

DYDDIO HEN DAI CYMREIG

DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES

PROSIECT DENDROCRONOLEG
GOGLEDD ORLLEWIN CYMRU



NORTH WEST WALES
DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

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HAFOD YSBYTY

Parish: Ffestiniog, Gwynedd, (old County: Merioneth)

NGR SH 725 432



A report commissioned by The North West Wales Dendrochronology Project in partnership with The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW)

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Parish: Ffestiniog, Gwynedd, (old County: Merioneth)

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HOUSE HISTORY: Summary

Dendrochronology date: 1509-1533.

Lying on the old road from Beddgelert to Ysbyty Ifan through Ffestiniog, and Cwm Teigl it is believed perhaps to have been a house of refuge for the poor and travellers between the priories of Beddgelert and Ysbyty Ifan and may have belonged to the Knights of St John at Ysbyty Ifan. Over the front door is an inscription in Greek saying 'Peace to this house'. The property maintains many of its original features.

The property has been linked with a large tract of mountainous land called Gamallt since at least Elizabethan times. In the mid to late 16th century the two properties were granted by the Crown to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, probably resulting from the dissolution of the monasteries. The properties were then inherited by Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, brother of the Earl, and then conveyed by Ambrose to his wife, Anne, Countess of Warwick, who conveyed it to Lord St. John of Bletsoe, who in turn conveyed it to Robert ap Ieuan ap Griffith, possibly of Ffestiniog or Trawsfynydd.

However, by the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th there was much dispute about the ownership of the properties between Richard ap Robert of Trawsfynydd and Humffrey ap David Lloyd which spread into violence. Humffrey ap David Lloyd prevailed and the properties remained in possession of the descendants of Humffrey and Jane until 1849 when George Casson, a businessman living between Toxteth, Liverpool and Blaennol, Ffestiniog became the owner.

On George Casson's death in 1867 the properties remained in the Casson family probably until 1934 when it was bought by the tenant farmer, Griffith T Jones. The properties went through four more owners until 1963 when the house, the land around the house and Gamallt were split up - Gamallt being sold to the National Trust. The present owner's mother reunited the house and surrounding land in 1973.

Up to around 1783 Hafod Ysbyty was probably lived in and farmed by the owners. The size of the land with the house is not known until 1784, when it appears to be somewhere around 529 acres - a substantial farm for that time but much of it was poor pasture. From about 1711 until about 1767 the occupier was Pierce Owen (husband of one of the owner's sisters) and then his son David

Pierce, From about 1767 to about 1885 Robert Owen (again husband of one of the owner's sisters) took over the tenancy followed by his son William Owen. About 1885 a new tenant, Robert Jones, took over. His son, Griffith T Jones, succeeded him and eventually buys Hafod Ysbyty and Gamallt from the Cassons around 1934.

In the mid 1800 much mining for lead and possibly other minerals takes place on the Hafod Ysbyty and Gamallt properties. The mines were short-lived. During this period the size of the farmland available reduced from 529 acres (1839) to 40 acres (1861).

Detail of HOUSE HISTORY

At Appendix A is an outline 'family tree' of the owner and occupiers of Hafod Ysbyty made up from various documents¹. It is suggested that reference is made to this tree as the ownership and tenancy of Hafod Ysbyty is complicated. There have been many spellings of Hafod Ysbyty over the years which make research via indexes and catalogues time consuming and difficult. During its long existence Hafod Ysbyty and its farmland were connected to the mountain area called Gamallt (NGR SH 750 445) which lies to the north east of the building (see 1595/6 and 1910) and appears to have been one estate up to 1963. So any reference to Hafod Ysbyty in this document includes Gamallt unless otherwise stated. A map with the approximate boundaries of the properties is shown at Appendix B.

1509-1533 - Dendrochronology date. (see Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory Report)

Lying on the old road from Beddgelert to Ysbyty Ifan through Ffestiniog, Hafod Ysbyty is believed perhaps to have been a house of refuge for the poor and travellers between the priories of Beddgelert and Ysbyty Ifan. One of the old forms of the name, Havod Yr Ysbyttu, suggests it may have belonged to the Knights of St John at Ysbyty Ifan.

Over the front door, there is a carved inscription in Greek. It reads
EIPHNH TΩ OIKO TOYTΩ which means "Peace to this house"²

One possibility is that the inscription dates from the days when there was a house here belonging to the Knights of St John of Ysbyty Ifan (if indeed it ever did). However it is more likely that it dates from around the early 1600s when Humffrey ap David Lloyd, and his wife Jane, daughter of Edmwnd Prys, lived in the house. Firstly, there were few people at that time who knew Greek, but he was certainly one of them, having studied it in St John's College, Cambridge³. Secondly, he would have felt that the house needed peace – either in the wake of the extended court cases involving it (between 1594 and 1607) or because it is said that Humffrey ap David Lloyd had killed

¹ T. Ceiri Griffith (2003) pages 76, 77, 158 and 165; Merioneth Historical and Records Society (MHRS) Journal 7:4 (1976) page 406; Pedigree, George Benson Nicholson, 1895, MS 12843F, National Library of Wales (NLW). Censuses.

² As transcribed in G.J. Williams: Hanes Plwyf Ffestiniog (1882) p. 55

³ *Reference needed*

his cousin, the attorney at law, John Roberts, son of Richard ap Robert, the opponent in the court cases.

1529-40 - The Protestant Reformation in England and Wales.

1537 -As a Catholic guild, the Order of St John was dissolved by Henry VIII as part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

1536-8 -As part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the English crown possessed monastic lands including the Dôl Gynwal (Ysbyty Ifan) area.

1560s – Hafod Ysbyty was granted by the Crown to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Then inherited by Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, brother of the Earl, and then conveyed by Ambrose to his wife, Anne, Countess of Warwick, who conveyed it to Lord St. John of Bletsoe, who in turn conveyed it to Robert ap Ieuan ap Griffith, possibly of Ffestiniog or Trawsfynydd (see 1558-88).

1571 - Owned by Robert ap Ieuan ap Griffith (see below).

1594 – 1607 – this is a turbulent time for Hafod Ysbyty. Sometime between 1591 and 1595 the property passes to Humffrey ap David Lloyd and his wife Jane Prys and during their time there they may have carved the Greek inscription above the front door, but not much peace was to be seen!

Hafod Ysbyty features in various court cases in the Court of the Star Chamber and the Great Sessions in Dolgellau⁴. The bone of contention was the ownership of three farms – Hafod Ysbyty and Llety Gwilym in Ffestiniog and Llwyn Teg in Maentwrog. Richard ap Robert of Trawsfynydd, an illegitimate son of Robert ap Ieuan, claimed that his father has executed a deed in 1571, promising him the lands after his death. This was contested by David Lloyd ap Robert, Robert ap Ieuan's eldest legitimate son and Edmwnd Prys, Archdeacon of Merioneth. In 1591 David Lloyd and Edmwnd Prys had made an agreement regarding the intended marriage between David Lloyd's son, Humffrey ap David Lloyd and Edmwnd Prys' daughter Jane, which appears to promise the lands to Jane as her dowry, on payment of money by Edmwnd Prys.⁵

In 1594 Richard ap Robert claimed that Edmwnd Prys had conspired with his greedy half-brother and that Prys had bought the three places from David Lloyd for very little money – less than half their true worth – and had agreed to undertake any litigation that might be necessary regarding the matter on the part of David Lloyd. The defence was that the deed of 1571 was fictitious and that

⁴ Gruffydd Aled Williams: Edmwnd Prys ac Ardudwy. NLW Journal 1982 Vol 22, no 3, pp282-303 available online at <http://cylchgronaucymru.llgc.org.uk/browse/>

⁵ Caernarfon Record Office (CRO) document XM 1023/1 from the Hafod-y-rhisgl papers. This document was unavailable when I asked to see it, whether lost or in too poor a condition to be inspected. Some of its contents are detailed in: Emrys Evans: Llety Gwilym,, in Rhamant Bro No 27, 2008, pp 42-47

the people who claimed to have witnessed it were lying. However it was not disputed that at that time the lands belonged to Robert ap Ieuan.

The marriage settlement of 1591 also refers to Robert ap Ieuan's wife (variously Ellyn or Elizabeth vch Lewis) who was said to be sister to the fathers of both wives of Edmwnd Prys – John Lewis and Morgan Lewis of the Pengwern family. Thus David Lloyd was first cousin to both wives of Edmwnd Prys, and Humffrey ap David Lloyd and Jane Prys were second cousins.⁶ The dispute was very acrimonious with claims and counter-claims and at least one of the parties must have been lying. The final verdict does not seem to be available, but the fact is that the properties passed down into the family of Jane and Humffrey.

1558 to 1588 - Exchequer Proceedings⁷ 61/19 (36 Elizabeth.). 1594/5

“Compl., Richard ap Robert of Trawsfvenith, gent

Def., David Lloyd ap Robert ap Ieuan, David Lloyd, his son, Hugh ap David, Rhydderch ap Thomas, William Owen.

Two messuages, called Ffreeth y gamallt, and Ffreeth Havod y Spithy, in Ffestiniocke, parcel of the encroachment in the said county.

Grant of said encroachment by Crown (L.P.⁸ 18, 19, 20 Eliz.) to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Inheritance of same by Ambrose, Earl of Warwick, brother of the said Earl of Leicester, and now deceased; conveyance thereof by said Ambrose to his wife, Anne, Countess of Warwick, who conveyed same, 34 Eliz., to Lord St. John of Bletsoe, who in turn conveyed to compl. the said two messuages.

Pretended title to same by first def.; seizure of deeds re premises, and intrusion into same by all def.“

[*This is an area for further research*].

1590s – Story of cattle rustling at Hafod Ysbyty and the killing of Ieuan ap Robert by Humffrey ap David Lloyd. See Appendix C.

1603 – 1625 - Exchequer Proceedings⁹ 6150/45/4 Jac. I

Plt. Richard ap Robert of Trawsvenith, gent.

Def. Humfrey ap David Lloyd. [Documents: B.W.B.A.]

Bill. Encroached lands in the county of Merion.

Crown demise (July 11, 18 Eliz. I; July 22, 19 Eliz. I and July 31, 20 Eliz. I) to the rt. hon. Robert, late Earl of Leicester, for ever, reserving several fee farm rents amounting to £31-6-3½. On his death they passed to his brother the rt. hon. Ambrose, late Earl of Warwick, who demised them to his wife Anne, who demised them to the Lord St. John, late of Blettzoe., who demised (43 Eliz. I) to

⁶ T. Ceiri Griffith (2003) page 73

⁷ Exchequer Proceedings (Equity) Concerning Wales - University of Wales 1939 - pages 232/3

⁸ L.P. = Letters Patent

⁹ Exchequer Proceedings (Equity) Concerning Wales- James I - University of Wales 1939 - page 227

plt. two mess.'s or tents, with p'ls of land in Ffestiniock in the commote of Ardudwy called Ffreeth y gamallt and Ffreeth Havod y Spytty for ever.

Expelling of plt. in 37 Eliz. I by David Lloyd ap Robert ap Jevan, Humphrey ap Dd., Rithergh ap Thomas and William Owen. Plt. exhibited his bill *v*. them in this court, but David Lloyd died. Deft., his son, now claims the premises by inheritance and has chased plt.'s cattle from the p'ls.

Answer. The premises were p'l of poss. of deft.'s great-grandfather, his grandfather and his father, and have now descended to deft. They are not encroached lands but are part and p'l of the property of Havod y Spytty. A commission into encroached lands was composed of the friends of the Earl of Leicester who got a great part of the lands and heredit. of many inhabitants of Merion., Caern. and Anglesey to be found to be encroached from the commons. The inhabitants, unable to stand against: the powerful earl, compounded with him to avoid trouble—as did deft.'s grandfather who received the premises for ever.”

[*This is an area for further research*]

1623 - Rent Roll for Ardudwy¹⁰:

Humffrey David Lloyd for Havod Spytty (3s 4d) and for Llettu Wilim (0s 8d) (suggesting he was an owner-occupier). Also Humff' David Lloyd for Gamallt & Llyn y Gamallt (0s 2d) and for Gors & Llynie Hafod Spytty (0s 2d). So Hafod Ysbyty and Gamallt are still together. This could be Humffrey ap David Lloyd's son.

1683 - David Lloyd ap Humffrey dies (son of Humffrey ap David Lloyd)

c1700 - Ellis Rowland, bard of Harlech (c1650-c1730) wrote a poem about Hwmffre Llwyd. Ellis Rowland was related to Jane Prys, Hwmffre's wife¹¹. [Area for future research]

1702 – Humphrey Lloyd dies (son of David Lloyd ap Humffrey).

1710 - Will of Jonet Williams¹² widow of Humphrey Lloyd of Hafod Ysbyty – does not mention Hafod Ysbyty, but most of her property is left to her daughter Catherine Lloyd who married Pierce Owen in 1711. They were tenants in Hafod Ysbyty.

1741 - In the document of this date in the Hafod-y-rhisgl papers¹³ Hafod Ysbyty and other property comes into the possession of Ellen Lloyd, great-grand-daughter of Humffrey ap David Lloyd and Jane Prys through the death of her brother, named as “David Lloyd, Cler, deceased late brother” As Ceiri Griffith writes, we can deduce how the farms had come down to David through the words: “David Lloyd ap Humphrey, Gentleman and Humphrey Lloyd his son, grandfather and father of the said Ellen”.¹⁴

¹⁰ MRHS Journal Vol XV (2009) page 384

¹¹ Bob Owen, Croesor, 1937, Meh. 8. Ref: 610 NLW

¹² Copy of will with Ann Watts

¹³ XM 1023/2 CRO

So it appears that the family had been living at Hafod Ysbyty from the time of Humffrey ap David Lloyd and Jane Prys down to their grandson Humphrey Lloyd who was married to Jonet William and by her had four children – David, Elizabeth, Catherine and Ellen. David Lloyd was the brother who died in 1713, followed by the death of his wife in 1725, without leaving any issue. The inheritance then passed to Ellen who was married to William John Edward of Llanllyfni, though they lived in Ffridd, Llwynllior, Beddgelert and Hafoty, Drwsycoed, and from now onwards members of the Williams family will not be owner-occupiers although John Williams her grandson may have live there a short time (see 1783). The 1741 document also mentions William Williams, son of Ellen Lloyd and it seems that the lands pass to both of them. Also in 1741 William Williams married Margaret Williams in Beddgelert. William Williams is described as “Gentleman”¹⁵.

1747 - The Will of Pierce Owen¹⁶ says he is “of Hafod Ysbyty”. Pierce Owen was the husband of Catherine Lloyd, sister of Ellen Lloyd who was the owner. Thus Catherine Lloyd was her sister’s tenant in Hafod Ysbyty.¹⁷

1755 - Bond and Inventory of Catherine Lloyd¹⁸, whose son David Pierce is her administrator. David Pierce stays at Hafod Ysbyty for a period after the death of his parents.

1764 - Ellen Lloyd dies. William Williams inherits Hafod Ysbyty.

1765 - Margaret wife of William Williams of Hafod Ysbyttu died aged 45 yrs¹⁹.

1767 - Eleanor Williams, Ffridd Uchaf (1747-1814) married Robert Owen (b.1741), Hafod Ysbyttu, Ffestiniog, son of Owen Owen, (702-1777) Ty Isaf y llan, Beddgelert. They had 8 children²⁰.

1772 - David son & heir of the late William Williams Gent. of Hafod Ysbyttu died aged 20²¹.

1779/80 - William Williams of Ffridd [Gent] died²². It was his wish that all of his land, buildings and holdings in Ffestiniog, co Merioneth namely Hafod yspyttu, Lletty Gwilym & Bwlch wha, which were farmed by Robert Owen, Richard James & Eleanor Evans or their descendants, would be inherited by his eldest son John Williams & his descendants, on the condition that he distributed bequests as follows:

¹⁴ T. Ceiri Griffith: Cysylltiadau Crefyddol teulu Edmund Prys, Archddiacon Meirionnydd, yn Ffestiniog a Beddgelert. (Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes a Chofnodion Sir Feirionnydd:) Vol 7, 1976 pp 404-415

¹⁵ *Reference needed*

¹⁶ <http://hdl.handle.net/10107/907727> NLW

¹⁷T. Ceiri Griffith *ibid*, p. 407

¹⁸ *Reference needed*

¹⁹ Memorial Inscriptions, St Mary's church Beddgelert, Gwynedd Family History Society A164

²⁰ T C Griffith page 31

²¹ Memorial Inscriptions, St Mary's church Beddgelert, Gwynedd Family History Society A154

²² Memorial Inscriptions, St Mary's church Beddgelert, Gwynedd Family History Society A164

Alice Williams, eldest daughter who was married to	William Pierce - £10 within 1 year;
Eleanor Williams, second " " "	Robert Owen - £10 " 2 "
Gaynor Williams, third " " " "	Richard Roberts - £10 " 3 "

cousins William Griffith & William David, two farmers from Drws y coed - £5 for taking the responsibility of being executors of the will.²³

1782 – Mention of John Williams, Havod Ysptytie, Gent. Also William Evans, clerk, rector of Llanfihangell y Pennant, William Jones of Bwlch Mwlchan, yeoman²⁴.

1783 - Hafod-y-rhisgl document mentions John Williams as being “late of Havod-y-spyttu ... but now of Perfeddgoed Bach”.²⁵ This is John Williams, son and designated heir (in 1779) of William Williams.

1784 – Estate Map of John Williams’ property²⁶. This is the first map found so far found of the estate. The areas shown are very similar to those described in the Tithe Schedule of 1839. The map is very detailed, showing field names, occupiers and surrounding landowners [this is an area for further research].

1798 - Land Tax Ffestiniog²⁷. Although no house names are recorded, the only entry for a John Williams is:

Proprietor: Mr John Williams
 Occupiers: Robert Owen 16/- , Richard James 10/- , Pierce David 6/-
 Date of contract: 19 April 1799.

1811 - Contract between John Williams of Lledwigan, Anglesea, on one part and William Turner of Ffestiniog and John Pugh of Machynlleth on the other²⁸, to “agree to the purpose and digging and searching for ore and Black Jack (a mineral called sphalerite that is the chief ore of zinc. Is also be called Zinc Blende) upon all that part of Hafod Ysptyty Farm ... called Hen Ffrith and Fridd y Gamallt for the term of 21 years”. John Williams reserved to himself “a part of the said concern not exceeding one forth.” This was the beginning of interest in the mineral rights on the land, although there was interest by Sir William Owen in lead ore at Gamallt as far back as the 1650s²⁹.

1815 – Will of Robert Owen of Hafod Ysbyty. He leaves £50 to his 1st son Owen Owen of Bron y erw, Ffestiniog £50, to his second son, William Roberts of Dduallt, Ffestiniog £50, to his 3rd son John Roberts of Penbryn pwll du (Llandecwyn, Talsarnau) £50, and £10 to his grandson John Lloyd

²³ T C Griffith 1989 pages 41-2

²⁴ GAS Hafod Ysptyty ms 3

²⁵ XM 1023/4 CRO

²⁶ Z/M/6850/2 DRO

²⁷ Merioneth Land Tax Assessments 1798 IR 23 page 70 Dolgellau Record Office (DRO)

²⁸ Casson Papers Z/DCH/5/220 DRO

²⁹ Lead Mining in Wales, W J Lewis, University of Wales Press, 1967 page 66

(the son of Owen Owens). He leaves £80 in trust of William Roberts (as above) for his daughter Margaret. Probate granted 27 May 1815³⁰.

1825 – November 15. Title of ‘Hafodysptty or Garnallt’ conveyed from John Williams to David Williams³¹. This is probably John’s brother³².

1837 – January 30. Lease of ‘Hafodysptty or Garnallt’ to Rev. J H Bransby and others³³.

1839 - Tithe maps Schedule³⁴. The owner of Hafod Ysptyty is John Williams, Esq. and the occupier is Robert Owen. This John Williams is probably the son of John Williams³⁵. The farm is shown as 529 acres, 1 rod, 27 poles with £1.17.6p paid to the Rector. This is the second recorded size of the farm which shows it is of a substantial acreage for that time. The impact of mining over the next 25 year shows the size of the land available for farming reducing to 105 acres in 1851 to 40 acres in 1861 (see census information below) but the estate area remains pretty much the same. John Williams also owned other property nearby totalling 62 acres.

1841 - Census³⁶:

Robert Ownes	45	Farmer
Jane “	45	
William “	20	
Margaret “	15	
David “	14	
Ellinor “	12	
John “	10	
Jane “	7	
Elizabeth “	4	

(all born in Merioneth)

1847 – In the spring of 1847 there was a flurry of activity with regard to ‘Hafodysptty or Garnallt’ as follows³⁷:

March 16.	Release - D Williams and other to John Williams.
April 6.	Release - S O Priestly to John Williams.
April 7.	Conveyance - John Williams to Robert Lloyd.
April 7.	Deed of Covenant. John Williams to Robert Lloyd.

³⁰ <http://hdl.handle.net/10107/655852> NLW

³¹ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

³² MS 12843F Pedigree NLW

³³ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

³⁴ Tithe Map Schedule, Ffestiniog, Page 3 DRO

³⁵ See Appendix A

³⁶ Class: HO107; Piece: 1427; Book: 3; Civil Parish: Festiniog; County: Merionethshire; Enumeration District: 5; Folio: 28; Page: 12; Line: 10; GSU roll: 464334

³⁷ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

April 8. Assignment - Rev. R Jones and another to Hugh Jones and another.
These types of change carry on until the 1900s and probably were to do with raising finance and undertaking mining activities on the property and in the area. It is unclear from the document whether 'Hafodysppty or Garnallt' refers to the general name of the property or that it was split up into two properties – probably the former. [*This is an area for further research*].

1849 – May 24. Mortgage: 'Hafodysppty or Garnallt' – R Lloyd to E Churchill.
August 25. Mortgage: – R Lloyd to G Casson and another.
December 13. Mortgage: G & J Casson & R Lloyd to G P (no name) and John Williams³⁸.

1849 to at least 1910 – Hafod Ysbyty and Gamallt appear to have come into the ownership of the Casson family business. The Cassons, who originate from Lancashire, were a wealthy and influential in the Ffestiniog and Porthmadog areas – equally to the Oakleys and Lord Newborough. In 1800 the Diphwys Quarry (one of the oldest quarries in Ffestiniog which opened in about 1765) was bought for £1,000 by William Turner (1766-1853) and his partners William and Thomas Casson. They were joined by Hugh Jones, Hengert Ucha, Dolgellau, a banker, and formed the company William Turner & Co. These three and especially Turner played an important part in the development of the slate industry in Ffestiniog. The company had considerable success³⁹.

Thomas Casson was the father of George (1802-1867), William (1813-1877) and John (1816-1873). Thomas and the family were involved with the North and South Wales Bank in Liverpool and another bank, Cassons & Co., in Porthmadog. Both banks are now part of HSBC. Randel Casson (1850-1914) was one of the sons of William Casson⁴⁰ and owned Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt) in 1910. The Casson Family live at Blaenddol, Ffestiniog⁴¹ then Bron y garth⁴², Porthmadog and Toxteth Park, Liverpool.

From the letters and papers in the Casson Papers⁴³ it appears that as soon as George Casson becomes the owner, Robert Lloyd of Ffestiniog attempts to buy Hafodspetty and Cefnperfadd (location not known at present) for £4000. Although it is unclear what happened as no contracts survive, it looks like Robert Lloyd either entered into some sort of an agreement with George Casson regarding Hafod Ysbuty and Cefnperfadd, probably in respect of the mineral rights – one set of papers dated 7 August 1849, filed in an envelope entitled 'Hafodysppty', are encouraging reports by engineers to John Lloyd on Gamallt lead mine and Efel-y-miners copper mine (Trawsfynydd) - or he actually bought some of the land from George Casson. Whatever happened the ownership of Hafod Ysbyty and Gamallt for the next 50 years or so becomes complicated.

³⁸ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

³⁹ Introduction to Casson Papers: Z/DCH DRO

⁴⁰ See Casson Family Tree at: <http://trees.ancestry.co.uk/tree/26095019/family?cfpid=1778166755>

⁴¹ <http://www.dafyddhardy.co.uk/ugc-1/dh/propertybrochure/.../2349.pdf>

⁴² <http://www.bronygarth.com/index.php>

⁴³ Casson Papers Z/DCH/6/239 & 240 & 243-246 & 249 & Z/DCH/3/134 Z/DCH/6/A/4 DRO

There are numerous documents dealing with conveyances, transfers and mortgages involving many people, but the Cassons seem to have maintained an overall hold on the properties. On the death of George Casson in 1867 the properties were passed to his brother, John Casson. After that it is confusing [*more research needed in this area*] but in 1884 a number of estates owned by the Cassons are put up for sale, including Lot 2 'Hafod-yspytty'. William Gally Casson (George and John's nephew) buys Lot 2. By 1910 Randal Casson (another nephew of George and John) is shown as the owner. His wife, Lucy Jane Casson probably inherited the properties on her husband's death in 1914. She died in 1933. The tenant farmer of the properties, Griffith T Jones, probably buys Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt), from her estate. [*More research is needed in this area*].

W J Lewis⁴⁴ says that in Merioneth during the 19th century the in respect of the main mining areas of Penrhyndraeth, the Ffestiniog Valley and Dolgellau, "*at no time ... was lead ore an important product ... and such activity as occurred was mainly a faint echo of that which took place in other areas or in the nearby gold-mining industry ... In 1857, one of the century's most productive years in this county, the total output was only 332 tons of ore of which the Aberdyfi and Brynfedw mines together contributed 276 tons ... By the early 1860s most of the mines had shot their bolt ... A supposedly rich discovery at Hafod Ysbyty in 1884 was too late to be of any use even if it was as rich as described.*"

1850 – April 3. Transfer: 'Hafodyspty or Garnallt' – E Churchill to John Williams⁴⁵.

1851 - Census⁴⁶:

Robert Owens	head	Mar	60	Farmer of 105 acres empl. no lab	Ffestiniog
Jane	" wife	Mar	55		Llanfrothen
Elizabeth	" dau	Unm	14	Scholar	Ffestiniog
William	" son	Unm	32	Farmer labourer [<i>scored out</i>]/son	Ffestiniog

1852 -There is a flurry of letters about 'ownership' and there is some involvement of a David Williams (possibly related to the previous owner, John Williams). [*All this need more research*].

1853 – September 12. Reconveyance; 'Hafodyspty or Garnallt' – G J Ellison to Robert Lloyd⁴⁷.

September 13. Conveyance – R Lloyd to G & J Casson⁴⁸.

1854 to 1860 – Hafodyspytty Rent Account⁴⁹. This document shows the rent being paid from 1854 to 1860 at the rate of £20 in February (Ladies Day) with a balance of £11 in November – a total of £31 per annum.

⁴⁴ Lead Mining in Wales, W J Lewis, University of Wales Press, 1967 pages 241-3

⁴⁵ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

⁴⁶ Class: HO107; Piece: 2512; Folio: 240; Page: 28; GSU roll: 104283

⁴⁷ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

⁴⁸ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

⁴⁹ Z/M/6850/12 DRO

1856 – April 30. Reconveyance: ‘Hafodysptyt or Garnallt’ – John Williams to G & J Casson⁵⁰

1861 - Census⁵¹:

Robert Owen	head	wid	70	Farmer about 40 acres	Ffestiniog
Griffith Griffiths	son-in-law		28	“	Maentwrog
Elisabeth “	dau	mar	24	wife	Ffestiniog
Jane Ellin “	dau		1		Ffestiniog
Margaret Williams	serv	unm	19	maid serv	Trawsfynydd

1862 – John Bethell (purporting to claim under a Lease from the Crown) filed a Bill of Complaint in the Court of Chancery against George Casson to establish his right to work the slate and minerals at Hafod–yspytty.

1863 – An ‘answer’ was given to the Court denying John Bethell’s claim saying it was without foundation. Bethell then abandoned all further proceedings in the suit and also abandoned any further attempts to exercise any rights of working under his said Lease⁵².

1867 – George Casson dies. His brother John (1816-1873) inherits Hafod Ysbyty and Gamallt. John Williams (who probably sold Hafod Ysbyty to George Casson in 1849) dies. He has lived at Frongoch, Pentraeth, Anglesea and Glanbeuno, Caernarfon⁵³.

1871 - Census⁵⁴:

William Owen	head	Mar	44	Farmer	Ffestiniog
Elisabeth “	wife	Mar	31	Farmer’s wife	Ffestiniog
Robert Jones	serv	unm	17	Domestic Servant	Trawsfynydd
David Hughes	lodg	unm	28	Quarryman	Llandegai

1873 - John Casson dies. His wife Mary Casson may have inherited the properties.

1881 - Census⁵⁵:

William Owen	head	Mar	54	Farmer	Ffestiniog
Elizabeth “	wife	Mar	42	Farmer wife	Penmachno
John “	son		9	Scholar	Ffestiniog
Ellin “	dau		8	“	“
William “	son		4		“
Ellis “	son		3		“

⁵⁰ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

⁵¹ Class: RG9; Piece: 4324; Folio: 27; Page: 25; GSU roll: 543269

⁵² Z/M/6850/25 DRO

⁵³ MS 12843F Pedigree NLW

⁵⁴ Class: RG10; Piece: 5696; Folio: 26; Page: 20; GSU roll: 875582

⁵⁵ Class: RG11; Piece: 5550; Folio: 19; Page: 10; GSU roll: 1342333

1882 – March 30. A number of lots owned by the Cassons are put up for sale. Unfortunately the Vendor is not named in the sale document – Messrs. Breese, Jones and Casson act on his or her behalf. Lot 2 is Hafod-yspytty (and Gamallt).⁵⁶

March 30. Agreement of William Gallery Casson (1841-1889, William Casson's son) that he purchased Sale Lot 2 (Hafod Ysbyty) at the price of £1,750 and has paid the deposit of £175⁵⁷.

October 12. Conveyance: 'Hafodysptty or Garnallt' – N & SW Bank L. and others to G W Casson

October 14. Mortgage: W G Casson to Mrs E Evans of Gorphwysfa, Pwllheli⁵⁸.

1891 - Census⁵⁹:

Robert Jones	Head	Mar	34	Farmer	Llaniestyn
Ann Jones	Wife	Mar	34		Llandecwyn
John Jones	Son	unm	10		"
Eliza Jones	dau		1		Ffestiniog
Robert Jones	serv		14	Farm servant	Anglesey
Catherine Williams	serv		13	Domestic servant	Ffestiniog

1901- Census⁶⁰:

Robert Jones	Head	M	44	Farmer	Llaniestyn
Anne	" wife	M	43		Llandecwyn
John	" son	S	20	Slate quarry rockman	Llandecwyn
Eliza	" dau		11		Ffestiniog
Gwen	" dau		8		Ffestiniog
Anne	" dau		5		Ffestiniog
Kate	" dau		3		Ffestiniog
Thomas Parry	serv	S	13	Farm servant	Bangor
Susy Parry	serv	S	17	General servant (domestic)	Bangor

1910 - Merioneth Land Tax 1910⁶¹

Hafod Ysbytty and land

Owner: Randel Casson, Llwynygarth, Porthmadog

Occupier: Robert Jones

Total area: 495 acres. Gross value £900.

1911- Census⁶²:

Robert Jones	Head	wid	55	Farmer	Llaniestyn
John T	" son	S	29	Quarryman	Llandecwyn

⁵⁶ Z/M/6850/25 DRO

⁵⁷ Z/M/6850/25 DRO

⁵⁸ Z/M/6850/1 DRO

⁵⁹ Class: RG12; Piece: 4645; Folio: 14; Page: 4; GSU roll: 6099755

⁶⁰ Class: RG13; Piece: 5257; Folio: 30; Page: 2

⁶¹ Z/QR/L/6 Book 1 DRO

⁶² Class: RG14; Piece: 34329; Schedule Number: 8

Elizzie J Jones	dau	S	21	farmer's daughter, dairy work	Ffestiniog
Annie Jones	dau	S	15	Farmer's daughter	Ffestiniog
Kate Jones	dau	S	13	Scholar	Ffestiniog
Griffith T Jones	son		9	Scholar	Ffestiniog

1914 - Randal Casson dies. His wife, Lucy Jane (1857-1933) probably inherits the properties.

Note – The information below unless separately referenced is from Rhiannon Davies who lives with her brother, Owen Davies, at Tryfal, a farm near Hafod Ysbyty. She has lived in the farm all her life and her father before her. The present owner Dr. Helen Ford also assisted.

c.1927 – Robert Jones dies. Griffith T Jones takes on the tenancy of Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt)

1933 – Lucy Jane Casson dies. About this time Griffith T Jones buys Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt), probably from Lucy Jane Casson's estate [*area for further research*].

c.1939 - Griffith T Jones moves to Teiliau Mawr (a farm lower down Cwm Teigl).

1939 to 1945 – German prisoners of war (officers) were lodged at Hafod Ysbyty and painted German city(?) crests on a joist.

c.1947 - Griffith T Jones sells Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt) to Mark Sontag, an artist, who farms the land. The cowshed in the north wing is converted to a studio.

c.1950 - Mark Sontag sells Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt) to Paul Du Pavier.

1953 - Paul Du Pavier sells Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt) to Hamish Forbes Moffat. Moffat reared chickens and was renowned locally for owning Bugatti cars. He converted the north wing into a garage. He had an interesting and eccentric life – see his obituary at Appendix D.

1953 - Watercolour; 294 x 405 mm, of Hafod Ysbyty painted by William Huws Williams⁶³.

Around 1956 - Hamish Forbes Moffat sells Hafod Ysbyty (including Gamallt) to Roger Henry Vale a Vet from Hereford. Henry's wife did not like the property and they only used it for holidays.

1963 - Roger Henry Vale sells Hafod Ysbyty (house only, not surrounding land or Gamallt) to Eluned Stanford (nee Woodford-Williams) for £7,000. The property is in a poor state and a further £7,000 was spent in restoration (roof, windows and doors). Gamallt was probably sold to the National Trust at this time [*needs to be confirmed with the National trust*].

⁶³ Deposited at NLW

1973 - Eluned Stanford buys the surrounding land (about 50 acres) from Roger Henry Vale for £20,000.

1990s - Dr Helen Ford, daughter of Eluned Stanford becomes owner of Hafod Ysbyty and surrounding land and is the current owner.

2011 – The ashes of Ann Lloyd Roberts (died 26.01.2011), the illegitimate daughter of one of Robert Jones's daughters, were scattered around Hafod Ysbyty in July (see 1911 for family).

John Townsend with earlier research by Anne Watt
27 February 2013

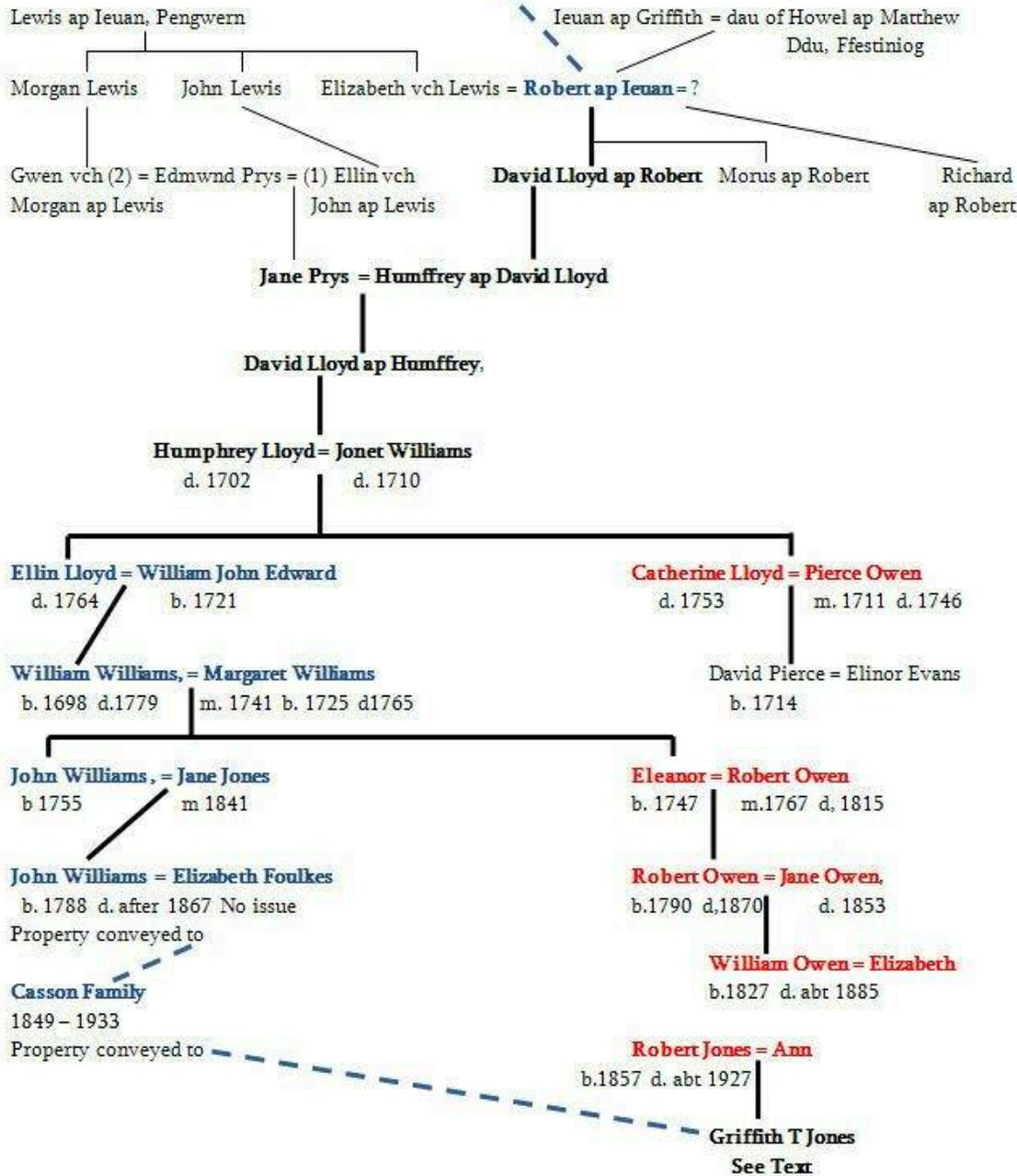
Note: This house history is complicated and in some places confusing. The information shown is the best I could do in the limited time I had within the Dendrochronology Project timescale. There is an abundance of information and documentation on Hafod Ysbyty and its owners. Much more can be done. I am reasonably happy that the documents at the National Library of Wales and Dolgellau Record Office have been found. There may be more at Caernarfon Record Office and elsewhere. Further work on the Exchequer Proceedings and the wills of some of the Casson family involved may be enlightening. I have indicated throughout this house history where more research could be undertaken - I hope it will. JT

APPENDIX A

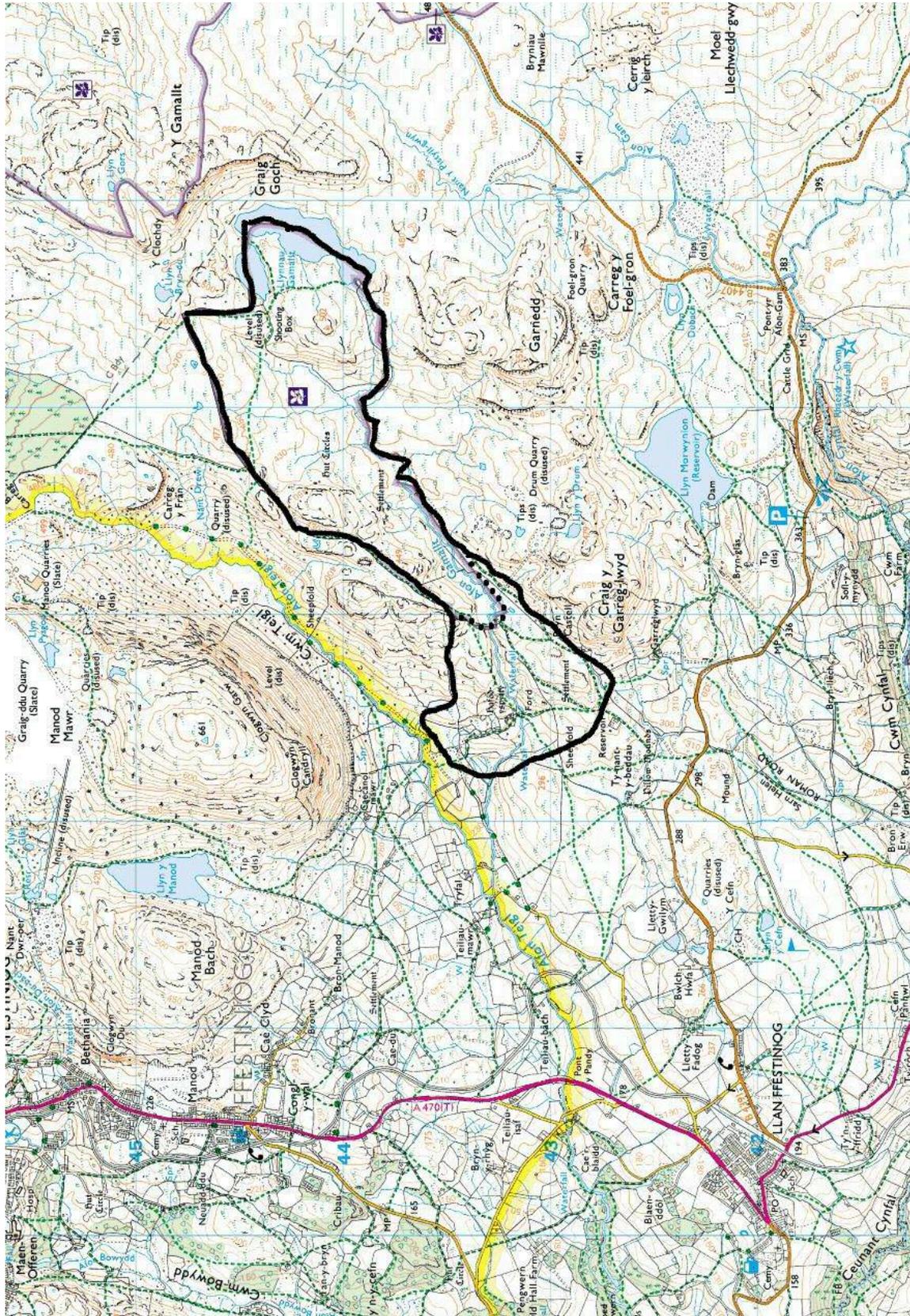
Owners and Occupiers of Hafod Ysbyty

Owners only = Blue Owners as occupiers = Black Occupiers only = Red

Monastic Property? → Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester → Ambrose, Earl of Warwick → Anne, Countess of Warwick → Lord St. John of Bletsoe → Conveyed to



APPENDIX B



APPENDIX C

Excerpt from article by Steffan ab Owain written for the 2012 Winter Edition of the MHRS Winter Newsletter 2012 but not published

“On inspecting the interesting documents of the Star Chamber during the last decade of the 16th Century we see that one Morris ap Robert ap Ieuan of Hafod Ysbyty was a complainant against some people who had been rustling his cattle, disturbing him, and seriously abusing him around May Day, 1595. Amongst the names of the perpetrators we find, Dafydd Llwyd ap Robert, Edmwnd Prys – yes the Archdeacon himself –, Lewis ap Ieuan ap Robert, Ieuan ap John and Hwmffre ap Dafydd Llwyd, the son of the first accused, and the son in law of the Archdeacon. It is said that they were armed with long spears, flails, pitchforks, swords and clubs and several other arms when they attacked him.

Thankfully, they failed in their plot that night to attack the complainant, but they succeeded in breaking into his yard and rustling some of his cattle. The next morning, Morris discovered that his cattle had been stolen by the gang, but he traced them to the house of Dafydd Llwyd ap Robert and when the complainant raised the question, Hwmffre his son came out and denied knowing anything about them. Morris doubted him and when he tried to find them in the farm yard, Dafydd ap Robert came out of the house and attacked him fiercely. Then Lowri, his wife, and Siân, daughter of the Archdeacon, wife of Hwmffre, all came out to assist Dafydd, and several criminals followed them.

The complainant was fortunate to escape with his life as the attackers were totally out of control and they shouted – “Lladdwch a distrywiwch y drelgi” (Kill and destroy the knave) as they ran after him and his servants. They had thrown him to the floor in no time, but assistance arrived in time and his life was spared. In the case, Morris pleaded for the Star Chamber to summon Dafydd Llwyd ap Robert, Edmwnd Prys and all the others. Somehow, I don’t believe anything further came of the case.

But the story does not end there. Sometime later, we find that Hwmffre and Siân lived at Hafod Ysbyty, and by then Morris had either been forced to leave the place or had made peace with the family. Yes, Hwmffre was Morris’ nephew on his father’s side, and therefore it is apparent that this was basically a family feud. It is obvious that this was not the only dispute that Hwmffre had with his relations either because things became very heated between him and his cousin at some point during the 1590s and as a result, Ieuan ap Robert, that is John Roberts the Attorney, was killed by him.

So far I have failed to find any court case relating to this atrocity although one could have been held at Dolgellau. Undoubtedly this event was known to many as the following englyn in the Cwrt Mawr collection at the National Library of Wales (Cwrt Mawr 25/15) testifies. Written by

Gruffydd Nanne, esquire, it refers to the event ger y groes yn agos i Ddolgelle lle lladdwyd John Roberts yr Attorney (by the cross close to Dolgellau where John Roberts the Attorney was killed):

Dymma garreg deg er digio –Attwrney
a'r taerni oedd ynddo
Dymma groes drwy i foes fo
â fyth i groes y fath groeso.

And now, to return to the beginning of my story, I have wondered many times, if it was at some point after this event that it was decided to place the words Peace for this house in Greek above the door at Hafod Ysbyty by the family of Hwmffre ap Dafydd Llwyd, and as already mentioned, I wonder if it was Edmwnd Prys who chose it?"

APPENDIX D

Daily Telegraph, 10 August 2002. Obituary: Hamish Moffatt

Hamish Moffatt, who has died aged 71, was a charismatic figure in vintage and historic motor racing.

His first foray into vintage motoring was inspired in 1952 by a friend's excursion through Kenya, Tanganyika and Rhodesia in a 1921 Calcott. Moffatt decided to make a similar trip in which he would cover as much as possible of Africa, north to south, "as finances permitted".

His motor car, a 1923 11.9 hp Lagonda, was not inherently well-suited to crossing the Sahara, however, being under-powered by a 1420 cc engine, developing only 24-brake horsepower. It had magneto ignition, no front wheel brakes and no shock absorbers. The four-door touring bodywork did, however, provide room for tools, a few spare parts and a change of clothing.

Moffatt attempted to recruit a companion for his journey, but he failed to find anyone sufficiently deranged to join him, and at 6.45 am on December 21 1952 he set off alone.

The Lagonda and its driver were flown to Le Touquet in a Silver City Airways Bristol freighter. Eschewing any notion of a leisurely or comfortable drive through France, Moffatt had arranged to sail from Marseilles at 3 pm the following day. Describing the French leg of his journey he later recalled: "I settled down to the car's comfortable cruising speed of 38 mph. Endless stops for cups of black coffee during the night were followed by a change to the spare magneto at dawn, because the points (new in London) had burned out. I had some nougat at Montelimar - which regrettably attached itself to the steering wheel - and was alongside at Marseilles shortly after two."

After an agreeable Christmas Day in Algiers with the Italian and Egyptian teams who were competing in the Algiers-Cape Rally, Moffatt embarked on the main challenge of the route to Cape Town.

The Atlas Mountains were crossed without incident, but a big-end bearing failed at Columb Becher; and a young Dutchman who hitched a lift from outside a brothel there managed to overturn the unfortunate Lagonda twice during his turn at the helm. Moffatt contrived on-the-spot repairs in both instances. By Nairobi he had repaired 57 punctures.

By the time Moffatt was driving from Johannesburg to Cape Town, his adventure had caught the attention of the press, and he was showered with gifts of fruit and newspapers as he went. After six weeks' driving, and 12,500 miles, he pulled up outside the Automobile Association offices in Cape Town, "seemingly all too soon".

Hamish Forbes Moffatt was born in Malaya on February 18 1931, the son of a rubber plantation manager. To escape the Japanese the family moved to Australia, where his initial schooling took place. After the war, they returned to England and he continued his education at King's School, Canterbury. Following a short spell in the Army he went to agricultural college.

Moffatt then bought a hill farm in Wales and began to acquire exotic motor cars to garage alongside the faithful Lagonda, which remained with him for the rest of his life. He was much attracted to Bugattis for "no other reason than that they are very beautiful cars". He owned two Bugatti grand-prix cars, a type 35B and a type 35T, and cherished a Brescia Bugatti which he

bought for £12 10s in 1952. For more ordinary motoring he had a 1928 Italian OM tourer - the epitome of a vintage touring car.

Moffatt's talent, competitiveness and determination won him more than 200 motor racing trophies in the 1960s and 1970s, racing his own two Type 35 variants and Frank Wall's single-seater Type 35B.

In the late 1960s, after the collapse of his marriage, Moffatt took to living out of the back of an MGB GT, in between welcome sojourns at the houses of generous friends. He distracted himself from his domestic problems by driving his OM across Australia and becoming an aeroplane enthusiast.

In the early 1970s he bought a farmhouse in Herefordshire. Despite (he claimed) having no money with which to pay for it, he had to have it because it was the "ideal site" for an airstrip. Set amidst beautiful English countryside it was, in fact, the least suitable of places to land and take off. The strip ran up a considerable slope; there was a precipitous falling away of the land on one side; and a rising bank and a duck pond on the other. Moffatt came to admire the sang-froid of anyone flying in to visit him.

He declined the services of a surveyor before clinching the deal on the house; he did not, he said, need the opinion of a costly expert to tell him it was a ruin. Diligently he restored the house and bought aeroplanes. His eye for an aircraft was as good as his eye for a motor car. He owned, for a while, a Pobjoy-engined Comper Swift, a pretty single-seater British machine of the early 1930s, but demanding and tricky to fly. Even Moffatt could see the sense of not stacking the odds too greatly by flying a highly-strung aeroplane into a difficult airstrip, and he eventually sold it.

Although he owned other planes, his favourite was his 1928 American-built de Havilland Gipsy Moth bi-plane. He was inordinately proud of the fact that its compass had originally been fitted to Amy Johnson's record-breaking Gipsy Moth, Jason.

Moffatt found the bureaucratic requirements of aviation tiresome, but less onerous than "filling in all the bloody bits of paper necessary to race at Silverstone or Oulton Park". He therefore gradually withdrew from motor-racing and took to the air, where he also attracted notoriety.

He was reprimanded and heavily fined by the Civil Aviation Authority for bombing vintage car friends in his local pub car park with bags of flour from the Gipsy Moth. This was much enjoyed by all, but contrary to officialdom's view of good airmanship.

Hamish Moffatt, who died on June 7, was buried beneath the turf of his airstrip, near to his hangar and and beneath the flight path of his ducks returning home to roost.

He married, first, Daphne Roscoe. The marriage was dissolved in 1968. In 1981 he married, secondly, Edwina "Bunty" Clark, who survives him, together with a son and daughter from his first marriage.

Resource: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1404023/Hamish-Moffatt.html>