

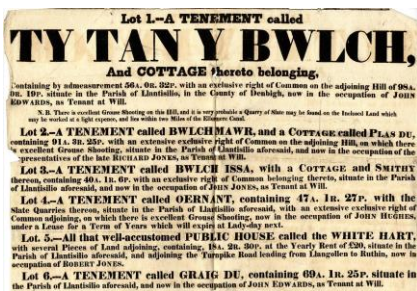
Bwlch Issa



Bwlch Issa in 2023.

Bwlch Issa was most probably built in the early 17th century, and the Cadw listing notes that it “is a well preserved and remarkably complete example of a small timber framed farmhouse, of a form of construction comparatively rare in this area”. Sadly it has proved not possible to discover, with certainty, anything about the first two hundred years of the life of Bwlch Issa, so named because it was the lowest (Isaf) house on the original pass (Bwlch) over the mountain.

The house is first identifiable in the records as the third lot in an auction of properties held at the Hand Inn, Llangollen, in August 1831. The lot consisted of the house, a cottage and a smithy, with a total land area of just over 40 acres. Unfortunately we do not know who was selling Bwlch Issa, along with a number of other houses in Pentredŵr. It seems likely, however, that it was one of the large estates, selling off a number of its properties at the same time.



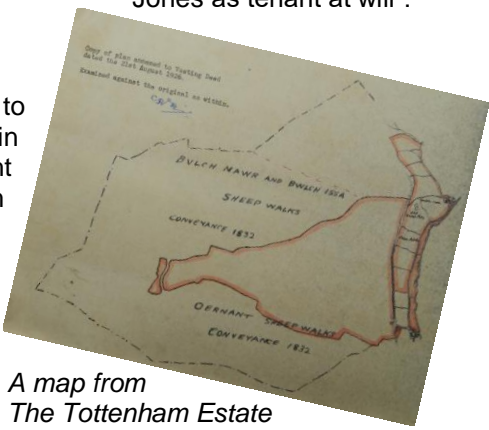
*Poster for the auction at the Hand Hotel in 1831.
Courtesy Llangollen Museum.*

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
 At the Hand Inn, in Llansgollen, on Friday, the 19th day of August, 1831, at four o'clock in the afternoon, (unless sooner disposed of by Private Contract, of which immediate Notice will be given,) in the following or such other lots, and subject to such conditions as will then be declared,
LOT III.
 A Tenement, called *Bwlch Issa*, with a Cottage and Smithy thereon, containing 40a. 1r. 6p. with an exclusive right of Common belonging thereto, situate in the parish of Llantisilio aforesaid, and now in the occupation of John Jones, as tenant at will.

It is at this time that Bwlch Issa and its occupants started to appear in the newspapers and other documents. The Chester Chronicle carried an advertisement for the auction, stating that at that time the farm was "in the occupation of John Jones as tenant at will".

Chester Chronicle,
 Friday 05 August 1831.

Although we have not managed to discover who sold Bwlch Issa in 1831/1832, we do know who bought the farm. The deeds for the farm contain a map that clearly shows the outline of the property when it was purchased in 1832 by the Tottenham Estate.



A map from *The Tottenham Estate Documents* shows the area of *Bwlch Mawr* purchased in 1832.

Although John Jones was the tenant in 1832, just seven years later he had been replaced by 43 year old farmer Edward Jones, his wife Mary and their daughter Sarah. Sadly Mary died in 1850, but Edward and his daughter continued to farm at Bwlch Issa.

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Rank or Profession	Married	Remarks
36	Bwlch Issa	Edward Jones	56	Farmer	Wid.	George (son of Edward) & Sarah at home
		Sarah	15	Daughter	Wid.	Honour servant
		Elizabeth Edwards	43	Farmer's wife	Wid.	Honour servant
		Mary Jones	43	Farmer's wife	Wid.	Honour servant
		Mary Evans	26	Wid.	Wid.	Honour servant

The 1851 census shows Edward Jones and his 15 year old daughter Sarah farming at Bwlch Issa.

1854. Marriage solemnized at *St. Paul's Church* in the Parish of *Llantisilio* in the County of *Denbigh*

No.	When Married	Name and Rank	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the Time of Marriage	Father's Name and Residence	Mother's Name and Residence
50	July 2 1854	George Edwards	24	Bachelor	Rockman	Bryngwyn	George Edwards	George Edwards
		Sarah Jones	21	Spinster		Bwlch Issa	Edward Jones	Sarah Jones

Married in the Parish of *St. Paul's Church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the *United Church of England* by us *George Jones*

This Marriage was solemnized before us, the Minister of the Parish of *St. Paul's Church* in the County of *Denbigh* in the presence of *George Edwards* and *Sarah Jones*

Sarah and George's wedding at Llantisilio Church in 1856.

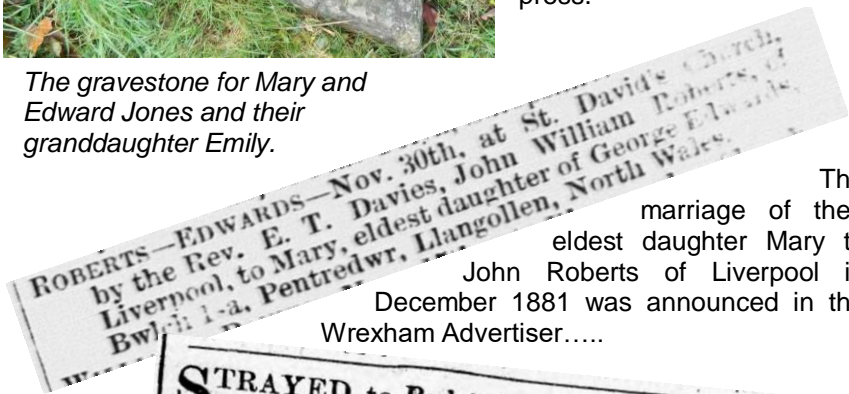
In 1856 Sarah married George Edwards. He was a rockman and son of Edward and Elizabeth Edwards, who lived just up the road at Bryn yr Odyn.



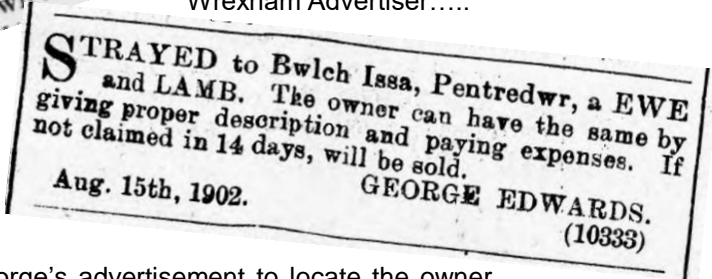
The gravestone for Mary and Edward Jones and their granddaughter Emily.

Less than three years after the wedding Edward Jones passed away, and was buried with Mary at Llantysilio Church. George and Sarah took up the running of Bwlch Issa, having five children – Mary (b. 1857), Elizabeth (b. 1859), Emily (b. 1861), Ann (b. 1863) and Edward (b. 1865). Emily sadly died at just 18 months old and was buried with her grandparents at Llantysilio.

George and Sarah farmed at Bwlch Issa into the 20th century, and were mentioned a few times in the local press.



The marriage of their eldest daughter Mary to John Roberts of Liverpool in December 1881 was announced in the Wrexham Advertiser.....



...and George's advertisement to locate the owner of a ewe and lamb that had strayed onto Bwlch Issa land appeared in the Llangollen Advertiser Denbighshire Merionethshire and North Wales Journal in August 1902. Somehow you get the impression from reading the advert that George may have been happier if he did not manage to locate the owner and so would have been able to sell the two animals.

It was in 1905 that George and Sarah made the headlines again, but this time for less than happy reasons. "George Edwards, husband of the deceased, said that on Monday he had been to Major Tottenham's rent audit dinner at Glyndyfrdwy. He met his wife at Llangollen afterwards and they set off to walk to Pentredŵr, along the road skirting the Shropshire Union Canal. It was a very dark night and after passing the lamp near the Tower Bridge he led the way into the darkness, his wife following, he having warned her to keep the top side of the road away from the unprotected edge of the canal. After going nearly to Ty-Du he missed his wife and returned to the Tower Bridge, afterwards procuring a lamp and unsuccessfully searching for her. He then proceeded in the direction of his home thinking she might be waiting for him at "the Britannia" Inn. She was not there, however, and a search party was organised and searched the Canal

banks all night without success. He had not since seen his wife alive. In answer to a juror he said the Canal bank was in a dangerous state and had recently been made more dangerous by the removal of a bank that had protected it. Ioan Jones and Thos Hughes gave evidence as to having seen deceased with her husband proceeding in the direction of their home and Robert Jones, a quarryman, said that he had discovered the body in the Canal where it was floating face downwards two miles from the place it had evidently fallen in. Albert Dean took the body out of the water, life being quite extinct, and upon searching it P.C. Evans found a bottle of whisky and 10s 3d in money upon it. A juryman commented upon the dangerous state of the Canal bank, over which a horse and trap had recently been precipitated into the Canal, and in returning a verdict of "Accidental death by drowning", a rider was added calling the attention of the Canal Company to the dangerous place."

THE LLANGOLLEN DROWNING FATALITY.

A DEATH TRAP FOR PEDESTRIANS.
The deputy coroner for East Denbighshire held an inquest at Llangollen yesterday (Thursday) touching the death of Mrs. Sarah Edwards, the wife of Mr. George Edwards, a farmer, of Bwlch Issa, Pentredŵr, whose body was recovered from the Shropshire Union Canal, on Tuesday last. George Edwards, husband of the deceased, said that on Monday he had been to Major Tottenham's rent audit dinner at Glyndyfrdwy. He met his wife at Llangollen afterwards and they set off to walk to Pentredŵr, along the road skirting the Shropshire Union Canal. It was a very dark night and after passing the lamp near the Tower Bridge he led the way into the darkness his wife following, he having warned her to keep the top side of the road away from the unprotected edge of the canal. After going nearly to Ty-Du he missed his wife and a lamp and unsuccessfully searching for her. He then proceeded in the direction of his home thinking she might be waiting for him at "the Britannia" Inn. She was not there, however, and a search party was organised and searched the Canal banks all night without success. He had not since seen his wife alive. In answer to a juror he said the Canal bank was in a dangerous state and had recently been made more dangerous by the removal of a bank that had protected it. Ioan Jones and Thos Hughes gave evidence as to having seen deceased with her husband proceeding in the direction of their home and Robert Jones, a quarryman, said that he had discovered the body in the Canal where it was floating face downwards two miles from the place it had evidently fallen in. Albert Dean took the body out of the water, life being quite extinct, and upon searching it P.C. Evans found a bottle of whisky and 10s 3d in money upon it. A juryman commented upon the dangerous state of the Canal bank, over which a horse and trap had recently been precipitated into the Canal, and in returning a verdict of "Accidental death by drowning," a rider was added calling the attention of the Canal Company to the dangerous place.

Whether Sarah's death was purely a result of the darkness and the dangerous canal bank or whether, as some have speculated, the whisky (or indeed George) played any role in her accident we shall never know.

George continued to farm Bwlch Issa for another ten years, still occasionally appearing in the newspapers, such as on this occasion in 1910, when he was fined for keeping a dog that was not under proper control and had been reported for worrying sheep. When the police visited they found one of George's dogs roaming loose in the yard at 11pm, with George totally unable to locate his other dog. He was fined one shilling and had to pay 8s 6d costs.

NOT UNDER CONTROL.
George Edwards, Bwlch Issa, Pentredwr, was charged with having kept a dog that was not under proper control at his farm.—P.C. Powell said that in consequence of complaints as to sheep worrying, he visited the defendant's farm and saw the dog roaming loose in the yard at 11 p.m. Defendant had another dog which he could not find. He had to pay a fine of one shilling and 8s. 6d. costs, the Chairman stating that the Magistrates desired to give warning to all keepers of dogs that they must be kept under proper control, and if further cases come before them they would not be so leniently dealt with as the present one.

DEATHS.
April 14th, aged 84, Mr. George Edwards, Pentre Ucha, Pentredwr. Funeral on Saturday, leaving the house at 2 p.m. for Llantysilio Churchyard.

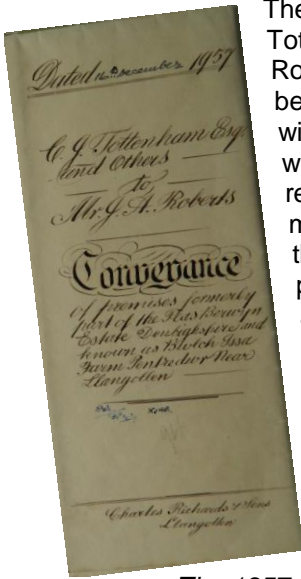
George Edwards was to appear in the newspaper one last time in April 1915, with the announcement

by the Llangollen Advertiser, Denbighshire, Merionethshire and North Wales Journal of his death at the age of 84. He was buried in Llantysilio Churchyard alongside Sarah.



The gravestone for Sarah and George, with the unfilled dates for Edward.

George and Sarah's unmarried son Edward continued to farm at Bwlch Issa, along with his sister Ann, now married to John Griffiths, who was a foreman at the Moel y Faen Quarry. John died in 1931, but Ann stayed with her brother at the farm. In the 1939 electoral roll she was listed as the farmer, whilst Edward was the farmer's assistant. Ann died in 1949 aged 86 and was buried with John. We do not know when Edward passed away or where he was buried. His name appears on the gravestone with his parents, but the date of his death and his age have never been filled in. An Edward Edwards who was the correct age died in Croes Newydd (now the Maelor) hospital in Wrexham in 1947 and was buried at Llantysilio, but the records do not show where. What we do know is that the passing of Ann and Edward marked the end of over a hundred years of family connection with Bwlch Issa.



The 1957 conveyance that saw Bwlch Issa sold away from the Estate.

The next known person to rent Bwlch Issa from the Tottenham Estate was timber worker James Arthur Roberts. Prior to the Second World War he had been a threshing machine driver, and had worked with Elis Jones, who lived at Fron Newydd with his wife Elizabeth and their three children. James also rented a room at Fron Newydd. Elis was killed in a motorbike accident but James remained lodging at the house. During the war, when James was possibly employed at the sawmill in Pentredŵr, he and Elizabeth married. In 1957 they purchased Bwlch Issa from the Tottenham Estate for £775, when it was sold off along with many other properties belonging to the Estate.

Bwlch Issa was back in the newspapers in April 1961 when the Tuesday Review announced the engagement of Frank Jones, the youngest son of Elizabeth from her first marriage, to Patricia

Davies. James Roberts was himself also in the Liverpool Daily Post in 1966 over a dispute that he had with the Council over the cost of a cattle grid.

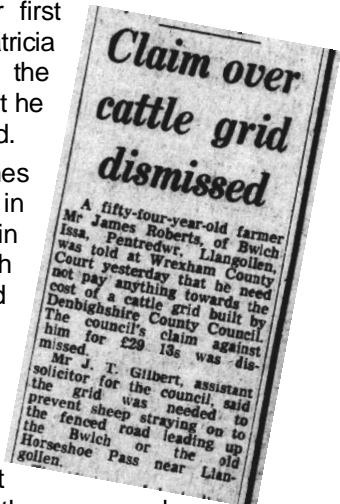
Elizabeth passed away in 1970, but James lived another twenty five years, dying in September 1995. Both were buried in Llantysilio Cemetery. Following James' death Bwlch Issa was sold in 1996 to David and Julia Jones, who lived in Rose Cottage, Pentredŵr, just down the lane. David was Elizabeth and Elis' eldest son (James' step son) and they had been renting Bwlch Issa off James for a number of years. David had left school at 14 to work for the Lewis' at Plas Eglwyseg Farm. After that he joined the army and spent time out in Burma at the end of the War. After the War he joined the Forestry as part of the tree re-planting programme.

Six years later David and Julia in turn sold Bwlch Issa to their daughter and son in law Sue and Mike Nicholas, who continue (2023) to keep Bwlch Issa as a family home.

ENGAGEMENT

JONES—DAVIES

The engagement is announced between Frank, son of Mrs Roberts, Bwlch Issa, Pentredwr and Patricia Lyn, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs E. Davies, Brynhyfryd, Dinbren; Llangollen.



By Mike and Sue Nicholas.