

NORTH WEST WALES
DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT
DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES PROJECT-
PLAS YM MHENRHOS

Penrhos, Pwllheli, Gwynedd

NGR SH 356 342

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HOUSE HISTORY

1608 Felling date for house timbers.

(Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory)

Name: Plas (meaning manor house) Penrhos meaning above or the top of the moor. (Collins Welsh dictionary)

Location & General Comments:

Penrhos is a small parish on the S.E. coast of Gwynedd. Settlement is on a gravel ridge between two areas of marshland. (see appendix 1) **Penrhos Parish Church** of St Cynfil was rebuilt in 1842 on its old site at the summit of the gravel ridge. Font: An octagonal bowl of freestone inscribed "HIS 1678", said to have been discovered in **1929 in Plas ym Mhenrhos**, where what appears to have been a wooden covering is incorporated in panelling.

Plas ym Mhenrhos is a small house of one storey with loft, dating from ca. 1700 but modernised. The ceiling has chamfered beams and roughly chamfered joists, and the roof trusses are original with collars pegged on to the principals.

Reset in a wooden partition is a wooden panel inscribed "HIS/1678" (in style like the font in the Parish Church) Condition (of the house); good. Visited 15 June 1956 (RCAHMW Caernarvonshire Inventory Vol 111, 1964, page 89. Monument no 1693)

No documents have so far been found to indicate who built the house, or who owned it or lived there before 1731. Edward Williams, gentleman, may have inherited it and his other property from his ancestors, or he may have recently purchased it. He may be the owner who "modernized" the house in the early eighteenth century. Further research may reveal more.

Documentary evidence:

The 1731 references to the house in the Broom Hall manuscripts (see below) give the name as Tyddin John suggesting that the original house may have been a smaller, simpler version of the present building. Tyddyn being defined as (small) farm, holding. (Collins Welsh dictionary)

Renaming the house Plas suggests that the house may have been extended / modified and that this was a house of substance owned by an important person in the area.

Early history.

(Proof of ownership for a marriage settlement for the son and wife of Edward Williams.)

1731, 19th May.

Edward Williams of the parish of Penrhos, co Caernarvon, gent, and Catherine, his wife, and

John Williams, gent. son and heir apparent of the said Edward Williams and Catherine, his wife.

Henry William Bellis of the parish of Penmorva, yeoman, and John Jones Junior of Tythin-madog-Goch, gent (*witnesses*)

"DECLARATION of the uses of a fine of messuage and lands called **Plas- yn-Penrhos, otherwise Tyddin-John** in the township and parish of Penrhos, and messuages and lands called Ty-tan-y-bryn, Bod-yr-yale, Ty-mawr-yn-Bangor, in and a house and backside in Bangor, in the townships and parishes of Penrhos, Abererch, and Bangor, all in co. Caernarvon."

Ref: LLYFRGELL GENEDLAETHOL CYMRU A SCHEDULE From BROOM HALL MANUSCRIPTS AND DOCUMENTS

Presented by BRIGADIER J.M.J.EVANS C.B.E., M.C. Wishanger

Complied by RHIANON FRANCIS ROBERTS 1953 XM/5879/2 Archifdy Caernarfon

1745 The Young Pretender (Jacobite) launched another invasion of Britain.

1760 King George 111

1777 Sale of the house and land

1. Edward Jones of St.John's Lane, Clerkenwell, co. Middlesex, tallow-chandler;
2. William Evans of Rhiwgoch, co.Merioneth, gent.
3. John Garnons of Rhiwgoch aforesaid, esq.

1731
1. LEASE AND RELEASE, to make a tenant to the precipe for suffering a recovery of messuages and lands called Plas yn Mhenrhos otherwise Tythin John and Tu Tan Y Bryn in the parish of Penrhos, a messuage, lands and houses called Bodruale otherwise Bodyryale in the parish of Aberach otherwise Abereirch, and a messuage and lands and the house and
2. houses thereunto belonging called Tu Mawr and a house and backside in Bangor in the town and parish of Bangor, all in the co. of Caernarvon, and declaring the uses thereof.

1782-1785

According to the land tax assessment the Plas was owned and occupied by **Robert Williams**.

The tax for the first three years was 5/4p following that it was 3/6 until 1818

1788-1818

According to the land tax assessment the owner and occupier was **William Roberts** (*presumably the son of Robert Williams*)

1813: as part of an Enclosure Award, an embankment was built from Pwllheli to Carreg y Defaid, near Llanbedrog, with the aim of bringing new land into cultivation. However, being at sea level, and with several watercourses running through the land remained marshy and liable to flood. (pers. Comm. M. Dunn)

1819 Death of **Owen Parry** age 94 shown in the births & deaths records of Plas yn Penrhos .
No record of his position in the household

1820 King George IV

Ca 1824 a new road was built across this marshland from Pwllheli towards Llanbedrog and

Abersoch. Plas ym Mhenrhos is now reached by a short track from this main road at a point where the land starts to rise above the marshes. (Pers comm. M Dunn)

1828 Death as above of Gwen Griffiths age 5 years but no indication of who she was.

1837 Queen Victoria

1837 As above the death of William Roberts age 84 (*he is the father of Edward Williams who takes over from him in the Plas, and also Margaret Roberts who married John Walter Davies.*) see appendix 2.

1839 Landowner/occupier **Edward Williams**. (DEGWM6 IR29/48 61— 69 1839 Caernarvon records office. Parish of Penrhos.)

1841-1846 The 'Hungry Forties' Peel began to reduce the cost of living by substituting an income tax for duties on imported goods.

1840 Marriage of Margaret Roberts (Plas Ymhenrhos) to John Walter Davies from Llanerchymedd Anglesey. Her father William Roberts of Plas Ymhenrhos (certificate held with deeds of house by present owner)

The census the following year shows the head of the household of Plas to be Edward Williams this is (Margaret's) brother as the tendency was to use the first name of the father, for the surname of the son

1841 Census showing **Edward Williams**, age 30. Of independent means as the head of the household.

He had two farm servants and one house servant. They were all born in Wales.

1843 Birth of Eleanor to Margaret Davies (nee Roberts of Plas ymhenrhos) and John Walter Davies, who was a shopkeeper in Pwllheli at that time.

1844 Death (at Bryntirion Llanerchymedd, Anglesey) of Margaret, daughter of the above, age 10 years (*do they mean months*)

1845 Death of their daughter, Margaret Anne at Pwllheli

1846 Death of another daughter Margaret Anne, age 10 months, from convulsions, not certified.

1846 Repeal of the Corn Law, making bread cheaper.

1847 Birth of the Catherine Davies who lived at the Plas until her death in 1929

1849 Death of another daughter of the above, Margaret Jane. John Walter Davies is now a grocer in Pwllheli.

1850 Death of another Margaret Jane age 4 months (*No birth certificates were found for the above nor was there any documentation for the birth of their daughter Catherine who lived there with John Walter Davies at least from 1891 until her death in 1929 at the age of 82*)

1851 Census showing **Edward Williams** was still head of the household. His place of birth is shown as Penrhos. He had three farm servants, one domestic servant, and 15-year-old Owen as a

servant.

1861 Census showing **Edward Williams** now aged 51 with 3 servants and a Mably Williams aged 38 but no further information about her.

1871 Census showing **Edward Williams** (age 60) farmer of 75 acres with three servants including the above Mably Williams, Mabley Jones and John Williams age 50

1879 Death of **Edward Williams** 4th October, Wife Margaret sole executor, Personal estate under £600. Probate 22 December.
Ref BMD register volume 1 lb page 392.

1880 10th November, Mortgage agreement of Plas ynmhenrhos to **John Walter Davies** and his wife Margaret to secure £1500 and interest.

1881 Census listing John Williams age 65

(is this John O 1871 census who was a Farm servant, the age does not match but frequently do not

1883 Further charge of £100 and interest on the mortgage of Plas to John W Davies and his wife.

1891 Birth, marriages and deaths register shows the death of Margaret Davies age 85 at the Plas. The census shows that the same year the Head of the household was **John Walter Davies**, his daughter Catherine Davies, his grand daughter Helen Jackson and Jane Parry, a domestic servant, and two agricultural labourers.

John Walter Davies was born in Llanerchymedd on Anglesey in 1818. He married Margaret (who was born in 1809 according to the 1871 census which would make her 62 but the 1881 census has her born in 1829 and shows her as being 52 then) Margaret was the daughter of William Roberts, Gent, of Plas yn Penrhos. She married John W Davies on 20th January 1840 and she died in 1891.

In the 1871 census they were living at 64 High Street Pwllheli with daughter Catherine age 23, daughter Ellen Jackson age 27, granddaughter Cathe Margaret Jackson who was 2 years 7 months and grandson Edward John Jackson age 10 months. At this time he (JWD) was a flour merchant.

In the 1881 census John W Davies and his family were living at 92 High Street Pwllheli and he was a farmer of 40 acres, employing 3 men.

Also living with him were his wife, daughter Catherine, granddaughter Esther Jackson age 8, granddaughter Ellin age 6, and grandson Arthur S Jackson 5 years old.

1895 Indenture between John Walter Davies, his wife, and Benjamin Thomas Ellis of Rhyllech in the parish of Llannon where he needs to raise £1,500 "All that and those the messuages tenements lands hereditaments and premises with their and every of their appurtenances commonly called and known by the name of Plasymhenrhos otherwise Tyddinsion and Tyan-y-bryn situated lying and being in the parish of Penrhos formerly in the occupation of Edward Williams until his death and now in the occupation of the said John Walter Davies and containing eighty four acres three roods and four perches or thereabouts were conveyed and assured by the said John W Davies and his wife Margaret into and to the use of the said Benjamin Thomas Ellis, his heirs and assigns for ever by way of a mortgage for securing payment to him of the sum of £1,500 and whereas by **another indenture dated 18^h** July 1883 was made to John W Davies and his wife and the said Benjamin Thomas (see appendix)

- 1895 Indenture also to an agreement between John W Davies and his wife and Edward John Jackson (eldest son of Helen Jackson, Margaret's other daughter but later documents are signed by his younger brother William Robert Jackson who was born a year after him in 1871), regarding the fact that they have inherited the Plas and all the lands equally between them. Jackson agrees that J.W Davies and his aunt Catherine are to live there for as long as they live. They raise £350 to give to him. (See appendix) Further sums of money were raised on the property, which *may have been further payments to Jackson*.
- 1900 Lease of the piece of land (coloured red in appendix) by J. W. Davies to Peter Edwards where Riverside cottages were built.
- "Abstract of TITLE to a freehold farm and lands called Plasymhenrhos situated in the parish of Penrhos and Llannor in the County of Caernarvon and also to the reversion in Riverside Cottages part of the said lands."(Appendix)
- 1901 King Edward VI 1
- 1901 The census shows John W Davies (age 83) a farmer with his daughter Catherine age 53 and granddaughter Helen W Jackson but no servants are listed on the census return.
- 1905 **John Walter Davies** dies at Plas yn Penrhos age 87
- 1910 King George V
- 1910 Land Tax Assessment for Penrhos parish– any results
- 1911 The census has as occupier **Miss Catherine Davies**. Her name is then crossed out and the property is marked as uninhabited, however she has the Plas as her place of death in 1929 when she dies intestate at the age of 82
- 1914 -1918 World War
- 1923 Mortgage dated the eighth day of May One thousand nine hundred and twenty three and made between the Intestate of the one part and Frederick Catesby Holland and Cecil Maurice Chapman of the other part to secure the sum of One thousand two hundred pounds an interest as therein mentioned which said sum of One Thousand two hundred pounds together with the securities for the death of the Intestate vested (by virtue of the two deeds of transfer hereinafter respectively called the first transfer and second transfer) in Thomas Edward Jones Plas Tudur Llannon in the said county of Carnarvon farmer and as to the part of the said hereditaments which is coloured green on the plan hereinafter mentioned
- 1929 25th February death of **Catherine Davies**.
- 1929 Her sister's son William Robert Jackson now living in Swansea, South Wales, and working as an estate agent, requests a search of living relatives in order to claim the estate.
- 1929 Twenty second day of October Indenture Conveyance is made Between
1. **William Robert Jackson** of Teign cottage 10 Maple Crescent, Glamor Road, Swansea, Surveyor and Estate Agent and
 2. **Gwilym Parry** of Gwynfryn in the parish of Llannor in the county of Caernarfon farmer (hereinafter called the Purchaser) of the other part, Whereas Catherine Davies (hereinafter

called the Intestate) late of Plas yn mhenrhos in the parishes of Penrhos and Llannor in the said

County of Caernarvonshire died on or about the twenty fifth day of February last intestate a spinster and letters of administration to her estate and effects were granted by the Bangor District Probate Registry on the eleventh day of April one thousand and nine hundred and twenty nine to the vendor.

1929 W.A Jackson sold 54 acres, two woods, and thirty purches 953 and half yards to Mr.Gwilym Parry.

1931 Mr. Gwilym Parry rents it all to **Owen Lloyd Roberts** of Blaenddol, Ffestiniog for £100 per annum

1937-1945 World War II

mid 1950s Death of Mr Owen Lloyd Roberts (grandfather to Teresa Sturkey)

His sons, **Richard Lloyd Roberts & Griffith Roberts** became the tenants.

1970 Letter sent to Mr. Roberts re increase in the rent to £210 per annum.

c1980/81 **Richard Lloyd Roberts & Griffith Roberts together with Mrs Joan Roberts** (wife of Griffith) purchased the property from Mr Gwilym Parry or his successors in title.

c1996, on the death of Mr Richard Lloyd Roberts (Teresa's uncle), the house, gardens, farm buildings and approx 6 acres passed to Teresa Sturkey.

c1996 - 2007 it continued to be the home of **Griffith and Joan Roberts**. (Teresa's parents).

After Mr & Mrs Robert died, their daughter Teresa & her husband Mr Aled Sturkey restored the house.

Since September 2011 they have lived there.

Research undertaken by Mrs Val Hopkins and Mrs Mair Leverett. 26 June 2012