

Pentrefelin House



A view of Pentrefelin House in 1876 from canal.

Pentrefelin House is a Grade 2 listed building on the outskirts of Llangollen at the junction of the B5103 (Llantysilio Rd) and the A542 (Rhuthun Rd) enjoying a prominent position with views over the canal and up to Castell Dinas Brân.

The listing is described as follows:-

Late 17th Century stone farmhouse (with early 19th Century wing to south). 3 storeys, 3 windows. Rough cast. Renewed slate roof. Casements. Also sash windows and modern metal casements. 6 panel entrance door with sunk upper panels. Interior: slate flag floor. Bevelled beam. Exposed joists. Curved beam with wide fireplace. 2-panel doors with H-hinges with straps. Oak staircase, full height, lower flight with moulded rail, turned balusters with sunk panelled close string. 1st floor: elm flooring. Plastered beams, 6 panel and 2 panel doors. Hob grates. Residence of Hughes-Parry family.

As with many listings there are some inaccuracies, but essentially it describes how the house was at the initial listing.

The house most likely started life in the 17th century, or possibly earlier. The early style was of a Welsh longhouse. The large curved beam with adze marks over the inglenook fireplace may indicate an early medieval date for the house, but may also possibly have come from elsewhere such as the nearby Valle Crucis Abbey. The marks may also be later Victorian scorings to act as a key for plastering over the beam. Abbey Dingle Cottage, which was the original Pentrefelin Farm and Malt House, across the road, is even older.



The beam over the inglenook fireplace showing the adze marks



This plan from around 1839 shows the original form of Pentrefelin House, as well as the Malt House on the opposite side of the main road. Interesting as well is the indicated line of the proposed tramway that would be built 20 years later, following a different route.

The original house was built of stone, with a slate roof. The front drawing room, added around 1860 to form a forward wing, has a heavily moulded cornice. There are 16 pane sash windows, but the central wing has altered door openings which gave onto the former fine wrought-iron 2 stage balcony as seen in the painting of 1876.



Pentrefelin House in 1904, with the balcony still in place

The iron balcony still features in a photograph of 1904 (above), but was removed in about 1910.

Long term residents of Pentrefelin, along with the lands, were the family of Edward Hughes and his descendants, many of whom were also named Edward Hughes. They were farmers and tanners. Their tenure most likely began in the 17th century and they subsequently rented the house out from the mid 19th century. 18th century records show that occupiers included Anne Hughes, who died in 1786 aged 66yrs, Edward Hughes, who died in 1794 aged 72yrs, and his wife Margaret who died in 1810 aged 65yrs.

Edward Hughes of Pentrefelin and John Edwards of Penybryn were executors in 1771 of the will of Reverend Robert Price, Vicar of Llangollen (1737-1771), who lived at the Tower, Llangollen. Edward Hughes' son Edward Hughes 1750-1828 lost the lower part of the garden/land to the



The cut off section of riverbank belonging to Pentrefelin House.

canal which was completed to feed water to the canal system in 1808. This was why the strip of somewhat inaccessible land with fishing rights was maintained by Pentrefelin House.

This Edward had five daughters and one son, another Edward (1782-1868), who changed his name to Hughes-Parry in 1848. His eldest son was another Edward (1840-1868), who was given the surname Hughes-Parry on his baptism in 1840. The family had become part of the Hughes-Parry family of Llangollen Fechan and it is said that the change of surname was a condition of them inheriting the estate.

The 1841 census showed 55 year old Edward Hughes living in Pentrefelin with his wife Amelia, who was aged 30. Amelia Frances Hughes (née Price) was in fact great granddaughter of the Vicar Robert Price of the Tower. She and Edward had married in 1838. Also on the census was their 10 month old son Edward. An older sister to Edward, Catherine, had died the previous year aged just 9 months. Other children that would be born in the next seven years were Mary, Sarah Anne and Thomas Richard Jonathan born in 1842, 1844 and 1847 respectively. Also living at the house were male servant John Roberts, aged 40, and 2 female servants Jane Jones, aged 25, and Jane Roberts, aged 15.

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
	Uninhabited or Building	Inhabited		Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Parts.
<i>Pentrefelin</i>	1		<i>John Roberts</i>	<i>35</i>		<i>Shoemill</i>	<i>Y</i>	
			<i>Anne do</i>		<i>30</i>		<i>Y</i>	
			<i>Edw^d Price</i>	<i>35</i>		<i>Ag Lab</i>	<i>Y</i>	
	1		<i>Edw^d Hughes</i>	<i>55</i>		<i>Lanuce</i>	<i>Y</i>	
			<i>Amelia do</i>		<i>30</i>		<i>Y</i>	
			<i>Edward</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>month</i>		<i>Y</i>	
			<i>John Roberts</i>	<i>40</i>		<i>M J</i>	<i>Y</i>	
			<i>Jane Jones</i>		<i>25</i>	<i>S J</i>	<i>Y</i>	
			<i>Jane Roberts</i>		<i>15</i>	<i>S J</i>	<i>Y</i>	

The 1841 census.

The burial records confirm that Edward Hughes died in 1849, as a Hughes-Parry, Amelia and the children moved out of Pentrefelin House and went to stay at Ty Isaf in Llangollen Fechan. Sadly, just two years later in 1851, the children were orphaned when Amelia too died. A Miss Griffiths, great granddaughter of Jonathan Parry, took charge of them.

In the 1851 census, the house, pretentiously known as Pentrefelin Hall, was lived in by John William Kirkham. Aged 33, he was curate of Llantysilio and chaplain to the Marquess of Ailsa. Along with his wife Annie Kirkham, gentlewoman (née Ayr), and their daughter Annie Myfanwy Kirkham, aged 7 months, they lived at Pentrefelin House with

Matilda Blackwell, aged 54 (gentlewoman, mortgagee and annuitant), Ann Jones, the housemaid, aged 20, Jane Thomas, 28, the cook and Stephen Windsor, aged 17, a stable boy.

The Kirkhams did not remain at Pentrefelin House for very long and in 1855 John Paull, manager of the nearby slab and slate works, had moved in with his family.

The census of 1861 showed :

John Paull (53), mineral agent, born Devon , manager of the Slate and Slab Works.

Mary Ann Paull, (49) wife.

William Paull (22) son, born Ireland.

Ellen Maria Paull (18) daughter, born Aberystwyth.

John Littlejohns (8) nephew, born Durham.

Elizabeth Jones (20), house servant.

John Paull was a staunch English Wesleyan. It was said that he held his own services at Pentrefelin until 1863, after which he and others had the English Wesleyan Chapel built in Market St., Llangollen. This is now the Memorial Hall in which there are some stained glass windows in memory of John Paull and James Littlejohns. John Paull and his wife, along with an extended family, lived in Pentrefelin until his death on 24th April 1882.

During the early 20th century there were several different tenants both of the Hughes-Parry family and others. In the 1930's the tenants bred rabbits and ducks for the table, so not surprisingly, along with the attraction of grain at the nearby Pentrefelin Mill, rats were plentiful.



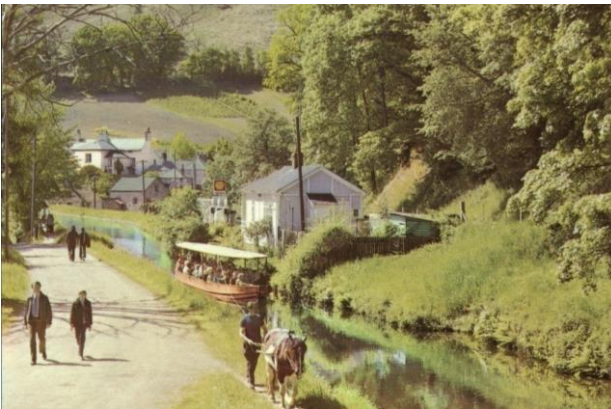
Two views of Pentrefelin during the inter-war years.

The Hughes-Parry family sold Pentrefelin in 1951, and Dorothy and Arthur Dodds took up residence in 1951, spending a lot of their time doing up the house and garden. When Arthur died in January 1963 Dorothy sold it to my father Dr Jack Davies. We moved from beside the cottage hospital in March 1963 and this was to become the family home of my parents Jack and Morfudd and my brothers Dafydd and Jonathan along with myself Rhys.



Looking towards Pentrefelin House in the 1950s. Pantafof, the bungalow on the right in the foreground, was demolished when the road was widened.

My parents lived happily at Pentrefelin until their deaths in 1995 and 1996 following which my wife Anne along with our son Owen and daughter Amelia took residence. Having had similar happy times in Pentrefelin, in which we made some changes with the permission of CADW, Anne and I downsized in 2019 and moved down to Abbey Rd.

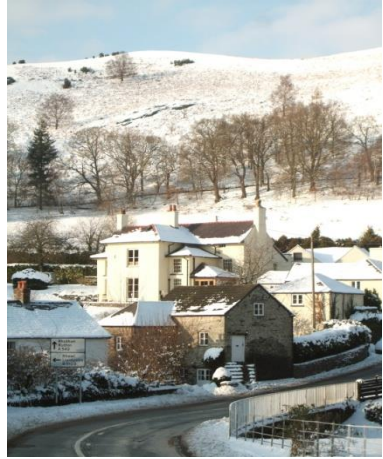


Pentrefelin in the 1960s. Pentrefelin House is in the background and the small petrol filling station can be seen on the right hand side of the canal.

Sadly our son Owen died in 2016 aged 33years. Our daughter Amelia has carried on the family tradition and now practises medicine as well as her father, grandfather, uncles, aunts and several other family members.

Pentrefelin was a wonderful place to grow up in the countryside, both for my brothers and me, and my children. Full of happy memories.

David and Rosemary Gannon are the most recent to take up residence. The house and garden look splendid and are being cared for exceptionally well. It's good to see grandchildren enjoying Pentrefelin so much.



Pentrefelin House in 2017.



Pentrefelin House in 2019.

Dr. Rhys Davies, 2022.