

## Bwlch Mawr



*Bwlch Mawr in 2022.*

Local folklore says that Bwlch Mawr was a grange farm for Valle Crucis Abbey, although there seems to be no historical evidence to support this. It also seems unlikely as the nearby Oernant Isaf was one of the properties of the Abbey. However, Bwlch Mawr is old, dating back, along with Plas Du below it, almost certainly to the 17th century and possibly before.

Along with Plas Du, it was marked on John Evans' 1795 map of North East Wales, although it was not named. However, on an Ordnance Survey plan from 25 years later the farm was marked and named, along with Plas Du, which was a cottage on the farm estate.



*John Evans' 1795 map (above) with Bwlch Mawr highlighted in blue and the 1819 Ordnance Survey map (left) on which the farm is named.*

*© The British Library Board.*

*Llantysilio 9*  
*The Will of Richard Jones*  
*late of Bwlch mawr Tarnia*  
*Parish of Pentredwr the 9 day of*  
*May 1826*  
*R. P. J. J.*  
*Under Seal*

<i>Richard Jones</i>	<i>Bwlch-mawr</i>	<i>June 18<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>72</i>	<i>High Court</i> <i>Parish of</i> <i>Whitford</i>
No. 184.				

*Richard Jones' burial record (above) and part of the front page of his will (left).  
 Courtesy The National Library of Wales.*

The earliest records that we have of the farmers that lived at Bwlch Mawr comes from the will of Richard Jones, written in 1826, and his death at the age of 72 five years later. Richard was buried in June 1831 in Llantysilio Churchyard, and his will, which was proved in 1832, it was stated that Richard was 'late of Bwlch Mawr'. In it he bequeathed £40 to his son William and £60 to be shared between his daughter Gwen and her husband Johny Jones. The remainder of his belongings were split equally between his three other sons, John, Richard and Robert.

In the same year that Richard died, Bwlch Mawr was put up for auction, along with a number of other properties in Pentredwr. Sadly we have not been able to discover the identity of who was selling, but it was likely to have been one of the larger estates. In the auction Bwlch Mawr and Plas Du were sold as Lot 2 and were described as being in the occupation of the representatives of the late Richard Jones as tenant at will.

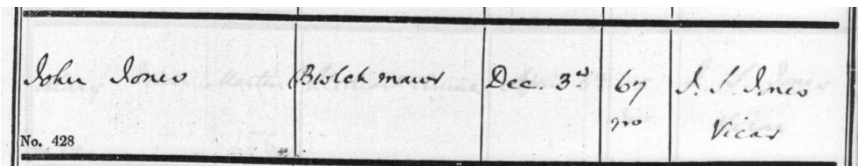
**LOT II.**  
 A Tenement, called *Bwlch Mawr*, and a Cottage, called *Plas du*, containing 91a. 3r. 25p. with an extensive exclusive right of Common on the adjoining Hill, on which there is excellent Grouse shooting, situate in the parish of Llantysilio aforesaid, and now in the occupation of the Representatives of the late Richard Jones, as tenant at will.

*The auction of Bwlch Mawr and Plas Du.  
 Chester Chronicle, 05 August 1831.*

We do know, however, that Bwlch Mawr was purchased at the auction (as were many of the other properties) by the Tottenham Estate because on the tithe survey of 1841 the 91 acre farm was owned by the Right Honorable and Reverend Robert Ponsonby Tottenham, Bishop of Cloghar. Farming there at the time was 45 year old John Jones and so it seems quite possible that this was the John who was one of Richard's four sons. He was farming with just three servants and a rockman, Thomas Phillips, as a lodger.

John would stay farming at Bwlch Mawr for over ten years, but by 1861 another John Jones had taken over there. Still farming 91 acres, 47 year old John, who was originally from the Glyn Traian are of Llangollen, was supported by his wife Margaret and their eight children, John, William, Ann, Sarah, Lydian, Mary, Thomas and Margaret, who ranged in age from 20 years to 2 years old.

John and Margaret would stay at Bryn Mawr for twenty years, but then in 1881 John died, aged 67 years. He was buried at Llantysilio Church in December of that year.



*John Jones' burial record from 1881.*

Following John's death Margaret, Ann and Mary, the two daughters still living at home, moved out and Richard Williams and his family moved into Bwlch Mawr. Richard had previously been farming at Oernant Isaf, just up the valley, but his son Thomas had taken over farming there and so Richard, his wife Elizabeth and their remaining daughter Mary moved down to Bwlch Mawr.

The next thirty years would see four different families tenanting at the farm. First came Robert and Margaret Thomas, with eight of their twelve children. Originally from Bryneglwys they had farmed for the previous twenty years in Weston Rhyn. Following them were John and Jane Davies and their two daughters, who had relocated from Denbigh.

Then, for a short time at the end of the First World War, Evan John Roberts farmed what was then the 71 acres of Bwlch Mawr. Evan was listed as the tenant in a 1919 schedule of Tottenham properties.

<u>Pl. to</u>	<u>Rect. Roll</u>	<u>Name of Holdings</u>	<u>Tenants Name</u>	<u>Area of enclosed land</u>	<u>Area of unenclosed pasture or number of sheep grazed</u>
L.1c8	90	Plas 30n	W.E. Roberts	.771	
L.1c1	91 & B	Bwlchmawr	Pece John Roberts	71.003	234.025
L.1c6	91A	Powder Mountain	R. Iwan		
L.1c2	92	Bwlch Isaf	John Griffiths	35.601	98.119
L.1c	93	Plas yn Bwlch	William N. Edwards	25.117	
L.1c9	94	Methodist Chapel	Orpaul Trustees	.058	
	95	Land at Rhwyl	Edward Evans Roberts	.542	
	96	Ynch Stryd	S. B. Jones	.305	
	96b	Free Titled Land	Edward Jones	2.546	
L.1c7	96	Ffronddu	Edward Roberts	.800	
	97	Tyn-y-wydd Bach	Thomas & M. Davie	17.062	60.000
	97b	Fethedynon	vacant		
L.13pt	100	Bwlch Isaf Quarry	W. E. Roberts	.708	
	101 to 101b	Free Titled Land	W. E. Roberts		
	102	W. E. Roberts	W. E. Roberts	.086	
	102	Ffronddu Trenchard	Edward Jones	6.316	
	103	Ynnydd Stryd	John Owens	131.504	
		Woodlands			
		Spectles			
		Fisher	4 miles		
				1300.222	1667.670

*The 1919 schedule of properties belonging to the Tottenham Estate.*

Evan did not stay for very long however, because by 1921 he had moved to live at Yr Efail down in the village. Hugh Edward Jones became the farmer at Bwlch Mawr, along with Laura his wife and their three young children Morris, Ifan and Rhiannon. Hugh had been born in Llanuwchllyn in 1886, himself the son of a farmer. In 1915 he had married Laura Jones, also a native of Llanuwchllyn, and the young family had come to begin their farming life in Pentredwŷr.

A grave in Llantysilio Churchyard informs us that, just a year later, Amos Roberts died. Although his burial record showed that he was living at North End, Pentredŵr, when he died, on his gravestone he was described as being formerly of Bwlch Mawr. His wife Fanny, whose burial five years later was also recorded on the grave, was noted in her burial record as living at Bwlch Mawr at the time of her death. Amos and Fanny could have lived for a time at the farm when Amos' nephew Evan John Roberts was in occupation, or possibly during some periods the house was home to more than one family, even though all census records up until this time showed just one family at Bwlch Mawr at any one time.



*(Gwneler dy Ewyllys)  
Er serchog gof am  
AMOS ROBERTS  
(gynt o Bwlch Mawr)  
Pentredŵr anwyl  
briod FANNY  
ROBERTS bu farw  
Ebrill 6ed 1922 yn 74  
mlwydd oed Hefyd yr  
uchod FANNY  
ROBERTS yr hon a  
fu farw Mawrth 21,  
1927 yn 83 mlwydd  
oed.*

*(Make your Will) In loving memory of AMOS ROBERTS (formerly of Bwlch Mawr) Pentredŵr. Beloved husband of FANNY ROBERTS died April 6th 1922 aged 74 years Also the above FANNY ROBERTS who died March 21, 1927 aged 83 years.*



*Elizabeth Roberts and her granddaughter Glenys Evans standing at the gate of Bwlch Mawr.*

Certainly in the period leading up to the Second World War the Roberts family were living at Bwlch Mawr. Hugh Edward Jones and his family had moved up to Dio (Deio) Isaf Farm, a mile to the north east of Bryneglwys, and John Edward Roberts (Amos and Fanny's son) had moved into Bwlch Mawr with his wife Elizabeth. Also living there in 1939 were 35 year old Annie Evans, 21 year old Meurin Evans and 11 year old Cyril Evans. There was also one record redacted from the electoral roll. It seems certain that Annie Evans was John and Elizabeth's daughter, born in 1904, and that the redacted record could be her daughter (John and Elizabeth's granddaughter) Glenys.

During the Second World War many families were relocated away from the large cities to escape the threat of bombing. The Pickett family were one of those lucky enough to escape London. John Pickett describes the move up to Wales, with him being sent up ahead of his mother, father and sister.

'In the early 1940's, aged eight, I was evacuated from Tottenham, London to Rhos y Coed farm, Trevor, to stay with my Aunty, Hilda Glascott Archer, and my Uncle Ernest Glascott Archer. The reason why our family lived in the area was because my grandfather (on my mother's side) was from Rhosymedre. He was a professional footballer playing for the Druids, then Wrexham, then Everton and finally for Tottenham Hotspur. He played nineteen times for Wales, usually at centre half.

Later in the war we moved to Bridge End farm just opposite Scotch Hall. I attended Cefn School with my Uncle Ernest. The Archer family were friendly with the Roberts family who farmed Tŷ Ucha near the Golf Course in Llangollen. I was able to buy a hen and chicks from Mrs Roberts, five shillings for the hen and one shilling each for the chicks.

It was Francis Roberts that found us our first farm - Bwlch Mawr in Pentredŵr on the Horse Shoe Pass. As we were fairly new to farming my father did joinery jobs and, in return, we were helped by some very kind locals. We left Bwlch Mawr in 1950 and moved down the valley to Pentredŵr Farm where we have been ever since'.

After the War many properties were sold off by the large estates and the Tottenham Estate was no exception. Often the houses were first offered to the tenants, and Bwlch Mawr was offered to Sydney and Lillian Pickett for the sum of £4,000. They in turn made a counter offer of £2,000. Not finding any acceptable middle ground on price, Sydney and Lillian moved out and down to Pentredŵr Farm (Maesyrychen).

Bwlch Mawr was bought by Cliff and Barbara Bond from Merseyside, who made the house their family home, and the family have continued to live there right up until today (2023), although the house and the accompanying 81 acres are currently up for sale.

*By Alison Ashley and David Crane.*



*The same view of Bwlch Mawr where Elizabeth Roberts and Glenys Evans stood all those years ago (left) and inside the lounge (right), showing the heavy oak timbering.*