fuller from Pandy Village (pandy means fulling mill), Cynllwyd, but became a farmer, a career which probably began when he came to Trawsfynydd as a farmhand at Tyddyn Sais. Their daughter Jane, presumably named after her grandmother, was baptised at the parish church later that year, but by the spring of 1857 the family had moved on to the township of Dyffrydan (now the name of a farm only) on the northern slopes of Cader Idris where their other children were born on the farm called Friodybrithgell. If the couple had had any thoughts of staying on at Tyddyn Sais with a view to eventually taking over, a pattern seen elsewhere, they decided to strike out on their own, which proved a wise decision given John Hughes's longevity. How often Sarah was able to keep in touch with her parents is unknown; it was more of a journey then than today.

The story of Zechariah and Sarah's family is a reminder that while industry had a growing role in the area during the nineteenth century, farming continued to be a desirable goal as a way of life. Though lives may be lived partly in industrial-type employment, several of the stories of subsequent families at Tyddyn Sais demonstrate the ambition to settle in farming. No doubt the independence of the yeoman tenant in managing his farm was rightly respected, with all its complex responsibilities, and risks, of course. It seems it was widely seen as preferable to wage-labour at the daily behest of a master, such as went with a job in a fulling mill. Such mills, found alongside any strong-flowing river, as by the Prysor just above Trawsfynydd village, were known locally as 'ffatri' or 'factory.' In 1861 Zechariah was down as a 'farmer' with a young family, but by 1871 at the age of 41 he had prospered to become a farm bailiff, now living at Tynyceunant in Dyffrydan, with Sarah, 48, and five children, Jane, 16, Evan, 14, Gadwalader, 11, Margaret, 9, and Sarah, 6, plus a boarder, a 43 year old agricultural labourer. In the intervening decade Sarah's father John Hughes had died. Perhaps her family's enhanced status was due in part to an inheritance from him. In 1881 they were still there, with their 16 year old daughter Sarah, and another Sarah, a granddaughter of 5, plus a male servant. In 1891 Zechariah was still working as a farm bailiff at 61, Sarah was now 68, and the household was completed by their son Cadwaladr, 31, an agricultural labourer married since 1884 (in Bala) to Trawsfynydd-born Catherine Hughes, 27, Sarah Jane the granddaughter now 15 and a dressmaker, and two farmhands. When Zachariah died on 5 May 1891 it was Sarah, his widow, who took charge of his affairs.¹⁰²

1861 Census

At the 1861 census John Hughes was still at Tyddyn Sais, recorded as aged 89, with Jane 75, plus two grandsons, John Pugh, now 15, and (presumably his brother) Richard Pugh, 10. (John Hughes also had nephews John and Richard Pugh, sons of David Pugh, Bryn Crwn.)

¹⁰¹ Merionethshire Marriages 1854 Festiniog (registration district for Trawsfynydd): Zechariah Evans to Sarah Hughes. Freebmd: June quarter, 11b 783. John Hughes' other children have proven difficult to trace.

¹⁰² St Asaph will/administration.

1869 Death of near-centenarian John Hughes

From 1866 age at death was officially recorded. When John Hughes, retired farmer, of Tyddyn Sais, died on 22 April 1869 he was registered as aged 99. It was a great span, though not unique. Memorials in the churchyard at Trawsfynydd demonstrate that such a striking age was not unknown. Cause of death was put down as 'Disability. Old age.' No doctor was in attendance. It was probably felt that there was little point. The person who went a month later to register the death was Evan Griffith (or Griffiths) of Caerynghylliad, a farmer in his late thirties who with his brother had worked the Cwm Prysor farm for his widowed mother. At the 1861 census they had the help of a dairy maid and a shepherd, 18 year-old Morris Roberts whose family had lived at Tyddyn Sais in 1841. It is likely that Morris had been born at Tyddyn Sais before his family moved away, and since Caerynghylliad was where he had probably his first job, there may have been kinship ties between the two farms.

In the spring of the previous year it seems that John's wife of over half a century, Jane Williams of Llanbedr, had died, recorded as aged 82, so although so much younger she did not outlive him.¹⁰³ Who cared for John in that lonely last year? It was perhaps Evan Griffith himself. His elder brother John eventually married,¹⁰⁴ presumably taking over the farm once their mother died, as by the 1871 census John, 40, with a wife of 36, were in charge at Caerynghylliad.¹⁰⁵ Understandably perhaps, Evan had moved away and in 1871 was working at Ffriddbryngoch, a large farm of 1000 acres, mostly mountain land, just a few miles south,¹⁰⁶ but he may have moved first to Tyddyn Sais to look after the farm and be with John Hughes for the final phase of his life, which would account for his registering the death. What is certain is that a long era of at least seven decades at Tyddyn Sais had come to an end.

1850

Will of **John Richard (or Richards)**, yeoman, of **Tyddynsais**.

Written 7 February 1849. Brief Inventory. Probate 14 June 1850.

[His fluent signature on the document indicates he preferred the form John Richard, plus a flourish, but the official record has him as John Richards. It is a brisk will, going straight to the point after identification of the testator, without the usual formal and pious preamble.]

I give and devise all these my Messuages or Dwellinghouses lands and hereditaments with their appurtenances which [are] at Dinas Mawdd[w]y in the County of Merioneth unto my Nephew David Roberts of Pant Mawr Trawsfynydd and his Heirs. I charge the same with the sum of Twelve pounds yearly which I give and bequeath to Mr Robert Pugh of Brynlllefrith In

¹⁰³ Freebmd. The date of her death is confirmed as 4 April 1868 in Achau Rhodri and Deiniol's Family Tree at www.tribalpages.com/triber/familytree (19.5.17).

¹⁰⁴ It is striking how frequently farmers' grown-up children remained unmarried at this period, an indication of the precariousness of the yeoman farmer, with no margin from which to establish their independence. Dolwen north of Bryn Crwn in 1851 was an extreme case, farmed by a widow with 5 unmarried sons aged from 42-28.

¹⁰⁵ Boarding with them was a mole catcher from Llanuwchllyn and another John Griffiths, a widower in his sixties, a farmhand who had presumably replaced Evan. The family had ties with the Bala area, which Margaret Jones the brothers' mother had left to marry Ephraim Griffith in 1825.

¹⁰⁶ Technically it is in the parish of Llanddwywe Uwch Graig which functions as if part of Trawsfynydd parish.

trust to pay therewith yearly to my Sister Catharine Jones during her life the sum of Eleven pounds and after her decease to pay the same sum to my Sister Lowry and to retain the remaining one pound towards his Trust – and from and after the decease of my said Sister I charge the same messuages and lands with the payment of the sum of eight pounds annually to be paid as follows. To my nieces Margaret and Elizabeth and my nephews Robert and Owen each the sum of one pound for her and his life and to my niece Catharine and my nephew David Jones each the sum of Two pounds for her and his life – I give and bequeath unto William Edwards of Gellicoch [Gelligoch] the sum of Nineteen pounds and Nineteen shillings conditionally that he pay to my said Sister Catharine during her life the sum of one pound annually – All my furniture I give and bequeath unto my said Sister Catharine for her life and from her decease I give and bequeath my Dresser and Chest unto my Niece Elizabeth and my presse cupboard and Chest unto my niece Catharine All the residue of my personal estate I give and bequeath unto my said sisters equally between them as Tenants in common. I give and bequeath to my nephew David Roberts the sum of Five pounds and I appoint him Executor of this my Will In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand this seventh day of February one thousand eight hundred and forty nine

John Richard [signed with a flourish on the final letter]

William Griffith of Dolgelley S[olici]tr.
Wm. Williams his Clerk

Trawsfynydd.

The Will of John Richard.

Under £200

Prob[ate] gr[an]ted 14th June 1850

‘...the whole of the Goods Chattels and Credits of the deceased Testator do not amount in value to the Sum of Two hundred Pounds...’

The Testator died on the 20th day of May 1850.¹⁰⁷

[Very brief inventory, no date, no signatories]

Household furniture & Wearing apparel	£5 18s
Cash secured by note of hand etc.	£146 14s
Cash in the house	4s 11½d
	<hr/>
	£155 16s 11½d

It is not clear what John Richard’s relationship was to Tyddyn Sais. Presumably he either shared the house at Tyddyn Sais, as John Hughes was still in residence at this date, or lived in the subsidiary premises. They were two old men born in the previous century. John Richard may, of course, have been a relative. John Hughes’ father was Hugh Richard, so it is possible that John Richard was his brother, and therefore uncle to John Hughes, though he seems to

¹⁰⁷ Death registration: John Richards, [2nd Quarter] 1850, Festiniog 27 145.

have been of similar age or slightly younger. He was evidently well-to-do via the Mallwyd holdings¹⁰⁸ and therefore in a rather different social category from John Hughes, yeoman tenant of a single farm. The 1841 census has a John Richard, aged 65, of independent means, living at Bronllywarch in the south of Trawsfynydd parish, apparently alone, the only likely person in the local record. If in subsequent years he had needed to lodge with a family who would look after him, this could explain the move to a situation only a short distance from his sister and other relatives. Since the will's inventory gives no indication of anything beyond clothing, furniture and money, it seems he was not a farmer (at this point of his life anyway), and presumably was a bachelor or widower. If the latter, it seems he was not survived by children. From the impressively large sum of £146-worth of credit notes, he evidently had quite a history of lending money, whether for profit or not.

Of his two sisters Catherine and Lowry it seems from the will's terms that Catherine was the elder, though it is not clear whether they were older than the brother who was making provision for them as well as for their children. Certainly Lowry was already about seventy when her brother died. His principal heir and the men entrusted with his sisters' annuities resided at some of the more prestigious holdings in the parish. Pantmawr and Brynlefrith were nearby, east of Tyddyn Sais, while Gelligoch was a mile or so south on the turnpike.

Her brother's will leaves the second annuity for Catherine in the hands of William Edwards¹⁰⁹ who was at the major farm of Gelligoch in the south of the parish. He had married Mary Jones of Llanaber in 1817, and was recorded as from Trawsfynydd parish.¹¹⁰ In 1851 William was still there, now a widower, down as 69, with his unmarried children. John Richard had lived not far from him at Bronllywarch and was presumably a friend. The bequest of nineteen guineas in trust for his sister Catherine at a pound a year was quite generous to William.

¹⁰⁸ Since there is no mention of these being freehold premises (and they do not feature in the valuation of his estate), it seems likely that John Richard was tenant of multiple holdings which he sublet.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. the 1794 will of Humphrey Cadwalader had Evan Edward as residual legatee. Edward was not a common name locally at this date, a hint of a connection perhaps, as the Gelligoch family repeated Edward as a name. A link between Gelligoch and the Tyddyn Sais area is evident in a bond of 1782 in which Elizabeth Tudor, widow of Thomas Edward of Gwern y cyfrdwy, across the river Eden from Tyddyn Sais, and Edward Tudor of Gelligoch, yeoman, probably a relative (see next), were granted the administration of her late husband's estate.

¹¹⁰ Evidently she was young enough to need parental consent (under 21). He signed his name but she made her mark in the Llanaber parish register. Their first child was born at Llanaber, but in 1822 they were farming at Bryn Bwlan, Llandderfel, on the far side of Bala, where their daughter Mary was baptised. By 1841 they had settled at Gelligoch, Trawsfynydd, a big farm of almost 300 acres, where they were when John Richard wrote his will in 1849; William was down as 55, as was his wife Mary, with two children, Edward, 20, and Mary, 18. Earlier history of the family is evident in the 1774 will of Elizabeth Edward of Gelligoch, widow, whose eldest son Edward Tudor is principal heir and executor. He and brothers Robert and Richard are to receive £40 each, a substantial sum, daughters Gwen Tudor, married to Richard Roberts of Tai cynhaeaf, Llanelltyd, and Grace the wife of Owen Edward of Llwyn du, Llanaber (a significant and ancient holding, possibly the link to William's wife being from Llanaber), receive £20 each, and the residue goes to Edward. The 1796 will of this Edward Tudor, yeoman, of Gelligoch, speaks first of his son Tudor Edwards, then a son Robert Edward, daughters Anne Edward and Elizabeth Edward, and finally a son William Edward. Residual inheritor and executrix is his wife Catherine, but if she marries again her inheritance is reduced to a nominal sum and she is 'to be turned out of the said farm of gelligoch by the consent of my Master.' The clause is a reminder of the bottom line of power between freeholder and yeoman farmer, and women of course, but also of the concern to secure the inheritance of a good lease to a farmer's own sons, avoiding the pattern often seen elsewhere, where a widow employing a new man to run the farm often married him and he would inherit (as had happened relatively recently at Tyddyn Sais). The scale of the holding is evident from the inventory: cattle worth £80, horses £25, sheep £60, household goods and furniture £20, and implements of husbandry £10, making an impressive total of £195. It seems that half a century later the (presumably youngest) son William had taken over the farm.

Who or where Catherine was is less easy to determine. She had evidently married a man called Jones and had a son David, who like his cousin Catherine Roberts was left an annuity of two pounds a year after the death of mother and aunt, while the other cousins (other than David Roberts himself) were only to receive one pound. Perhaps their need was deemed to be greater, or perhaps they were just John's favourites. His sister Lowry was only due to receive an annuity after the death of her sister Catherine, presumably assuming that her husband and son David the main beneficiary should support her until then.

Robert Pugh of Brynlllefrith, unlike most of his neighbours, was to progress from being a tenant farmer to a freeholder or crown tenant, as proudly recorded in entries in the parish register.¹¹¹ His story is an example of the social flexibility that emerged as the nineteenth century unfolded, with a judicious marriage still, as before, a key to prosperity. Born in 1810 on 20 December, he was baptised in January 1811, the son of Hugh Pugh, Hendre Fawr, and his wife, formerly Eleanor Roberts.¹¹² In May 1836 he married Anne Lloyd at Trawsfynydd 'with consent of Parties' indicating that she was under 21. Both were literate and signed their names, but interestingly the bride signed herself as Anne Lloyd Jones although the official entry above had just Anne Lloyd. By 1841 they were farming at Brynlllefrith with two farmhands and two female servants. The head of the household, however, was Anne's aunt Catherine Lloyd, aged 80, part-freeholder,¹¹³ a reminder that at the mid-nineteenth century Lloyd descendants with a proud Rhiwgoch heritage were still in key positions in the district, often living, as here, on prosperous farms with relatives representing a complex marital history. Catherine, a spinster, died in December 1847, leaving to her niece Anne Lloyd Pugh, her executrix, her one third share of the freehold not only of Brynlllefrith but also Caegwyn and Dolybontfawr. Other relatives, all female, were to receive £5 each: her sister Anne Jones,¹¹⁴ her niece Elizabeth, wife of John Jones of Dolgain, and grand-nieces Catharine and Mary, daughters of her late niece Catharine Jarrett.¹¹⁵ Robert Pugh's status of relatively wealthy freeholder, derived from his wife's 1848 inheritance, may have encouraged John Richard to entrust the significant annuity for his sister to him.

¹¹¹ He was also executor for David Roberts, a Penmachno-born 'Landed Proprietor' and farmer who lived in the village with his wife Elizabeth (aged 72 at the 1851 census), who died in 1856 [Death Duty Register].

¹¹² Traws.Par.Reg: 14 January 1811 Baptism: 'Robert son of Hugh Pugh (Hendre Fawr) and Eleanor his Wife formerly Eleanor Roberts. Born 20 December 1810.' Cf. 4 June 1813 Baptism of John son of Hugh Pugh and Eleanor Roberts, Hendre fawr, yeoman.

¹¹³ Catherine, down in the 1840 tithe survey as part-freeholder with [her sisters] Gwen Jones and Anne Owens (though she was sole freeholder of Berthddu Isaf and Uchaf), had been a beneficiary of her brother John Lloyd of Hafodwen in his will of 1797 (assets of between £300 and £600, a considerable sum). His siblings William, Anne and Gwen were to receive £2 each, as was his aunt Margaret Lloyd. He bequeathed 'all my share of Farming stock and Furniture at Bryn llefrith to my sister Catherine Lloyd of Brynlllefrith.' His wife Elizabeth Humphreys/Lloyd was residual inheritor and executrix though if she married again she would retain 'only the Money I had with her which is three score pounds' - her dowry. Witnesses were Jarett Jarett, Evan Evans and John Price, so it seems there was a Lloyd - Jarett connection of some kind even in the C18 (see next paragraph). Jarrett Jarrett (the spelling varied) was recorded as a drover (a position of trust and status in the community) at the baptism of his son Jarrett in 1811. In his will of 1818 Robert Roberts, shopkeeper of Trawsfynydd (like the Jarretts), left most of his sizeable estate including freehold hereditaments (value not more than £1500) to his wife Gwen Jarret (d.1822 aged 81), with bequests also to his brother Edward, a weaver of Ffestiniog, and his two sons, and to seven nephews, sons of his late brother Humphrey (of Gors Wen, d.1813 aged 75). Both Jarretts and Roberts were converting the income from successful trade to valuable freehold property, a sign of the changing times.

¹¹⁴ Presumably the mother of Anne Lloyd Jones, wife of Robert Pugh.

¹¹⁵ NLW Wills: Catherine Lloyd, Trawsfynydd, 1848. The will is signed with her mark as she was not literate.

On 9 November 1849 two ceremonies were conducted at Trawsfynydd parish church, a baptism and a wedding. Robert and Anne's baby daughter was christened Catherine Lloyd Jarrett Pugh, her father proudly recorded as 'Freeholder',¹¹⁶ and Catherine Lloyd Jarrett, spinster,¹¹⁷ married William Roberts, bachelor,¹¹⁸ both of them confidently signing their names. Two of the bride's family were witnesses, R.J. Jarrett and Owen Jarrett.¹¹⁹ There was presumably a link of some kind between the Jarretts and the Pughs.

The 1851 census shows Robert and Anne with two children, John Lloyd Pugh, 4, and Catherine Lloyd Pugh, 1 (their middle names honouring the aunt whose will changed their lives), and running a substantial farm of more than 200 acres with two female servants and two farmhands. One more child, Robert Hugh, was born. At his baptism in August 1851 his father's occupation was recorded as 'Gentleman' indicating a significant shift of status. However, Anne died early in 1860 leaving Robert a widower with the three children. Later that year Robert Pugh was granted administration of Catherine Lloyd's estate since his late wife had not performed her legal duties as executrix and had died intestate. In old age he moved with his unmarried daughter Catherine¹²⁰ into the village where he lived at Bryngwyn 'on his own means.' Robert Pugh was to live almost half a century after John Richard's death, dying in 1897 aged 86, another of those reaching an impressive age in Trawsfynydd.

Some of the names mentioned in the will were so common as to make identification virtually impossible. There were many local people of suitable age called Catherine Richard or Jones, and David Jones,¹²¹ and it may not be safe to assume John's relatives were in Trawsfynydd. The story of John's sister Lowry Richards is, however, clear. 1850 was a terrible year for her.

¹¹⁶ Traws.Par.Reg: 1849 9 November Baptism of Catherine Lloyd Jarrett Daughter of Robert and Anne Pugh of Bryn Ilefriith, Freeholder [i.e. Catherine Lloyd Jarrett Pugh]. John Richard's will had been written early in 1849.

¹¹⁷ She was thirty. Catherine Jarrett, daughter of William Jarrett and Jane Edwards of Trawsfynydd, had been baptised on 13 Dec 1818. The baptismal records of her sister Eleanor in 1810 and brother William in 1816 show William and Jane farmed at Glanllafar in Cwm Prysor.

¹¹⁸ Traws.Par.Reg: 4 March 1825 Baptism: William Roberts son of Wm. Roberts and Anne Roberts, Plas Captain, Gent.n. This is the most likely William Roberts for this marriage. At the 1841 census his father was 70, 'farmer' at 'Plas' with Anne, 40, and 7 children: William, 16, Anne, 14, Jane, 12, Elizabeth, 10, Ellin, 6, Griffith, 3, and Catherine, 5 weeks. They had long been established as one of the leading local families. (Cf. Traws.Par.Reg: 14 Feb. 1768 Baptism: Wm. Son of William Roberts of Plas Captain & Anne his wife.) However, the 1849 departure from the normal practice of having one member of each family witness the marriage, in that two Jarretts signed, may suggest disapproval of the match by the Roberts. Social standing was finely nuanced.

¹¹⁹ Owen was son of the village shopkeeper Jarrett Jarrett and Mary Richards his wife, baptised on 13 February 1820. By 1851 his father was a widower of 74, down as merchant and farmer of 641 acres employing 6 labourers, with his three unmarried sons, Jarrett junior, 35, also down as a merchant, while David, 29, and Owen, 28, ran the business at Glasfryn House (still in 2017 the village shop). By 1861 Jarrett is down as a widower, a 'Grocer Linen and Woolen Draper' (grocers/drapers were common) helped by David, while it is Owen who manages their landholdings of 627 acres, both unmarried. R.J. Jarrett is Richard, the eldest, who in 1841 was a merchant with a young family at Werngron, employing 3 agricultural labourers and 2 female servants. The Jarretts were a successful and influential family who assembled significant landholdings.

¹²⁰ For deeds in Catherine's name from the early C20, see MAD Z/DS/10/476 and Z/DS/10/478.

¹²¹ Cf. Traws.Par.Reg: 11 October 1802 Marriage of Edward Jones of Festiniog and Catherine Richard of Trawsfynydd (both literate as they sign register). Witnesses Evan Jones (signs) and John Richard (makes mark). At the 1841 census they were living at 3, Rhydysarn, Ffestiniog, Edward a labourer of 67, Catherine, 60. They were still there in 1851, Edward now a basket maker, down as 82, Catherine 70, b. Ffestiniog. Edward died at Rhydysarn in 1853, recorded as aged 86. Another possibility: a William Jones, bachelor, married Catherine Richard, spinster, both of Trawsfynydd, on 19 February 1823 (Traws.Par.Reg.). David Jones, son of William Jones and Catherine, was baptised at Penstreet (Penystryd) Independent Chapel on 15 January 1825. In 1851 David was an unmarried farmhand of 26 for John Pugh, 46, and Ellin, 39, at Gilfachwen, close to Brynlllefrith on the road from the village to Penystryd.

Her husband of 44 years, David Roberts of Pantmawr, died in May.¹²² Her brother John at Tyddyn Sais also died in the same month, and her youngest son Owen, 24, followed to his grave before October. She had already lost her eldest son Richard, probably in 1846,¹²³ as in 1851 she was raising his four year-old, Lowry.

The census record for 1851 when as a widow she was head of her family demonstrates that she was born in Llanfachreth, as, probably, were her siblings.¹²⁴ In 1806 Lowry had married David Roberts.¹²⁵ They lived first at Ty Llwyd where their daughter Elizabeth was born in 1809¹²⁶ but moved to David's family farm of Pantmawr, a locally significant holding, probably after his father Richard Roberts died in 1810.¹²⁷ Lowry and David were to have three daughters, Margaret (Margaret Jones in her father's will), Elizabeth and Catherine,¹²⁸ and four sons, Richard, David, Robert and Owen.¹²⁹ In 1841 Lowry was down as 60 and David as 65, living with Richard, 30, Elizabeth, 30, Catherine, 29, David, 25, Robert, 20, and Owen, 15 (the 1841 census did not record relationships). John Richard's nieces and nephews specified in the will have these names, except for Richard who was referred to as 'my late son Richard Roberts' in his father's will written in March 1850. By 1851, the first census after her brother's death, Lowry was recorded as a widow of 71, farmer of 157 acres employing one labourer,¹³⁰ living with her son David, down now as aged 37 and unmarried, her unmarried daughters Elizabeth, 40, and Catherine, 38, and a granddaughter of 4, Lowry Richards, born in Ffestiniog, presumably named after her grandmother. She perhaps had lost both parents as she is not with her mother.¹³¹

David, the son of David and Lowry, who took over at Pantmawr, though still a bachelor at 37 married eventually, probably on the strength of his 1850 inheritance from his uncle John Richard (his father having left him just £2 and made his younger brother Owen residual inheritor of Pantmawr after his mother, perhaps in the knowledge that David was to be John Richard's principal heir).¹³² David inherited the Dinas Mawddwy property interests which

¹²² NLW Will written 12 March 1850, witnesses Jarrett Jarrett junior and Robert Morris. Short Inventory. Probate was granted on 31 October 1850 to Lowry Richards, widow, the co-executor Owen Roberts, son, having died by then. Annotated at probate to record that David Roberts had died in May 1850.

¹²³ Several people of this name died in the Festiniog registration district to 1850, the last two in 1846. His absence from his uncle's will suggests he died before February 1849.

¹²⁴ The 1841 census shows a Catherine Jones aged 80 of independent means living alone in Llanfachreth at Ty isaf, who might perhaps be John's other sister.

¹²⁵ Bishop's Transcripts: Trawsfynydd (genuki.org.uk). David Robert and Lowry Richard married on Feb 24.

¹²⁶ 1809 5 November Baptism: Elizabeth d[au]ghte[r] of David Roberts, Ty llwyd and Lowry his wife (formerly Lowry Richards). Traws.Par.Reg.

¹²⁷ 1810 16 August: Burial of Richard Roberts (Pantmawr) aged 77 years. Traws.Par.Reg. cf. Richard Roberts of Trawsfynydd married Ellin Morris of Llanycil in 1754. Llanycil Par.Reg. His daughter was to follow him a year later. 1811 26 August: Burial of Jane Roberts dr. of Richard Roberts late of Pantmawr aged 56 years.

¹²⁸ 1812 2 February Baptism: Catharine Dr. of David Roberts (Pant mawr) and Lowry his wife, formerly Lowry Richards. Traws.Par.Reg. (recorded online as Catherine Robert).

¹²⁹ David was baptised on 20 March 1814, son of David Roberts, Pantmawr, and Lowry Richards (erroneously the online transcript includes a death date of 1823; the 9 year-old David Roberts who died in 1823 lived at Derwgoed). Robert was baptised on 22 May 1820, and Owen on 19 September 1823. Traws.Par.Reg.

¹³⁰ The scale of the farm she ran as a widow is evident from the inventory at her husband's death. There were 7 cows, 6 oxen, 5 2-year-olds and 6 1-year-olds, and 6 calves (£76 10s), 2 horses and a foal (£15 15s), 2 pigs (£2 2s) and 120 sheep (£33), ploughs, carts and other implements of husbandry (£12 8s), which with household furniture (£15 15s) and clothes (£2 15s) were worth an impressive total of £158 6s 0d.

¹³¹ It has not proved possible to trace what happened to this Lowry Richards.

¹³² David Roberts' will left £20 each to Lowry, Catherine and Elizabeth, £2 to David and Margaret, £1 to granddaughter Lowry, all to be paid a year after his death. Owen was to be executor with his mother and

were to provide Catherine's and Lowry's annuities via Robert Pugh as trustee, and was made executor. By 1861 with his Llandderfel-born wife Mary, 38 to his 47, he had a growing family, Catherine, 6, Mary, 4, John, 2, and another little Lowry of 5 months. Still with them aged 81 was Lowry, now down as mother, widow and 'retired farmer' but no longer head of the family.

While the will specified annuities for both younger nephews Robert and Owen and both nieces Margaret and Elizabeth, the annuities for Lowry's daughter Catherine and his sister Catherine's son David Jones were double, perhaps indicating a greater need of support. The story of John Richard is one where family was key even for a man who apparently had no direct descendants, and where the difference between tenant farmers and freeholders able to retire on private incomes was conspicuous. Many people lived to a great age in the mountains of Trawsfynydd. In the mid-nineteenth century when normal life expectancy was low, it was a place where considerable power was wielded by the aged, including some elderly women.

1862

Jan 5th 1862, **Ellin** daughter of **David** and **Elizabeth Lewis, Tyddyn Sais**, Quarryman. (Traws.Par.Reg. Baptism.)

This is presumably a family in the secondary dwelling at Tyddyn Sais. In the last quarter of 1858 the marriage took place at Trawsfynydd of David Lewis to Elizabeth Jones of Penmorfa, Caernarfonshire,¹³³ the daughter of a stonemason, Evan Jones. In January 1862 their daughter Ellin was baptised, with David down as a quarryman and the address as Tyddyn Sais. The story is yet another example of the flexible movement of families and labour between nearby parishes, though Elizabeth's move from the Porthmadog area was a relatively big step. David was the son of farmer Richard Lewis and his wife Anne of Muriau Bychan, neighbouring Tyddyn Sais on the west of the river Eden. He was 8 at the 1841 census. In 1851 he was a farm labourer working not far away at Cefngellgwm for Morris Lloyd, but by 1861 he was living in the village, at Gwyndy, down as a slate quarryman with two children aged 2 and 1. The parish register demonstrates they were at Tyddyn Sais for a while, but by 1871 they were farming in Maentwrog parish at Llechwcn (not far from Pandydwryd), with a growing family. From where the children were born it seems they left Tyddyn Sais between 1862 and 1866, as the three eldest were born in Trawsfynydd and five younger ones in Maentwrog. David's parents Richard and Anne Lewis had now taken over the neighbouring farm of Tynycoed, so a family nucleus had been established in Maentwrog which remained in 1881. David died in 1890 but his family were still there in 1891.

It may not be just a coincidence that the 1623 Ardudwy Crown Rental reports Lech y Cwn (Lechwcn) as in the hands of John ap Evan Lloid, one of the beneficiaries of the 1618 marriage settlement which included Tyddyn Sais. There is perhaps a direct line of descent from one to the other, mirrored in the family's moves from one house to the other. Many local farming families are aware of the continuity of their family story in the same location

residual heir after her but died before probate was granted. His father makes no mention of Robert, who disappears from the local record, although included in his uncle's will written in 1849. Did he emigrate?

¹³³ Freebmd: 4th quarter of 1858, marriage of David Lewis to Elizabeth Jones, registered Festiniog 11b 787.

over several centuries, and while they may have become tenants, moving from one of the farms of a long-established estate to another, they often repeat family history.

1867 Trawsfynydd British School Fund

*Schedule of Contributions by Proprietors, Residents, or Employers of labour, in the Parish of Trawsfynydd towards the cost of A School Room & Master's House...*¹³⁴

David Pugh	Tyddynsais	£27 -	10. -
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David Pugh had long farmed at neighbouring Bryn Crwn, with his wife Elizabeth.¹³⁵ He was fifty-two (though this could refer to his eldest son David who would have been in his late twenties). His uncle John Hughes at Tyddyn Sais was in his late nineties at this date so perhaps he just delivered the payment on his behalf. His tenancy of Bryn Crwn continued.

1870s

Who held the freehold of Tyddyn Sais during the years after the Parry Trustees relinquished it is not clear. As noted above, the estate reverted to Richard Parry III when the Trust ended. His death in 1873 would dovetail with the subsequent history. Margaret Dunn records that his son and heir, a Boer War soldier who went by the unusual name of Llewelyn England Sydney Parry (his mother was daughter of Gen. Sir Richard England),¹³⁶ sold Craflwyn itself. He probably disposed of the other Merioneth holdings at the same time. The dates fit.

Goppa itself and many of the Trust properties put up for sale initially in the 1840s were eventually sold on in the early 1870s to David Tegid Jones from the Bala area who had prospered from the local cottage industry of knitwear, particularly socks for the army. The knitters of Bala, both men and women, were famous. They often gathered to work in the better light of the open air, particularly on the motte at the northern end of the borough's main street. The 1881 census records David Tegid Jones, aged 32, born in Llanuwchllyn, as head at Y Goppa, farming 288 acres with the help of 3 men and one boy. He had married in 1870. His wife Catherine, 29, and their eldest child, Mary Anne, 10, were also born in the

¹³⁴ A list of proprietors and holdings with 'Annual value of rental, or at which rated to the poor in this parish,' and 'Amount of Contribution.' Contributions ranged from 15 shillings to 2s 6d, with most charged 10 shillings, making a total of £196 10s. The school was due to open in January 1869 'under a Certificated Master.' It seems that freeholders and yeoman farmers (tenants) would have to contribute, but not farm labourers/employees.

¹³⁵ A different David and Elizabeth Pugh lived at Cefndeuddwr. Such parallels were not unusual. In May 1838 at Maentwrog David had married Elizabeth Jones, daughter of John Humphreys of Nantymarch, with John Pugh, his older brother, and Ellin Humphreys, Elizabeth's younger sister, as witnesses. (An elder brother Ellis was a drover.) Unlike the others, John Pugh was able to sign his name. Whoever inscribed the register wrote the groom's name as David Hughes not Pugh beside his cross. The bride's name follows the patronymic rule with Jones for John. In 1841 David Hughes senior and wife Jane were at Brynrcrwn while a new household nearby had been established for the young couple at Brynrcrwn ucha, with two children, David, 3, and John, 1. David is recorded as David Hughes, jnr., not Pugh, as later.

¹³⁶ Unusual names continued: he called his two elder daughters Ruby and Pearl and the younger twins Olive and Ivy. Pearl's daughters were named Mary Sapphire, Joan Amethyst, and Frances Pearl. (Griff.Ped.p.387)

Bala area, but the two younger children, 7 and 1, were born in Trawsfynydd, so it seems the family had moved there by about 1874.¹³⁷ Tyddyn Sais may have been theirs, but see 1885.

1871 census

Tyddynsais (listed between Berthddu and Tynllain):

John Pugh was farming 60 acres.¹³⁸ Forty-two, he was born in Llanaber¹³⁹ and his Towyn-born wife **Catherine**¹⁴⁰ was 47. There were three children born in Llanelltyd, **David**, 17, **Edward**, 13, and **Margaret**, 5, plus a female servant born in Maentwrog.

They had presumably come to Tyddyn Sais after the death of John Hughes, who was apparently no relation. Earlier census records for Llanelltyd seem to be lacking.

Tyddynsais (a separate household listed between Brynmaenllwyd and Brynrcrwn):

Jane Roberts Head Widow 52 Formerly farming	b. Trawsfynydd
David Roberts Son Unm. 21 Plasterer	b. Trawsfynydd

In 1861 they had been at Glanlliniau, just a couple of miles south in the Eden valley. Two children were with Jane then, David, 11, and Jane, 7. By 1871 young Jane was working as a dairy maid at Llwynrcrwn in the north of the parish.

1873 or after - Freehold Transfer

When Llewellyn England Sidney Parry inherited the Parry estate in 1873 it seems he then disposed of its Craflwyn estate and associated Merioneth holdings, including Tyddyn Sais.

1881 Census

John Pugh, 50, (b. Llanelltyd, not Llanaber as in the 1871 record¹⁴¹) was still at Tyddyn Sais, farming 160 acres and employing 3 labourers. Catherine was 57, Edward was 24, and Margaret A., 15, plus a servant, **William Kilner**, 17, born, unusually, in Birmingham. At the 1871 census Aston-born William aged 6 was boarding with a widow with two children of her own, so perhaps his own family situation led him to Wales in search of a job once he was old enough. In 1891 the Pughs were at the nearby farm of Ty Cerrig, just across the river Eden,

¹³⁷ Conversations with the family, *passim*. Since the Welsh name of Bala Lake, the largest lake in Wales, is Llyn Tegid, or ‘pleasant’ lake, it seems fitting that the family continues to keep its historic origins alive by continuing the use of Tegid as a personal name. The family’s descendants are still in residence at Goppa.

¹³⁸ This is a smaller acreage than was earlier recorded, but the acreage worked by the adjacent farm of Brynmaenllwyd has suddenly increased. It seems likely that Thomas Jones the new farmer had taken on much of the Tyddyn Sais land as well, a pattern of ‘double farms’ since repeated between the farms nearby.

¹³⁹ Cf. 1881.

¹⁴⁰ Catherine Edwards married John Pugh in Ffestiniog district in 1853, but the names are not uncommon.

¹⁴¹ A John Pugh was 10 in the 1841 census, son of Evan who kept the turnpike gate at Llanelltyd and Margaret.

but now their daughter Margaret, still only 25, was William Kilner's widow, with children aged 5, 4, 2 and 10 weeks. William had died in summer 1890 aged just 26. In 1901 John Pugh[e] now a widower and his daughter were living in the village at Stone St. with her four children, John Kilner 12, Edward Kilner 10, Hugh P[ugh]. Kilner 4, and Blodwen A. Kilner, 1 (John Pugh spoke both languages but the others only Welsh). After her father died Margaret Anne raised her children by keeping a lodging-house mainly for railway workers. In 1911 she was 44, living with Blodwen, 11, and six lodgers in Maengwyn Street (Stone St.). The family had evidently moved to South Wales but returned to Trawsfynydd in 1913 when daughter Blodwen A. Kilner (born 1900, her mother down as a widow living back in Maengwyn Street) enrolled at the village school. Previously at school in South Wales, Blodwen joined Class IV from January to November before being kept at home, presumably to work.¹⁴²

1885 Valuation

23 Jan: Valuation List: Trawsfynydd Parish....

116. Tyddynsais.

Estimated extent: 102 acres; Rental £38; Rateable value £34.

Owner: **D[avid]. Ll[ewelyn]. Lloyd** Esq. [also owner of Pantmawr, Brynre, Brynmaenllwyd, Bryncrwn, ?Wernbach.]

Tenant: **G[riffi]th. Roberts**¹⁴³

At the 1881 census Griffith Roberts had been tenant of the adjacent farm of Bryn Re, just across the river Eden, where at the age of 38 he was farming 120 acres with his wife Margaret, 37, son Hugh, 10, daughter Margaret A., 8, and Ffestiniog-born father-in-law William Jones, 85. A generation earlier William had married Margaret from Trawsfynydd and moved to farm at Tynyceunant (high in Cwm Prysor, listed between Bryncelynog and Tanyrallt), where the young couple Griffith and Margaret and their two eldest children lived with them in 1871, Griffith working as a quarryman. Ten years earlier he had been nearby as cowman on the farm of his father Hugh Roberts, Darngae. The nextdoor farm was in the hands of Hugh's father Griffith Roberts, 81, born, like his sons, in Penmachno, a parish north-east across the mountains which has not hitherto featured in this history. Tyddyn Sais's Griffith was then seventeen and born in Trawsfynydd, but his sister of 22 had been born in Penmachno. Back in 1841 the Roberts family had been at Carrog, Penmachno, with the father Griffith working as a mason, so it seems the Roberts moved to Trawsfynydd in the 1840s, with Hugh's family coming first and his father and the rest of the family following later. Neighbouring farms worked by close relatives are typical of this story. Trawsfynydd evidently had pulling power at this stage, particularly for those looking for a life in farming. However, while both sons Hugh and Robert had been agricultural workers in 1841, in Cwm Prysor Robert worked as a mason, as his father had done. The 1840s, hard as they were, offered opportunities to some, with multiskilling and flexibility of labour a key to survival.

¹⁴² National School Admission Registers 1870-1914. Trawsfynydd, Merionethshire.

¹⁴³ MAD ZM/4728.

By 1891 the family were farming not far away at Dolgain with Hugh and Margaret A. living at home but working in service, plus a farmhand and domestic servant.

1885 Death of David Llewellyn Lloyd, freeholder

[NB From this point on, there is considerable overlap with my history of Brynmaenllwyd, q.v.]

Feb 27: Death of David Llewellyn Lloyd (1831-1885, b. Pwllheli, d. Ffestiniog).

Since David Tegid Jones had taken over Goppa and much of its estate by 1874 it seems likely that other farms on the former Parry estate changed hands at similar date, probably including Tyddyn Sais. Brynmaenllwyd, the neighbouring farm to Tyddyn Sais which had not been part of the Goppa sale or the Parry estate, was a case in point. By 1885 the freehold of both belonged to David Llewellyn Lloyd, who died that year. It is not clear when he acquired it.

His family story exemplifies the changing times. He was the son of Lewis Lloyd (d.1875)¹⁴⁴ who had married Ellin Lloyd, daughter of David and Elizabeth Lloyd of Plasmeini, a gentry house in Ffestiniog, and had two sons, David Llewelyn and William. Lewis Lloyd was a shopkeeper in Pwllheli until appointed in 1832 by William Gryffydd Oakeley of Plas Tan y Bwlch, the principal quarry owner of Blaenau Ffestiniog, to be landlord of Tan y Bwlch Inn and lands, later known as the Oakeley Arms (also Postmaster of Tanybwlch Post Office).¹⁴⁵

The 1841 census shows the family at Tanybwlch (though by 1849 Lewis Lloyd was back in Pwllheli, as innkeeper of the Crown and Anchor¹⁴⁶). It was a responsible job. In 1841, as well as employing a farm-hand, he was managing a business with five male servants, a cook, and six other female servants. On census night there were six guests, including one couple with their own footman. The Oakeley Arms, which had recently been greatly extended, was where much of the global slate business must have been conducted, and where travellers between the quarries at the head of the Vale of Ffestiniog and the quays on the coast at Porthmadog would have refreshed themselves. With the bays of its then new wings in front of the old house it still makes an imposing sight above the river Dwryd. Census returns show him in 1851 as a 'retired innkeeper' living opposite the Pengwern Arms in Ffestiniog, but by 1861 he had been transformed to a 'landed proprietor' in Rhyl on the north coast. He died at Rhyl in 1875, with considerable assets approaching £6000, including stocks and shares, though no land is mentioned in the will. His main heirs were his sister Ellen Lloyd and cousin William Wynne of Rhyl, a wine merchant.¹⁴⁷ The will mentions neither of his sons. It is possible that Lewis had been proprietor of the Trawsfynydd properties, and passed them to his son. It is also possible that there had been a rift, perhaps over alcohol, between publican father and staunchly Methodist, probably teetotal, son.¹⁴⁸ The will of his wife's mother, Elizabeth Lloyd of Plas Meini was careful to give personal control over her inheritance to her daughter, not

¹⁴⁴ Possibly ownership of Tyddyn Sais passed to Lewis Lloyd (c.1801-1875, b. Dolgelley) before his son.

¹⁴⁵ In the parish of Ffestiniog. The contract, a jt. tenancy with David Lloyd, shopkeeper of Ffestiniog (a relative?), was for 7 years at £175 p.a. MAD, Z/DV/3/177; also 1840 Lease and Release, Z/DQ/17.

¹⁴⁶ Caerns.Arch.,Caernarfon. Item 2/24 1849 Apr 6; item 2/25 1849 Nov 10.

¹⁴⁷ Probate Registry. 1875, 'Effects under £6000, No Leaseholds.' A third executor was a chemist.

¹⁴⁸ 'From the late 1830s, temperance and teetotal campaigners increased their hold on many Welsh communities.' Russell Davies, *Hope and Heartbreak*, 345.

her son-in-law.¹⁴⁹ Since the couple's second son, William, was baptized in an independent chapel in Trawsfynydd,¹⁵⁰ it may indicate that the family exemplified the changing religious affiliations of the times, with the wife being the main dissenter. Lewis Lloyd's will reaffirms him as a member of the Anglican community with a major bequest of £100 to the local church, but his son David became a pillar of nonconformism.

Born where his father Lewis Lloyd was a shopkeeper, he was taken as a baby to live at the Tan y Bwlch Inn (now Oakeley Arms), and was still there in 1841 aged 10. By 1851 he was apprenticed to a chemist at Llanbeblig, Caernarfon, learning a prestigious career. At the 1861 census, he was with his parents in Rhyl, as a 'chemist/not in business.' In 1865 'D.Ll. Lloyd Esq.' ('Esquire' was reserved for gentlemen) contributed £10 to the Trawsfynydd British School Fund; the address recorded is 'for Pantmawr,' as if he didn't live there but was owner.¹⁵¹ In 1867 in his mid-thirties he married 21 year-old Dorothy Philips of Towyn (Tywyn).¹⁵² Like his father's, however, his status was rapidly transformed, as in 1871 he was down as a 'landowner' in Towyn (living with a baby daughter and a servant in High St, Faenol, with middle-class neighbours), his estate probably already including his 1885 holdings in Trawsfynydd parish. In 1881 he was at Plas Meini, Ffestiniog, a minor gentry house inherited from his mother, recorded in the census as 'Chairman of Ffestiniog Parish School.' (In 1871 and 1881 his mother-in-law Margaret Edwards, 'Independent Minister's Wife,' was resident with them. She died at Ffestiniog later in 1881, aged 58.) He had seen the industrial world of the slate quarries (owned by the Oakeleys and others) cause a population explosion which overtook the ancient rural centre of Ffestiniog with the new town, Blaenau Ffestiniog, at the head of the valley, bringing its new opportunities and new challenges.

He became a prominent member of the Calvinistic Methodist community, and, from 1880, one of the founders and trustees of Capel Brynbowydd, Blaenau Ffestiniog, one of the largest of the town's many chapels.¹⁵³ He died at Plasmeini in 1885, a Justice of the Peace and pillar of the community. It was thought at first he had not left a will as his widow Dorothy applied for administration, but one was subsequently found. Written in 1868 when he was newly married (living at College Green, Towyn), it left everything to his wife, appointing her as executrix. His estate was valued at £749, a fraction of the sum left by his father. He is commemorated by the tallest monument in the churchyard of St. Michael, Ffestiniog, a pink granite obelisk¹⁵⁴ with an effusive inscription which praises him, among other things, as a landlord.¹⁵⁵

In affectionate remembrance of David Llewelyn Lloyd Esq^{re} J.P. of Plas Meini who fell on sleep the 27th day of Feb, 1885 aged 54 years, a most devoted husband, affectionate father and a true friend. His

¹⁴⁹ NLW. See Elizabeth's will, written 1849, d.1851, daughter Ellin as executrix. Elizabeth was perhaps reacting to the male-dominated will of her late husband, David Lloyd (NLW written 1834, probate 1847). A legacy of £80 to his grandson David (Llewelyn Lloyd) may have paid for his apprenticeship. There was in 1834 also a sister Elizabeth who presumably died young as she is not in the 1841 census.

¹⁵⁰ Penystryd Independent Chapel, Baptisms: William son Lewis Lloyd by Eleanor his wife of Tan y bwlch Inn in the parish of Ffestiniog Innkeeper was baptized Sepr. 30th 1832. Born Sept. 29th 1832.

¹⁵¹ NA.

¹⁵² BMD: Machynlleth (registration district for Towyn).

¹⁵³ MAD: Chapels catalogue; Z/DCB.

¹⁵⁴ North of the church. Nonconformists' graves were often marked with 'non-idolatrours' monuments such as obelisks with their classical associations. See appendix.

¹⁵⁵ Probate Registry: 1885 Will of David Llewelyn Lloyd, and Brynmaenllwyd deeds.

public life was adorned by various solid virtues whether viewed as a neighbour, landlord, magistrate, chairman of boards and committees, or as a deacon of a Christian church. His wisdom, tact, conscientiousness, and unsullied purity of character were strikingly apparent throughout. To his family he left a fragrant memory and to the world a bright example of integrity and active usefulness. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

1885

Ownership of Tyddyn Sais passed to **Dorothea (Dorothy) Jane Lloyd** (c.1846-1927, b. Towyn, d. Colwyn Bay), his widow. After 2 years she decided to sell Brynmaenllwyd and probably her other Trawsfynydd properties.¹⁵⁶ She lived subsequently in Bangor (where one of her two daughters was married to a lecturer at the Normal College, then the principal educator of nonconformist pastors), and spent the last part of her life accompanied by her unmarried daughter on the north coast, in the house at Colwyn Bay she presumably had built, as she named it Moelwyn after the mountain which fills the view from Plas Meini.¹⁵⁷ When she died in 1927 at the age of 81, after 42 years as a widow, Dorothy Jane Philips of Towyn, had become Dorothea Jane Lloyd of Moelwyn, Llanerch Road, Colwyn Bay, with a personal estate reported in the *Times* of £8,127.¹⁵⁸ She is commemorated on her husband's monument, as is their married daughter.

1887 The Wood Estate

12 Nov: Probable date of purchase of Tyddyn Sais and Brynmaenllwyd by **Richard Henry Wood**,¹⁵⁹ (1820-1908) high-Victorian industrialist, capitalist, philanthropist, and another 'saintly' proprietor, though this time a High Church Anglican. Between 1873 and 1898 he bought a score of farms in Trawsfynydd parish, several thousand acres, still spoken of locally as 'the Wood estate.'¹⁶⁰ It was not just that he wanted a country estate (he made Pant Glas, Abergeirw, on the upper Mawddach his rural seat), he also took out precious-metal mining licences from the Crown.¹⁶¹ Born in central Manchester in 1820, the son of a lawyer, by the 1851 census he was a 'Stock Broker' visiting 'James Hatton, Iron Merchant,' (a major industrialist) in Salford, Lancs. In 1854 he married the childless Hatton's niece, **Elizabeth Hatton** (b. 1826, Aston, Warrington, Cheshire). The Hattons of Hatton, Cheshire, were aristocratic, descended from Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Chancellor to Elizabeth I, and related to the Earls of Winchelsea. By the 1861 census Richard Henry Wood was down as an 'Iron Merchant' in Crumpsall. When his wife's uncle James died in 1879, the Woods were principal heirs of a princely estate (probate value 'under £700,000'). They lived also for many years in Rugby (at Penrhos House now part of a school), where they donated the St Cross Hospital and library,¹⁶² and retired to a house by the sea, Belmont, in Sidmouth, Devon, now a hotel. They funded the building of Sidmouth parish church, just as they had

¹⁵⁶ Brynmaenllwyd deeds.

¹⁵⁷ BMD; Census; Probate Registry.

¹⁵⁸ *Times* 11 June 1927 15c.

¹⁵⁹ Brynmaenllwyd deeds.

¹⁶⁰ Pers.comm: Mr Tudor Ellis, Cefnclawdd/Ty Cerrig, March 2011, *et al.*

¹⁶¹ NA.

¹⁶² Their house in Little Church Street bears a blue commemorative plaque.

made major contributions to Elizabeth's ancestral church, Daresbury, Cheshire, and to St. Madryn's, Trawsfynydd, from the perspective of a near-Catholic, post-Oxford Movement faith. Richard was also a historian and a sportsman¹⁶³ (see 1904, 1908).

1889

Richard Henry Wood (though a relative newcomer) was High Sheriff of Merioneth.¹⁶⁴

Official Crown papers¹⁶⁵ and a MS transcription of the Crown Lease (undated) show that Richard Henry Wood took out royal mining licences for his Welsh estate from the Crown (which controlled mining for gold and silver everywhere, unlike base metals):

No on Crown Rental 292. County Merioneth.

Name of Mine Pantglas Estate

Description of Premises
and Substances demised; from
Lease.

Gold & gold ore silver & silver ore in Lands (belonging to the Lessee) known as Trawsnant & Glanllyn y forwyn Llanelltyd, Cefncam, Llanddywe [sic] uwch y graig; Pantglas, Clyppiau, Brynygath Brynmaenllwyd Beddcoedwr Tyddynbach, Erwddwfr, **Tyddynsais**. Bryn yre. Brynrcwn, Caerhys, Wern y frony. Caegwyn Ffridd y grugle Trawsfynydd. Cwmbychan Llanbedr & Llanfair Abergeirw Mawr Llanfachrdu [Llanfachreth] Gellia & Murfoeden in Llanaelhaiarn, Co Carnarvon.¹⁶⁶

While the lease appears to be a catch-all involving all of Wood's holdings in North Wales at the time and does not mean that Tyddyn Sais was specifically expected to yield gold, it may reveal his general intentions in becoming a Welsh landowner. Cf. the terms of the Goppa sale advertisement, 1845. Pantglas itself neighboured the Mawddach gold mine at Gwynfynydd.

1894

First Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire. *Re* evidence submitted on rents (*House of Commons Parliamentary Papers*):

‘... It is now 35/-. Mr Wood never received more than 35/- for it. **Tyddyn Sais**, he says, was raised from 40/- to 50/-. The truth is, it was lowered from 50/- to 42/-.’

¹⁶³ In her will Elizabeth left a portrait of Cardinal Newman by Roden, inherited from her uncle, to the city of Manchester. Weighing under 9 stone, Richard was a keen steeplechaser and horseman (*Baily's Magazine*, June 1907, 494-5, where at 87 he is described as ‘still very hale and hearty’).

¹⁶⁴ *The New Kalendars of Gwynedd*, 1994.

¹⁶⁵ NA CRES 49/3509-3511. Ref. to Department letter on Lease of Mines Royal, 6 Feb 1889.

¹⁶⁶ MAD Z/DAV/65. As an industrialist in charge of iron works, Wood would have been interested in sources of manganese, too, which had recently become vital in steel production. The Rhinog mountains were becoming a key site for manganese mines (cf.1906), as was Llanaelhaiarn on the Llyn peninsula.

1891 Census

Edward Williams, 44, farmer, b. Trawsfynydd, was at **Tyddyn Sais** with his sister **Gwen**, 42, and a servant, also **Gwen Williams**, 15 (all Welsh speakers born in Trawsfynydd).

Edward was the son of a mining captain in the mines of the south of the parish. Born in Llanddwywe, by the age of 3 he had moved to the Tyddyn Gwladys silver and lead mine next to the Gwynfynydd mine in Trawsfynydd, later famous for its gold, with his parents George and Ellenor Williams, born respectively in Llanferes, Denbighshire and Llanbedr, Merioneth, two elder brothers born in Llanelltyd, and a little sister born in Trawsfynydd. Skilled mining engineers were in demand, and could command good fees if they were willing to move around. By 1861 the family were still there, the father now a Mine Agent, with three more children, supported by the same domestic servant. All the children are down as Trawsfynydd born. However, George Williams died in 1864, leaving his large family with an uncertain future. By 1871 Edward was earning his living in Trawsfynydd village as a joiner, living with a younger sister, a dressmaker, both unmarried. He is down as Llanddwywe-born. He evidently prospered sufficiently to take on the demanding tenancy at Tyddyn Sais by 1891, again with the help of a younger sister, now Gwen, not Ellen. It is not clear how long he persevered at farming. He had moved on by 1901. He was never to marry. In the 1911 census he records himself, aged 63, as an agricultural labourer, living alone in a four-roomed house at Islawrcoed, Trawsfynydd. Islawrcoed, Maentwrog, is just to the north of the Trawsfynydd parish boundary. There does not seem to be another house of that name in Trawsfynydd itself. Either the parish boundary may have changed, or he was perhaps getting confused in old age. Although he had accurately recorded his birthplace as Llanddwywe in earlier census returns, in 1911 he puts himself down as Trawsfynydd-born. That was perhaps the salient fact to him: that he was of Trawsfynydd. He died later that year.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

1901 Census

Tyddyn Sais was in the hands of a different family, a widow and her two sons. **Laura Roberts** was 61, born in Trawsfynydd, and described unusually as a 'Farmeress' (a translation of the gendered Welsh term). Her 21 year-old son **Owen** worked as carter on the farm and his brother **William John**, 19, as cowman. A nephew of 8, **William Jones**, was there too, as was an 18 year-old servant, **Mary Jones Tickell**, who was born in Ffestiniog and unlike the others spoke English as well as Welsh.

Laura Roberts (since Laura is the English version of the Welsh name Lowry, her name is an echo of the earlier Lowry Roberts) was the widow of William Roberts, born in Maentwrog, the eldest of the large family of William Roberts, slate quarrier. By 1861 they had moved to Fronwen, Ffestiniog. William jnr. was 21, unmarried, and a slate quarrier, like brothers John, 17, and Robert, 14. (Owen who was 9 and at school would have known what to expect.) The girls who were old enough were in domestic service. By 1871 William jnr., down as a quarryman, had married Laura and moved to her village of Trawsfynydd. They lived at

Tynypistill with sons William, 7, disabled (listed as ‘Idiot’) and Humphrey, 5, both born in Ffestiniog, but by 1881 William, now 40, was down as a ‘farmer of 10 acres and quarryman,’ living at Penygarrig St. with his family. Humphrey, now 15, was a ‘farmer’s son working at home’, and the three younger children were all born in Trawsfynydd. It is an interesting example of how the money which could be earned in the punishing work of the quarries could be put to good use establishing a new role as farmer, however modest the smallholding. By 1901 Laura now a widow was at the relatively substantial farm of Tyddyn Sais, with family help. Her 21 year old son Owen was down as ‘Carter on farm,’ and 19 year old son William John Roberts was a Cowman. Her nephew William Jones, 8, also lived with them, and the household even had a servant, Mary Jones Tickell, 18, born in Ffestiniog, who unlike the rest of the family spoke both languages. With her un-Welsh surname she represents the migrant families drawn to the area. Her Irish-born father Alexander married a Welsh woman, went to South America, returned to keep a shop and lodging house in Ffestiniog village, and later worked in the Blaenau slate quarries.¹⁶⁷

By 1911 Laura had moved on from Tyddyn Sais into Trawsfynydd village, where she was at 3 Brynglas with three lodgers in their thirties: two married women, both the mothers of several children who were not with them, and the third, interestingly, a Trawsfynydd-born coal-miner, perhaps on a visit from work in South Wales or Flintshire. Also see below, 1910.

1902

The War Office came to Trawsfynydd in search of artillery ranges. It was initially at Bryn Goleu, then from 1904 a much larger military encampment was set up round Rhiwgoch, Robert Lloyd’s fine manor house which was commandeered for officers (and damaged), with a huge firing range to the east in the Gain valley and the hills around. The range eventually covered over 13,000 acres (bought from the Wynnstay estate), causing the evacuation of many ancient farmhouses, which were then destroyed by artillery. The settlement which grew up to service the military on the main road, largely in corrugated iron buildings, was dubbed Tin Town, though known formally as Bronaber as it is above the farm called Aber. The incoming personnel, the hardware, the explosions,¹⁶⁸ the unexploded ordnance, all changed the parish in dramatic ways for half a century,¹⁶⁹ with the last still having an effect in the twenty-first century. By the 1911 census, Rhiwgoch with all its history had all but disappeared, swallowed up in the address ‘Military Camp’ with its occupant ‘The Government’. Along the new ‘Camp Road’ the addresses mark how much the area had

¹⁶⁷ Ffest.Par.Reg. Baptism: Sep. 1882, Mary dr. of Alexander and Gwen Tickel [sic] Saron House, shop-keeper. The 1881 census has him as 44, Ireland-born, running a grocer’s and lodging house, with Gwen, 34, and 5 children 11-1, the eldest two born in Chile, the next two in Peru, the youngest in Merioneth. Perhaps they had been in Patagonia first. They had 14 middle-aged lodgers, only one down as married, labourers, 3 Welsh, 6 English, and 5 Irish. By the 1891 census Alexander was a slate labourer living in Blaenau Ffestiniog, as in 1901 in his sixties. He died in 1902. His wife Gwen Jones was the daughter of a Llandderfel farmer but at 13 was already working in domestic service. Their daughter Mary was to marry Thomas Jones, a butcher, in Tredegar, South Wales, in 1908 when both were 26. Her brother and sister were witnesses.

¹⁶⁸ The ranges were then leased for grazing to farmers who had to put up a flag where a sheep had been killed. Compensation of 14 shillings per ewe and 7 shillings per lamb was paid, market price at first but it was never increased. Pers.comm. [Edmwnd] Gwynfor Jones, husband of Kit, whose family leased Gain valley land.

¹⁶⁹ The bilingual book of old photographs of Trawsfynydd, *Traws-Olwg*, Talybont, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2017, Images: Keith O’Brien, reproduces several early photographs, including one of a military march led by a band on the road past Tyddyn Sais, probably on its way to the station (p.98).

changed: Chip Potat [sic], Tea Rooms (3 of them), Stationery Shop and Restaurant. For a time shells were fired W over the main road to Crawwellt affecting the area around Tyddyn Sais. The noise must have been deafening. Cefnclawdd was evacuated, and David Tudor at Brynmaenllwyd was not amused to find soldiers peering in his window as he was eating.¹⁷⁰

1904

14 Jul: Death of Elizabeth Hatton Wood at the Woods' residence of Belmont,¹⁷¹ Sidmouth, Devon. Her estate was valued at £82,000 (gross estate £83,478). Among her legatees were her relatives the Finch Hattons, who received £10,000, which presumably facilitated their acquisition in 1905¹⁷² of the Plas, the principal house in the centre of Harlech, now the Plas Café.¹⁷³ Her husband commemorated her with a stained glass window in St Madryn's church, Trawsfynydd, portraying her as a pious elderly woman robed in the Hatton and Wood arms,¹⁷⁴ praying before St David.

1908

25 Apr: Death of Richard Henry Wood (88) at Belmont, Sidmouth, Devon. His estate was valued at over £500,000 (gross estate £675,997). At his death he was JP and Deputy Lieutenant for both Merioneth and Warwickshire, and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (he was an expert in pre-Reformation religious houses and collected their seals and documents¹⁷⁵). He and his wife (d.1904) are buried at Daresbury, Cheshire, the Hatton family's parish church. Their polished granite tomb is in the churchyard W of the tower, next to the similar one of James Hatton, the uncle whose wealth, principally from Lancashire ironworks, they inherited. Among its inscriptions are the words, 'Make them to be numbered with thy saints.' Inside, the W wall bears a brass memorial to them with their coats of arms. Similarly there is a brass plaque to them in St Madryn's, Trawsfynydd, mentioning that they are buried at Daresbury.

Stanley Rose Wood (d.1920), bank manager of Nantwich, Cheshire, nephew and principal heir of Richard Henry Wood, inherited Tyddyn Sais.¹⁷⁶ He is one of three benefactors commemorated on the foundation stone for the parish hall in 1911.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁰ Pers.comm. Kit Price Jones, his niece. The camp was a valuable source of jobs for local people, too.

¹⁷¹ Parish register transcriptions: Morris Davies, 'Selections.'

¹⁷² Dewi Roberts, *Towns and Villages of Snowdonia*, Llanrwst, 2006, 67.

¹⁷³ The 1930s colonial life of Denys Finch Hatton later acquired international fame when it formed the basis of the film *Out of Africa* (1985, dir. Sydney Pollack) starring Robert Redford and Meryl Streep.

¹⁷⁴ The Hatton family had had their arms, a chevron with wheatsheaves in blue and gold, since the Norman Conquest – they can be seen in London at the Holborn end of Hatton Garden as the sign for the pub *Sir Christopher Hatton*, named after their ancestor, Lord Chancellor to Elizabeth I, whose house stood there – but Richard Henry Wood had taken out his coat of arms, a lion rampant, only in 1871. *Grantees of Arms* II, k-2, 1687-1898, Harleian Society, 1917.

¹⁷⁵ The Hatton Wood Collection is an archive of 1500 such items now at Keele University.

¹⁷⁶ Brynmaenllwyd deeds. Will of Richard Henry Wood, Probate Registry.

¹⁷⁷ Foundation stone on Neuadd Trawsfynydd.

1910

Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald 23 September, p.4.

Amongst the advertisements in English for farms in the Conwy valley and boarding houses in Llandudno is a notice in Welsh of a **stock sale at Tyddyn Sais**, Trawsfynydd, to take place in October under the auspices of Arthur R. Jones, Auctioneer, Valuer, House and Estate Agent, of Conwy. Similarly in the *North Wales Observer and Express*, 7 October 1910, p.4 is a boldly capitalised advertisement: “TYDDYN SAIS, TRAWSFYNYDD. AR YR HOLL YSTOC a’r CELFT, DYDD SADWRN, HYDREF 15fed, 1910, am Un o’r gloch.” It seems Laura Roberts had decided, at the age of seventy, to sell up and retire to the village.

1911 Census – Ellis Tudor (b.1882)

A similar pattern of connections between Trawsfynydd and the neighbouring communities of Ffestiniog and Maentwrog is evident in the family which by 1911 had replaced Laura Roberts at **Tyddyn Sais**. This time it was the wife who was the incomer from a neighbouring parish, married to a local man. **Kate**, 28, born in Ffestiniog, was the wife of farmer **Ellis Tudor**, 29. They had three children, **Robert**, 8, **Annie**, 6, and **Gwennie Powel Tudor**, just 20 months. There was also a farmhand of 15, born in Maentwrog, **Robert Owen Davies**. The form was filled in in Welsh and signed by Ellis Tudor in a confident hand. Ellis was the son of David and Anne Tudor of Tyntwll, an early house now on the western shore of Llyn Trawsfynydd. Ten years earlier he had been living at home with his parents on their farm, but by 1911 he had married and taken on his own tenancy at Tyddyn Sais. Later he and the family were to move to Denbighshire. The 1939 survey shows him at Hiraethog where he died at 65 in 1951.

WORLD WAR I

The impact of the First World War on the Trawsfynydd area must have been considerable given the scale of the military ranges as training grounds. No doubt many young men either volunteered, or later were conscripted into service, but the parish’s most famous son was undoubtedly the poet whose poem won the 1917 Bardic Chair at the National Eisteddfod at Birkenhead. When his pen name Hedd Wyn (White Peace) was announced as the winner, instead of the poet stepping forward it was followed with the tragic news that the author Ellis Evans had been killed a few days earlier in Flanders on the first day of what became known as the Battle of Passchendaele, shortly after his arrival at the Western Front. He is buried at Ypres. He was thirty. The carved oak chair which he had won with his poem ‘Yr Arwr’ (The Hero) was transported to his home farm of Yr Ysgwrn in Cwm Prysor, barely a mile from Tyddyn Sais, draped in a black cloth. Ever since, that eisteddfod has been known as the one of the ‘cadair ddu’ or ‘black chair.’ The chair is still alongside his other bardic chairs at the family farm, now renovated by the Snowdonia National Park Authority and since the 2017 centenary open to visitors. A 1992 Welsh language film ‘Hedd Wyn’ written by Alan Llwyd and directed by Paul Turner tells his story. For the centenary of his death on 5 August 2017 the BBC broadcast a programme about him, ‘Hedd Wyn: the lost war poet’ presented by Ifor ap Glyn. Narrated in English, it includes some poetry and interviews in Welsh with subtitles.

1920

Owner: **Elizabeth Anne Wood** (d.1927), widow of Stanley Rose Wood.¹⁷⁸

1927

Owners: **James Hatton Wood and Richard Stanley Wood** (sons/heirs/trustees of Elizabeth Anne Wood).¹⁷⁹ A1930 vesting deed left James Hatton Wood in control.

C.1930-1935: Ellis Tudor b.1873, Farmer of Tyddyn Sais

Curiously the next resident tenant at Tyddyn Sais shares the same name as his predecessor. This Ellis Tudor was one of the six children of a different David and Anne Tudor, of Cefn Clawdd, a short distance west across the Eden valley from Tyddyn Sais. Born in 1873, he was the third son, after Edward and Morgan, and senior to David, Catherine and Laura.¹⁸⁰ The village school admissions register shows Ellis as enrolled in September 1878 at the age of four, passing standards in 1885 and 1886, and leaving school in May 1887. He was more successful than his elder brothers Edward and Morgan who were enrolled at later ages and appear not to have taken much to schooling. David, however, and Catherine, passed standards like Ellis. From 1897 Ellis, and siblings David and Catherine, were living together at Brynmaenllwyd, the neighbouring farm to Tyddyn Sais, just a couple of fields away, and a mile or so from their family home in Cefn Clawdd. After Catherine married in 1909, just Ellis and David were at Brynmaenllwyd. At the 1911 census both were unmarried, Ellis aged 35 and David 34, with a 27 year-old dairymaid, Lizzi[e] Roberts, completing the household. The form was filled in in Welsh, and they identified themselves as Welsh speakers only. Ellis, the eldest, was down as head of the household, but David seems to have written his own details, putting himself down as ‘ditto,’ corrected in official red pencil to ‘brawd’ – brother. Unusually, both signed the form. It seems to have been quite an egalitarian household. Lizzie had been born in the village, but did not have much of a future, dying in 1913.

Then in 1918 Ellis married Gwennie (Gwen) Tudor, daughter of William and Gwen Tudor, who were living at Caeadda (a mile or so north) in 1901 and Nantbudr (a few miles east) in 1911. (Her father William was the elder brother – 13 years older – of the Ellis Tudor who was previously at Tyddyn Sais, both of them raised at Tyntwll, a reminder of the tight network of family ties which was typical of parishes like Trawsfynydd. In 1911 it was Gwennie who filled in and signed the Nantbudr census form, in a confident hand.) Ellis and Gwennie moved to Bryn Goleu, a farm nearer the village and on the east side of the turnpike (the initial site of the government’s military activities), where their daughter **Anwen Price Tudor** was born in 1920. Sadly Gwennie died in childbirth in 1925, leaving her husband as a widower to bring up his daughter.

Ellis then moved with Anwen to Tyddyn Sais, presumably vacated by his late wife’s uncle Ellis Tudor. He advertised for a housekeeper and took on **Annie Jones** of Corwen, whom he

¹⁷⁸ Brynmaenllwyd deeds. Presumably a similar pattern for Tyddyn Sais.

¹⁷⁹ Brynmaenllwyd deeds. Ditto.

¹⁸⁰ From about the 1860s it seems that the name Lowry took on the more standard English form of Laura.

married in 1930. Their daughter **Catherine Price Tudor** was born in 1931, and in 2017 ‘Kit Tyddyn Sais,’ as she is known locally, still lives in the village with her husband Gwyn (Edmwnd Gwynfor Jones, Dolprysor).¹⁸¹ As a girl she was a constant visitor to her cousin Sal (Sarah Jones) at Brynmaenllwyd, where her aunt Laura kept house for a while for her father’s unmarried brother David after her own house was demolished to make way for the village bypass. Sal was just 3 years older than Kit, whereas her sister Anwen was 11 years older – a big gap. In fact Anwen married in 1937 (to Oswald L. Williams) when Kit was only six, so from then on she was effectively an only child.

Dairying was a big thing at Tyddyn Sais, as at most farms in the area then. There was a reservoir on the higher land across the main road from which water would be let down once a week to power the wheel-driven churn, with butter and cheese taken to market in Blaenau Ffestiniog on Fridays by rail. Ellis Tudor had a milk round in the village, selling milk from a measure. Later national organisation of the dairy industry resulted in a daily collection of the metal milk churn from a little platform built for each farm beside the road. Many of the platforms still remain. During the war the focus on food production meant that some pasture was ploughed up for potatoes or grain. Each farm had a pig which would typically be slaughtered in the autumn and the meat salted and smoked to preserve it, with hams hung from the beams in the kitchen, there being no refrigeration. Each farm would have chickens, and usually a couple of horses, though bigger farms had more. The horses could be very intelligent. Kit remembers an incident when a pig got out into the paddock and eluded recapture. The horse in the field cornered it and held it down with its hooves until the men could tether it. The horses would be used for everything – carting, ploughing, and bringing in the hay on an unwheeled sled-like vehicle called a ‘car llusg.’¹⁸² Originally the hay was cut with a two-handled scythe, a huge labour from pre-dawn to dark while the good weather held. Mowing machines came in later, at first drawn by horses and eventually by tractors. Haystacks were sometimes made, but given the weather it was more usual for hay to be forked into the upper chamber of a stone barn directly from a waggon through the special high door. Later most farms built open-sided barns for hay (known elsewhere as Dutch barns) until the later twentieth-century technology of plastic-wrapping ‘haylage’ cylindrical bales to be left in the open made them redundant too.

There was much sharing of labour between Ellis at Tyddyn Sais and David at Brynmaenllwyd, and other members of the family at Cefn Clawdd. David had shot off his own arm in a gun accident years before, but was renowned for being able to do most things as well as anyone else. They tended to make hay, for instance, as a joint effort. The scale of activity is evident in a photograph of c.1910 of threshing at Tyddyn Sais, with the latest in steam technology powering what was a crucial day’s work. Apart from the two men in charge of the steam engine with its lethal-looking drive belt, there are eleven men in the picture (including Ellis Tudor, Kit’s father, with hand to head in the centre) and a boy, as well as three women and two girls.

When Ellis died at 61 in 1935¹⁸³ **Annie Tudor** was left with the two girls. Eventually in 1939 she married again, to **William (Gwilym) Lloyd Roberts** of Hendre Fawr, the next farm south

¹⁸¹ Warm thanks to Kit Price Jones for sharing her memories on several occasions, most recently in Dec. 2017.

¹⁸² An early photograph is in Jean Napier’s evocative *Rhinogydd*, Llanrwst: Gwasg Carreg Gwalch, 2017, p.41.

¹⁸³ TUDOR Ellis of Tyddyn-sais Trawsfynydd Merionethshire died 7 March 1935 Probate Bangor 23 November to Annie Tudor widow. Effects £1025 1s 11d [Probate register].

of Brynmaenllwyd. In the 1939 register Tyddyn Sais has **Annie Roberts** listed first (b.1900, married), William Llewellyn (a transcription error presumably for Lloyd) Roberts (b.1907, married), and **Isaac (John) Davies** (b.1906, married) as farmhand.¹⁸⁴



Steam-powered threshing at Tyddyn Sais, c.1910, Ellis Tudor in the centre with head on hand.

Photo: Courtesy of his daughter Kit Price Jones

WORLD WAR II

The Trawsfynydd artillery ranges had never allowed the district to forget theatres of war further afield but near the start of World War II an unexpected involvement brought it home.

1940 German Plane Crash

27 Sep: a German reconnaissance plane crashed on Tyddyn Sais pasture, one of only three German planes brought down in the Snowdonia National Park throughout the war. It had been spotted at great height over Liverpool docks, was shot at and crippled, and made a

¹⁸⁴ Born in South Wales, the son of a Glamorgan coal-miner and Birmingham-born mother living in Treharris in 1911, he had married Anna M. Roberts in Merioneth North in 1937, and died in Merioneth in 1975.

descending flight over Snowdonia to Trawsfynydd, followed by the RAF Spitfire pilot who brought it down. It clipped a chimney at Plas Capten before ploughing into a field beside the track to Tyddyn Sais and coming to rest against a stone wall (the chimney was rebuilt in brick not stone in accordance with wartime regulations, which is still deplored by the Williams family who live there).¹⁸⁵ One of the four crew members died but the others survived. RAF Spitfire pilot Dennis A. Adams reported that the Luftwaffe pilot (Rolf Book) had ‘kept on flying west and losing height until he made a forced landing in a small field.’ As the Dornier 17 touched down ‘it did a ground loop to starboard and then the port wing bashed into the west wall of the field. I opened the hood and did a few slow circuits, and the pilot gave me some sort of salute, Nazi or otherwise I would not know. My last recollection is of the village Bobby in full uniform pedalling manfully up the rise to get to the wreck. I wagged my wings and set off back for Ringway.’¹⁸⁶

It was a Saturday and nine year-old Kit Price Jones¹⁸⁷ was gathering blackberries at Tyddyn Sais when the plane came down. Her mother Annie thought she was under the plane and came rushing out with the frying pan ready to tackle the ‘enemy’. Kit was sent for a blanket to cover the body of Gustav Pelzer, aged 26, who was buried at Pwllheli.¹⁸⁸ She saw another man with blood running down his face. Her husband-to-be, Gwyn, then about twelve, had been bringing in the cows a few miles away in Cwm Prysor and saw the plane come in extremely low, trailing smoke, followed by the Spitfire. He was amazed that it flew on so far before crash-landing. The pilot was evidently very skilful, minimizing the impact and saving most of his crew.¹⁸⁹ Kit says the first person to arrive was not the policeman in the RAF pilot’s account but someone who came running from Bryn Crwn. Because of fears there might be a bomb they had to spend two nights at Hendre Fawr (the family farm of William Ll. Roberts). Many people came to view the wreckage afterwards, and someone from Llys Awel (on the main road north of Bronaber) fashioned rings from the perspex of the aircraft (then a novel material), which were very popular.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Pers.comm. 22.11.2010.

¹⁸⁶ Edward Doylerush, *No Landing Place, vol.2: More Tales of Aircraft Crashes in Snowdonia*, Leicester: Midland Publishing, 1999, 34-44; with photographs. (The dates given are conflicting and not correct.) The crash is still widely remembered. In December 2011 a man met over a counter in Tremadog immediately came up with the story on hearing where we were from.

¹⁸⁷ Pers.comm. 1 April 2012.

¹⁸⁸ Edward Doylerush, *No Landing Place*.

¹⁸⁹ *Traws-Olwg*, 2017, includes this image (p.109) and gives the names of the survivors as Felt Webeln, Kurt Jensen and Hans Kuhl. With the pilot and casualty this would mean a crew of five.

¹⁹⁰ A small piece of clear perspex from the plane about ¼ inch thick is held in MAD. Photo: Llys Ednowain, Trawsfynydd.



1940s Freehold Transfer

In the late 1940s the Wood estate finally relinquished its hold on the farms by selling Tyddyn Sais, Brynmaenllywd, and presumably others in the area, to the families who had worked them and been their tenants for so long.

When David Tudor of Brynmaenllywd died in 1951 after half a century at Brynmaenllywd, the paired working of farms continued but in a new direction. Annie and William Lloyd Roberts at Tyddyn Sais became proprietors of Brynmaenllywd but it was later arranged for its land to run with Bryn Re and the Owen family on its western boundary rather than with Tyddyn Sais, and they sold off the farmhouse in the 1960s as a holiday cottage. With increasing mechanisation the shift towards double farms was well under way everywhere. Most farms acquired their first tractor in the postwar years.¹⁹¹



Harvesting oats at Tyddyn Sais, 1965 (NLW)

The house and the Rhinog mountains are in the background.

When Kit and Gwyn married in 1952 they stayed on at Tyddyn Sais for a year until they got their own place in the village. After Annie's death in 1973 Will carried on alone at Tyddyn Sais until he died in 1981. Kit and Gwyn's son **Edwyn Jones** took over the farm at Tyddyn Sais alongside his other job but the house was empty for a number of years, and when illness struck, the decision was made to let Tyddyn Sais go.

¹⁹¹ NLW has 14 b/w photographs by Geoff Charles of harvesting oats at Tyddyn Sais on 2 October 1965 with Will Lloyd Roberts on the tractor and Gwyndaf Owen and Gwyndaf Jones raking and hand-binding sheaves. (See online at NLW, or www.digido.org.uk and Europeana - google Tyddyn Sais.)

1995 Freehold Transfer

In 1995 Tyddyn Sais was transferred to a new family, that of the late **Ned Evans**, Cae'n y Cefn, a couple of miles south. His son, the present owner, **Seimon ab Iorwerth**,¹⁹² who moved in a year later, has since been gradually renovating the house alongside farming and other work. Active with the local chapel community, he judges rare breeds of sheep for the agricultural show. His father was a great collector of books in Welsh, and his wife **Esyllt** is a schoolteacher and musician, training youngsters in music particularly through the eisteddfod system. Once again, just as in the 1930s, there are two daughters growing up at Tyddyn Sais. They can now often be seen pictured smiling in the local paper as young eisteddfod winners.

A TV interview on BBC's S4C: Pennod 13 (translated from Welsh)

'Generations of Seimon ab Iorwerth's family have farmed sheep on this land near Trawsfynydd. When Seimon looked for farmland of his own he came across Tyddyn Sais. He married Esyllt and along came Elain. He had to make a home for his new family. "We bought it from a farmer in 1995. We didn't really consider the house when we bought it but we thought it would make a good home. I moved in during the summer of 1996. I applied for a grant. A council inspector said it was unfit for human habitation. I was a bit put out since I was living here!" Was it ready to be transformed into a home when you moved in, Esyllt? "I took a chance and got involved, not knowing we would get married! Work on the shell had been completed when we started to make this place our own." It's a substantial house considering it was built in 1550. "Yes, it isn't a cottage. It's a good sized house. Some very wealthy people must have lived here back then." It's called Tyddyn Sais, Englishman's cottage. "We don't know who the Englishman was." You kept the original features. "Yes. We wanted to take it back down to the wood. It had either been painted or wallpapered. The bedroom walls were all wallpapered and painted. We stripped most of it back to the wood but we had to give up on some of it because it was too much work. We kept many of the original features because we couldn't afford to do anything else!" Can you imagine living anywhere else now you've settled here as a family? "I've farmed this land with my father since I was a child. This is my home. I've been quite nomadic. I have no roots really. I'm a person who likes change and who likes moving around. I must accept that I'm unlikely to leave this place. I like being in the kitchen and I enjoy relaxing in the living room. The bedroom is nice too. I actually like it. I hadn't realized before!"¹⁹³

2017

The obituary of **William Thomas** of Ty'n Twll, Trawsfynydd (possibly one of the oldest houses in the parish), who was born in 1925 at Hafod Cynfal high on the Rhinog side of the Eden valley just south of Cefn Clawdd, mentioned that one of his early jobs was as a farmhand at Tyddyn Sais.¹⁹⁴ He worked also at Cefngellgwm and Friddbrynoch. Well

¹⁹² Iorwerth is the Welsh form of 'Edward/Ned.' Seimon is retrieving the old system of patronymics.

¹⁹³ <https://subsaga.com/bbc/entertainment/04-wal/2000-2008/pennod-13.html> - retrieved 23 July 2017.

¹⁹⁴ *Cambrian News*, 6 July 2017, p.27.

known in the district, he was the son of Edward, whose parents were John and Jane Thomas, Coedrhygyn, and Blodwen, the daughter of Edmund and Mary Evans of Muriau Bychan.¹⁹⁵

His life is another reminder of the close ties between the seemingly isolated farmsteads scattered across the uplands of Trawsfynydd, and of its ancient history. The farm known as Muriau Bychan, recently renovated, is across the Eden river from Tyddyn Sais on a shelf of rock which bears evidence of early settlement in its field patterns. The name meaning 'Little Walls' probably relates to once-conspicuous remains of Iron Age or Bronze Age hut circles, enclosures or burial cairns, of a type encountered elsewhere in the district, on the Crawwellt and in the Rhinog mountains. The extraordinary ancient monument, Bryn Cader Faner, is not far away, on a ridge overlooking this area. It is not improbable that some of today's local people are direct descendants¹⁹⁶ and inheritors of that long, long story.

¹⁹⁵ When Kit was growing up at Tyddyn Sais two brothers lived at Muriau across the Eden river, one of whom was deaf. She said you could hear from her home the other shouting to his brother.

¹⁹⁶ Genetic analysis has shown a remarkable degree of continuity through to the present, e.g. from prehistory in the Cheddar Gorge area, or from the Roman period in the area around Chester. Trawsfynydd too, perhaps.