

## Plas Uchaf at World's End



*Plas Uchaf in 2023.*

There are many stories associated with Plas Uchaf (Highest Hall), and much history. W. Watkin Davies recorded in 1930 that there was an inscription over the door stating that “the manor was inherited by the princes of Powys in 1073 from Bleddyn, King of Gwynedd”. That the inscription is genuine and dates from the 11th century is very doubtful, as most of the manor is of Tudor and Elizabethan construction. It is, however, possible that some parts of the house are older, possibly dating back to the 14th century. There is speculation that the site was occupied back in Roman times, although the only slight evidence for this was the discovery of a possible Roman floor tile in peat dug nearby.



*The plaque and inscription over the door at Plas Uchaf. The inscription reads:- Eglwyseg Manor inherited by the Princes and Lords of Powis from Bleddyn ab Cynvyn King of North Wales and Powis slain 4.D. 1073 sixth in descent from Mervyn King of Powis slain ;in battle A.D. 903 son of Roderic the Great King of all Wales slain in battle A.D. 877 son of Mervyn King of North Wales and Powys slain in battle A.D. 844 son of Nest daughter of Cadell ab Brochwel ab Eliseg of Powys who died A.D. 808.*

A popular tale associated with Plas Uchaf is that of Owain and Nest. Owain, Prince of Powys at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, became infatuated with his cousin Nest, who was married to Gerald, steward of Pembroke castle. Having heard of the beauty of Nest, Owain visited her at Pembroke castle on the pretext of kinship. He returned with a group of men on the same night, however, and set fire to the castle, intending to kidnap Nest and kill Gerald. Nest made her husband escape through the privy hole, but she was captured by Owain, along with her children, taken to Powys and hidden at his hunting lodge on the site of Plas Uchaf. The kidnap is reported in documents written near to the time, but they report simply that Owain returned to Powys. That they hid in a hunting lodge on the site of Plas Uchaf has become part of local folklore.

Another plaque over another door at Plas Uchaf says:-

MDLXIII (1563) ELIZABETH REGINA, and another legend has it that



*The inscription to Elizabeth I*

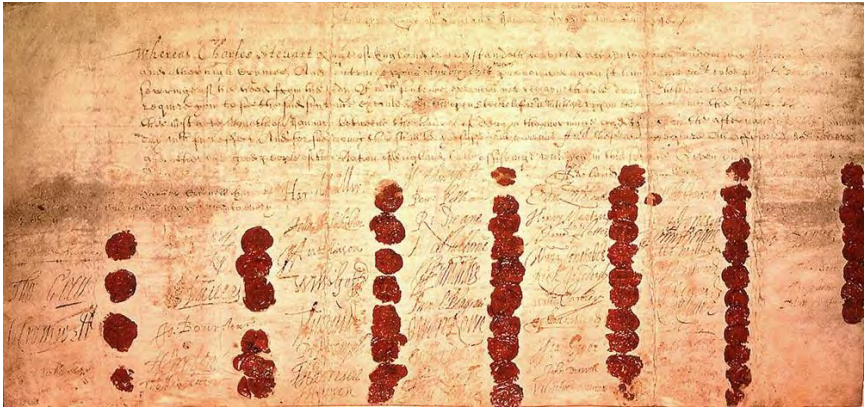
Queen Elizabeth I purportedly came to World's End to give birth to an illegitimate child.

An article in the Llangollen Advertiser of 1899 states that:-

Plas y Glwyseg was where the old family of the Pryses lived. They were descendants of Iestyn ab Gwrgant. Another branch of the Pryses resided at Plas Ucha, Llanfyllin. Griffith Lloyd, rector of Llanfyllin, the brother of Edward Pryse, Eglwyseg, married Catherine Griffith, daughter of John Prys, vicar of Llangollen in 1530, and Gwen Lingam, his wife. Through this marriage the estate of Plas Uchaf, Eglwyseg, and Plas Ucha, Llanfyllin, became united. One of the Pryses was killed in a skirmish in Denbigh, through the tyranny of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The

estate passed from the Pryses to the Vaughans, of Llwydiarth, Montgomeryshire, through Charles Vaughan. of Llwydiarth, marrying Margaret Price, heiress of Edward Prys, Eglwyseg. From the Vaughans the estate came to the Wynns of Wynnstay, the same time as Llwydiarth, Llangedwyn, and Glanllyn.

It is also reputed that an occupant of Plas Uchaf in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was Colonel John Jones, who's second marriage was to the sister of Oliver Cromwell. Until about 1902 a portrait of Oliver Cromwell by Lely hung in the hallway at Plas Uchaf, as did a portrait of Cromwell's mother. Brother-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, Jones was born at Llanbedr in North Wales and is often surnamed Jones Maesygarneidd after the location of his Merionethshire estate. He was an avid Republican at a time when most of Wales was Royalist, and for this reason he was described by one of his contemporaries as "the most hated man in North Wales". During the civil war Jones served in the parliamentary forces in Wales, and was described as a colonel. He was returned to the Long Parliament in about 1647 for Merionethshire. Jones was selected as one of the judges of King Charles I, and attended the trial with great regularity up to the day he signed the King's death-warrant.



*John Jones was one of the signatories to the death warrant of Charles I.*

In 1696, Edward Lhuyd mentioned that “Y Plâs ycha [yn Eglwyseg]” was lived in by Mr Edward ap Edward and “belonged to ye Eatons”. Earlier records for Eglwyseg show a number of Eatons having lived in the valley (Owen Eaton 1626 and 1633, Griffith Eaton 1671), but by the turn of the century the family appear to have just owned Plas Uchaf and not lived in Eglwyseg.

It has not been possible, so far, to identify Plas Uchaf with certainty in records covering the next 150 years, but in the 1844 Tithe survey Plas Uchaf belonged to Thomas Trevor Mather of Pentrehobin in Flintshire, who owned much of the land at the top end of the valley. It was lived in by Roger Roberts, a farmer, his wife Mary and their daughter Harriet and the family stayed there into the 1850s. George Borrow passed by Plas Uchaf in 1854, stopping to talk to a “respectable man near to the house” (possibly Roger Roberts) and to enquire on the route to Wrexham over

the top of the mountain. The man confirmed Borrow's suspicion that the house was so named because it was the highest house in the valley, with Plas Canol (Ty Canol) and Plas Isaf (Plas Yn Eglwyseg) below it.

By 1871 Edward Lloyd, also a farmer, had moved in with his family of five and remained there for at least the next ten years. By 1881 Edward Lloyd had re-married to Sarah, 13 years his junior, and just the two of them were living at the Hall.

The 1887 rates book for Eglwyseg records that Plas Uchaf was owned by Thomas Jones. He had succeeded his father to the estate of Plas Llanerchrugog but decided to purchase the Manor at Eglwyseg as well. In 1887 the house was lived in by George Moore Dixon, but by the time of the census of 1891, Plas Uchaf was occupied by James Ewart, a shepherd who had previously lived with his family at Fron Lwyd. When Thomas Jones died in 1894 he bequeathed the estate at Eglwyseg to Mrs Willington, who had nursed him during his severe illness.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 31 year old bailiff, John Roberts, lived at Plas Uchaf with his wife Jane, but by the time of the 1911 census, widowed sheep grazier Julia Lewis, along with her young children, John and Marian, and three servants were living there.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.											
<p>Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of this paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.</p> <p>The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The census is not to be used for any purpose in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the purposes of Statistical Tables.</p>											
SEX AND SERVICE	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE last BIRTH and SEX	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE		PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Person and his usual or principal				BIRTHPLACE of self and Parents	EDUCATION	LANGUAGE spoken
			Male	Female	Profession or Occupation	Industry or Service with which connected (if any)	Place of Birth	Place of Birth			
Head of Family	Head of Family	58	Widower	9	0	1	Sheep Grazier	100	England	England	English
Wife	Wife	6							Wales	Wales	English
Daughter	Daughter	3							Wales	Wales	English
Servant	Servant	21							Wales	Wales	English
Servant	Servant	17							Wales	Wales	English

The 1911 census.

Farming at Plas Uchaf continued through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1939 it was recorded that mixed farmer 38 year old Frank Glynn Jagger lived at the "Manor House", along with his wife Norah Nelson Jagger and two servants.

During the Second World War the only active involvement in hostilities in the area was in 1941, when extensive areas of the heather moorland on Ruabon Mountain were set ablaze by enemy bombers and parts of Plas Uchaf were damaged by an incendiary bomb.

Today, farming continues at Plas Uchaf, with 'To the World's End Ltd' continuing to farm organic produce.



*Plas Uchaf when the road ran directly in front of the house.*

We hope to have a more complete story of Plas Uchaf available soon.