

**Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru**  
**Royal Commission**  
**on the**  
**Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales**



**Lanlash Farmhouse**

**County:** Carmarthenshire

**Community:** Llangathen

**NGR:** SN5707 2210

**NPRN:** 310170

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A house existed on the site in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, according to the bard Lewis Glyn Cothi, who mentions it (Lan-lais) as belonging to Llwelyn ap Gwilym (*Thomas Lloyd*). He also refers to it in an address to Gwilym ap Thomas's sons, one being Henry ap Gwilym of Lanlais and Court Henry. (*Lewis Jones*)

The present building is a stone-built, 2-storey, L shape plan house, which has c1800 Kitchen added at the upper end and 19<sup>th</sup> century cow-houses to the lower end, in-line. It was largely rearranged in the late-17/early-18<sup>th</sup> century to form a central passage-entry, end-chimney plan with Rear-parlour. However, a recently unblocked doorway behind the stairs indicates the position of a cross-passage to a former hall, extending from the Front-parlour into what became the cow-house. This arrangement suggests it was originally a hall-house with storied parlour-wing of at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Evidence of this building, can be seen in the thick walls, which have a number of **stone foundation arches**. At first-floor in the parlour wing, there are the remains of an external doorway with segmental arch, and a round arched window opening of sandstone blocks. On the ground-floor the former cross-passage doorway has a segmental stone arch and possible loop-hole recess beside it.

It is probable that the damp position of this site made it necessary for the builder to spread the load and he used the foundation-arch technique in its wall construction. The use of this method first appears about 1290 and can be seen in the 14<sup>th</sup> century Merchant Taylors' Hall in London (*Scofield, J.*) and also seen in the curtain wall of Rochester Castle. The stone-built first-floor halls in Glamorgan, Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire, probably extended the traditional use of foundation-arches into the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## Description

The **main south-west front facade** is limewashed with end-chimneys and a slate roof. There is a central doorway with flanking sash windows to each floor under stone cambered vousoirs. Stone foundation arches are visible under the present ground-floor windows. A 3-door cow-house, situated in-line to the south-east has been formed from the former hall and a further 3-door cow-house has been added in-line in the mid to late-19<sup>th</sup> century. The cow-house/hall doorways have

stone voussoirs, while the cow-house has brick surrounds and arches. At the north-west there is a c1800, 1 ½ storey, slate roofed, kitchen unit with end-chimney, window, doorway, and gable-end lean-to.

The **rear north-east facade** includes the parlour-wing gable-end with batter at base, chimney stack, and a sash window on each floor with stone cambered arches, as in the front elevation. It also includes two ground-floor foundation arches. A blocked first-floor doorway to the right has a stone segmental arch, partly damaged by alterations. To the left of the cross-wing is a c1800 cattle lean-to with ventilation slits. To the right is the 19<sup>th</sup> century service lean-to and rear of the kitchen unit. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century the cross-passage doorway would have been visible against the left edge of the cross-wing.

## Interior

The front doorway leads into a passage with Living-room to left and Front-parlour to right. The passage is taken out of the Living-room, by a thin lathe & plaster partition to left. An earlier partition to the right supports the Living-room ceiling-beams. These ceiling-beams are cambered upwards and their medium chamfers have 'ogee' stops. The joists are square in section and with the ceiling-beams indicate a late-17<sup>th</sup>/early-18<sup>th</sup> century period. These beams continue (boxed) in the Rear-parlour only separated by a stud and plaster partition. The Living-room fireplace is splayed, projecting both inwards and outwards from the end wall, and is slightly angled to the room. It has a chamfered timber lintel, which is sloped at its rear, but its left end may have been reduced slightly, to allow for a later doorway through to the kitchen. A cupboard to the right of the fireplace, backs onto the recess, which houses a range in the service-room, perhaps in a former opening, which would make the stud-partition secondary. The Front-parlour has a 19<sup>th</sup> century fireplace and plaster ceiling. It is divided by a narrow partition from a Pantry under the stairs at the rear, formerly accessed by a doorway in a stud-partition (blocked). The early 19<sup>th</sup> century stair behind the partition has chamfered and stopped, capped newels, moulded hand-rail and stick balusters. The outer wall of the stair contains the formerly blocked, cross-passage doorway. In this wall, where it is met by the abutting south-east cross wall of the

Front-parlour, part of the internal arch of a blocked possible loop-hole has been discovered. Its full width is similar in size to the cross-passage doorway. Adjacent to it, an angled opening provides the present pantry access via the Rear-parlour. The Rear-parlour room has a 19<sup>th</sup> century fireplace and gable-end window with plastered ceiling between boxed ceiling-beams. An opening has been made into the Service-room, where the cross-wing wall has a batter. A doorway leads into the kitchen which has central and end ceiling-beams with narrow chamfers and run-out stops. Its joists have been replaced, but slight rebates show the earlier joists position, which are widely spaced. The central beam has mortices for two studs and peg holes for wattle infill and may be re-used. The kitchen has a deep inglenook fireplace at the north-west gable-end with a chamfered timber lintel and bread oven (brick) to left side with a similar opening to the right side (now altered), perhaps for a small cooking oven. There is a stair to left of fireplace, which was formerly boxed in.

The cow-house/former open hall may once have extended from the cross-passage to the end of the thicker walled part of the cow-house. This rear wall retains two foundation arches the same as elsewhere.

At **first-floor**, the parlour-wing retains retains a similar stud and plaster partition, as on the ground-floor, dividing it into two rooms. There is a 19<sup>th</sup> century fireplace in the north-east gable-end and a blocked opening over the Living-room fireplace. In the loft above, the gable walling around the chimney is infill, indicating there was no gable and that, the chimney stack would have been visible as a tall stack. Unfortunately the original roof has been replaced by late-19<sup>th</sup> century softwood tie-beam trusses, still with pegged joints. Indeed, most of the buildings roofs seem to have been replaced at the same time. There are large stone tiles in the garden, which would have been used prior to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The gable of the cow-house/hall retains one ventilation slit for its former hay loft.

#### Comment

This hall and storied cross-wing house works well for the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but some features indicate it may have developed from an earlier structure. Evidence of this is still being revealed by ongoing works by the owner. The hall may have had an

enclosed fireplace, perhaps in the end-gable or the south-west elevation, where both walls have now been rebuilt, leaving no evidence. As the sandstone blocks to the blocked arch of a window at first-floor are the only ones, it is possible they are reused material from Dryslwyn Castle. The first-floor doorway does not work well in a 16<sup>th</sup> century cross-wing, perhaps, as it is fairly narrow, it was a latrine opening into a framed chute. However, the discovery of a possible loop-hole, in the wall close by the hall doorway, and the blocked first-floor doorway, may indicate an earlier defensive structure. We know from the documentary sources that there was a house here in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps the cross-wing and hall encompass that earlier building.

The house was rearranged in the late 17<sup>th</sup>/early-18<sup>th</sup>, to provide the present ceiling-beams and front entrance facade, with subsequent c1800 addition of kitchen and conversion of the hall to a cow-house with lean-to. A second cow-house was added along with a Service-room and a kitchen lean-to in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the late-19<sup>th</sup> the trusses were replaced in softwood and it was slated. Tom Lloyd informs me that the South-Wales geneologist Francis Green recalls a “massive oak beam” being removed in about 1900. This indicates major works were being undertaken at this time and probably dates the present sawn soft-wood roof timbers.

Through the present owners’ endeavours, original features are now seeing the light of day, enhancing our understanding of its development.

## References

Thomas Lloyd, The Early History of Court Henry, Dryslwyn, *Carmarthenshire Historian*, Vol 16, 1979

Lewis Jones, *Hist. Carms. Homes & their families*, 1987, P28.

Scofield John, *The Buildings of London*, 1984, p99.

Francis Green, Unpublished History of the Family of Court Henry, c1920, in possession of Thomas Lloyd.

Recorded, Geoff Ward, 18/11/2010.

