

## Tŷ Isaf



*The mound and few stones that remain of Tŷ Isaf in 2023.*

At the end of the 18th century Tŷ Isaf (Lowest House) was owned by John Jones of Tan y Fron Farm, and remained in the Jones family whilst they stayed at the farm. Over the next 100 years the cottage was rented out, mainly to labourers and quarry workers, normally with two families at a time living there.



On the 1844 tithe map Tŷ Isaf was No. 277, owned by William Jones and occupied by Thomas Jones. Courtesy The National Library of Wales.



Tŷ Isaf was named on this 1835 Ordnance Survey plan.  
© The British Library Board.

In 1844 the tithe survey recorded that Tŷ Isaf was owned by William Jones and lived in by Thomas Jones.

William Jones was farming at Tan y Fron, just up the lane from Tŷ Isaf, renting most of his farm from the Wynnstay Estate. However, he appears to have owned a few of the fields around Tŷ Isaf, including the cottage.

The Census three years earlier lists the Hughes and the Jones families living there. Both Edward Hughes and John Jones were thirty year old labourers. Edward was married to Ann, with four young children.

Also living with the Hugheses was sixty year old labourer John Phillips. John's wife was also called Ann, and they lived with their two children and servant Janet Roberts. The layout of the census records indicates that Tŷ Isaf was divided into two, or possibly three, separate cottages.

1851 saw two different families living at Tŷ Isaf. One cottage was lived in by agricultural labourer John Williams (32) and his wife Susannah Williams (33), along with their children Ann (7), William (5) and Joseph Williams (2). Both John and Susannah were natives of Llangollen. John and Susannah would remain at Tŷ Isaf for over thirty years. The second cottage had become home to the Jones family – Evan, a 38 year old agricultural labourer originally from Caernarfon and his wife Jane, who was born on Anglesey. They had five children, Thomas, Elinor, Catherine, Sarah and Griffith, aged from 13 down to 2 years old. Thomas, the eldest had been born in Llanfihangel, but the younger four were all born in Llangollen.

11	1	John Williams	Head	32	58	John Williams	Head	33	58
		Susannah Williams	Wife	33	58	Ann Williams	Daughter	7	58
		William Williams	Son	5	58	Joseph Williams	Son	2	58
12	1	Evan Jones	Head	38	11	Jane Jones	Wife	38	11
		Thomas Jones	Son	13	11	Elinor Jones	Daughter	11	11
		Catherine Jones	Daughter	8	11	Sarah Jones	Daughter	5	11
		Griffith Jones	Son	2	11	Griffith Jones	Son	2	11
		Janet Roberts	Servant		11				11

*The 1871 Census record for Tŷ Isaf.*

John and Susannah Williams were still living at Tŷ Isaf in 1871, although on this Census John was recorded as having been born in Ruthin. All of the older children had left but one younger daughter, Elizabeth (11) was still living with them. The second family living there were rockman John Jones (33), his wife Ann (27), son Thomas (8) and daughters Elizabeth (5) and Sarah (1). A third property was marked as uninhabited. On the Census record the division between the different families and also the uninhabited property was marked with a \, which usually indicated a separate dwelling (as opposed to just \, which showed a separate family in the same dwelling), adding weight to the idea that Tŷ Isaf may have comprised three separate houses.

In 1881, John, Susan(nah) and Elizabeth remained as occupants, but the second cottage (called Cottage near Hen Bandy) had become the home of Mary Griffiths, a recently widowed dressmaker of 37, and her two young daughters Emilie and Jane. Ten years later the Williams family had gone, leaving just Mary Griffiths and her daughters at Tŷ Isaf. Some of the older residents of Eglwyseg have said that they remember an older Mary Griffiths making dresses there many years later, although after 1891 Tŷ Isaf never again appeared in any records.

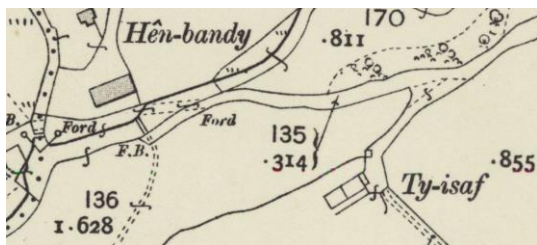
The only other mention of Tŷ Isaf was from a year later, when the Wynnstey Estate wanted John Griffith, who had recently taken on the lease of Hendre, to also lease the field of Tŷ Isaf, lying next to those of his farm. However, the field had been neglected and John Griffith was unsure whether it would be viable. Shortly after moving in he wrote to the Estate saying that he was willing to take on the field as long as he could manure it immediately and not have to buy the seed. No mention was made of anybody living in the house in the bottom corner of the field.

*John Griffith's letter to the Wynnstey Estate.  
Courtesy North East Wales Archives,  
DD/WY/462.*

*The Hendre  
Exploiting  
Tŷ Isaf*

*Mr. Stewart  
Dear Sir*

*In answer to your letter, I am willing to take the field of Tŷ Isaf, on the condition that I have not to buy the seed, I have been to see the field to day, & I am at a great deal taking it, in the condition it is, with out going to buy the seed. My only chance of getting anything from it, is by manuring it will at once*



*The 1912 Ordnance Survey map.*

Tŷ Isaf continued to be marked and named on Ordnance Survey maps right up until 1963, although any occupation of the cottages had long since ceased by that date.

*By David Crane*



*A photograph from the 1930s or 1940s. In the top right corner of the photograph can be seen Birch Cottage and, towards the bottom left, the building of Tŷ Isaf.*