

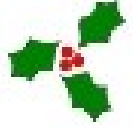


# CYMDEITHAS HANES CWM DULAIS CWM DULAIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Newsletter – Cylchlythyr

December 2021



Helo pawb - Hello everyone

*Nadolig Plawen Merry Christmas*

**H**ere we are fast approaching Christmas again - I must admit, when I first published the Society Newsletter in June 2020 I never imagined that I would still be writing to you in this form 18 months later and even now only hoping for a restart to our regular meetings in 2022! I hope its publication has managed to maintain your interest during this period.

Following last month's emphasis on People of the Valley, I have received more information from members about other individuals and places. Two stories follow about **Glyn Rhedyn** and **Pen Caer Lan Farms** and some of the occupants.

The Neath Port Talbot Heritage Network group have begun to revive activities and recently held a Zoom meeting online. Some items from the Minutes of the latest meeting are listed below.

**Libraries and Museums Update** – *All libraries have fully reopened but some activities are still limited. Library headquarters have now moved to Briton Ferry, in the former Ynysmaerdy School (opposite Tesco Express). This includes the Library & Resource Centre which can help with requirements such as printing, design and interpretation panels, etc.*

**Cefn Coed Colliery Museum** *remains closed for the time being due to extant health and safety issues. Consultants have been called in to advise on future possibilities for the site one of which we hope will see the reopening of a museum again.*

*The new Chief Executive of NPTCBC is said to be “very interested in heritage and recognises its value to the borough”. A formal strategy with emphasis on heritage and the arts has been identified.*

**Lottery Funding** - *Another potential source for developments in the area is the availability of National Heritage Lottery Funds. Apparently NPTCBC and Rhondda Cynon Taff are two counties which have been identified as deserving of priority consideration for such funding – projects can vary in size and ambition – do we have any ideas which might be developed in the Dulais Valley?*

I also note from the Minutes that other Societies report a very similar pattern of activities to ourselves over the pandemic period but a few are now looking towards 2022 as the opportunity to recommence talks and meetings. The Society Committee is also of the same opinion .... all we need is some stability in rules and confidence in control of the Omicron virus. Let's be optimistic!

Wishing you all the very best for the New Year - Blwyddyn newydd dda a dymuniadau gorau

*Tim Fearnside, Chairman*

## Introduction

This map extract shows the area of Seven Sisters with sites mentioned in the following articles on a historic Ordnance Survey map published about 1901. The two farms referred to in this issue are **Glyn Rhedyn** and **Pen Caer Lan**.



Copyright National Library of Scotland Online Maps

## William Phillips and others

contributed by **Rhiannon** and **Viv Tucker**

**M**y family roots in the area pre-date the gradual development of the mining village, subsequently named Seven Sisters instead of Dulais Higher.

**William Phillips**, my 3x great grandfather was a tenant farmer in Nant Hir on land belonging to **Leigh Capel Hanbury**. Hanbury was from Monmouthshire originally a native of Pontypool, he married into the Mackworth family thus amassing extensive land holdings in this area.

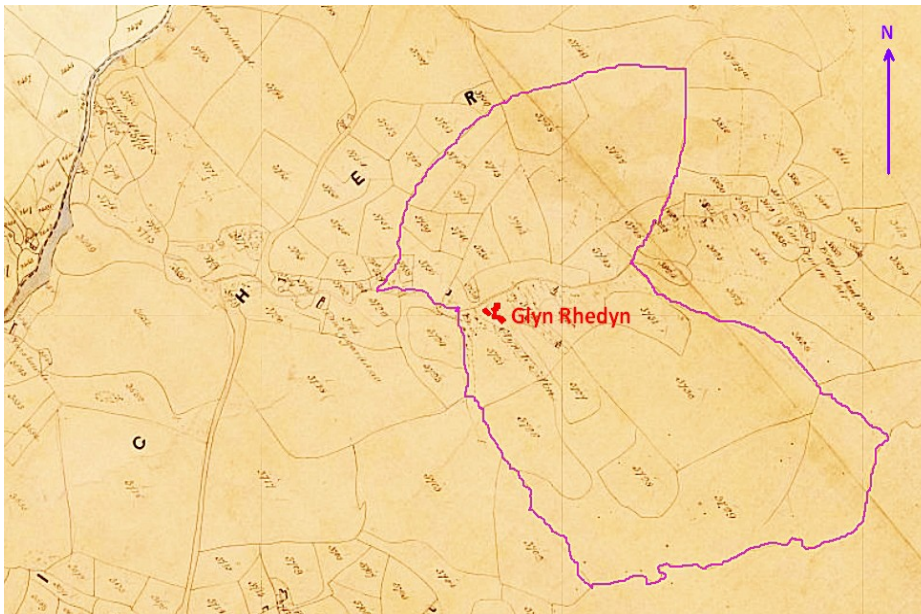
Occupier	Land No	Land Description	Cultivation state	Area	Dues to Vicar	Dues to Owner
William Phillips	3733	Glyn Rhedyn House Buildings Garden & Driveway	Pasture	13 3 25		5 8
	3734	Garden	Arable	1		2 11
	3725	Gravig y Nofel	Pasture	7 15		2 7
	3737		Arable	3 20	9	2 6
	3738		Pasture	2 30		
	3736		Arable	3 1 35	11 3	1 8
	3739	Coe llaer maes isaf	Pasture	1 2 35		1 7
	3740	Coe llaer maes uchaf	do	1 3 7		2 7
	3741	Coe llaer	Arable	1 2	8	2 11
	3742	Hoes llaer Maes	Pasture	11 15		3 2
	3743	Coe llaer maes uchaf	do	1 2 15		3 3
	3748		do	5 3		10 5
	3747	Nahan Parc	do	31 37		1 7
	3746	Coe llaer maes uchaf	do	2 2 15		1 3
	3745		do	3 20	1	11 11
	3744	Wain uchaf	Arable	5 1 30	6	11
	3735		do	2 2 22		1 1
	3739		Pasture	1 3 20		1 5
	3731		do	4 3		2 2
	3730		Arable	2 2 20	11	6 10
3727		do	2 2 20		9 11	
3726		Pasture	5 3	110		
3728		Arable	5 3 20	1 6 1		
3729		do	5 3 20		2 19 11	
				195 3 31	2 6 8	

**Figure 1 Tithe Apportionment - Glyn Rhedyn**

I have copies of the payments made by the tenant farmers to the land owner and to the church. Details of such amounts can be found on Tithe Apportionments and associated Maps, see Figures 1 and 2. (Available online from the National Library of Wales. ) They show land owners and occupier,

who in this case of Glyn Rhedyn farm, was my great grandfather, **William Phillips**. Then follow field numbers and names, cultivation state (usage), acreage and rent due to each of the Vicar and Owner.

A detailed plan of the partitioning of his fields, showing evidence of crop rotation with areas left fallow also survives. Oats were the main crop and sheep were kept on areas labelled 'pasture'. The



90 acres covered the area of where Brynbedd cemetery is now and also where the Council site now stands.

As the coal mine was developed, the owner purchased a substantial part of the local farmers' acreages from the landowner in order to build the railway and viaduct. This ruthless action resulted in these subsistence farmers from Nant Hir farms, rioting and damaging machinery.

**Figure 2 Tithe Map extract - Glyn Rhedyn**

Their ability to grow enough crops to feed their families and provide a surplus to sell at Neath Market was drastically reduced through no fault of their own and they had no union to fight their case! None benefitted from a formal education.

Further catastrophe followed. A well known newspaper reported at the time a flood that occurred one stormy night. It swept away two farms, one was Glyn Rhedyn where my ancestors' family lived. Miraculously, they escaped surviving by climbing trees and hanging onto branches. The other farm, Pantygarddau, lower down the valley, but still above the new viaduct, was the home of one of their daughters. The occupiers also survived. Both properties were badly damaged\*.

It is suggested that the flood was caused as a result of the river valley, Nant Hir, being narrowed in order to build/ support the high viaduct linking embankments either side and causing a backup of rain water runoff from higher up the stream. Some evidence for this narrowing may be seen on the Ordnance Survey map above.

\* **Note** copied from *Farm Names & Records* compiled by E. Williams held by the Society.

## **Men of the Valley Community: David Morgan and Erastus Jones**

Bandmaster, **David Morgan's** first son, **William**, captained the Seven Sisters Rugby team and was known "Will Cap". His wife, **Gwenllian**, was my father's sister. Their eldest son, **Gwynfor**, became an accomplished musician and played in the band. He emigrated to Australia and while there formed his own band.

One of his brothers, **Dennis**, played soccer for Norwich. While another, **Handel**, played rugby for Seven.

I have a good deal of information on the Morgan family. Gwynfor's children today live in New Zealand and keep in regular touch.

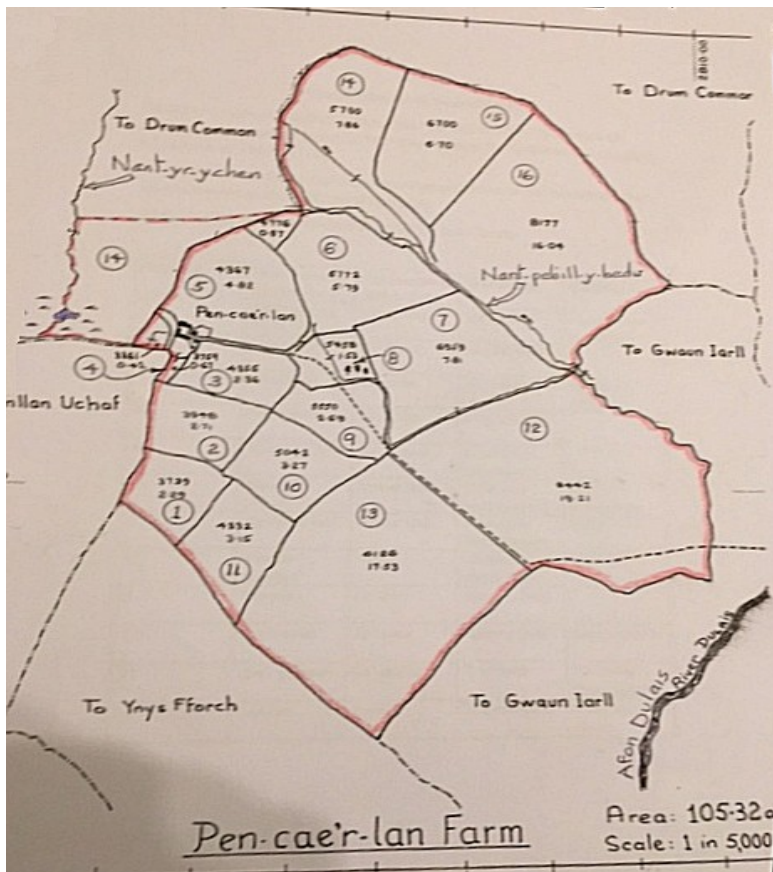
Another notable person who contributed so much to the Dulais Valley was Soar Chapel Minister, **Erastus Jones**. In the many successful ways he encouraged the whole community to come together. Later he moved to Aberfan to help the community after the disaster. A great man!

# Pen-cae'r-lan Farm, Seven Sisters

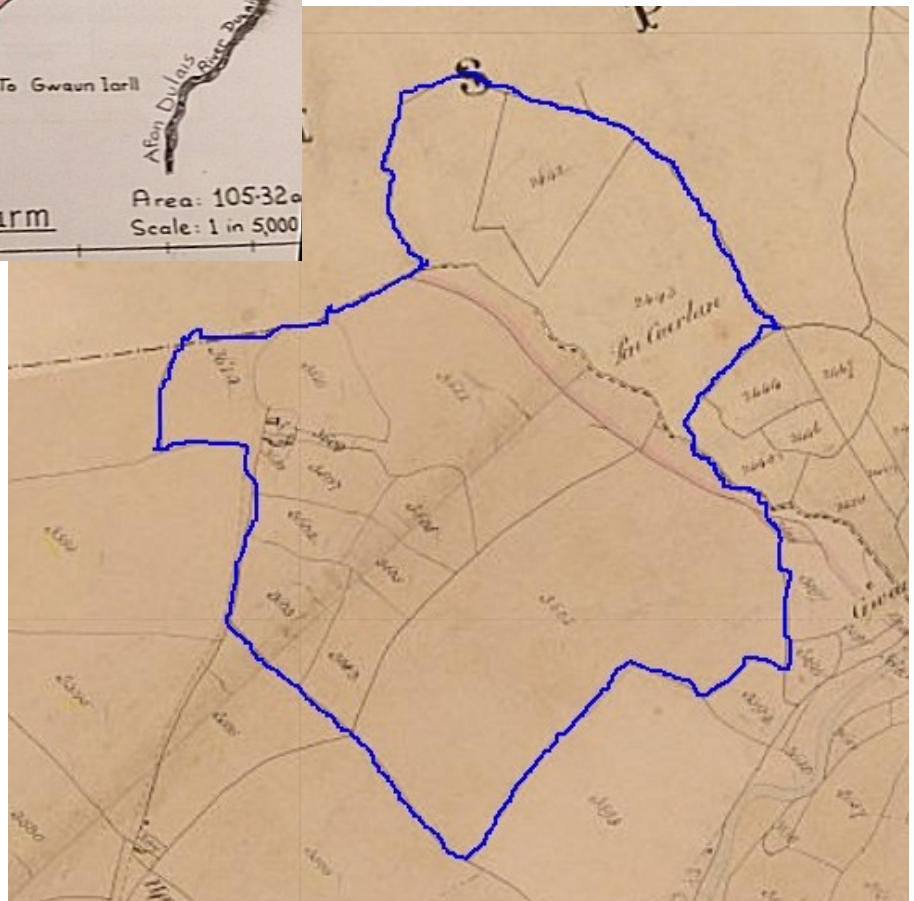
contributed by David Rees

**D**avid Rees, now resident in Tregaron, sent this information about Pen Cae'r Lan Farm expanding on the story in the August 2021 edition of the Newsletter about the travels to Patagonia of former farm occupants, the **Rees** family. The location of the farm in relation to Seven Sisters is shown on the Ordnance Survey extract at the beginning of the essays.

The farm name is normally spelled without the hyphens or the apostrophe as "Pencaerlan" and is pronounced as "Pencalan". But on the Ordnance Survey plans it is shown as "Pen-cae'r-lan" while in the Tithe records it is "Pencaerlan".



Map 1 Sketch plan of Farm (recent)



Map 2 Tithe map extract of Farm

The names of the fields and their meanings are shown in the following tables and can be linked with reference to the adjacent sketch plan, Tithe map and Apportionments.

**Figure 1 Extract of Tithe Apportionment relating to Farm - then occupier Daniel Evans**

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Field reference	Field name in Welsh (for.)	Field name in Welsh (inf.)	Translation	Comments
3608	House Buildings &c			
3607	cae pellu	Yastaw	Stone field	2. A
3604	cae canol	do	Middle field	2 1 A
3603	cae garreg	Meadow	Stone field	2 2
3602	cae hunt	Arable	Hunt field	3 1 2. 18 4 1 A
3605	cae celyn	do	Holly field	3 32 17 3 10 A
3606	Do	do		2 2 5 11 2 10 A
3610	cae uch lawn ty	do	Upper lawn field	4 1 2 11 2 4 5 7 A
3611	Naw Eru	Meadow	Nine acre field (upper)	16 1 8 10.
3601	Ishen Eru	do	Nine acre field (lower)	36 - 12 1 1 7
3609	Road			19
			73 2 25	2 .. 5 1 - 5

**Table (a) Field references and names**

As of 2010 when the farm was owned by the Rees family.

Field reference	Field name in Welsh (for.)	Field name in Welsh (inf.)	Translation	Comments
1	Cae'r garreg	Ca' gyrreg	Stone field	Large stone in corner
2	Cae canol	Ca' cenol	Middle field	
3	Cae pelau	Ca' pele	Balls field	Uncertain origin
4	Cae'r ddas	Ca'r ddas	Hay rick field	
5	Cae'r 'sgubor	Ca'r scipor	Barn field (granary)	
6	Naw eru uchaf	Nywar ycha	Nine acre field (upper)	Once one whole field combined.
7	Naw eru isaf	Nywar isha	Nine acre field (lower)	
8	Y twics (tylciau)	Twics	Chicken sheds field	
9	Cae pori	Ca' pori	Grazing field	
10	Cae'r cwar	Ca' cwar	Quarry field	Stone quarry
11	Cae'r gleren	Ca' gleren	'Fly' field	Probably from 'celyn' (holly)
12+13	Y waun	Y wain	The meadow	Now two fields
14+ 15+ 16	Coed-cae	Y cotca	The tree field	3 unnamed parcels

**Table (b) Field references and names** circa 1842, when **Daniel Evans** was occupier/tenant of the farm.

The following names are those entered on the Tithe maps.

Field reference	Field name in Welsh (for.)	Field name in Welsh (inf.)	Translation	Comments
1	Cae'r garreg	Ca' gyrreg	Stone field	Large stone in corner
2	Cae canol	Ca' cenol	Middle field	
3	Cae pella	Ca' pella	'Far field'	Uncertain origin
4	No name			Part of garden
5	Cae uwch law'r ty	Ca' iwch law'r ty	Field above the house	(Ca' scipor later)
6+ 7+ 8	Naw eru	Nywar	Nine acre field	One whole field
8	No name			Part of Naw eru
9+10	Cae celin	Ca' celin	Holly field (celyn)	Ca' pori + Ca' cwar later
11	Cae hwnt	Ca' hwnt	'Yonder field/ Far field'	Later 'Ca' gleren'
12+13	Ichen erw	Or icen erw	Twenty acres (ugain erw)	Later Y waun

The field references in the Tithe Apportionment give an indication of the use of the field for example, House, Buildings or Pasture, Meadow or Arable.

**Notes:-**

**Welsh (for.)** means the formal written Welsh as opposed to the informal **Welsh (inf.)** which was spoken locally. For example, 'twenty', 'barn' and 'middle' would be 'ugain', 'scubor' and 'canol' in formal /written Welsh, but in the dialect we speak in West Glamorgan, we would pronounce these as 'icen', 'scipor' and 'cenal'.

The nine-acre field is of greater area than described. Also, the twenty-acre field (later 'Y waun') is actually over 36 acres in area. It is said that farmers played down the size of their fields in order to minimize the tithe they would have to pay.

The field we knew as the Coed-cae (Cotca) does not appear on the Glamorgan tithe plans because, at that time, it was located in Breconshire. The stream known as Nant-pebill-y-bedw flowing between the field known as Naw-erw and Coedcae was then the boundary between Glamorganshire and Breconshire. The boundary was later relocated to run across the ridge of the *Drum* mountain.

The new parcel of land adjoining Cae-scubor (Field 14) acquired by Pencaerlan Farm about 30 years ago, was called Ca' nywidd (from 'cae-newydd' ; meaning 'new field').