

Gelli-Cefn-y-Rhos is very different to the next farm passed on the walk - Penrhiw-geingen. This is similar to the ruined Cwm yr Efail up on Mynydd Cynros. These are typical 18th/19th century planned farmhouses, with the buildings laid out around three sides of a yard. The two storey farmhouse at the head of the yard and, typically, the barn and the cowhouse on either side of the yard below. This is very much an oversimplified account of farmhouse and farm buildings developments, but the contrast on this particular walk is a very striking and significant one. An abandoned farmhouse like Cwm-yr-Efail gives a good idea of an unimproved layout - presumably it was abandoned in the 1950s or 1960s.

6. Mynydd Cynros - Commons and Enclosure.

The Surveyors Drawings of 1811-12, at a scale of 2 inches to the mile, preparatory to the First Edition One Inch Ordnance Survey map of 1831, is a very valuable source because it depicts the landscape before the last wave of Enclosure of common lands. Mynydd Cynros is here labelled Talley Common and provided common pasture for the freeholders of the manor. An Act of Parliament of 1817 authorized enclosure. No Enclosure Award giving more precise details has survived. The straight lines and regular pattern of boundaries on the 1989 Pathfinder map shows the pattern of enclosure very clearly, laid out with reference to the Ordnance Survey's 'trig. point', or triangulation survey point. It is likely that Cwm-yr-Efail Farm was built at the same time as the Enclosure, since it is an integrated part of the new layout. It is interesting however to note, having walked the route, that these Enclosure boundaries are themselves now being superceded and larger open areas returning.

This upland part of the walk therefore gives a good experience of landscape change and Enclosure as well as retaining some of the feel of what the large upland Commons were like.

7. Drovers Roads - Ffordd y Porthmyn. 35394 segment

According to Dr Richard Colyer's definitive study *The Welsh Cattle Drovers*, the main route across north Carmarthenshire passed from Lampeter to Caer, and Porthyrhyd to Llandovery. (see his map 3 attached), but he does mark routes converging on Talley that need further research. He notes "the multiplicity of routes which passed through the central part of the county ultimately coalesced at Llandovery or Tafarn Talgarth, whence the route to England was the well-trodden track over the Epynt via Tafarn y Mynydd". Cilycwm was an important focal point but the principal place for cattle fairs in north Carmarthenshire was Caer. But although the Drovers in the first half of the 19th century used the turnpike roads, they were also noted for "their enthusiasm to avoid a tollgate wherever possible". The drift roads focussing on Talley were such routes. Drovers needed to be well organised with overnight stopping places at Inns, with ffalds for cattle, shoeing places and smithies. Talley had two blacksmith's shops, as the surviving name Cwm yr Efail indicates. It had two annual fairs, held on 22nd June and 20th September. It is possible that more could be learnt about these fairs by research into Manorial Court documents.

Before Enclosure, the Drovers' route passed over the open commons. Clearly, after Enclosure following the Act of 1817, hedged green lanes were made between the fields. As noted above, some of the enclosure boundaries are now gone and across some fields the farms have pushed down the hedgebank of the lane itself. Hopefully no more of such clearance will continue. This certainly shows that the Droving trade continued on over the first half of the 19th century in North Carmarthenshire - the coming of the railways at first altered, but did not abolish droving, since the Drovers skills were now employed in assembling their animals at the Station yards. Areas remote from railheads suffered.

8. Edwinsford. 6943 ✓

One of the biggest changes in the history of Carmarthenshire in the twentieth century has been the break-up of the great estates and the decline of the landed gentry and their country houses. In Victorian and Edwardian Carmarthenshire they were preeminent, none more so than Sir James Williams Drummond of Edwinsford, one of a dozen or so major landowners in the county with 9,287 acres of land and an annual income from them of £6000 p.a. Edwinsford mansion is now a ruin and can only be glimpsed from the road and picnic place. It cannot be directly viewed from any of the walk's vantage points. But looking northwestwards from the walks up past Parcydilfa, the woodland surrounding the ruined mansion can be seen, also (with binoculars, or driving past to the picnic place, the lodge and fine iron gates of one of the principal drives to the mansion. This was the main entrance; the gate piers and gates are Listed.

Some regret these changes, others rejoice in them. As an archaeologist, I think it adds to the enjoyment of people on the county walks to act as a landscape detective and pick out the traces of 'estate' landscapes, - the tree-lined carriage drives, the lodges, the gates and so-on. Certainly it is not possible to appreciate the history of Talley, and surrounding parishes in north Carmarthenshire without being aware of the role played by the dominant landed family - the Williams of Edwinsford.

All Victorian and Edwardian Carmarthenshire gentry aspired to and claimed ancient Welsh pedigrees - but that of the Williamses of Edwinsford was genuine. As the late Francis Jones, Wales Herald and historian of the gentry class has put it: "The history of the Williamses illustrates the survival of an ancient family of uchelwyr throughout the uncertain middle ages, and its progression from the ranks of rural freeholders to the vanguard of Carmarthenshire's county families in post-Tudor days". Rhys Williams was High Sheriff of the county in 1614, as was his son Nicholas. His son, Rice was knighted, also became High Sheriff, and is buried in Talley Church. A baronetcy followed under Queen Anne in 1708, but Sir Nicholas Williams died without heirs in 1745 - his memorial can also be seen in Talley Church. His brother inherited but by the end of the 18th century Edwinsford descended to an heiress, Arabella, who married Sir James Hamlyn of Clovelly in North Devon and the two estates remained merged for several generations well into this century. Sir James Hamlyn-Williams was active politically in the county and was twice MP