

Tan y Bwlch

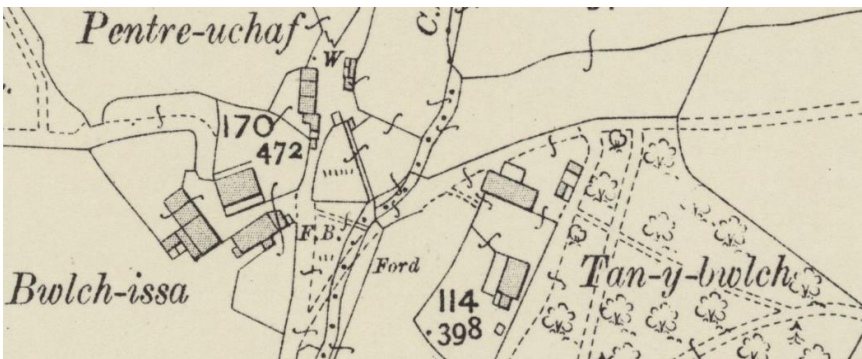


Tan y Bwlch, in 2023.

Tan y Bwlch was clearly marked and named on John Evans' 1795 map of North Wales and it is likely that it was built some time earlier in the 18th century, although it could date back into the 17th century. Historically the property consisted of the main farm with a separate cottage nearby.



Tan y Bwlch was marked on John Evans' 1795 map of North Wales (above) and the 1912 Ordnance Survey map (below) shows the farm and the separate cottage.



There is a date of 1774 on the front of the barn to one side of the farmhouse. Although this would indicate that Tan y Bwlch existed at that date, it may, of course, just be the date that the barn was constructed rather than the farm building itself. The property sits next to the Pentredŵr stream, which formed the boundary between the former townships of Maesyrychen (in Llantsilio parish) and Eglwyseg (in Llangollen parish) and details for Tan y Bwlch have been recorded under both in past centuries.

It is around the turn of the 18th century that we can begin to find out about who owned and lived in Tan y Bwlch. In 1814 the farm was to be sold at an auction at the Royal Oak Inn in Llangollen. An advertisement for the auction noted that the Farm was occupied by William Ellis, as tenant from year to year, and the adjoining cottage and garden were occupied by William Williams, also as tenant from year to year. In addition, the advertisement also says that the details of the estate can be had from Thomas Trevor Mather, of Pentrehobin in Flintshire, indicating that it is he who is selling the property. The whole area of the Farm is given as just over 56 acres.

On 23rd August 1820, Anne, the daughter of William and Mary Roberts (née Edwards) of Eglwysegle was born. The baptism entry records that Mary's original parish was Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog.

DENBIGHSHIRE.

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

At the Royal Oak Inn, in the town of Llangollen, in the said county, on Saturday the eighth day of October next, in the afternoon, subject to condition;

ALL that Message or Tenement, Farm, and Lands, commonly called and known by the name of Ty-tan-y-Bwlch, otherwise Tan-y-bwlch, situate in the parish of Llantsilio, in the said county of Denbigh, and now in the occupation of William Ellis, as tenant from year to year.

Also, all that Cottage and Garden, adjoining the above premises, situate in the parish of Llantsilio aforesaid, and now in the occupation of William Williams, as tenant from year to year, the whole containing by admeasurement 56a. 3r. 4p. more or less.

The above is a very desirable and compact farm, and is situate close to the turnpike-road leading from the market town of Ruthin, to the market town of Llangollen and Wrexham, and to which there is a very good sheepwalk belonging.

The tenants will shew the premises; and for further information inquire with Mr. T. TREVOR MATHER, of Pentrehobin, near Mold, who has in his possession a map and particulars of the estates.

The auction of Tan y Bwlch was advertised in the Chester Courant on Tuesday 4th October 1814.

| No. | Child's Name. | The Names of Father and Mother. | Former Name of the Mother, Whether Spinster or Widow. | Father's Business or Profession. | Parent's Residence. | Father's Parish. |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 46 | Anne | William & Mary Roberts | Mary Edwards Spinster | Bookbinder | Eglwysegle | Llantsilio |
| 47 | Mary | John & Mary Roberts | Mary Edwards Spinster | Labourer | Llangollen | Llangollen |
| 48 | Thomas | John & Catharine Hughes | Catharine Hughes Spinster | Bookbinder | Gentle Drift | Llantsilio |

The baptism of Anne (above) in 1820 and William (below) in 1823, both at the Calvinistic Methodist Rehoboth Chapel in Llangollen.

| | | | | | | |
|----|----------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 69 | William | Wm & Mary Roberts | Mary Edwards Spinster | Bookbinder | Eglwysegle | Llantsilio |
| 70 | Mary | George & Mary Thompson | Mary Edwards Spinster | Farmer | Georgewere | Llangollen |
| 71 | Margaret | Edward & Elizabeth Griffiths | Elizabeth Roberts Spinster | Carpenter | Cyffyllte | Llangollen |

On 29th March 1823 another child, William, was born to William and Mary Roberts, but in that record it stated that the couple lived at Tan y Bwlch. Both children were baptised in the Rehoboth Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in Llangollen.

The occurrence of Eglwyseg as the parents' residence in the earlier baptism entry and then Tan y Bwlch for the second baptism gives us confidence that was the farm in Pentredŵr and not its namesake in Llangollen. William's occupation was given as a rockman, however, so possibly they were living in the cottage rather than the farm. Sadly, by 20th July 1823 the young William had died aged only 4 months and was buried at Llantysilio Church. He was recorded as living at Tan y Bwlch in his burial record. The non-conformists would often have had to be buried in the churchyard at this time because many of the chapels (e.g. Rehoboth) had no graveyard and the civic cemetery in Llangollen had not yet been opened.



The gravestone of William, Richard and Enoch Roberts, as well as Mary, wife of Evan Evans, in Llantysilio Churchyard.

Two months earlier, on 3rd May 1823, Catherine, daughter of Thomas and Ann Roberts of Tan y Bwlch, was baptised at Llantysilio Church. This could possibly have been Thomas and Mary's granddaughter, a different Roberts family who were maybe living in the farmhouse, or even possibly a family from Tan y Bwlch in Llangollen – it is difficult to be certain.

| | | | | | | |
|----------|-------------|----------|---------|-------------|--------|------------|
| May 3 | Catherine | Thomas | Roberts | Tan y Bwlch | Farmer | Edward Bra |
| No. 149. | Daughter of | Ann | | | | Minister |
| | | his Wife | | | | |

Catherine Roberts' baptism in 1823.

In 1826, eighteen year old Richard Roberts was buried at Llantysilio and then, in 1833, Enoch Roberts, aged 20. Both were remembered on the same gravestone as baby William and so were very likely his brothers. No burial record can be located for Richard. Enoch was noted as living in Pentredŵr when he was buried but Tan y Bwlch was not mentioned and so possibly the family had moved by then.

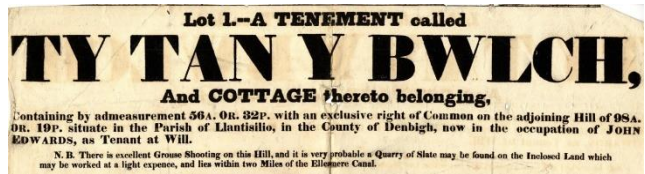
By 1826, two families were living at Tan y Bwlch, possibly one in the house, and one in the cottage. The parish register tells us that Moses, son of Owen and Elizabeth Hughes of Tan y Bwlch was baptised at Llantysilio Church on 25th March. Just a fortnight later on 9th April, Edward, son of Philip and Eleanor Morris of Tan y Bwlch was baptised, also at Llantysilio Church.

| BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>Llantysilio</i> in the County of <i>Denbigh</i> in the Year 18 <i>26</i> | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| When Baptized. | Child's Christian Name. | Parents Name. | | Abode. | Quality, Trade, or Profession. | By whom the Ceremony was performed. |
| | | Christian. | Surname. | | | |
| 1826. March 25 No. 209. | Moses son of | Gwen y Edgell his Wife | Hughes | Tan y Bwlch | Rockman | Edward Brown, Minister |
| April 7 No. 210. | Edward son of | Edgell y Danner his Wife | Morris | Tan y Bwlch | Tailor | Edward Brown, Minister |

In the baptism records Owen Hughes was listed as a rockman and Phillip Morris a Tailor.

The baptisms of Moses Hughes and Edward Morris in 1826, both of Tan y Bwlch.

Six years later in 1832, Tŷ Tan y Bwlch, including a cottage, then in the occupation of John Edwards as Tenant at Will, was put up for



The auction of Tan y Bwlch in 1832.

auction along with a number of other properties in the area. Unlike many of the other houses that were sold in the auction, Tan y Bwlch was purchased not by the Tottenhams but by the Wynnstay Estate.

By the 1841 Census, Tan y Bwlch was occupied by: Robert Jones (40, farmer), Eliz. Jones (45), Elinor Jones (7), Isaac Jones (5), and Edward Edwards (15, servant). The next year, on 30 April 1842 Anne Jones, 'base' daughter of Susannah Jones, spinster, of Tan-y-Bwlch was baptised at Llantysilio Church.



*Tan y Bwlch on the tithe map of 1844.
Courtesy The National Museum of Wales.*

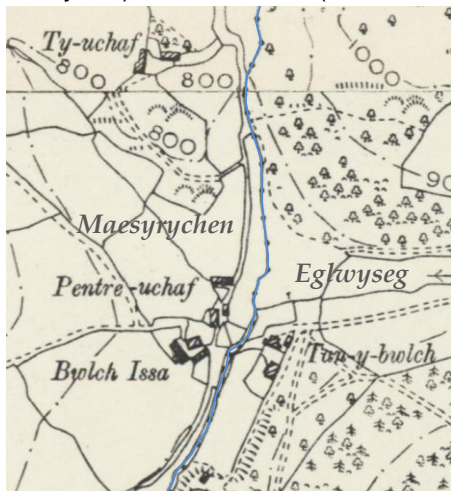
The following year (1843) two baptisms of children born at Tan y Bwlch were recorded. On 12th February, Mary, daughter of Robert (Farmer) and Elizabeth Jones of Tan y Bwlch and on 15th June, Jane, daughter of Jonah (rockman) and Jane Roberts of Tan y Bwlch. It's probable that Jonah and Jane were living in the cottage. In 1844, according to the Tithe Map for Eglwysseg, Tan y Bwlch (then called just Bwlch), was owned by Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and occupied by Robert Jones.

By 1851, the Census records that Elizabeth Jones was now a widow aged 57 and a farmer. Her sons John (21) and Isaac (15) were running the farm with her. John Richards (58, rockman), Jane Richards (48, wife), Ann Richards (16, daughter, at home), John Richards (4, son, at home) were also recorded as living at Tan y Bwlch, probably in the cottage.

Twenty years later, on the Eglwyseg Census for 1871, the same Jones family were still farming at Tan y Bwlch Farm. The Census listed John Jones (40, farmer of 60 acres, b. Llangollen), Elin Jones (35, sister, housekeeper, b. Llangollen). These were the son and daughter of Robert and Elizabeth Jones who were farming Tan y Bwlch from 1841. In that same 1871 Census, the cottage at Tan y Bwlch was occupied by Jane Griffiths (30, widow, charwoman, b. Ireland), Elizabeth Griffiths (7, daughter, b. Llantysilio), Mary Griffiths (5, Daughter, b. Llantysilio).

By the time of the 1881 Eglwyseg Census the residents of Tan y Bwlch were: David Jones (24, quarryman, b. Llantysilio), Mary Jones (23, wife, b. Llangollen), David Jones (3, son, b. Llangollen), E.A. Jones (13 months, daughter, b. Llangollen).

The 1891 Census creates something of a puzzle. In the 1891 *Eglwyseg* Census Tanybwloch was occupied by John Jones (58, slatemaker, b. Llanfyni), Hannah Jones (50, wife, b. Llangollen), John Dennis Jones (10, son, b. Llangollen). But in the 1891 *Maesyrychen* Census, Tanybwloch was occupied George Edwards (59, farmer, b. Llantysilio), Sarah Edwards (54, wife, b. Llantysilio), Edward Edwards (26, son, b. Llantysilio), John Williams (16, servant, b. Llangollen).

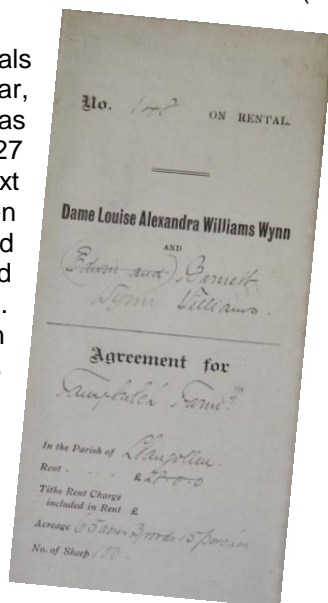


The boundary between Maesyrychen and Eglwyseg townships is the dotted line running along the Pentredŵr Brook (highlighted blue).

Tan y Bwlch Farm was in Eglwyseg at that time, the Pentredŵr Brook, just below the Farm, forming the boundary between the two census districts. It looks as if the Edwardses were now farming at Tan y Bwlch and a different Jones family resided at the cottage. One possible reason for the confusion could be that George Edwards had been listed in 1881 as farming at Bwlch Issa in Maesyrychen. Bwlch Issa was not in the 1891 Census and so possibly at that time George and Sarah were running both farms, living at Tan y Bwlch in Eglwyseg but being listed under Maesyrychen.

By 1901 George and Sarah were back farming just Bwlch Issa. The occupants of Tan y Bwlch Farm were recorded, though still in the Maesrychen Census as: John Davies (78, widower, farmer, b. Cynwyd), Elizabeth Davies (57, niece, b. Cynwyd), Robert Richard Edwards (14, servant, b. Llantysilio).

A 1907 list of Wynnstay Property rentals confirms that Tanybwlech was, in that year, being rented by Edward Davies. Rent was £25 per year for 68 acres 2 roods and 27 perches. However, at some point in the next few years a rental agreement between Dame Louise Alexandra Williams Wynn and Barnett Wynn Williams showed that he had taken on the tenancy of Tan y Bwlch Farm. Barnett Williams was the son of Edwin Williams at Pentredŵr Farm (Eglwyseg). Edwin (crossed out on the rental document) would have been around 55 to 60 at that time and so Barnett may have been starting to take on more of the running of the farm. It looks like they rented Tan y Bwlch Farm as well and then sub-let it to quarryman Evan Edwards, and so the 1911 Eglwyseg Census listed the occupants of Tan y Bwlch as Evan Edwards (39, quarryman, b. Llangollen), Alice Edwards (29, wife, b. Llantysilio), Sarah Ann Edwards (8, daughter, b. Llantysilio), Frank Edwards (6, son, b. Llantysilio), Robert Thomas Edwards (5, son, b. Llantysilio).



The rental agreement between Dame Louise Alexandra Williams Wynn and Barnett Wynn Williams. Courtesy North East Wales Archives, DD/WY/462.

In 1921 Evan Edwards and family were still renting Tan y Bwlch. Evan (50) was quarryman at Minera but out of work at that point. Alice Edwards (40) was at home, Robert S. Edwards, their son (15), was working as a farm servant for Mr Barnard (Barnett) Williams at Pentredŵr Farm, and Priscila, their daughter (6), was at school.

A gravestone in Llantysilio Churchyard commemorating William Henry Bond of Tan y Bwlch, who died in 1929, along with his wife Catherine Jane who died seventeen years later, would seem to indicate that the farm or the cottage was their home for a number of years at the end of the 1920s.



William and Catherine Bond's gravestone.

From the 1930s onwards the recollections of Ann De Gennaro (née Ellis), Eirlys Jones (née Ellis) and their family, tell the story of Tan y Bwlch more vividly. Barnett Williams had married Margaret Jane Ellis (sister to Anne De Gennaro's grandfather David Ffoulkes Ellis) in 1916, establishing the Ellis connection with Tan y Bwlch Farm.



David Ffoulkes and Janet Ellis' grave at Llantysilio.

'My father, David Samuel Ellis (Sammy), his sisters Eirlys and Elen, and their parents David Ffoulkes Ellis and Janet moved to Pentredŵr initially in the late 1920s I believe, firstly to Penclawdd (since Uncle Barnard (Barnett) and Auntie Maggie were relatives). My Taid, David Ffoulkes died in the big snow of 1947. He was a road man. My Nain, Janet helped look after the children of Trevor and Olwen Hughes, Pentredŵr Farm, Eglwyseg (all part of the same extended family).

In the early 1930s Sammy, Eirlys etc. moved to number 9, Post Office Terrace, where my maternal grandmother, Margaret Jones subsequently lived with her son Glyn in the 1950s. Eirlys remembers being 10-12 years old, so it would have been about 1933, when the family moved to Tan y Bwlch.

I am not sure of dates, but another family lived with the Ellises in Tan y Bwlch. Joan, Pat and Donald Gollan, plus their grandmother from Formby and her carer Jen Hughes, all lived in the parlour, while the Ellises lived in the front room. We carried water from the well and washed in the washhouse next door, using candles and paraffin lamps. The toilet was at the top of the garden (wonderful organic produce!) and they took in a lodger upstairs in one of the four bedrooms for extra income. The Gollans were related to John Pickett.

Sammy was given the tenancy of the farm by Uncle Barnard (Barnett) when he married Jane in 1952. I was born in 1953 and my sister Janice in 1957- we both went to Pentredŵr school. I remember it being very cold at the farm - huge fires in the grate but your back was always cold from the draughts. A fire was lit in the parlour only on a Sunday. There was no electricity until the late 50s or maybe even the 60s. The bathroom was put in in the late 1960s and phone in 1971. Our neighbours opposite (at Bwlch Issa) were Elizabeth and James Roberts.



Sammy Ellis (left) with fellow forestry workers.

Mum always had a coat on in the house because she was in and out such a lot doing the farming while Dad worked in the forestry. We listened to the radio, read, played cards and games and quizzes.

I remember 1963, the big freeze. We only missed one day of school while the snow settled - because it reached to the top of the hedges in the lane and stayed like that for weeks. Eryl from Pentredwr Farm and Dad cut steps in the snow so we could get to school. We had icicles like stalactites on the cow shed. We built an igloo which stayed for months.

Other winters were just as bad, walking through snowdrifts, covered with sacks and Dad's coat, - leaving our wellies in White Hart and changing into school shoes but never really drying out in school. Always lovely hot meals when we got home. We chased sheep in the spring, birthing lambs and putting them



Janice and Anne Ellis with their pet sheep Delilah.

EARLY ARRIVALS

Un-expected but very welcome lambs arrived in the Pentredwr valley this last week. Eryl Hughes' flock at Pentredwr Farm produced the first, closely followed by a lamb appearing at feeding time on Sam Ellis' farm at Tan-y-Bwlch.

I wonder how long they must wait for companions?
J. Pickett

Llangollen Broadsheet – March 1983.

by the fire or even in the oven to warm through with a Tot of brandy to help them along- the same with chicks and the same with piglets when our one and only sow, Pongo died giving birth and we hand reared 8 piglets.

We had a pet sheep Delilah who didn't know she was a sheep, mum tried to hide her at dipping time but the men from the Ministry found her, dipped her and she died. We had dogs and cats and chickens and a budgie and a slow worm.

Jane and Sammy lived in Tan y Bwlch until 1987 and my children spent most of their childhood holidays there with Nain and Taid. They then moved to the Bwthyn in the village itself, although Sammy continued to lease and farm the land at Tan y Bwlch for another ten years, until he and Jane moved down into Llangollen in around 1997'.

Janice has some more entertaining recollection from the Ellis family:

'We lived in Tan y Bwlch and went to Pentredŵr school. My grandmother Margaret Jones lived in the row of houses in the village, next to the post office run by Elsa and Charles Edwards. We knew everyone in the row. I would often have a sleepover at Nain's and remember having 2d for sweets at the shop. Len fish would come on Fridays and Glyn Bwtchar from Glyndyfrdwy, with the meat in the back of his van. No refrigeration or hand gel in those days....even hot summer days!! Ok if you were the first stop I suppose!'

Barnett Williams had died in 1951, and his daughter Olwen, and her husband Trevor Lloyd Hughes, had then taken over the running of Pentredŵr Farm, Eglwyseg. They had had eight children and, when Sammy and Jane had moved out of Tan y Bwlch in 1987, (Dafydd) Alun Hughes, being the youngest, moved into Tan y Bwlch with his wife Anne, where they had three boys. After Alun and his family, John Walker rented the house whilst Eryl Hughes farmed the land. Angela and Patrick Bird-Jones bought the house in 1998, including just the bottom field and the hillside behind the house and to the right if looking from the road. Extended and improved, Tan y Bwlch continues today (2023) to be their family home. Eryl Hughes still farms the rest of the land.

Eirlys Jones (nee Ellis), whose memories are included here as part of the history of Tan y Bwlch, very sadly passed away before this book was printed.

*By Anne De Gennaro, Eirlys Jones
and Heather Aspinwall.*



Tan y Bwlch in 1988.