

through his family tradition, been so deeply involved in the history of Pembrokeshire Wesleyanism. That alone should make the study itself an important point of reference for further research in this field.

Donald Jones

PENTRE IFAN BARN: THE REMAINS OF A TUDOR GENTRY HOUSE?

An Interim Report

Introduction

In the north of the historical county of Pembrokeshire near the northern foothills of the Preseli mountains stands Pentre Ifan farm. It is situated on the lower slopes of Carnedd Meibion Owen about 1½ miles to the south-east of Nevern and about ¾ mile to the north of its better-known neighbour the Pentre Ifan cromlech. The area to the south is lightly wooded and is known today as Coed Pentre Ifan; during the Middle Ages this would have formed part of the more extensive tract of scrub and woodland known as Coed Cilryth. Agriculturally, the area is one of mixed farming with the majority of farm units being fairly small, and many tenant farmers and smallholders would traditionally have exercised their rights to graze their sheep or cattle on the surrounding commons. At the end of the last century Pentre Ifan farm measured a respectable 98 acres. In recent years the farm buildings have suffered neglect and lack of maintenance and several are now decayed or abandoned. In 1978 the farm was presented to Urdd Gobaith Cymru (the Welsh League of Youth) and it is now their intention to utilize the site as a youth activity centre with offices and function rooms being provided in the largest of the farm buildings, generally referred to as the barn.

The farmstead is approached along a lane which leaves the minor road from Temple Bar to Crosswell. The lane dips southwards for about 300m, entering the farmyard near the north-east corner (Fig 1). The site is roughly rectangular in shape and slopes gently downwards from roughly north-east to south-west. Across the top one-third of the site are traces of former ponds, almost certainly man-made, which may well have served as fishponds. At least four such ponds were sited here and it is possible that the out-flow from the lowest (western-most) pond led to further ponds beyond the farmstead proper. Another water feature, this time a

mill leat, enters the yard near the south-eastern corner, and this can be traced from a now-silted-up millpond, situated some 80m to the east of the site, to the mill, and beyond in the form of a tail race and secondary outlet which flow due west and south-west respectively.

Occupying the eastern side of the site is a well-built 19th century farmhouse. Attached to this house, and at right angles to it, is a smaller two-storeyed building that was once used as a dairy or kitchen with a servant's loft above, which was reached by outside steps leading to a door in the west gable. This 'dairy' has substantially built walls, thicker than those found in the house and a massive hearth on the ground floor; the roof is made of a large selection timbers that appear to be re-used roof trusses. Some 5m. to the south is a small stone building, now ruined, which was latterly used as a calves cot.

Down-slope and south-west of the farmhouse is a corn mill, now gutted, but which was once powered by an overshot water wheel. In its present form it would appear to date from the late 18th or early 19th century, though the structure could be earlier. On the north side of the farmstead is a cow shed, much modified internally to accommodate a modern milking layout which replaced the earlier cow stalls. A cart shed is located next to, and at an angle to, the cow shed and the considerable thickness of its walls suggests that it is of earlier date than the latter. Several other farm buildings have probably been demolished, for there are, for instance, no identifiable stables, pigsties, granaries or hay lofts as might have been expected of a farm of nearly 100 acres. Several large concrete and asbestos sheds serve to illustrate the changes that have taken place in agriculture in more recent years.

Dominating the centre of this farm complex, and facing one as one travels down the lane into the farmyard, is what at first sight appears to be a rather well-built stone barn with a large low-arched doorway near the centre. Indeed this building was often referred to as the barn, though it had obviously been used more recently as a cow shed, the ground floor having been concreted and the walls cement-rendered in 1955 - as testified by a date inscription and the letters AFRH above a depiction of the Prince of Wales feathers carved in the cement-work under the west gable. The upper floor, or loft, served as a granary until about 1985.

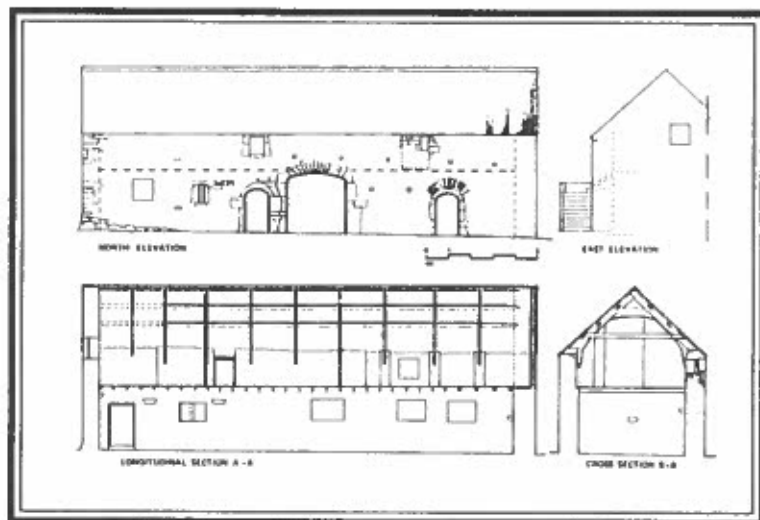


Fig.2

On closer inspection, however, the 'barn' turns out to be of much greater interest and antiquity than might have been expected. It is, in fact, a surviving portion of a once substantial Tudor establishment which formerly stood at Pentre Ifan and which will be the subject of this article.

Description

The building known as the 'barn' is a two-storeyed structure built mostly of random rubble but with more substantial roughly-squared blocks at the corners. The original door and window openings are characterised by blocks of closely-stratified conglomerate which have quite carefully worked reveals and quoins. The building measures 20.35m by 6.7m wide at ground level with walls 900mm thick, giving an internal plan area of 18.6m by 4.8m. It stands to a height of 4.5m to wall top level, rising to 7.5m at the ridge.

The northern side of the 'barn' is dominated by a large central doorway measuring 2.55m wide by 2.7m to the underside of the arched door head (Fig 2). The door reveals are strongly chamfered on the outside, this feature being continued around the vousoirs of the low-arched head. On either side of this doorway are smaller door openings, again having chamfered reveals and heads, though here the latter are cyclopean in character; with the arches being slightly pointed. To the left of the eastern-most doorway is a simple slit light measuring 800mm high by just 200mm wide on the outside, but splaying to 1160mm on the inside, and as with the door openings noted earlier, chamfered reveals are featured here also. Between the slit light and the eastern corner of the building is a modern window opening measuring 900mm by 950mm high, containing a metal casement window.

At first floor level two small window openings are evident; the first, above the eastern-most of the small doors, measures 650mm by 980mm high and though it does not display the chamfered reveals of the doorways, they are nevertheless built of the same conglomerate masonry as found in the former. An engraving published in *Arch. Camb.* in 1867 (Fig 3) shows this window blocked with masonry, but it was later brought back into use with a simple wooden frame and shutter being fixed in the opening. Mid-way along the western half of the facade is another window opening measuring just 380mm by 580mm high suggesting perhaps a small ventilation hole to the loft. Closer inspection, however, reveals that this is in fact the surviving fragment of a much larger window and examination of the surrounding stonework on the external wall reveals the outline of the former window opening which measured 1200mm wide by about 1450mm high. This window opening had been largely blocked with masonry by 1867 and has remained thus since that time. Fortunately, a reasonable-sized portion of the original timber window frame still survives within the built-up opening and this will be discussed later.

The only other features of the front (north) facade are two rows of constructional putlog holes, the first at a height of about 2m above ground level, the other at about 3.3m. The putlogs are spaced about 2m apart. Two rough corbel-like stones project from the wall just to the left of the silt vent but their former purpose, if any, is unclear.

The rear (south) elevation has been much altered and modified. In 1955 nearly a half of the west gable wall, from first floor level upwards, was rebuilt in concrete blockwork, together with approximately a third of the rear wall of the building. Consequently, any features of interest that may have been here, window or door openings or fireplaces for instance, have been lost. Three large metal-framed windows measuring 1250mm by 950mm high in the western half of the wall to the ground floor, and one measuring 900 x 950mm to the upper floor all probably date from the 1955 alterations; all have square reveals internally. At the eastern end of the south wall is a doorway which leads into the ground floor. This may be

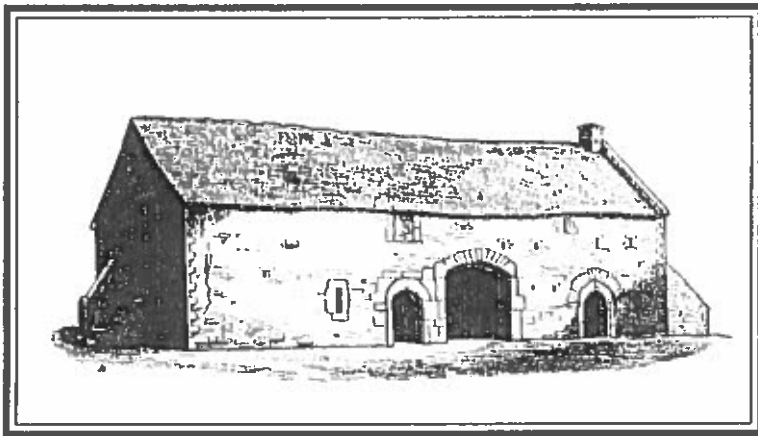


Fig. 3

a 19th century insertion, it certainly does not bear any of the features associated with the doors in the front elevation. An external flight of steps leads to a door which provides access to the loft. These steps are built largely of brick suggesting a 19th-century date or even later, but confusingly the door reveals are largely built of the conglomerate found around the old doors in the front elevation.

To the west of the ground floor doorway and overlooking the lower portion of the loft steps is a small rectangular window opening. Internally, one reveal is fairly square, but the other is sharply splayed and it is apparent that this was originally a ventilation slit, similar to the one in the north wall, that had been enlarged to accommodate a modern frame.

Most of the rear wall has been cement-rendered and the surviving area of visible masonry displays the sort of random rubble found in the front elevation, though no putlogs are evident. The outline of a wide blocked door opening can be made out in the rendering towards the centre of this wall. A modern single-storeyed lean-to has been built against the east gable and a window above it is a recent (?1955) insertion. The 1867 engraving (Fig.3) shows a flight of 6 or 7 external stone steps leading to a loft doorway in this gable, the door occupying more or less the same position as the present window, indicating that the latter was incorporated into the upper part of the door opening, probably when the present steps and doorway were added to the back of the building. The 1867 drawing also shows a very small opening or window high in the gable above the door, suggesting either a ventilation opening or a small light to an upper sleeping loft or store at this end.

A few other features are also evident from the 1867 engraving. At the western end of the building is what appears to be a stone-built lean-to much of whose walling still stands, though its original function is unclear. The roof as drawn suggests small, probably locally-quarried slate, and the feet of the supporting rafters can be seen projecting along

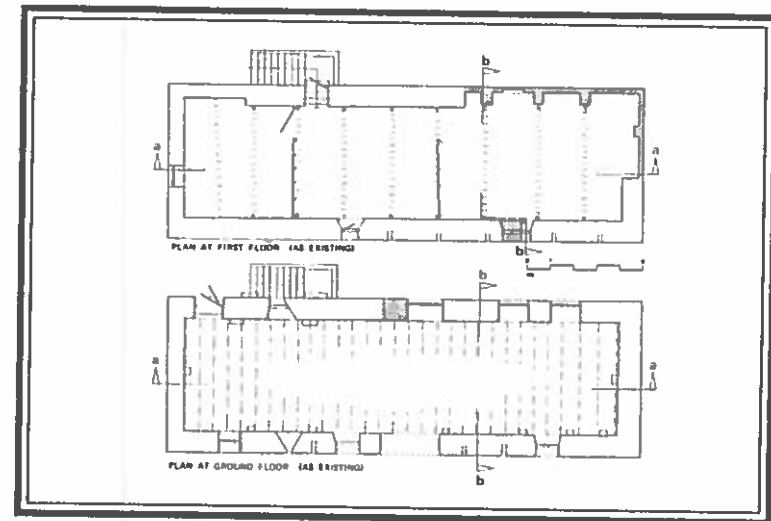


Fig. 4

the eaves. At the west gable the walling continued upwards above the roof covering in the form of a stone coping, and at that ridge is a small chimney, the illustration suggesting that it was built off-centre to the ridge.

Internally, the building shows signs of considerable modification in more recent years. The ground floor is today a single large open space, its recent use as a cow shed or milking parlour being evident from the cement-rendered walls, concreted floors and earthenware vent pipes set into the wall, together with, as noted earlier, the large metal-framed windows in the back wall and which were also built into the small doorways in the front of the building. The single doorway in the back wall may have provided access to a feed passage in front of the cow stalls.

The present ceiling is formed by the timber-boarded floor of the loft, the clearance from floor to ceiling averaging 2.9m. In the western half of the building, at a height of 1900mm above the present floor, are a number of stone corbels which project from the north wall, and there are similar corbels in the eastern half of the building (in both the north and south walls) though here they are at a height of 2260mm above the floor (Fig 4). There are no corbels in the south wall at the western end of the building, these possibly having been removed when the wall was rendered. A single large corbel is centrally located in both the eastern and western end walls at a height of 2500mm and 1630mm above the ground respectively. These corbels were presumably bearers for beams supporting the upper floor, the difference in height at either end indicating a more spacious room upstairs in the western half of the building with, consequently, a low-ceilinged undercroft below, and a roomier undercroft in the eastern part, the upper room here being correspondingly lower in height and it is possible that this extended over the central doorway and may have formed a separate small room above the entrance.

Upstairs the loft is today divided into two rooms, the smaller portion covering approximately the eastern-most quarter of the building with the other three-quarters extending over the remainder of the loft (Fig 2). This latter room has been further divided by a low timber partition. Neither of these partitions is an original feature of the building and they were probably inserted after the floor had been raised to its present level. Dominating the loft is an impressive oak roof structure comprising eight

sets of trusses with threaded purlins. A ninth pair of trusses appears to have been removed from the western end being replaced in more recent times by a poorer-quality version of the others.

The trusses, which are spaced approximately 2m apart, measure about 4m in length, from wall plate to ridge, and span 4890mm, being the width of the building measured between the inner faces of the walls. Each principal rafter measures approximately 360mm by 120mm near its base,

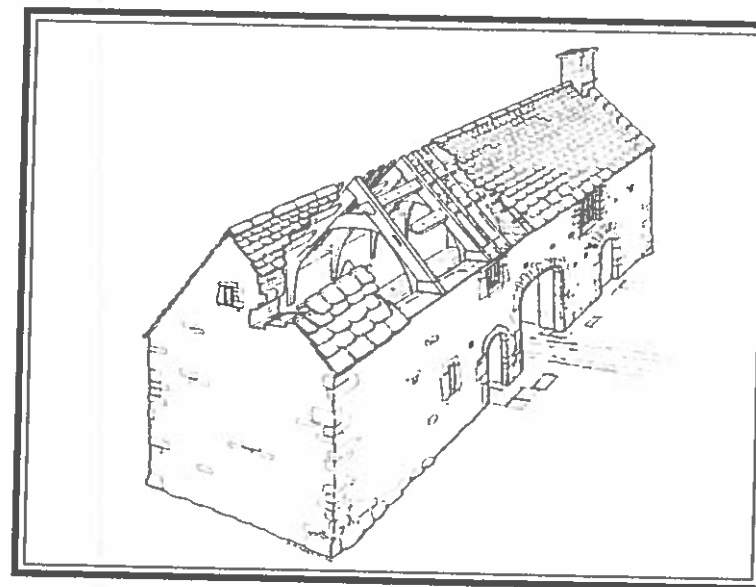


Fig. 5

tapering slightly to 300mm near the ridge. The base of these principals rests on timber sole plates which in turn sit on a wall plate. An arched collar in the upper part of the truss is again of quite substantial dimensions, measuring 400mm in depth at the centre. The curved line of the collar is continued down beyond the truss blade into a wall brace which is morticed and pegged into the lower part of the principal rafter and sole plate, and which then continues downwards for a distance of 815mm below the base of the principal rafter.

Two purlins, measuring approximately 200mm x 75mm are threaded through each principal, these purlins being lapped and joined at every other truss. None of the original rafters survive, but peg holes in the purlins show that they were spaced approximately 450mm apart, and would have been about 85mm thick, so that their upper surface would be level with the top of the principals.

The underside of each truss is decorated with a simple flat chamfer which terminates in a run-out stop near the foot of each wall brace. The chamfer is continuous around the brace, principal and the collar. The 'springer' of each brace is further decorated with a simple stepped-back rounded foot, suggesting almost a debased corbel. A small triangular, flat-gouged decoration embellishes the face of the brace just above the springer point.

The roof trusses and purlins show signs of smoke blackening and this is especially pronounced towards the west end of the building. The traces of blackening diminish towards the east and the two eastern-most trusses are virtually clean. Such evidence suggests a fireplace at or near the west gable, a fact borne out by the engraving of 1867 which shows a chimney stack here and by later descriptions (see Edwards Laws' report of 1904 for instance), though it is possible that this was a later addition and that the original fire was an open fire set on the floor.

Other than the roof, the only other significant feature identifiable here is the window located towards the western end of the building. Now mostly concealed behind masonry, sufficient of the frame can be examined to show that it measured 1130mm in width, having two mullions with small diamond-section bars between. The frame and mullions which are ovolo-moulded are 180mm deep, the frame being about 95mm wide and the mullions nearer 160mm. The outline of the window opening visible on the exterior wall suggests an overall height of about 1450mm, in which case there may have been a transom at mid-level. The inside walls are largely cement-rendered precluding further investigation at this stage.

Interpreting the Building

There are basically three elements that can be used as a guide to dating this building; namely, the door and window openings in the north wall and to a lesser extent traces of openings in the south wall; the roof structure; and the wooden window frame in the upper floor noted earlier. To these can be added historical and genealogical evidence for dates at which Pentre Ifan was occupied.

The two small doorways with their low, four-centered arch heads and their simple but pronounced flat chamfer mouldings suggest a late medieval date, possibly late 15th or early 16th century. The slit vent evident in the north wall and the remaining traces in the south wall could equally be of the same date. The large, central doorway clouds the issue slightly in that it is obviously contemporary with the other doors, and boasts the same moulding details, but its presence in what appears to be a domestic dwelling is slightly incongruous, for it would appear to be better suited to a barn. However, that point aside it can still reasonably be ascribed to the late Middle Ages.

The roof, with its large section principal rafters, arched collar, base bracing arch and threaded purlins again suggests a date somewhere in the 15th century of the early 16th century, a supposition that is reinforced by the flat chamfer mouldings, and embellishments at the base of the bracing arch. Peter Smith notes (correspondence 29 April 1988) that there is a marked similarity with the roof over Ty-gwyn, Abermo, which can safely be dated to the 15th century.

The surviving timber window with its ovolo moulded frame and mullions suggests a date in the early or mid 17th century (datable examples in Gwent for instance have been ascribed to the 1630s and Tyle House, Boverton, in the Vale of Glamorgan, has been dated to 1658), and it is possible that this was a later insertion replacing an earlier, probably smaller, window.

The ground floor does not appear to have had any windows of the size and quality noted in the loft, and the low headroom, particularly in the western end of the building would have precluded its use as domestic quarters. By contrast, the fine quality of the roof timbers and carefully

moulded window with the obvious signs of smoke blackening on the trusses and purlins strongly suggests a domestic use for the loft. The building must, therefore, have had a dual usage with the ground floor being used possibly as a store or animal quarters (stables perhaps) and the upper floor forming a not insubstantial domestic quarters which was reached by external steps, either from the east gable as shown in the drawing of 1867, or by an earlier set of steps predating the existing ones on the south side.

It has been suggested (*Arch. Camb.* Vol. XIII, 1867) that this arrangement was an example of the first floor hall house that was once fairly common in Pembrokeshire during the Middle Ages. Most such examples though tend to be located in the south of the county in areas that were controlled by the Normans from quite an early date. Pentre Ifan would, therefore, be at best an outlier to such a pattern, but the lack of defensive features tends to weigh against this assumption.

The large central doorway similarly complicates this hypothesis, but also suggests an alternative explanation, namely that the building was in fact a gatehouse, in which case one would have expected to find other associated buildings of similar date to be located near to or around it. Close inspection of the exterior of the south (rear) wall at a point directly opposite the large doorway (an area now covered with cement render) does in fact reveal cracking which appears to follow the outline of an archway. Little else can be determined until this render is removed, but the arch does appear to correspond in size and shape with that in the front wall, except that it is possibly marginally lower in height.

A gatehouse of this scale would suggest a house and estate of considerable importance, and such a gatehouse in an area as remote as this part of north Pembrokeshire would have meant that the owners would have been particularly wealthy, powerful or well-connected.

The historical background

Pentre Ifan is situated within the ancient estate of Cilrhyth in the Baronry of Cemaes, the property and surrounding lands having remained in the

control of the same family for 800 years; in fact the lineage of the Bowens of Pentre Ifan and Llwyngwair may be traced in an unbroken succession from the early 12th century down to the present day. Members of the family were almost certainly men of consequence in the 12th century and were said to be descended from Gwynfardd, reputed prince of Dyfed during the latter half of the 11th century. By the early 13th century, Gwilym, son of Gwrwared II, was actively supporting the English crown and by 1244 was appointed as Royal Bailiff to administer lands around Llanbadarn Fawr for King Henry III. In 1250, he held properties called 'Sauneles, Fradeswenith, Clunerodin, and Pennard in Cardigan' from the King at a rent of 5 shillings a year and was later appointed Constable of Cardigan Castle, a post seldom entrusted to a Welshman at such a turbulent period. Gwilym ap Gwrwared had five sons, namely Einion Fawr, Ieuan, Gwrwared III, Howel Gawr and Gwilym.

Einion Fawr, the first son was described variously as 'o'r Coed' and of 'Coed Cilruth', this being the woodland that included the slopes of Carnedd Meibion Owain, extending from the area of the cromlech to, and beyond, Pentre Ifan and westwards in the direction of Trewern. It is believed that the main family house was located somewhere in this woodland though its exact location has not been discovered.

The third son of Gwilym, Gwrwared III married Gwenllian, daughter of Sir William Cantington of Trewilym in Eglwyswrrw, by whom he had a son Robert, who married Lleucu daughter of Llywelyn ab Owen. They in turn had a son Owen (ap Roppart) and it is in a final concord made in the court of the Earl of Pembroke in 1342, which sets out the apportionment of lands and property to his heirs, that we find the first reference to Pentre Ifan.

The first son Robert ap Owen inherited amongst other property, lands and a mill in Cilruth. Ieuan, the second son, had lands including '20 messuages, 3 carucates with appurtenances, in Pentrefyoen (Pentre Ifan)'. Howel was to receive property in 'Clastir, Baywyle, Rosaverken and Melyng' and Lewelin the youngest son, lands in 'Llanerbevdu, Penkethlyvor, Talyronauc, Deinas, Brithdir and Kilgwyn'. Were any of the brothers to die without issue then provision was made for the lands to pass to the surviving brothers and their issue.

As Pentre Ifan was settled on the second son, Iwan (Ifan) it is quite probable that it was he who gave his name to the property. Ifan, however, died without a successor and the property passed to the sons of his youngest brother Llewelyn, who probably lived in the main homestead at Coed Cilruth.

Another Ifan, this time the son of Llewelyn, built a new homestead which served as the family seat for several generations and it is not improbable that this was on or near the site of the earlier house once owned by his uncle Ifan at Pentre.

Thereafter, the family passed through a phase of relative obscurity until the arrival of James ab Owen, great-grandson of Ifan ab Llewelyn, who earned fame and, later, royal favour as supporter of the Earl of Richmond on his march to Bosworth in 1485, and who by 1506 had been knighted for his services to the King. In 1514 he was appointed to be auditor and attorney of the Barony of Cemaes. Sir James married twice, having 9 children through his marriage to Jane Perrot of Caerforiog, near St. Davids, and 13 by his marriage to Mary, daughter of John Herle of Brecon. He died sometime between 1518 and 1532. In 1545, Owen Bowen of Pentre Ifan was appointed High Sheriff and in 1569 his son, Thomas, J.P., was similarly appointed. The Bowen line remained at Pentre Ifan until 1636 when upon the death of Elizabeth Bowen the property passed (through her marriage to Lewis Phillips of Cardigan) to the Phillipses.

The most likely person to have built a large homestead at Pentre Ifan would appear to be Sir James ab Owen, loyal supporter and friend of Henry VII. By the early years of the 16th century he was undoubtedly one of the most powerful individuals in north Pembrokeshire and was no doubt amply rewarded for his services to the first Tudor king. It would not be unreasonable therefore to suppose that it was he who, emulating grander Tudor designs displayed elsewhere in the country, decided to erect a substantial complex of buildings arranged behind or around a gatehouse.

During the Tudor era the gatehouse was in effect being 'rediscovered' as an architectural feature. Whereas formerly they had served a very real defensive purpose by controlling entry to a fortified manor house or castle, now in the more settled circumstances prevailing during the

reigns of Henry VII and VIII, the gatehouse was seen in more symbolic terms. Its purpose now was to impress the visitor whilst presenting a token 'quasi-defensive' image, one that would be readily associated with power and importance. The architectural (as opposed to military) gatehouse reached its peak, during the Tudor period, at Hampton Court Palace and it was perhaps only natural that such features would be copied by the wealthy gentry in other parts of the country, and several were built in Wales during and after this period.

Supporting evidence is fragmentary but examined collectively it does tend to support the above hypothesis. In 1904, for instance, Edward Laws, F.S.A. in an address to the Cambrian Archaeological Association, on the farm buildings of Pentre Ifan, claimed that the old building 'probably dated from 1395' (should this perhaps have read 1495?) in view of 'the walls being looped for purposes of defence' - though what he exactly means by that statement is not made clear. He did observe that 'the lower storey was not inhabited' and that there was but a single fireplace, presumably upstairs. He also made the interesting observation that 'the windows of the upper storey were Tudor in character' suggesting that there might have been one or more other mullioned windows (similar to the one in the north wall) possibly in the south wall, the wall that was rebuilt in 1955 using concrete blockwork.

On the 18 August 1859 members of the Cambrian Archaeological Association who were then holding their 13th Annual Meeting at Cardigan, visited Pentre Ifan. The visit was reported as follows: after visiting the cromlech ... 'The rest of the party, who had gone round in their carriages, met the pedestrians at Pentre Evan, where the remains of the mansion of Sir James ap Owain, consisting only of a stable retaining some rudely splayed windows, and an early, probably original, roof, were examined. Tradition called the place the 'House of Refuge' or some such name; but this may probably be traced to the hospitable character of its owners ... The remains of the old house of Pentre Evan were apparently about the time of Henry VII, as far as could be conjectured from the small remains, which consists only of a barn and stable ...'

More traces of the associated buildings were apparent when Richard Fenton visited the farm prior to his tour of Pembrokeshire which he undertook circa 1810. In his book *A Historical Tour Through Pembrokeshire*

he refers to his earlier visit, as follows: 'Pentre Evan, that here next presents itself, now a mere farm-house, was once the principal mansion, not only of this particular district but of this country, in the reign of Henry the Seventh, when Sir James ap Owen, one of his strenuous adherents, occupied it in the true style of baronial magnificance. Some years ago I remember to have seen fragments of buildings of superior architecture and portions of the chapel; it lay in the midst of an extensive wood called Cilrhydd ...' What these 'fragments of buildings of superior architecture' were, we can but guess; was the structure described as a chapel indeed a chapel or was he misled by a pointed-arched window or some such feature?

Perhaps the most interesting statement regarding Pentre Ifan is to be found in an article on the Perrot family which appeared in *Arch. Camb.* dated 1865, where E.L. Barnwell noted that 'Sir James Bowen was a staunch supporter of Henry of Lancaster, although his name is not mentioned in the life of Sir Rhys ap Thomas. His fame for hospitality still lingers in tradition about the ruins of his mansion of Pentre Evan, now consisting only of the Stable. The house is said to have been in the form of a square, of which the present building formed one side'. The source of this evidence has not yet been traced, but it does certainly support the gatehouse theory, where one would have entered a courtyard through the gateway, a device that was popular during the Tudor period. The Hearth Tax Returns of 1670 record that Thomas Phillips was liable for 4 hearths at Pentre Ifan; thus, if the fireplace in the gatehouse counted as one hearth, there were a further three elsewhere - presumably in the main house.

Summary

The old building generally referred to nowadays as the 'barn' is almost certainly the only surviving portion of what was once an extensive Tudor courtyard homestead. The evidence of large central opposing doorways indicates that this was the gatehouse, through which one would have entered the courtyard, this being a formal device much favoured by the Tudor gentry. Access to the gatehouse may well have been across a

causeway over the ponds that were located on the north side of the complex. The person responsible for erecting these buildings was undoubtedly Sir James ab Owen who in addition to being knighted, may have received substantial financial reward for supporting the Earl of Richmond in his quest for the English crown in 1485. The design and construction of the roof and the masonry details to the door openings at ground floor level correspond with a 15th century date. The building remained in occupation for at least another hundred years as evidenced by the insertion of the fine ovolo-moulded window in the upper floor of the gatehouse, though by this time the property may have passed, through marriage, to the Phillipses of Cardigan, a branch of the Picton Castle family.

It is not clear when Pentre Ifan went into decline, for certainly George Owen regarded it in high esteem noting (c.1600) that it was 'the chief house and place, not only of this quarter but of this country' (Pembroke-shire). The buildings must have been largely abandoned and in an advanced state of dereliction by the 18th century as Fenton recalled 'fragments of buildings of superior architecture and portions of the chapel' at Pentre Ifan. The tithe map of 1844 is, unfortunately, not particularly helpful in this respect as the farmstead, as drawn, appears to be somewhat incomplete and only one building is marked, at approximately the position of the corn mill. The Ordnance Survey 2" map, on the other hand, which was surveyed circa 1810 does indicate three sets of buildings at Pentre Ifan, and though the scale is small, these would appear to correspond roughly with the present dwelling house, the barn/gatehouse, and the mill. The other buildings would presumably have been too small to illustrate on the map.

Why, therefore, was the original house (and perhaps other courtyard buildings) demolished, and why was the gatehouse retained? The answer to the first question may be that the dwelling house had, by the 18th century, become old-fashioned and in need of repair or renovation, and it was probably considered more convenient and cheaper to build a new dwelling. The old house was therefore surplus to requirement and was probably demolished, the stonework possibly being used to help build the new house. The gatehouse, however, was a different matter; though no longer serving its original function, it could be adapted quite easily for use as a barn and stabling for horses, and it was its continued

use as an agricultural building that ensured its survival to the present day.

Pentre Ifan gatehouse is of considerable architectural and historical importance in Pembrokeshire, being one of but a handful of domestic Tudor structures to have survived in that county in a reasonable complete form. Archaeological excavations on the site may well reveal further evidence to support (or contradict) the hypothesis proposed in this note, and similarly, documentary evidence may emerge to cast new light upon the role played by the occupants of Pentre Ifan at local, county and national level during the late and post-medieval period. This study must, therefore, be an interim report, and it is hoped that, if not a definitive article, then at least a fuller one can be produced at a future date once more evidence has come to light.

St Fagans

G.D. Nash

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