

## Bonc



*The ruins of Bonc*

Bonc can be traced back in the records to 1778, at which time an Edward Davies rented it from Sir Watkins William Wynn. The same Edward Davies also rented "more" (actually Pant Glas) from Mr Evan Vaughan Esq. The name Bonc is possibly a diminutive of Boncyn which is used in Welsh to mean a mountainside, a fitting description for a cottage in this location. Bonc was also the word used by the men of the welsh slate industry to describe a ledge or levelled area and so the name may have been derived from this, the cottage being built on a level area of the hillside. The small stone construction 30 yards away from Bonc is the original outside toilet and the stone walls next to this are the remains of a sheepfold.





The 1874 Ordnance Survey map shows the buildings of Bonc (just above and to the right of Glyn, before the track turns sharply to the left), although it is not named.

In 1871 Edward Trafford, a gamekeeper, and his family of 8 lived in this small house. In 1875 the local newspapers carried a story about Edward's son, William, and some of his friends – 'The Eglwyseg Poisoning Case'. At the inquest the ten year old William recalled how he and his friends, John Ewart and Seth Robert Thomas had picked and eaten some 'white carrots that grew in the stream. They 'tasted like nuts'. William ate three or four, his friends many more. On his way home William felt sick and vomited when he got home, but was 'nearly right the next day'. William was lucky – what the boys had eaten was hemlock.

Sadly his two friends were not so lucky and both died.

William Thomas Trefford, not sworn, said—My age will be ten on the 17th of this month. My father's name is Edward Trefford, and is a gamekeeper to Sir Watkin. I was at School on Friday, and left there at a quarter to four, in company with John Ewart. We went up the brook Nant-y-glyn, towards Plas, and when near that place we were joined by Seth Robert Thomas. We again went up the brook, and picked those things like carrots, which we got from the middle of the water. They were the same as those produced. We thought they were white carrots. We all ate of them. I took three or four, and they took a great many more. They don't taste like carrots, but they taste like nuts. I went home afterwards, but before I reached the house I felt sickly, my stomach ached, and I was sleepy. As soon as I reached I had some warm tea, and then I felt better. I was nearly right the next day after vomiting. (At this point the boy's father in answer to the coroner stated that the bedroom was filled with sickness, and that the boy purged fearfully during the night.) I could not sleep at all. I first began to feel sickly after eating, and before reaching home. When I was going away from the brook, I shouted on the boys and asked them to come along, but they did not. They were both eating the herb when I left, and I was also eating as I went along. John's horse was in the same direction as mine. I never ate any of the herb before, but we ate these because we were hungry. I had nothing to eat but what I had before going to school that afternoon, and so my stomach was empty. John Ewart began eating them first, and he said they were good to eat. I don't know where they went after I left them, but when I last saw them they were sitting on the ground eating. Thomas said that he would not come until Ewart would. I have never been gathering water-cresses.

Page 10] The undermentioned Houses are situate with  
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No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, ALLEY, and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES (No. of HOUSES in the HOUSES)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	COE. DEFERS	AGE of Person
24	Bonc	1	Edward Trafford	Head	Mar	48
			Oliver Trafford	Wife	Mar	49
			Charles Trafford	Boys	Mar	16
			James Trafford	Boys	Mar	11
			Edward Trafford	Boys	Mar	7
			William Trafford	Boys	Mar	5
			Elizabeth Trafford	Boys	Mar	4
			Richard Trafford	Boys	Mar	1
25	Glyn Farm	1	Thomas Jones	Head	Mar	44
			Robert Jones	Son	Mar	20

The article about the poisonings in the Llangollen Advertiser on 16th April 1875 (left) and the 1871 census showing the Trafford family living at Bonc (above)

By 1907 Bonc was rented by George Roberts for the sum of £8 per year and by 1911 it was lived in by a Thomas Jones, who rented it from the Wynnstey Estate for the same amount. By 1923 it had changed hands again and was let to Edwin Williams, who lived in Pentredwr and was still paying £8 per year. People in the valley still remember his sister in law giving piano lessons at Bonc in the 1930s. We hope to have a more complete story of Bonc available soon.