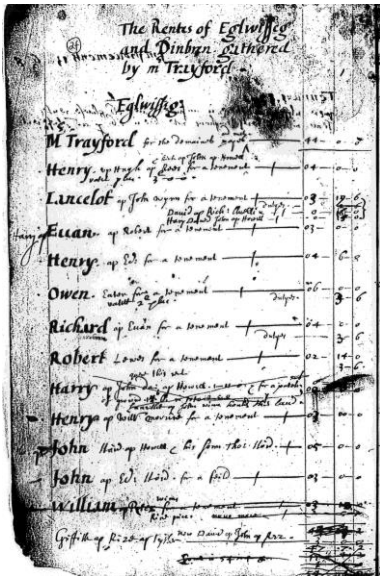


Tan y Fron Farm



Tan y Fron Farm in 2023.

Being part of the Wynnstay Estate for three hundred years, there are records that enable the history of Tan y Fron Farm to be traced back into the 17th century. We can find the history of the house and people with certainty as far back as 1710. With some research plus an intuitive leap backwards it seems probable that Tan y Fron can be identified back to 1650 when a Henry John paid rent to the Wynnstay estate. With another leap, but more of faith than intuition, we can go back another 25 years.



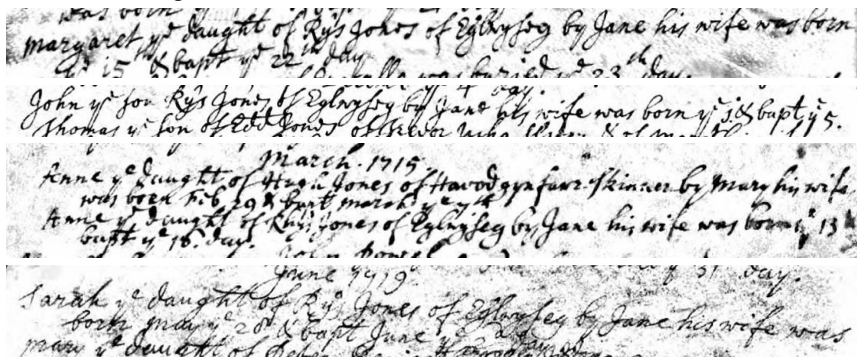
The 1626 Wynnstay rental record for Eglwyseg.
Courtesy The National Library of Wales.

The earliest rental records for the Wynnstay Estate in Eglwyseg date back to 1626 and we think that the entry fourth from the bottom shows John Lloid ap Howell (his from Thomas Lloid) paying £5.0.0 rent per year for Tan y Fron.

In 1650 we can be a little more certain. There was only Henry John (Henry ap John?) paying £6.0.0 rent to the Wynnstay Estate in that year. Twenty years later, in 1671, Henry was still there, but another Henry, Henry ap Evan, was also paying £6.0.0 to the Wynnstay Estate. From looking at later rental records we know that Tan y Fron

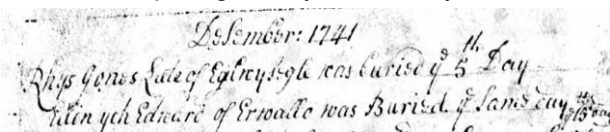
was one of two properties that were being rented out for £6.0.0 per year at the end of the 17th century. Although it is not certain that Henry John was the tenant at this time, all of the available evidence points to that being the case.

Moving into the beginning of the 18th century we can be sure about who was living at the farm. From the Llangollen parish records we can see that between 1710 and 1719 Rys and Jane Jones of Eglwyseg had four children – Margaret, John, Anne and Sarah.



The baptism records for Margaret, John, Anne and Sarah Jones between 1710 and 1719.

The rental records show that Rees/Rys/Prees/Rhys Jones continued to pay £6 annual rent for Tan y Fron until his death in December 1741. Note the various spellings of 'Rys' over the years. Following Rhys' death his son



Rhys Jones' burial in St Collen's parish records.

John took over the running of the farm, followed in turn by his son Rice (yet another spelling) and his wife Sarah.

Rice had married Sarah Price from Chirk in January 1789, and they went on to have five children over the following ten years – Thomas, John, Edward, William and Margaret. They continued to pay rent and land tax for Tan y Fron although the tax amounts varied between 8s 6d and 17s 0d over the years. Rice died in 1725 and was buried at St Collen's Church, with the grave outside the wall of the north aisle. He would be joined twelve years later by Sarah.

Rhys and Sarah's grave at St Collen's Church.



Unusually it was the youngest son that took over the running of the farm, with William succeeding his father as the farmer at Tan y Fron. The tithe survey of 1839 showed Sir Watkin Williams Wynn as the owner and William Jones as the occupier and that the layout of the house and farm buildings was similar to what remains today.



*The 1839 tithe map showing Tan y Fron.
Courtesy The National Library of Wales.*

Later censuses gave more detailed information about the people who lived at Tan y Fron. The 1841 Census showed William lived there with his much younger wife Ann and his brother Thomas, although Thomas was recorded as being ten years younger than William, rather than ten years older. There were also two servants, Elias Jones and Miriam Roberts. Ten years later Miriam had been replaced by Harriet Roberts and they had been joined by William's eleven year old nephew Moses Jones. Thomas' age was also given correctly on the 1851 Census as being ten years older than William.

William Jones appears to have been the last of a 150 year family line to farm at Tan y Fron. The 1871 Census shows that there were two new families living at the farm. Joseph Hughes and Griffith Roberts were both rockmen at the nearby quarries and, with their wives and children, there was a total of nine people living at Tan y Fron.

By 1881 Tan y Fron had returned to being a farm, with 63 year old Elias Jones and his wife Harriet, fifteen years his junior, living there. Could it be the case that Elias Jones and Harriet Roberts, who had been servants at the farm thirty years before, had married and returned as masters of the household? The ages are very close but sadly we can find no certain proof that was the case.

Elias and Harriet did not stay at Tan y Fron very long, however, as by 1887 Richard and Jane Jones and their son Arthur had taken up residence, although they too only remained there for about ten years before Lemuel Davies became the farmer.

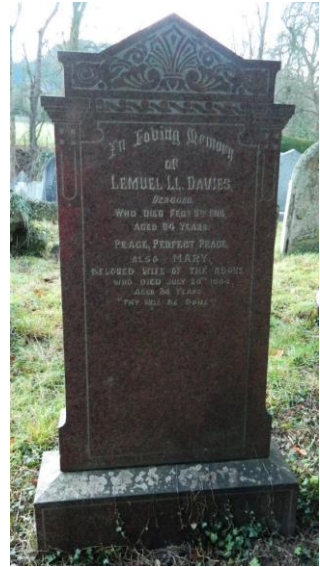
Lemuel had previously farmed at Pen y Bryn, across the valley from Tan y Fron. He and his wife Margaret, who was from Llanderfel, had had two daughters, Elizabeth and Annie, before Margaret sadly died. Remarrying Mary Jane Parry from Garth y Pistyll, a mere stone's throw from Pen y Bryn, in 1892, the couple went on to have another daughter Edith, and the family moved to Tan y Fron Farm.



William Evans standing with two of his younger brothers behind their father at Fron Newydd.

The following year Lemuel's father Edward, who had farmed at Dergoed for the previous 35 years or so, died. Lemuel and Mary moved up to Dergoed. Lemuel passed away there just nine years later and was buried in Llantysilio churchyard, but Mary lived to the ripe old age of 84, not joining Lemuel until 1944.

In loving memory of LEMUEL LL. DAVIES, Dergoed, who died Feby 11th 1918 aged 84 years. Peace perfect peace. Also MARY, beloved wife of the above, who died July 20th 1944 aged 64 years. Thy will be done.



William and Annie took over the farming at Tan y Fron, and over the following ten years had four children, Margaret (b. 1909), Richard (b. 1911), Annie (b. 1916) and Edward (b. 1919). At the start of World War Two all of the children were still living at Tan y Fron, with the exception of Margaret.

As farming and growing food were critical to the war effort, both Richard and Eddie remained at Tan y Fron throughout the conflict. This meant that both of them were at home when their father died in 1943.

Richard and Eddie Evans outside Tan y Fron.

William was buried at Llantysilio Church and, thirty four years later, 93 year old Annie was also interred alongside him, although by that time she was living in Aldford in Cheshire.

Two years after the death of his father, Eddie married (Jane) Eluned Williams from next door Penyclawdd Farm and went to take over the running of the farm there. When the Wynnstay Estate sold off some of its properties after the Second World War, they often gave first refusal to the tenants. Richard seized upon this opportunity and, in 1947, bought Tan y Fron Farm off the Estate for £1,450. Three years later he married (Alice) Ceridwen Williams, Eluned's sister.



William and Annie's grave at Llantysilio Church.



A photograph of Eluned and Ceridwen in the 1980s.

The two brothers and sisters farmed next door to each other until 1980. In that year, very sadly, both Richard and Ceridwen passed away and Tan y Fron Farm was left jointly to members of the family. Richard and Ceridwen's nephew (Trefor) Rhys Hughes has lived and farmed at Tan y Fron since then, and in 1991 married Siân Williams. They raised three sons, Iestyn, Morgan and Meuryn and continue to farm at Tan y Fron today (2023).

By Siân and Rhys Hughes and Ceris Williams.