

# **Blaenblodau Hall, New Inn, Carmarthenshire**

## **Archaeological Appraisal**



Prepared by Cambria Archaeology  
For W Jones



# **ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY**

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2008/2  
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Rhagfyr 2007  
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## **Blaenblodau Hall, New Inn Carmarthenshire Archaeological Appraisal**

Gan / By

**Simon Ratty**

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**Blaenblodau Hall, New Inn Carmarthenshire  
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Llofnod / Signature ..... Dyddiad / Date

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As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may  
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**BLAENBLODAU HALL, NEW INN, CARMARTHENSHIRE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

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**BLAENBLODAU HALL, NEW INN, CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

**Summary**

*This archaeological assessment has been prepared by Cambria Archaeology Field Services in response to a request from Mr and Mrs Jones to provide any documentary and photographic evidence of the pre 1928 history and archaeology of Blaenblodau Hall, New Inn, Carmarthenshire (SN4687037160). The pre-1928 emphasis of the assessment is due to the addition of a substantial two-storeyed gabled porch to the west aspect of the Hall during that year.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Cambria Archaeology Field Services was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Jones to undertake a rapid desk-based assessment of Blaenblodau Hall, New Inn, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN4687037160), with a view to providing documentary and photographic evidence for the history of the house. In particular, Mr and Mrs Jones were interested in pictorial depictions of the house prior to the construction of a two-storey gabled porch, which was added to the west elevation of the Hall in c.1928.

### **Scope of the Project**

The appraisal consisted of the examination of readily available documentary, pictorial and cartographic sources such as maps and published works, as well as other unpublished sources, in order to provide as much information as possible regarding the pre c.1928 period relating to Blaenblodau Hall

## **2. Historical Background**

Blaenblodau Hall (NGR SN4637160), in the parish of Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, is located to the northwest of the hamlet of New Inn, Carmarthenshire. Little is known of its early history and it does not appear on the original Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawings of 1811-12, although Blaenblodau Farm is present and is depicted as a cluster of buildings around an informal farmyard, with associated small rectangular enclosed fields. Map regression work suggests that the Hall itself was constructed at some point between 1811 and 1842, when the house first appeared on the Tithe Map. At this time it appears that the entire holding was transformed into a 'polite' landscape, with the present pattern of large rectangular fields enclosed within hedgebanks probably dating from this remodelling of the holding (Ludlow 2002, 4). The Tithe and Apportionment Map of 1842 for the parish of Llanfihangel-ar-Arth lists that the Blaenblodau Estate or, as it is described in the documentary evidence, 'Blaenblode Demense', was at that time owned by David Frederick Nichol. Nichol is listed as both landowner and occupier, and the 'Blaenblode Demesne' comprised a fairly significant land holding in the parish. The Welshman newspaper of 28<sup>th</sup> August 1859 carried an advertisement offering the property to let, although it is not known to whom the property was let.

It appears that the 'Blaenblode Demesne' was eventually brought into the ownership of the Jones family of Maescrugiau, with Blaenblodau Hall and Farm, and associated other holdings, subsumed into the Maescrugiau estate.

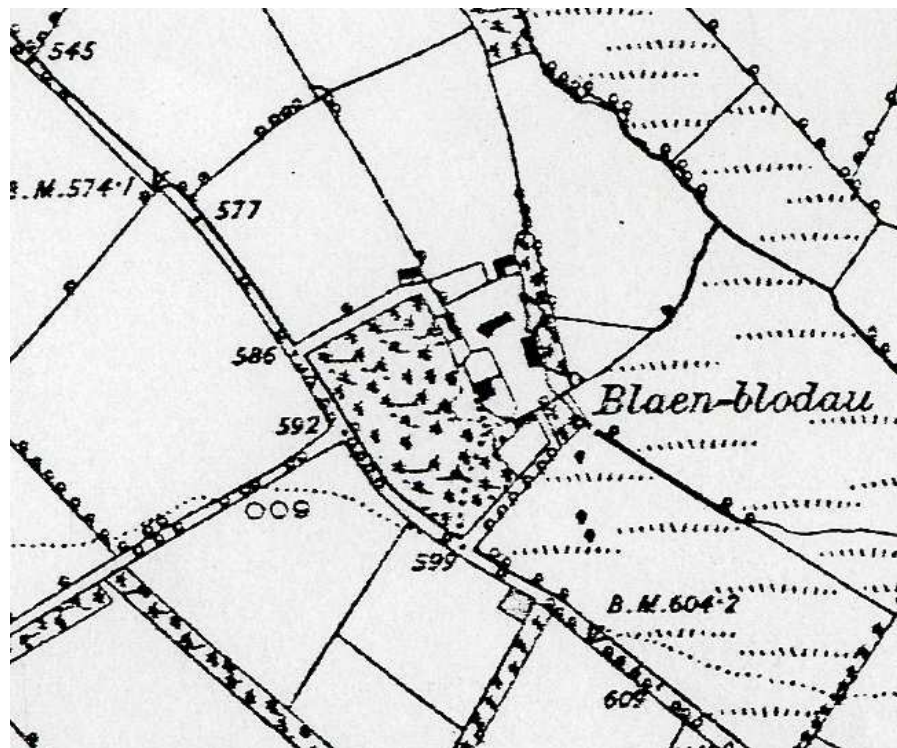


Figure 1: Extract from Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2500 (1891)



The National Monuments Record (NMR), held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) in Aberystwyth, records that Blaenblodau Hall was once owned by the Mansel family, although it is known that it was also formerly owned by the Jones' of Maescrugiau. It appears that the Hall and its estate passed into the hands of the Mansel family by way of marriage, when the daughter of Mr and Mrs Jones, Maud Margareta, married Sir Richard Mansel in 1878, and inherited the holding following the death of her widowed mother Eliza in 1890. Maud and Sir Richard had a son, Sir Courteney Mansel, and it would appear that he inherited Maescrugiau Estate.



Figure 2: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1:2500 (1907)

It has been suggested that Blaenblodau Hall was offered for sale by auction on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1906, with the sale catalogue advertising the property as 'Blaen Blodau Estate, comprising the recently built family residence of Gwastod Abbot, and 35 farms and buildings, of about 1,100 acres in Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, Llangeler and Llandysul (Cards.)' (Jones 1987, 9). Further research however has revealed that the Hall was not in fact offered for sale in this auction (Evans & Evans, 1906).



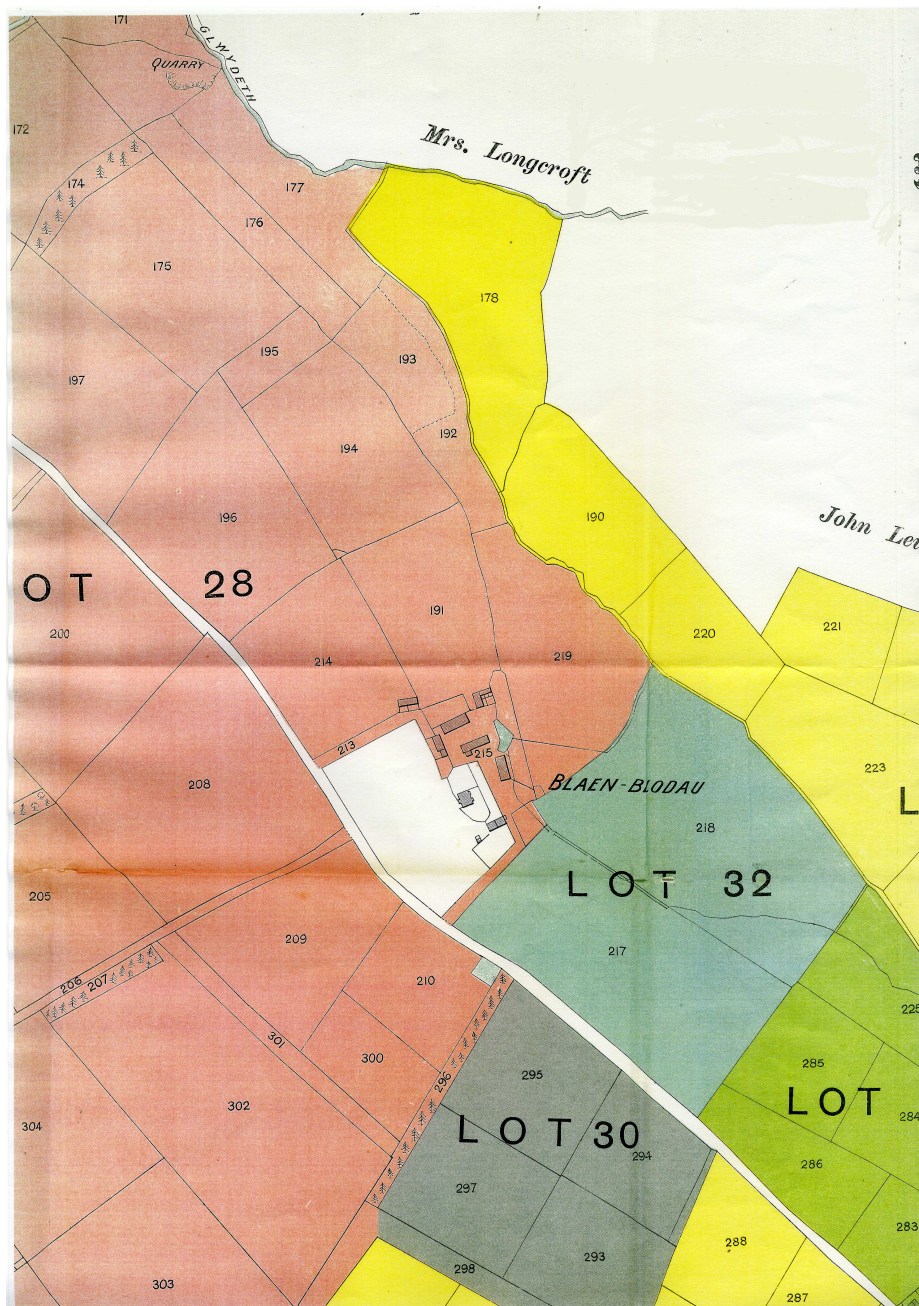


Figure 3: Detail of Sale Catalogue Map indicating Blaenblodau Hall not included in sale (Evans & Evans, 1906).

The Hall itself had in fact previously been offered for sale by auction along with other portions of the estate at the Porth Hotel Llandysul on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1902, the sale being held by the Trustees of the will of Eliza Jones to make payments in aid of her personal estate. At the time of the sale the Hall was occupied by Frank Morgan as a yearly tenant. A feature of this tenancy allowed him to enjoy free use of the well and pump on the adjacent Blaenblodau Farm, this right passing to the purchaser of the Hall. However the pump and piping connecting the Hall would remain the property of Frank Morgan (Thomas, 1902). It is known that

Frank Morgan was still living in the house in 1909, although it is unclear whether he was still a tenant or was by then the owner

Unfortunately, neither the 1902 or 1906 sale catalogues contain any photographic images. The possibility remains that when the Hall was subsequently sold in circa 1925-26 to the great grandfather of W Jones, the present owner of the property, a sale catalogue may have been produced, which may include photographic images of the Hall both externally and internally. However, no copy of this sale catalogue was found within the Records Office at Carmarthen unlike the particulars for the previous sales.

By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Hall was in the possession of the Knights of Llandeilo, and was possibly sold again in 2001 (Ludlow 2002, 9).



Figure 4 Location map of Blaenblodau Hall

Reproduced from the 1986 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale Pathfinder Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A



FIRST EDITION (without Plans).

## CARMARTHENSHIRE AND CARDIGANSHIRE.

*Parishes of LLANFIHANGEL-AR-ARTH, LLANGELER, and  
LLANDYSSUL.*

Particulars and Conditions of Sale

OF THE VERY VALUABLE

RESIDENTIAL & AGRICULTURAL ESTATE

KNOWN AS THE

# Blaenblodau Estate

Which includes the Family Residence of BLAENBLODAU, and also the very important and productive Copyhold FARMS and HOLDINGS, known as

Blaenblodau, The Cottage Farm, Blossom Lodge Inn and Farm, Clawddgwynne, Dolwenfach, Ffosyfedwen, Pantyrodin, Sunnyhill Farm, Sunnyhill Factory (subject to the Lease thereof), Waungron, Wargraig, Abernawmor, Pont-Talog Factory (subject to the Lease thereof), Ivy Tower, Milestone, New Inn Shop, Tyrcapel and Cottage, in the Parish of Llanfihangel-ar-Arth, in the County of Carmarthen.

The Freehold Farms of Blaensheddy, Bwlchyddwryhos, and a Cottage and Garden, called Tyrgate, in the Parish of Llangeler, in the said County of Carmarthen.

And the Freehold Farms of Troedrhiwfffenid, Llyndwr, Llain Fields, Darrenfach, and three Cottages and Gardens called Sychpant, in the Parish of Llandyssul, in the County of Cardigan,

WHICH WILL BE OFFERED FOR SALE BY AUCTION BY

---

**MESSRS. J. HOWELL THOMAS & SON**

---

AT THE PORTH HOTEL, LLANDYSSUL

*On Tuesday, the 15th day of July, 1902*

At ONE o'clock punctually.

Plans and Particulars of Sale, and all other information, may be obtained from **Messrs. J. HOWELL THOMAS & SON**, Auctioneers and Estate Agents, at their Offices, St. Mary's Mart, Carmarthen; or of **Mr. THOS. WALTERS**, Solicitor, Carmarthen.

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Printed by "The Journal" Co., Limited, 1 & 2, St. Mary Street, Carmarthen.

Figure 5: Details of properties included in sale of 1902 (Thomas 1902)

### **3. Archaeological Assessment**

Blaenblodau Hall was constructed immediately south of Blaenblodau Farm sometime between c.1811 and 1842. Architecturally, the Hall is in the late Georgian style of two storeys with three bayed front with pilasters, first floor sill band, sixteen pane sash windows, and an elliptical rather than curved projecting front. The rear of the Hall demonstrates two bays of slimmer construction with triple sash windows (Lloyd *et al* 2006, 362).

The following detailed description of Blaenblodau Hall is contained within an assessment of the house made by Ludlow in a Historic Environment Report produced in 2002.

Originally the front, or west, elevation of the Hall would have appeared symmetrical, as is often the case with this type of architecture, and was focussed around a central round-headed entrance within the projecting elliptical front, with six panelled door and traceried fanlight above. The original symmetry of the architecture has been somewhat lost following the construction of a 'porch' in c.1928. The 'porch' currently consists of a two storeyed, pebbledashed, gabled structure which is open to the ground floor (Ludlow, 2002, 9)

The gable ends of the Hall have twelve pane sash windows and large cement rendered chimney stacks, which may indicate the possible original presence of a significant number of open fireplaces or are an architectural statement to enhance the status of the Hall. The western gable end has an extension in the form of a 20<sup>th</sup> century kitchen, a railed area housing steps to the basement doorway.

To the rear, or east elevation, the Hall retains its original symmetrical form with two matching full height bow windows both with similar glazing. Completing this elevation are pilasters and sill band similar in form to those of the west elevation. (*ibid*)

Internally the Hall retains many of its original features in the form of six panelled doors, panelled window shutters and moulded cornices. In addition to these the late Georgian staircase is also still present. The eastern half of both floors in the Hall is occupied by a large full width room which come complete with original sliding partitions. In addition to this in the ground floor room has present on the ceiling an applied detail in the style of Robert Adam (*ibid*).

The Hall was Grade II listed as a largely unaltered late Georgian style small country house on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1992 (Cadw).

The Hall itself is situated within an enclosure bounded by low rubble walls and is approached by means of a main entrance to the southwest which leads to a driveway to the main west entry. Further entrances exist to the north and northwest also accessed by means of drives. Between these drives lay ponds and a fountain and to the east of the Hall was once a lawned area (Ludlow, 2002, 9)

#### **4. Conclusion**

Whilst it was not possible to locate any photographic evidence pertaining to the pre-1928 addition of the two-storeyed porch to the west elevation of Blaenblodau Hall, the possibility of further photographic evidence being in existence remains. The suggestion the Hall was sold in circa 1925-26 provides one possibility as a sale catalogue may have been produced and may include photographic images. A further possibility could be the 1909 postcard, of which a copy was included with the approach to Cambria Archaeology. The postcard could form part of a series produced of Blaenblodau Hall during the 1900s and which may include an image of the west elevation of the Hall. In all likelihood, the postcard was produced by a local photographer, as opposed to a large national manufacturer. The lack of a title, publisher and serial number on the postcard suggests it would be very difficult to discover if such a series was produced.

The research undertaken during the course of the archaeological appraisal has however provided some new information regarding not only the history of the hall, but also the estate itself. It was possible from the research to discover the Hall was built during the early to mid 1800s and formed the centre of a substantial estate. Additionally it was discovered that the estate passed into the ownership of the Mansel family, by way of marriage into the Jones family of Maesycrugiau. Perhaps more importantly it was possible to identify an earlier sale date of 1902 for the Hall itself as it was previously assumed it had been sold in 1906.

## **Sources**

### **Maps**

Llanfihangel-ar-Arth Parish, Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1842.  
Ordnance Survey 1811-1812, Original Surveyors' Drawings, Sheet 187.  
Ordnance Survey, 1891, Carmarthenshire Sheet XV SW, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 1:10560.  
Ordnance Survey, 1907, Carmarthenshire Sheet XV SW, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1:10560.  
Ordnance Survey, 1986 Pathfinder 1035 Pencader, 1:25000.

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### **Unpublished sources**

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Ludlow N 2002 Blaenblodau W/12/2320 Tir Gofal Historic Environment Report, Cambria Report No. 2002/35.

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