

## Ward's Cottages / Pentreuchaf Cottages



*The remaining cottages at Pentreuchaf in 2023.*

Today No. 4 and No. 6 Ward's Cottages consist of two semi-detached homes lying just to the north of Bwlch Issa. The cottage closest to the lane has, however, been formed from what were two individual dwellings, which, along with the other house, were originally known as Pentreuchaf Cottages. No. 4 has, in recent years, been re-named Cloc Dŵr - after a sculpture in the garden of the same name. It was designed and made in glass by Amber Hiscott, with the words of a poem by Menna Elfyn sandblasted into it. It was a collaboration between the sculptor and

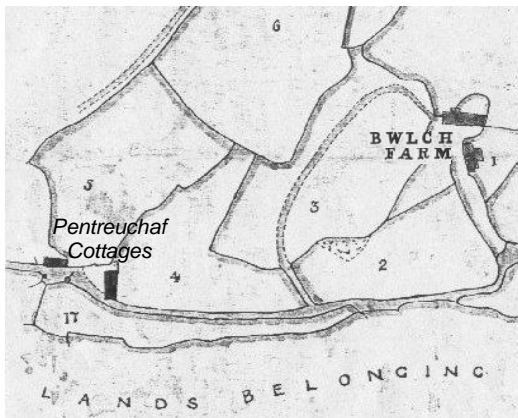
the poet in 1991 for the Garden Festival Wales in Ebbw Vale.



*The date plaque on the wall of Pentreuchaf Cottages.*

Fortunately we can be reasonably sure of when the cottages were built as a plaque on the front wall bears the date 1769. The plaque also bears the initials R.D., undoubtedly those of the person who either built the cottages or had them built. Sadly the identity of R.D. has been lost in the mists of time.

Pentreuchaf Cottages first appear in the records on an Ordnance Survey plan from 1835. On that plan there were two separate buildings rather than just the single row of cottages that remain today. The second row of cottages has now totally vanished.



*The 1835 Ordnance Survey plan (above - © The British Library Board) and the plan of Bwlch Farm (Tŷ Uchaf today) made in 1839 (left – Courtesy North East Wales Archives – DD/LH/51), both show Pentreuchaf Cottages.*

Another plan of Bwlch Farm (Tŷ Uchaf today), made just four years later in 1839, shows more clearly the two individual buildings of Pentreuchaf Cottages.

On the plan from 1839 the cottages appear not to have belonged to belong to Bwlch Farm (Tŷ Uchaf today), which at that time belonged to Robert Price, although it is difficult to be certain from the plan. Another plan of nearby Bwlch Issa Farm, from an 1832 acquisition by the Tottenham Estate, showed that Pentreuchaf Cottages were not part of that property either. On the title map of 1841 no buildings were marked for any properties, although the area where the cottages stood was part of property number 32. On the apportionment this was named Tan y Bwlch and owned by Robert Price and so would seem to indicate that Pentreuchaf Cottages did indeed belong to Bwlch Farm – today called Tŷ Uchaf, but then rather confusingly referred to as Tan y Bwlch.

It is at this time that we also begin to learn from the census records who was living in the Cottages. In 1841 there were six families living there:- Jonah and Jane Roberts and daughter Mary Anne, John and Elizabeth Jones and 4 children, Robert and Anne Jones, John and Jane Richards, with daughter Anne, William, Mary and Noah Roberts and Thomas and Margaret Roberts with their four children. Jobs were evenly split between quarry workers and agricultural labourers.

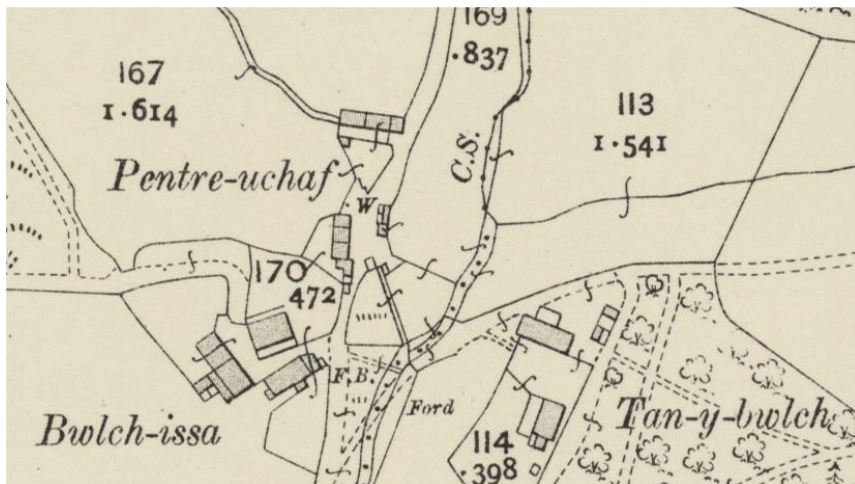
Ten years later two of the families were still there. Quarryman Thomas Roberts and his wife Margaret remained tenants. The two eldest children had left home, but Thomas and Margaret had had two more daughters and a son, as well as taking in two lodgers, and so there were nine people living in their small cottage. William and Mary Roberts also continued to rent one of the cottages but, as both were now in their mid seventies, William had retired from his job as a rockman. They were joined by three new families:- Daniel and Jane Williams and daughter Catherine, William and Anne Davies and their two children and John and Eliza Roberts, also with two children. All three men worked in the quarries.



*One of the quarries at the top of the Horseshoe Pass.  
Courtesy North East Wales Archives: D/GR/777.*

In 1861 only one of the families that had lived there ten years earlier remained. Quarryman William Davies was recorded on the Census with his son Hugh, also a quarryman. Although his wife Anne was not listed it would appear that she was simply somewhere else at the time of the Census as William was noted as being married rather than widowed.

The Davies family were joined at Pentreuchaf by five new families, all of which had male members who were labourers or quarry workers. These new neighbours were 1) David and Margaret Hughes and their three children, 2) Griffith and Margaret Roberts, with their two daughters, 3) John and Ann Jones, with their son and three daughters, 4) widower Evan Hughes and his son Hugh and 5) Robert and Sarah Roberts and their six children, of whom one, George Roberts, would return to live at Pentreuchaf with his own family twenty years later.



*The 1912 Ordnance Survey map shows that the two buildings at Pentreuchaf were each divided into three separate cottages.*

By 1871 three of the cottages were uninhabited, although there were still four families living in Pentreuchaf Cottages. Again only Griffith and Margaret Roberts had stayed ten years, showing the frequent movement of families that was a regular occurrence at that time. However, two of the other families that came in 1871, headed by Robert Williams and John Jones, would still be there in 1881, and Robert Williams and his wife Ann would stay at Pentreuchaf for over 20 years.

1881 saw the return of 29 year old quarryman George Roberts to Pentreuchaf, now with his wife Ann, son Evan and two daughters Emma and Laura.

1883 would see a further addition to the Roberts family, with the birth of a third daughter Sarah, and the family would remain at Pentreuchaf for another ten years or so before moving just down the road to Yr Efail in the early 1900s.

*BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, & DEATHS.*

**BIRTHS.**

May 10th, the wife of Mr. George Roberts, quarryman, Pentre-ucha, Pentredwr, near Llangollen, of a daughter.

May 10th, the wife of Mr. John Griffiths, quarryman, Oernant, near Llangollen, of a daughter.

May 11th, the wife of Mr. Richard Evans, quarryman, Pentredwr, near Llangollen, of a daughter.

*The Llangollen Advertiser recorded the birth of Sarah in 1883.*

From 1900 onwards there would only ever be three or fewer families living at Pentreuchaf Cottages and so it would seem very likely that it was at this time that the second row of cottages became empty. In 1911, having moved to Pentreuchaf from Rhewl, labourer Robert Roberts and his wife Elizabeth were the only family occupying the cottages. With them was their son Hugh, who worked in the slate quarry and daughter

Jane, who was a fountain pen maker, almost certainly in the former slate works at Pentrefelin, which had become a fountain pen factory in 1909. Robert and Elizabeth also had four younger children, Mary, Robert, Edith and Madoc, who were either at school or at home.

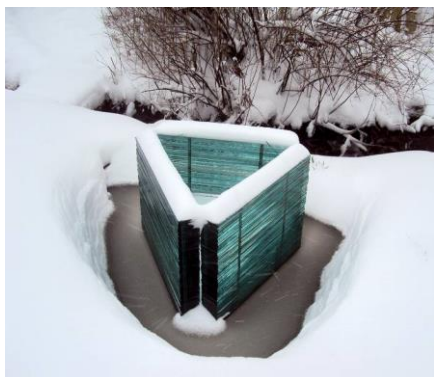
Ten years later and the two remaining cottages had become home to two families, both of whom had relocated from Liverpool. Before the Great War Joseph Sharratt was a fishmonger and greengrocer in Walton, just to the north of the centre of Liverpool. Why he and his wife Jane relocated to Pentredŵr with their two daughters we do not know, but possibly he was trying to rebuild their family life after being away fighting.

The other cottage was occupied by Amos Roberts, his wife Minnie and their seven year old son Eric, all born in Liverpool. Amos had been a Chief Steward with the Byron Steamship Company, but was now out of work, possibly explaining their move to Wales.

At some point in the next 20 years the two remaining cottages became known as No. 4 and No. 6 Ward's Cottages, as they still are today (although number 4 is now known as Cloc Dŵr). This would indicate that the joining of the two end cottages into one had already happened. It would also appear that the modern name of the cottages was bestowed by the occupants who moved into No. 4 in the 1930s.

Born in 1862 Isaiah Ward grew up in Toxteth and Everton in Liverpool, son of labourer and boilermaker William Ward and his wife Caroline. He married Agnes Jane Low in 1883 and the couple lived in Everton, Isaiah becoming a boiler maker like his father. He and Agnes had seven children who went into various occupations such as wheelwright and bookbinder. Presumably wishing to enjoy a peaceful retirement they moved to Pentredŵr in the 1930s. and named the house that they settled in after themselves.

*By Amber Hiscott and David Crane.*



*Number 4 Ward's Cottages is now named after a sculpture in the garden. Cloc Dŵr or Water Clock' focuses on ideas about water and time. A stream passes through the base and an inscribed poem compares the flow and containment of water to that of the Welsh language.*