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North West Wales Dendrochronology Project  
**DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES**

**Creigir Isaf, Llanengan, Gwynedd**

**ARCHITECTURAL RECORD**

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*in partnership with*



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# North West Wales Dendrochronology Project

## Creigir Isaf, Llanengan

### Introduction

This report contains the results of a survey undertaken to complement the proposed dating of timbers at, as part of the North West Wales Dendrochronology Project. The survey was undertaken on 7 January 2011 by Adam Voelcker. Documentary research will be undertaken by volunteers to accompany this survey, and a separate report has been issued describing the results of the documentary survey and of the dendrochronology sampling carried out in September 2010 by Dr M C Bridge, Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory (Report 2010/45).

### Site particulars

#### Site address

Creigir Isaf, Llanengan, Abersoch, Gwynedd LL53 7EL

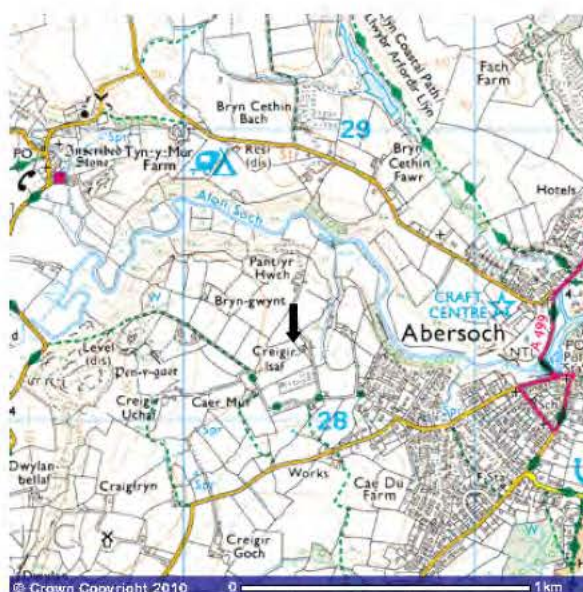
#### NGR

SH 3040 2824

#### NPRN

#### Listing status

Grade 2



### Methodology

The house was measured during the inspection (there is no reference to the house in the RCAHMW Inventory so no plans are available) and the plans and cross-section were drawn by hand. The roof timbers were not examined in detail because safe access (other than looking through the hatch) was not possible.

## Description

The house is of two storeys, with gable chimneys at each end. The front elevation faces approximately south-east, and there is a low outbuilding extending out from the north-east gable.

The walls are built of rough rubble stone, painted white or whitewashed on the front and gable elevations. There is just a hint of a horizontal line on each of the main elevations, about 1m below eaves level, and on the front elevation the wall begins to batter out below this line, suggesting that the house was previously (originally?) lower and was subsequently raised to provide a full upper storey. The front elevation is more or less symmetrical - with three small upper windows above a central doorway and two larger windows - but these are all shifted off-centre towards the north-east gable, suggesting the standard arrangement of main fireplace (perhaps with mural stair if one ever existed) at the south-west gable. However, this gable may have been rebuilt; certainly both chimneys have been.

The window and door openings appear to be of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century date, with rough stone slab lintels externally. The front and back doors do not align as one might expect in the typical cross-passage plan; the front door is central in the hall but the back door is shifted so that it is hard against the partition and beam. There is no evidence in the stonework of the rear elevation that there was a previous central doorway here. The windows and doors, of timber (but with some uPVC replacements) are modern.

The house is of four bays internally. These bays are clear in the upper floor and roof. On the ground floor the bay divisions do not continue through and the arrangement is more like a three-bay house, with the central bay similar to the traditional cross-passage and the fourth, western-most bay subsumed into the thickness of the former chimney and fireplace. The different arrangement on each floor would seem to corroborate the external evidence suggesting a later raising of the house.

The shallow (approx. 35 deg) slated roof is supported on rough oak rafters, purlins and trusses. The truss principals measure approximately 9" deep by 4" to 6" thick, have roughly chamfered arrises and are lapped and bolted at the apex, with later and more regular ties placed at ceiling level. Some of the purlins are laid flat in the old way, most are upright.

Upstairs all the partitions are modern. Downstairs they are similar apart from the post-and-panel partition between the hall and the living room, the chief feature of significance surviving in the house and probably sixteenth-century in date. This has posts and panels of approximately equal width (about 10"), the posts with 1" chamfers that are continued in the head, into which they are fixed with a pair of pegs. Some of the sill beam survives but there is no primary beam visible above the partition. The central doorway in the partition is not original since there is evidence of a pair of earlier, lower doorways to each side, probably leading to a pair of service rooms. These have been filled in with mortar or plaster either side of the existing doorway. The panelled door looks eighteenth century; the timber, dog-leg staircase looks mostly modern.

There is an oak beam above the modern partition on the other (west) side of the hall (approx. 8" x 8") and an oak bressummer above the kitchen fireplace (but stopping at the modern stone/brick pier); neither has any enrichment. There is no bressummer at the east gable, this fireplace having been rebuilt.

The likely felling date of 1499-1531, derived from the sample taken in the (west) oak beam between hall and kitchen, is surprisingly early, considering the probable later date of the house as a whole, perhaps later eighteenth century or early nineteenth. The three-bay layout of the ground floor and the twin-door partition could be evidence of a sixteenth-century house, with principal (W) room, cross-passage and a pair of service rooms behind the surviving screen; but nothing above this level (nor most of the ground floor) seems to be of this early date, implying the upper half was added or rebuilt.

## **References**

Cadw listing description

Record No. 19624 (see Appendix)





Plate 1 Rear (NW) elevation



Plate 2 view from W



Plate 3 view from E



Plate 4 Partition (north end)



Plate 5 Partition (S end)

## LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS INCLUDED ON CD

- 001 rear (NW) elevation (Plate 1)
- 002 exterior from W (Plate 2)
- 003 exterior from N
- 004 exterior from E (Plate 3)
- 005 front (SE) elevation
- 006 partition, N end
- 007 ditto
- 008 ditto (Plate 4)
- 009 partition, S end (Plate 5)
- 010 roof structure, looking towards E
- 011 ditto
- 012 ditto



## PLANS AND ELEVATIONS

