

DANYGRAIG, MEIDRIM CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING



Report prepared
by
Dyfed Archaeological Trust
for
Mr Robert Brown



ymddiriedolaeth archaeolegol
DYFED
archaeological trust

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

REPORT NO. 2008/74
PROJECT RECORD NO. 93842

May 2008

DANYGRAIG, MEIDRIM, CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

By

Simon Ratty

The report has been prepared for the specific use of the client. The Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd can accept no responsibility for its use by any other person or persons who may read it or rely on the information it contains.

YMDDIRIEDOLAETH ARCHAEOLEGOL DYFED CYF

Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo
Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Gwasanaethau Masnachol 01558 825986
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ffacs: 01558 823133
Epost: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Gwefan: www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LIMITED

The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121
Commercial Services 01558 825986
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131
Fax: 01558 823133
Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk
Website: www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

Cwmni cyfyngedig (1198990) ynghyd ag elusen gofrestredig (504616) yw'r Ymddiriedolaeth.
The Trust is both a Limited Company (No. 1198990) and a Registered Charity (No. 504616)

CADEIRYDD CHAIRMAN: C R MUSSON MBE B Arch FSA MIFA. CYFARWYDDWR DIRECTOR: K MURPHY BA MIFA

**DANYGRAIG, MEIDRIM, CARMARTHENSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING**

CONTENTS	PAGE
Summary	1
1. Introduction	2
2. The site	3
3. Results of archaeological recording	4
4. Conclusions	6
Sources	7
Figure 1: Location plan	3
Plate 1: Overall front view of fireplace.	8
Plate 2: Oblique overall view of fireplace.	9
Plate 3: Pointed arched recess with later bread oven inserted.	9
Plate 4: Niche in left hand side of fireplace showing chamfered wood arch.	10
Plate 5: Possible oven in right hand side of fireplace.	11
Plate 6: Former location of boiler.	12

**DANYGRAIG, MEIDRIM, CARMARTHENSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING**

SUMMARY

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Operations were commissioned by Mr Brown to under a programme of archaeological recording of a fireplace at Danygraig, Meidrim, Carmarthenshire (PRN 38331: NGR SN29842163), a grade II listed building. Stylistically the fireplace dates from between 1650 and 1750, which accords well with the suspected construction date for the house. It appears to have been an inglenook, with later modifications including the addition of ovens.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

Renovation work being carried out at a property known as Danygraig, Meidrim, Carmarthenshire (PRN 38331: NGR SN29842163) revealed hitherto unknown architectural features within a substantial fireplace following the removal of a later range and back wall. Mr Brown, the owner of the property, which is grade II listed, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out a programme of archaeological recording of the fireplace prior to any further works being carried out on it.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The project was designed to record the architectural features of the fireplace prior to any further restoration work being carried out on the feature. Also incorporated into the project design was background research into the history of Danygraig along with interpretation of the fireplace and its architectural features.

1.3 Methodology

A site visit was made to the property to view the fireplace and to undertake a programme of archaeological recording in the form of a photographic survey and measured sketch record.

1.4 Report Outline

This report describes the location and historical background to the site before summarising the results of the archaeological recording and the conclusions drawn from those results.

1.5 Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER¹) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

¹ Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

Danygraig is located at NGR SN29842163, approximately 1km north of the B4298 at Drefach to the north east of Meidrim. The property is reached off a narrow lane, which terminates just beyond the house.

2.2 Historical Background

Danygraig is a substantial farmhouse of probable late 17th or early 18th century origins. The property was remodelled in the late 18th or early 19th century with further improvements being undertaken around 1900. The house is a grade II listed building (Cadw ref: 19091), and was granted this status in November 1997 on the basis of the historic character of its Georgian interior. There is some suggestion that Danygraig once formed part of the Castell Gorfod estate. Castell Gorfod mansion is located to the north of St Clears in the parish of Llangynin, however, it has not been possible to discover whether this was the case from the sources available (Jones 1987, 25).

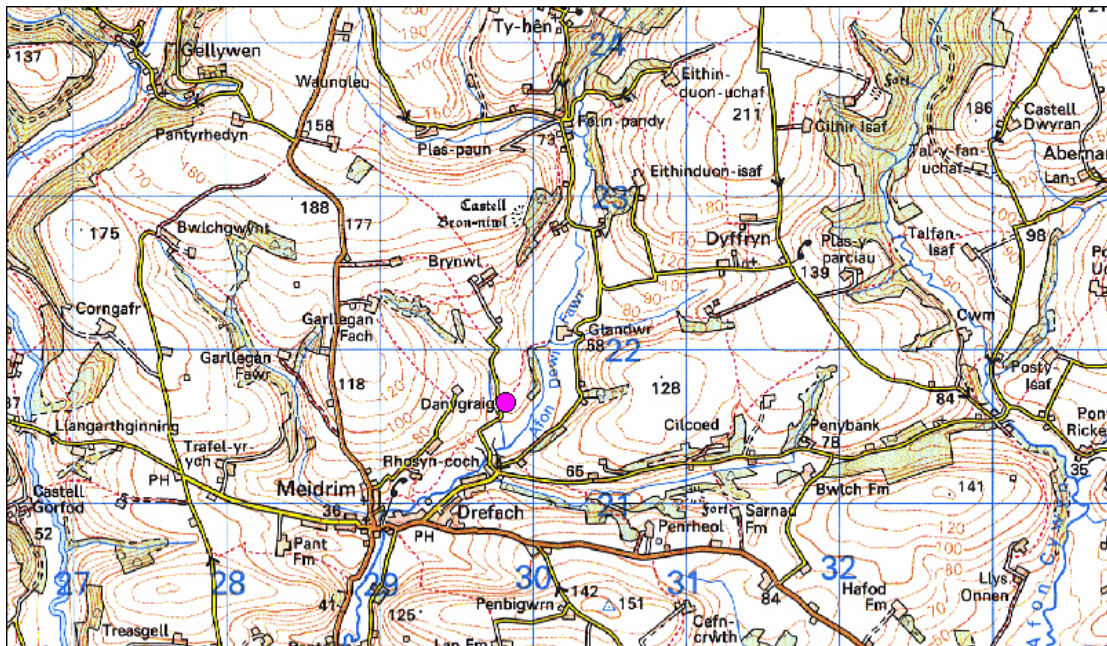


Figure 1: Location plan showing Danygraig (pink circle).

Reproduced from the 1997 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A.

3. RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

3.1 Descriptive Summary

The fireplace recorded at Danygraig is a substantial structure constructed of stone and timber, with later brick and cast iron additions. The structure has a width of 3.2m, stands to a height of approximately 1.7m (to the top of the lintel) and has a depth in the region of 1m.

Externally the main lintel, also known as a bressummer, is 3.1 metres in length 0.36m high with a depth of 0.34m and has been fashioned from a single piece of timber and has a chamfered finish. The bressummer is supported on rough stone side walls and supports the rough stone chimney wall above (Plates 1 and 2).

Internally the structure appears to have once had a cobbled floor surface. Additionally, the back wall displays evidence of differing phases of construction. Contained in the back wall are an oven with cast iron door and grate below 1.54m in height with a maximum width of 0.64m. These appear to have been set into an earlier 0.76m x 0.52m feature with a pointed arch (Plate 3). A similar oven, 0.6m x 0.6m, is present in the right hand corner of the fireplace (Plate 5). The back wall has an area of damage, 1.42m x 1.1m, where the boiler was once located (Plate 6). The left hand side of the fireplace contains a shallow recess standing c.2m high and topped with a flat wooden arch which appears to be chamfered, although this was difficult to see due to the presence of heavy sooting (Plate 4).

The chimney flue appears to have been blocked off and has a modern flue added in to it. The original chimney would appear to have been constructed of rough stone and would have been a substantial structure. No such chimney is visible on the exterior.

3.2 Results

Fireplaces such as the one at Danygraig are difficult to date as it has clearly been the subject of much alteration since its original construction. However, it is possible to make some observations, which may help date some of the phases. A fireplace in a 17th century house was usually a large construction with flanking walls to shelter the occupants of the house from draughts and help to conserve the heat generated by the fire (Smith 1988, 267). Therefore, it is possible that the niche in the left hand wall of the fireplace may once have functioned as a seat for the inhabitants of the property.

Stylistically the bressummer or lintel appears to be of a date sometime between 1650 and 1750 given it has an ogee stop. (Pers comm²). From this, and given the size of the fireplace, it may be possible to suggest a late 17th century date for the original construction of the fireplace. This is broadly in line with the suggested dating of Danygraig when it was registered as a grade II listed building.

Perhaps most interesting is the former recess with the pointed arch that now contains the bread oven. This feature clearly predates the bread oven – which is probably a 19th or 20th century addition – and may be contemporary with the original construction of the fireplace. The function of this recess is unclear although it may be an earlier oven. What may be significant about this recess is its pointed arch form as this would appear to be rare in the locality with many

² Richard Suggett Royal Commission Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, personal email

ovens not having this architectural form (Pers Comm³). This may indicate that the feature may not originally have been an oven and it may have fulfilled a storage function, possibly for keeping food warm.

The recess in the right hand corner of the fireplace is likely to have functioned as a bread oven given its form. An area of heavily disturbed back walling of the fireplace represents the location of the former boiler, which had been removed prior to the programme of archaeological recording being undertaken.

Information received from the owner of Danygraig suggests that some of the fireplace furniture survives in the form of what was described as an 'iron crane' which was at the time of the site visit stored in an outbuilding of the property. However, this was not seen and its date and form are unknown.

³ Neil Ludlow personal email.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The fireplace at Danygraig can be said to broadly date from the mid 17th to mid 18th century, which is consistent with the earliest date assigned to the property when it was listed. However, the fireplace appears to have been the subject of later reworking. Whilst it is possible that the pointed arch recess containing the cast iron oven is contemporary with the original construction it is not possible to be certain given that it is stylistically rare in the locality. However, it is possible to be more certain regarding the bread oven and grate inserted in the 19th or early part of the 20th century. It is likely the cast iron fittings may have been produced in a local foundry, although, the absence of any visible manufacturer's name makes it difficult to be entirely certain. The bricks used in the construction of the bread oven are also likely to have been produced locally with St Clears being one of the nearest brickworks to Danygraig.

It seems likely that the niche in the left hand corner of the fireplace, which once may have functioned as a seat, and the recess with the pointed arch are contemporary with the original construction phase.

Where possible, and if structurally viable, the original features should be retained within any further renovation works. Particular emphasis should be placed on the retention of the former recess with the pointed arch and the large recess on the left hand side of the fireplace as these are thought to be part of the original construction.

SOURCES

Jones F 1987 *Historic Carmarthenshire Homes and Their Families*. Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society and Cultural Services Department Dyfed County Council.

Lloyd T, Orbach, J and Scourfield R 2006 *The Buildings of Wales: Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion*. London: Yale University Press.

Peate I C 1946 *The Welsh House*. Liverpool: The Brython Press.

Scott J S 1979 *The Penguin Dictionary of Building*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Smith P 1988 *Houses of the Welsh Countryside: A Study in Historical Geography*. London: HMSO.



Plate 1: Overall front view of fireplace.



Plate 2: Oblique overall view of fireplace.



Plate 3: Pointed arched recess with later bread oven inserted.



Plate 4: Niche in left hand side of fireplace showing chamfered wood arch.



Plate 5: Possible bread oven in right hand side of fireplace.



Plate 6: Location of former boiler.

Danygraig, Meidrim, Carmarthenshire Archaeological Recording

**REPORT NUMBER 2008/74
PRN 93842**

July 2008

This report has been prepared by Simon Ratty

Position: Archaeologist

Signature Date

This report has been checked and approved by Nigel Page
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position: Head of Field Services

Signature Date

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may
have on the content or presentation of this report