

Bryn yr Odyn



Bryn yr Odyn in 2023.

Our house, Bryn yr Odyn (the Hill of the Kiln), stands next to the stream that forms the boundary between the old townships of Maesyrychen and Eglwyseg. We can find it mentioned in 1800. The records of people who were eligible for jury service in Llantysilio show John Edwards, living at Caeabedward (field of the son of Edward), with a note added 'since Brinrodin'. So this could indicate that the house was built sometime in 1800, in the field belonging to John Edwards.

In 'Walks through the History of rural Llangollen', there is a mention of Sarah Ponsonby (one of the Ladies of Llangollen) having problems getting



An 1835 map marks Bryn yr Odyn as Bwlch Uchaf, though possibly this is mis-labelled and should have been next to Tŷ Uchaf just below.

© The British Library Board.

a piano over the Horseshoe Pass, to a concert in Plas Newydd in around 1800. The route taken at that time was through the valley past Bryn yr Odyn to Pentredŵr, she notes ' We should say a little of the trouble to yourselves and danger to the precious little instrument of sending it on horseback down Bwlch y Rhiw Odyn' (Pass of the Hill of the Kiln).

In the 1881 Census, there were 3 households living at Bryn yr Odyn. Robert Edwards, 52, quarryman, born in Llantysilio, his wife, Ann, 51, born in Glyn Ceiriog, sons Edward, 24, quarryman, John, 15, apprentice, Owen, 10, scholar, all born in Brynrodin, lived there, along with George Evans, 33, quarryman, born in Llantysilio, his wife, Margaret, 31, born in Llangollen, sons Price, 11, Edward, 8, daughter Catherine 6, all born in Llangollen. Also in the house were Edward Edwards, 74, quarryman, born in Llantysilio, Elizabeth, his wife, 74, born in Llangollen, son John, 35, quarryman, born in Llangollen, and granddaughter, Mary, 18, born in Llangollen.

1886 saw the death of the older Edward Edwards, followed four years later by Elizabeth. They were buried together in Llantysilio Churchyard.

In 1891, at Brynrodyn no 1, were Robert Edwards, Head, 62, slate quarryman, born in Llantysilio, Ann, 61, his wife, born in Llansaintffraid GC, Evan, slate quarryman, son 20, born in Llangollen. In Bryn yr Odyn no 2 lived Edward Edwards, 34, slate quarryman, born in Llangollen, Margaret, wife, 35, born in Llanerfil, Montgomery, Elizabeth Ann, daughter, born Llantysilio, sons Robert Richard, 5, born Llantysilio and John, 1, sons, born Llangollen, and lodger, Richard Owen, 17, slate quarryman, born in Llangollen. They are all recorded as being Welsh speaking.

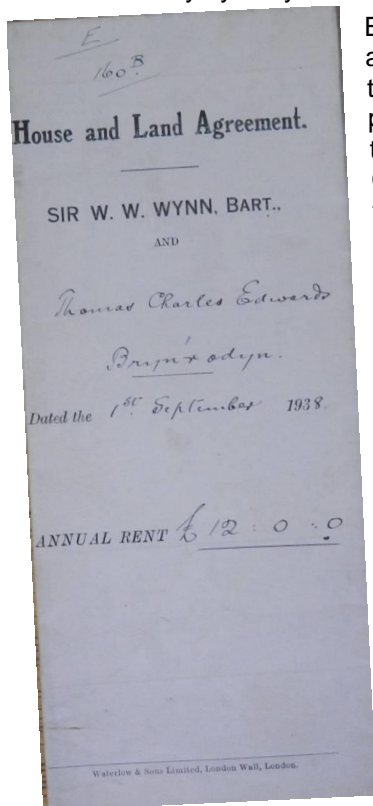


Edward and Elizabeth's gravestone in Llantysilio churchyard.

In 1901, the Census showed Edward Edwards, 44, slate quarryman, worker, born Llangollen, Welsh speaking, Margaret, his wife, 25, born in Montgomery, spoke Welsh and English, son John, 11, born Llangollen, spoke Welsh and English. Another household had Robert Edwards, widower, 72, slate quarryman, worker, born Llantysilio, spoke Welsh, and Evan, 30, son, slate quarryman, worker, born Llantysilio, spoke Welsh and English.

In the 1911 Census there were again two households: Edward Edwards, 74, widower, slate worker, born Llangollen, spoke Welsh, and Robert Richard, his son, 25, single, slate worker, born Llantysilio, spoke Welsh and English. On a separate page were: Richard Evans, 50, married for 29 years, 15 children born alive, 13 still living, 2 died, rockman in the slate quarry, worker, born Llangollen, Ann, his wife, 47, born Llantysilio, Maria, daughter, 22, single, Jonah, son, 18, slate maker, Thomas, Son, 16, single, slate maker, Nellie, 14, Lora Sara, 6, daughters, Emlyn 11, David 3, sons. All spoke Welsh only and all of the children had been born in Llantysilio.

Richard and Ann Evans had moved down from Fron Newydd, where Richard had been born and grown up. His oldest son William had just taken up farming at Tan y Fron Farm. Within the next ten years, Richard would give up his life as a quarry worker and, following his son's example, would leave Bryn yr Odyn and start farming at Hendre Farm.



Bryn yr Odyn seems to have been lived in and owned by the several generations of the Edwards Family. However, at some point Bryn yr Odyn had been acquired by the Wynnstay Estate and in 1938, Thomas Charles Edwards rented Bryn yr Odyn from Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of Wynnstay for the sum of £12.00 per year. He appears on the Electoral Roll in 1939, living at Bryn yr Odyn. Thomas had been born on 20th April 1910, son of Herbert Charles and Mildred Edwards of Drefechan, Penycae, and was a Quarry Labourer. He had married Lilian (Lily) Pierce Edwards in 1931 in St Thomas' Church Penycae. On the 1939 Electoral Roll she undertook 'Unpaid domestic duties'. They lived with their four children, Reginald, 7, Margaret Ellen, 5, Margaret 3, and Katie, 21, who also carried out domestic duties.

We have little information about people living at Bryn yr Odyn after that but we think that there were more families renting for a while. After the Second World War it became home to George Twardowski when he first arrived as an exile from Poland. He worked in the forestry but apparently supplemented his income by growing and selling tobacco. In 1953 he married (Gertrude)

The 1938 rental agreement for Bryn yr Odyn. Courtesy North East Wales Archives, DD/WY/462.

Marion Jones from the Cambrian Stores in the village and he went to join Marion in the running of the shop. For a while, according to village memories, Bryn yr Odyn was also home to 'Bob Topia', Topia being the local nickname given to the house, as it was at the very top of the valley.

The houses were rented or owned as holiday homes. An old lady from Liverpool turned up one day a few years ago with her son and she remembered staying in one of the houses in the 50s for whole summers as a child.

She remembered that her father would drive down from the Ponderosa to the house directly but couldn't drive back that way. The road is now a footpath following a landslide many years ago - the same road that the Ladies of Llangollen complained about all that time ago. She also remembered that the toilet was a shed on the other side of the road and once was stuck in there when they were bringing the sheep up past the house.

Me - Ticky Lowe - and John Merrill, my husband, bought the house from Paul Christie, who had owned it from the 1980s until 2010. He had gradually bought all 3 properties that made up Bryn yr Odyn, as they came up for sale, and turned them into one long house. When he sold it to us it had been divided back into two, with the smaller house owned by a couple from near Birmingham as their holiday home.

Paul had originally used the house as a holiday home whilst living in Birkenhead. At the time when he bought it there was no water source to the house at all and he relied on the stream and bottled water, but by chance, during a drought one summer he realised that, although the stream running past the house had dried up, it was still flowing lower down. He discovered a spring which he managed to plumb into the house and suddenly he had fresh running water, and even installed bathrooms.

We moved in with our children Pebble, Spike and Josef in 2010. Pebble and Spike have since left home and Josef is now 15. We live and work here full time and are very happy.

In 2019 the house next-door, Bryn yr Odyn Bach, was sold to Ian Foreshaw who also lives here full time and works locally for Bryntysilio Outdoor Education Centre.

By Ticky Lowe



Bryn yr Odyn Bach, which adjoins the original house.