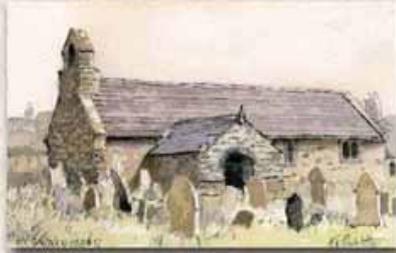
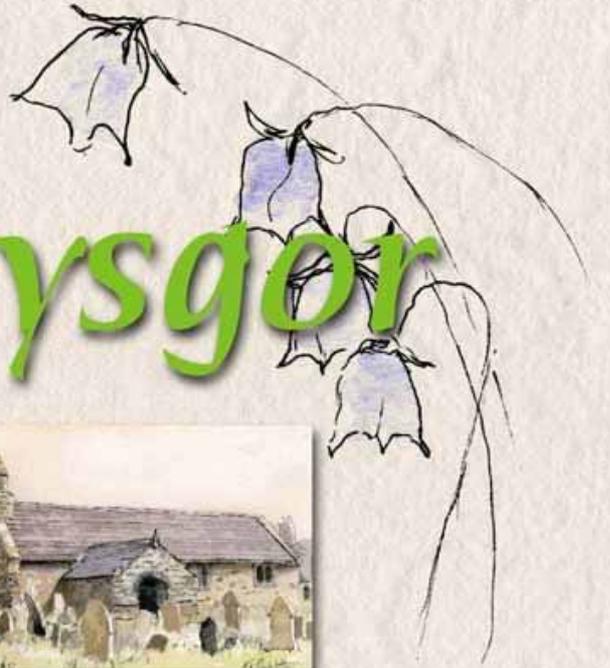


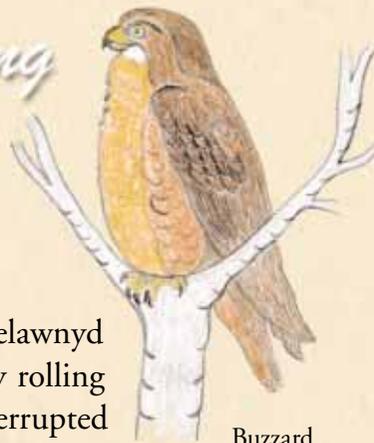


Explore Gwaenysgor



The Villages of the
Clwydian Range

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Buzzard

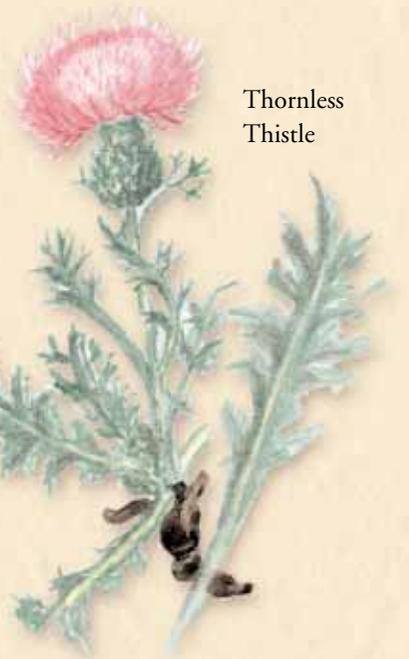
The Parish of Gwaenysgor is situated on the Trelawnyd plateau, an extensive open area of mostly gently rolling farmland on an elevated limestone plateau, interrupted by small conifer plantations on hilly slopes, especially on Gop Hill, within the parish. It is edged by steep slopes to the north which form the Coastal Hills. There are no major roads in the parish.

The area retains characteristics associated with the underlying limestone; most notably minor rock outcrops, remnant calcareous grassland and stone built dwellings. Fields are bounded by a mix of dry stone walls and hedgerows. The biodiversity of the area is associated with broadleaved woodland, grassland, outcrops of rock and wetlands.

The first historical mention of the village of Gwaenysgor was in the Domesday Book of 1086, where it is referred to as Wenescol. Over the centuries it has been known as Gwenscor (1284), Wenescor (1302), Gwensker (1610) and Gwaenyskor (1699). The differences are likely to stem from the efforts of various scribes to render the spoken name for a virtually non-literate population.

The village is designated as a conservation village within the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and new building has been restricted to within the village envelope.

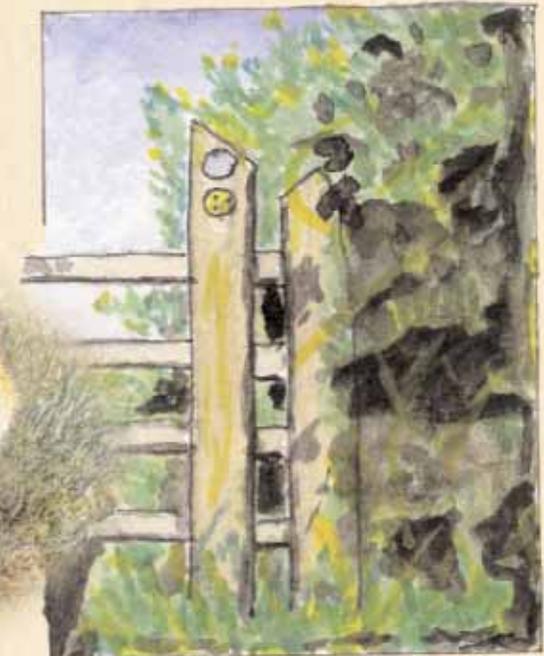
Bullfinch



Thornless Thistle

The special character of the area was recognised in 1985 with its designation as part of the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty AONB. The five Welsh AONBs along with the National Parks make up the finest landscapes in Wales and are internationally important.

Denbighshire Countryside Service manage the AONB in partnership with the Flintshire County Council and the Countryside Council for Wales who together with landowners, recreation and conservation representatives make up the Joint Advisory Committee.



Milestones of Gwaenysgor

Pre-history:

Ca. 7,000-2,000BC

Mesolithic seasonal settlement near Mia Hall Neolithic settlement on Bowling Green.

Gop cairn built.

Bronze Age burial mounds Ca. 1,000 BC

Iron Age enclosures on hillside.

Early history:

60 AD

Romans in Wales: bronze horse found in churchyard; silver coin, reign of Emperor Domitian (78-96) found in Coed y Llan.

8th/9th centuries

Anglo-Saxons: Frequent wars in the area.

Offa's Dyke.

Common field system established.

Probably Anglo-Saxon church.

10th-14th century

Christianity already established.

Norman 1086 Domesday Book lists *Wenescol*.

Present church established.

Black death and plague - 1349, 1369, 1379 and 1391.

1500-1600:

Church reconstructed.

Acts of Union (with England)

Church registers in Wales begun.

Bible and Book of Common Prayer translated into Welsh.

Golden Grove established.

1600-1800s

Church reconstructed.

Ty Isa and Ty Ucha Farms built.

Tir Gwelyog built as the Rectory (probably extending an earlier building).

John Thomas, a miner of Pant y Fachwen, died falling down a shaft at the Talargoch mine.

1801-1900:

Non-conformism established in the village.

Enclosure of the commons.

New Rectory (now the Old Rectory) built.

Independent Chapel built (now Bryn Siriol)

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel built.

Largest population of Gwaenysgor, 380.

Post box.

Ty'n Twll abandoned.

National Education Act.

Diphtheria epidemic and Small pox.

National Church of England School opened providing universal education.

Tithe Wars.

1901-1930

1905 Non-denominational Board School opened.

1909 National School closed.

1912 Whooping cough epidemic closed school.

1914 Outbreak of First World War.

1915 Scarlet fever epidemic closed school.

1918 End of First World War: Isaac Griffiths (19) and Alun Parry (24) had been killed.

1927 Influenza epidemic closed school.

Council houses built.

1928 Post Office opened.

Independent Chapel closed and became butcher's shop.

1930-1950

1930s Bus service established on Saturdays.

1932 Mains water supplied from standpipes.

1936 Electricity brought to the village.

1937 Plas Gwen abandoned.

1939-1945 Second World War:

Evacuees, RAF radar station built, ARP established, land girls and prisoners of war worked on the land.

One casualty: William House died on the Burma railway, bonfire on Gop to celebrate end of war.

1948 National Health Service established.

1949 Mains water in homes.

1950-1995

1957 Wesley Place demolished.

1958 Tarmac applied to the steep hill to Prestatyn.

1959 First Streetlight.

1961 Butcher's shop closed.

1967 Mains sewage system installed.

1971 Offa's Dyke National Footpath opened.

1975 Village part of newly established Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Beauty.

1990 Gwaenysgor Conservation Group founded.

Early 1990's Post office and last shop closed.



Early History

Gwaenysgor is an ancient settlement. People have lived here for more than 5,000 years. There are indications of a walled Stone Age settlement, about 4,000 BC, to the north of the present village on what is known as King Charles' Bowling Green. The Gop in the south of the parish - the second largest mound of its type in Great Britain - is another Neolithic site where cave burials have been found. Bronze Age and Iron Age enclosures and burial mounds exist in the hills around the village.

The Romans were in Wales by 60 AD. Roman coins have been found in the village and a small bronze horse was dug up in the churchyard. A silver coin dating from the reign of Emperor Domitian (78-96 AD) was found in the glebe lands south of the Old Rectory.

By the 8th century the area was more or less under the control of the Anglo-Saxons. Traces of the ridge and furrow field system, in which villagers held strips of land, can still be seen to the south of the village. They can be seen best when the grass is short and the sun is low. During this period the coast was subjected to raids by the Vikings and some historians have claimed a Norse origin of the village name. King Offa of Mercia (760-784) was responsible during this time for the building of Offa's Dyke.

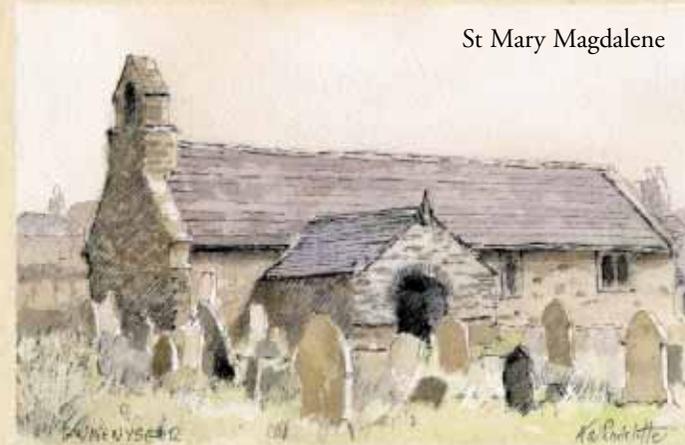
While Gwaenysgor was not centrally involved, being in an area where the Anglo-Saxons retained control; conflict between the English and the Welsh continued however. Then in the 10th century Hywel Dda became king of all Wales. After his death in 950, fighting broke out between rival groups and continued for nearly 100 years until Gruffydd ap Llywelen defeated the Norse, English and his fellow Welsh between 1039 and 1055. In 1063 Wales was again ravaged by English armies and Gruffydd was caught and beheaded. Although the country as a whole was in turmoil, the village probably continued as a subsistence agricultural community throughout these centuries.

The Normans conquered England in 1066 and eventually this part of Wales came under Norman control. Under the Normans, the village was listed in the Domesday Book of 1086. This is the first historical record of a name for the village. Wenescol is described as a small village with a "wasted" church and four householders, two of whom were Normans. The total population would have been about 20 at that time.



Christianity

The circular headed cross Maen Achwyfan in the neighbouring parish of Whitford, dates from the tenth century demonstrating that Christianity was well established in the area before the Normans came. However, the site of the present church may



St Mary Magdalene

have had pre-Christian religious connections. It has been suggested that the small Roman bronze horse found there may have been an offering.

The circular churchyard is evidence of its antiquity, pre-dating the present church. The ruined church in Gwaenysgor in 1086 was probably a wooden structure of Angle-Saxon origins. The existing Norman church, dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, was built in the 13th century. You can see that the porch is large for such a small church and it is thought that this served as both a vestry and as a lych-gate, where the coffin would wait for the clergyman to arrive. The wooden frame in the inner door may survive from the previous church. On the north side of the church are a small vertical window known as the Leper's Squint, so that lepers could see the Host, and the blocked up Drws y Diafol (Devil's Door) used earlier to admit the unbaptised, unchurched women and the excommunicated.

The Church would have been Roman Catholic until the time of the Reformation. It has the longest surviving church registers of births, marriages and deaths in the country dating back to 1538. They were instigated by Henry VIII of England and record the death of Elizabeth I.



North side of St Mary Magdalene

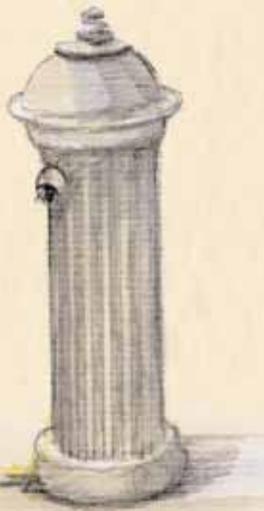
The Non-conformists became established in the village in the early years of the 19th century. Wesleyan Methodism came to the village in 1803, meeting at first in Ty'n y Caeau Farm and later in Ty Draw. Rehoboth Wesleyan Chapel (opposite the Eagle and Child inn) was built in 1835 and continues to hold services. Similarly, the Independents first met at Hafod Farm and built their chapel in 1830. Subsequently, the Independent chapel became a butcher's shop in 1928 and is currently the private house, Bryn Siriol.



For most of the 19th and 20th centuries most of the villagers were Non-conformists. The Tithe Wars in the late 19th century were particularly assertive in the village as the majority of Non-conformists resisted the tithe to support the Anglican church. The tithe agent, who travelled to the village from Holywell, had some bad experiences in Gwaenysgor, including the following at Ty Isa Farm:

The police officer remained outside ... after the lapse of half-an-hour, he went in quest of Mr. Craft. After considerable searching he found that gentleman had been locked into one of the rooms of the house. The police officer, after considerable difficulty, succeeded in opening the window and rescuing Mr. Craft from his involuntary confinement. By this time a number of persons had collected, and they showed a very hostile spirit. Mr. Craft was pelted with rotten eggs and both he and the driver of his conveyance (hired from the Alexandra Hotel, Rhyl) were struck with stones. The attitude of the people was such that Mr. Craft considered it prudent to then leave the neighbourhood. Legal proceedings will be taken against the parties...

Quoted from the Flintshire Observer, 19th September, 1889, in On Common Ground by Roger Hadley, p.47.

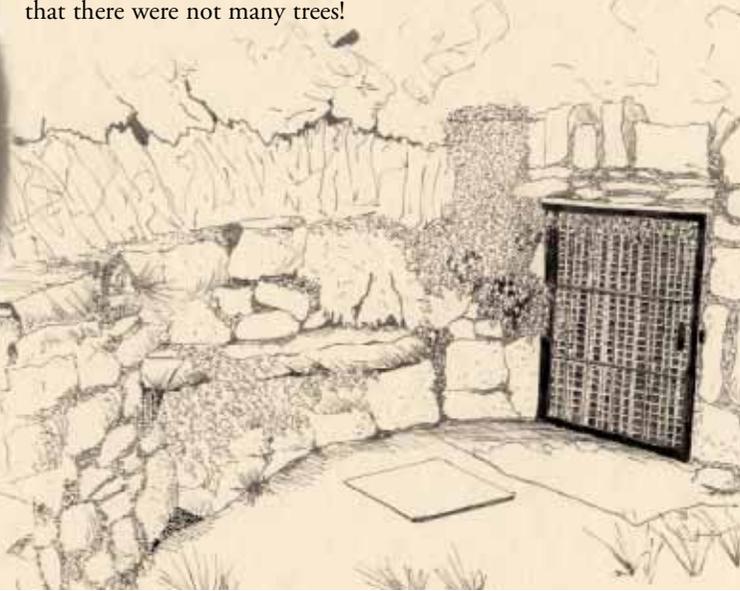


Water

The presence of water is critical for any settlement and for wildlife. Bryn Llwyn Pond is an important feature of the village. It is situated on the roadside on the north. This and another area of open water in Well Lane were probably the sources for the earliest inhabitants of the village, lying as they do within easy reach of the Neolithic settlement. The apparent entrance to the settlement comes down into Well Lane. Both of these ponds and Llyn Coch on the southern boundary of the village form part of a chain of ponds which over the years have served villagers, stock and wildlife and continues to provide a route for migrating bird life.

For most of the life of the village water came from wells and footpaths leading to the wells are still used today. The first official water supply was a public well and can be seen in Well Lane. Previously there was a large pump here. The shelf or seat around it, where villagers could put their buckets can still be seen. Standpipes were finally installed to provide piped water to the village in 1932, but mains water was not available to individual houses until after the second world war. Two standpipes remain: one can be seen on the corner of the village green and the other near Rehoboth Chapel. When one considers the large size of families in the 19th and early 20th centuries one can only imagine the toil involved in daily domestic life.

Early photographs of the village show a very bare picture with few trees in comparison with the leafy community of today. Wood was the only source of fuel available or that people could afford and water and cottages were heated by burning wood. It is not surprising that there were not many trees!



The well today



Agriculture

For most of its long history, agriculture was the main occupation for villagers. Iron Age enclosures on the hillside are thought to have been for containing animals. For much of this time, subsistence farming was the dominant occupation. The patterns of medieval field systems remain. In 1086 the population of approximately 20 would have worked the land. The earliest census of the village, conducted in 1681 by the rector, lists a population of 129, mostly yeoman farmers, labourers and their families, in 29 households.

Most of the farms in the parish belonged to the large estates of Golden Grove or the Mostyn Estate and were worked by tenant farmers and their labourers. Farming was predominantly pastoral with most crops for village consumption.

The agricultural depression of the late 1870s and the subsequent rise in rents following the acquisition of much of Golden Grove by Henry Pochin in 1877 led to a local decline in the numbers involved in farming. Between the censuses of 1871 and 1881, the numbers involved in work on the land dropped by half, while the numbers working in lead mining remained the same. It has been suggested that this reflected the fact that farms could support fewer people, rather than mechanisation in a poor parish. It was in the 1870s that a few left Gwaenysgor to seek their fortunes in the USA.

Both men and women worked in agriculture. Emily Price was the daughter of John Price of Teilia farm. In 1905, she was about 21 years old and worked with the livestock on the farm. The Prestatyn

Weekly reported the following story, which demonstrates her strength and determination: Taking the Bull by the Nose: Lady's Plucky Action

During the Second World War land girls and prisoners of war were sent to help with work on the farms. Since the second world war, the number of farms has declined from eight farms and small holdings to only four today. While dairy farming was predominant for most of the second half of the 20th century, only one dairy farm remains. Grain production has declined. The other farms mainly raise store cattle and sheep. These changes in farming have an impact on the landscape and on wildlife in the area.



The other day at Teilia farm a formidable bull, which was being fed up for the Mold Show, broke loose from its stall and began to smash up everything. Miss Price, the farmer's daughter, took him by the ring in his nose and held him until assistance came.



Mining

Blue Jay

It is thought that the Romans mined lead in the area, probably at the Talargoch Mine in Meliden. By the middle of the 19th century, many of the men in the village listed their occupations as farmer/miner. Small-holders in particular worked in the mines to supplement their income from farming. In addition to the large Talargoch mine, which employed 500 including boys as young as 7 in the mid-19th

century, there were several other smaller mines in the area. The Talargoch mine closed in 1891. The fields are full of disused shafts, which are marked on the larger scale Ordnance Survey Maps.

In the late 19th and 20th centuries miners went from the village to work in the coalmines at Point of Ayr, walking down the hill to Prestatyn in the mornings and back in the evenings.



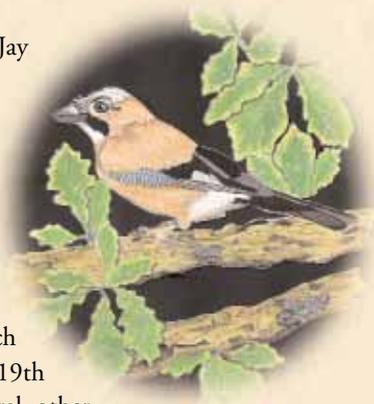
Clives Engine House

Gwaenysgor has few notables, but one was Lord Macdonald of Gwaenysgor. He was Gordon Macdonald, born in the village in 1888, the son of a miner and himself became a coalminer. He was active in the union, later became an MP. In 1947 he was knighted and became Governor of Newfoundland in Canada. When he returned to the UK he became Paymaster General and subsequently BBC Governor for Wales 1952-60. Gaunor Fox remembers his visit to her grandmother which illustrates his lack of self-importance.



Lord Macdonald of Gwaenysgor

He had just come back from Newfoundland and because he was the last governor of Newfoundland he brought back a fur coat for the Queen and he had been to present it to her. My grandmother suffered from bouts of migraine and biliousness and was in bed when he called. He knocked on the door and said 'I'm Lord Macdonald and I'm Rosina's cousin.' My mother said 'She's upstairs in bed, ill,' and he said 'Well, I'll go upstairs and see her' and my mother made me take him up and of course, there was the potty on the floor because we didn't have a toilet. I remember standing there on the other side of the bed. I could only have been about ten. He said that he had come back and he told the story how he had presented this to the Queen...



Other Occupations



In the early days, there were very few specialists in the village. Occupations other than farming and mining grew rapidly in the mid-19th century. By 1871 there was a joiner or carpenter, a shoemaker, a dressmaker, a seamstress, a tea dealer (sic!), two shopkeepers, a teacher, a bricklayer and a plasterer. There were also two publicans who were also miners. In the mid-20th century, there were two shopkeepers (a butcher and a general store) and a post office. The last shop closed in 1990's.

There was no professional midwife in the mid-19th century and people relied on local women who learned their skills on the job. Gwaenysgor had the services of Ann Williams, the widow of a farmer, who by her eightieth birthday in 1890 had delivered 1300 babies. There is no evidence as to exactly when she started acting as a midwife but with that number of births, even taking account of the fact that she worked in neighbouring parishes too, it is likely that she was doing this job by the 1860s if not before. We don't know what her success rate was but it is clear from the eulogy written for a presentation made to her on her eightieth birthday that she was held in high regard by the villagers.



From: On Common Ground by Roger Hadley, p. 13.



Ann Williams

In the 19th century young women worked in service as soon as they were old enough; some as far afield as Cheshire and Lancashire. In the 20th century more villagers worked in Prestatyn or Rhyl and other places on the coast, walking down the hill and then using the buses as necessary. Now most villagers drive to work outside the village daily as far away as Manchester. However, there has also been an increase of those who work at home courtesy of technical communications developments.



Quarries

Thornless Thistle



From early times, there were several small quarries in the village on common land. These were mainly used by villagers needing stone and most of the stone buildings and walls have been built of the limestone on which the village is located. The other use was to create lime for use on the fields and to lime wash dwellings and lime kilns existed in several places.

A village quarry and a lime kiln were behind the Methodist Chapel. This was filled in the second half of the 20th century and is now Chapel Green. The largest quarry was in the field between Ty Draw and the rest of the village and at one time two lime kilns stood opposite the gate to the house.

The limestone walls of the village have been identified as a special feature and provide valuable habitat for birds, small mammals, invertebrates and insects. The preservation and restoration of these walls has been an important aim of Gwaenysgor Conservation Group in recent years.



Chapel Green

Under the terms of the 1804 enclosure ... The Proprietors of Estates within the said Parish of Gwaenysgor shall for ever hereafter use and enjoy the eight last described Allotments for the several purposes of getting Marl and Clay to make Bricks, building Stone, Stone for the reparation of the Highways within the said Parish Gravel and Sand and Earth



Old Village Homes

Ty Isa Sundial



The oldest surviving houses in the village date from the 17th century. You can see several with dates engraved into the stone: Bryn Ffynnon (1680), Tir Gwelyog (1671) (earlier the Rectory), and the two oldest houses are Ty Isa Farm and Ty Ucha. Ty Isa has a 17th century sundial on its facade.



Ty Isa

Many of the small cottages built in the late 17th and the 18th centuries have disappeared, including a cluster called Plas Gwen at the end of Well Lane, which were in use until 1937. Ty'n Twll, which was to the south of Ffordd y Mynydd near the entrance to Bryn Hyfryd, is shown



Bryn Ffynnon

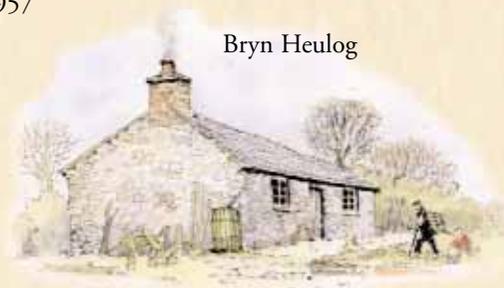
on the earliest maps of the village when few other buildings existed. It last appeared in the Census records in 1871, when it was occupied by a widow aged 65 and her 15 year old grandson. It is likely that it fell into ruins following her death.

Hamlet of Plas Gwen



Early cottages were likely to have been similar to Bryn Heulog on the Teilia Road. A similar cottage, known as Pant y Fachwen, was built on the hillside on the north-western edge of the parish and was inhabited until the 1870s. It is likely that the long walk up and down the hillside to fetch water from Ffynnon Mair was a contributory factor in its abandonment.

What is now the village green was the site, until 1957 of a cluster of three 19th century cottages known as Wesley Place, which included a public bake-house and a pound for straying animals. The flat wall near the village notice-board was used to place baking tins on. By the 1920s Wesley Place was considered by the parish council to be a slum and was condemned.



Bryn Heulog

Pant y Fachwen was built on what was then common land in the 18th century or earlier. In 1791 a 58 year old lead miner living there was killed when he fell down a shaft in the nearby Talargoch mine. In the 19th century a succession of miner's families lived there. The last recorded household, in the census of 1871, consisted of the miner and his wife and nine children between 5 months and 19 years old. The cottage had two rooms: a kitchen at the west end, where the fireplace is still clearly visible and another room to the east. Outside, at right angles to the cottage was an outbuilding which probably contained a boiler for laundry and perhaps a bread oven. An acre and a half of land was attached to the cottage.

From: Walking with History by Roger Hadley



Pant y Fachwen



Most of the residents moved into the new council houses and the cottages fell into dilapidation. They were finally demolished in 1957.

Some old cottages have been so altered that they would no longer be recognisable to their former occupants. Many of today's single homes were originally two, three or four small terraced cottages. Bryn Glen and Bryn yr Orsedd both were once three cottages; Canol y Marian and Rhydycilgwyn two (see overleaf). Throughout the 19th and the first half of the 20th century most of the homes in the village were owned by outsiders and rented to villagers. Now nearly all the homes in the village are privately owned including many of the former council houses. In the same period, most households numbered 4-8 members. In 1871 the two largest families had nine children.

Today most households include mainly 1 to 4 people. The history of one cottage serves to give a picture of village life over the last two centuries.



Pant y Fachwen today

Rhyd y Cilgwyn and Tan y Bryn (opposite the Old Rectory)

The land on which this cottage stands was originally common land. In 1804 under the Enclosure Act, the land was awarded to Edward Morgan, squire of Golden Grove. Around 1822 two small cottages were built probably to house lead miners working in Morgan's mines of which there were several in Gwaenysgor. One cottage, Tan y Bryn, was where the small building opposite the gate stands and the other facing west, Rhyd y Cilgwyn, was on the site of the present house. These were small cottages probably of two or three small rooms similar to Bryn Heulog and Pant y Fachwen. The houses were amalgamated into one property before 1839. The records are confusing because both names continued to be used in different contexts, although the property was known locally as Tan y Bryn until the 1960s. Water would have come either from Llyn Coch or from the well in Well Lane using the footpath which still crosses the field to the west.



Rhyd y Cilgwyn

The death of Elizabeth in 1864 left the house vacant and that same year another related Ellis family moved in. The new family consisted of Henry, 39, his wife, also Elizabeth, 32, and five children aged 6 months to 11 years. By 1871, at the time of the Census, three more children had been born and Henry and two of his sons (18 and 15) worked in the lead mines. Their youngest son died at the age of 3 in 1872, probably of diphtheria as there was an epidemic that year. In 1877 the squire's widow sold the Golden Grove estate and the cottage was sold for £35 to Henry Pochin, a wealthy landowner.

Shortly after this Henry and Elizabeth Ellis and their family moved to Four Crosses (now Bryn Gwalia) at the crossroads to the south of the village. By 1881, their three oldest children had left home but they had had three more children. Henry, 55, and two sons (19 and 14) worked in the lead mines.

The Ellises were replaced at Tan y Bryn, as shown in the 1881 Census, by Edward, 45, another lead miner, and Catherine Hughes, 33. They had six children aged one to nineteen. Two sons (19 and 15) worked in the lead mines with their father.

The 1841 Census lists the family as consisting of Edward Ellis, 38, a lead miner, his wife, Elizabeth and six children aged from 7 months to 13 years. They were leasehold tenants of Edward Morgan. All members of the household had been born in the village and were Welsh speaking. By 1851, the three eldest children had left home but two additional children had been born, aged 4 and 7. Edward died in 1860, aged 58, and Elizabeth in 1864, aged 63. They are buried together in the churchyard near the gate.

(Judging by the age of Catherine, It is likely that the mother of the older children had died and Edward had remarried.) They remained there until the lease expired in 1885. They were followed by a short lease to Henry Thomas the local schoolmaster, probably the first occupant to speak English. The property appears to have deteriorated at around this time as the rateable value dropped substantially.

In 1889, Henry Pochin sold the property to a farmer from Llanasa, who rented it to John and Mary Parry. John was another lead miner but he was also the parish clerk so must have been literate and also spoke English. The 1901 Census lists, John Parry, 53, lead miner, his wife Mary, 54, and two sons aged 12 and 20, born in the village. The eldest was listed as a coalminer. Also listed is a grandson, William, 10, born in Northampton, indicating that there were probably other older children who had left home. William's mother had died in childbirth. Mary, had been born in Whitford and her grandson born in England, where his mother was in service.

In 1899, the house was sold again to Thomas Morgan of Golden Grove, a descendant of the original builder. The house remained with the Parry family however. Mary Parry had died in 1897, aged 60. Their son, Robert Parry continued to live there with his wife Anne. They had three children born in 1898, 1903 and 1907. Robert was still living in the house in 1912.

From 1914-1923 the house was empty and probably derelict. During this period it was bought by Charles Booth, an accountant, married to Eileen Booth. The old Rhyd y Cilgwyn (the west building) was substantially rebuilt and enlarged with a new front facing south. The property continued to be known as Tan y Bryn. Charles Booth subsequently became a parish councillor. The Booths with their two children lived there until the 1930s. After this it was only temporarily occupied and probably functioned mainly as a holiday cottage.

In 1966, John and Edith Bilsborough moved in when they retired from running the pub in Trelogan. They restored the name of the house to Rhydycilgwyn, as it appeared in their deeds. Tan y Bryn was by this time dilapidated and used as a garage to accommodate the motor age. In the 1980s, the Bilsboroughs moved to Meliden to be nearer amenities and the house was

acquired by Roy Noon, who had no local ties, who lived there with his wife for a while. It was subsequently rented out for a few years until it was acquired as a family home by the present occupants, Pete and Gill Jones 32 and 44, and their daughters Aisla, 12 and Ruth, 9, who already lived in the village. They have enlarged the house further and restored the old Tan y Bryn as living accommodation retaining the original scale.



Tan y Bryn



Schools

For most of its history there was no formal education in the village. The first school was held by a woman in Craig yr Ysgol, which would have looked quite different in those

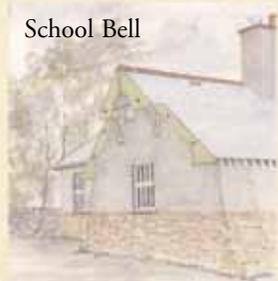
days. This was available only to those who could afford to pay. After the 1830s,

most education in the village, for adults and children, was carried out in the Non-conformist Sunday schools, its main aim to enable people to read the Bible.



Village Hall

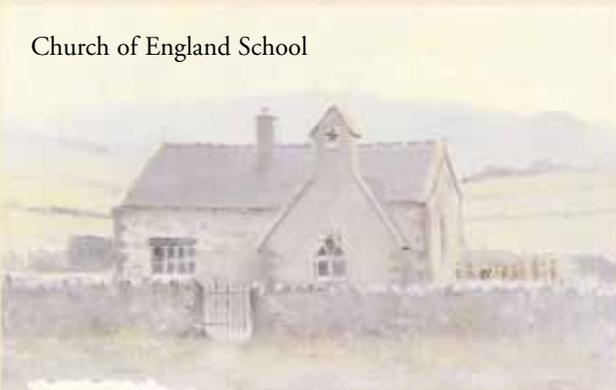
School Bell



Following the National Education Act of 1870, a National or Church of England School was opened in 1876. This was not welcomed by the Non-Conformists and subsequent open conflict in the village ensued until in 1905 a non-denominational Board School was opened. The National School closed in 1909. The Board school was closed in 1968 and is now the Village Hall.

The war of the schools is described in detail in Roger Hadley's book On Common Ground. The following is an extract published in the Prestatyn Weekly, 18th February 1906, reporting testimony given in court:

Church of England School



"Rector rushed upon the scene and behaved - if counsel was correctly instructed - very differently from what would be expected of a clergyman. The first girl he came to was a girl called Amelia Davies and he shouted at her He was carrying in his hand an umbrella with a knob on the end of it and without more ado he struck this child upon the head. She went down to the ground under the blow, and he struck her several blows while she was down. A little boy the rector seized with such violence that he was thrown upon the ground. This was not a casual assault at all. The reverend gentleman appeared to have lost entire control of himself and to have gone amongst these children with the fury of a wild beast."

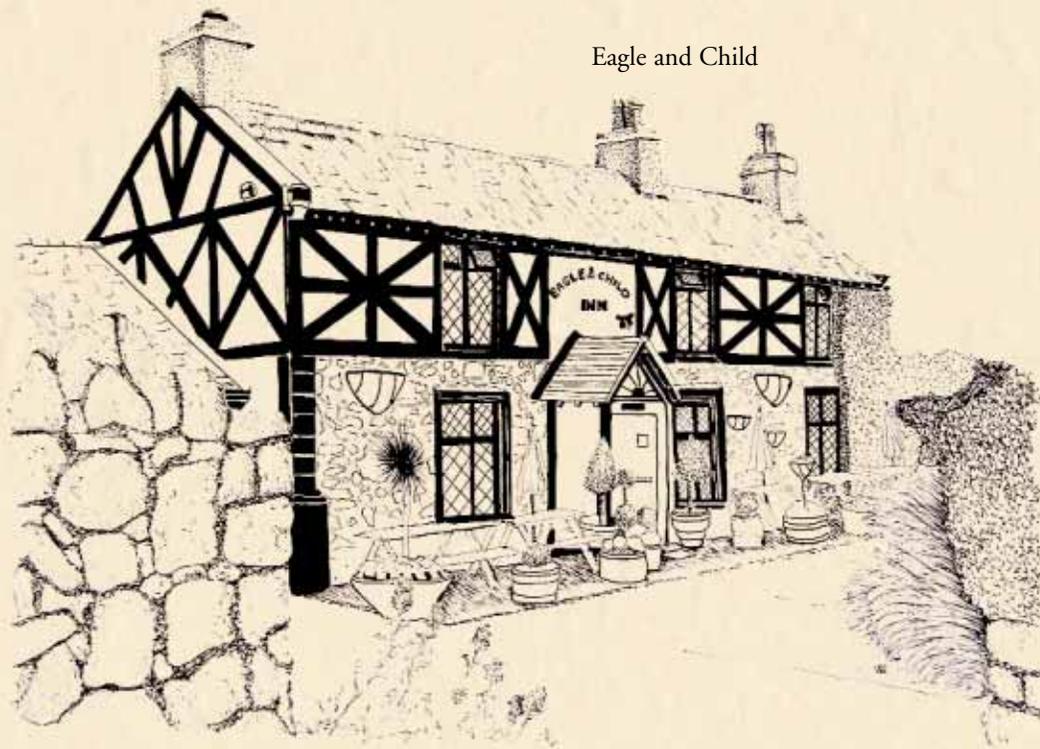
Pubs

At one time there were three pubs in the village. Ty Draw was first a farm and later (also) a pub called The Plow and Harrow and later a private house. The Saracen's Head is listed in census returns from 1851 and was open as a public house and bed breakfast until the 1960s. It is now a private home called Bryn Glen. The Eagle and Child was built in the early 19th century as a farmhouse but has also been listed as an inn in the census returns since 1851. It is the only pub to remain. It has been extended in recent decades and is a popular destination for lunches and dinners. In living memory it consisted of one little bar with a small fire, linoleum floor and outside lavatory, surrounded by a stony area which served as a car park. The contrast with today is stark! Not only has the pub been extended to include a dining room, but it also has an award-winning beer garden.

The Saracen's Head



Eagle and Child



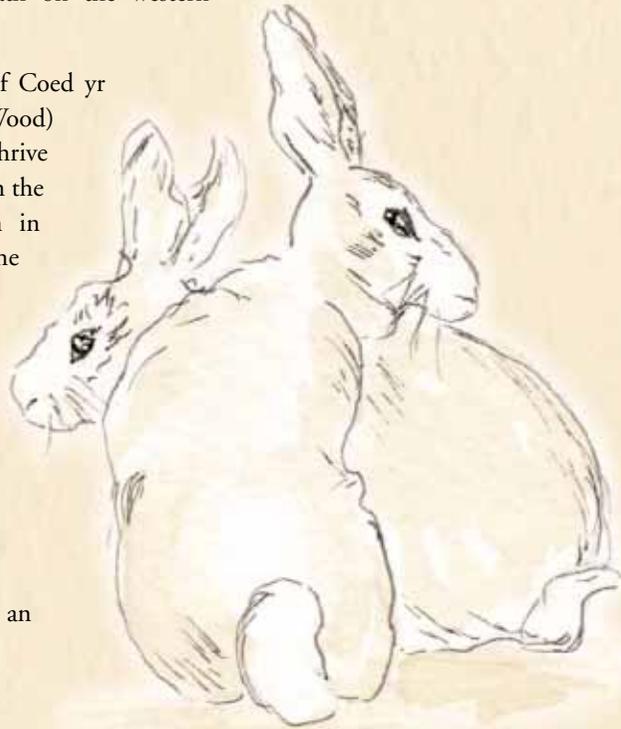
Flora and Fauna



Sorbus Terminalis The steep incline of Coed yr Escob (Bishop's Wood) has precluded hunting and foxes thrive and to a large extent are tolerated in the area. They are most often seen in daylight in January which is the mating season and their calls can be heard particularly in the winter nights.

Badgers have also been part of life here in numbers. There are two large badger sets within the parish and badger paths and latrines are common.

Farmer Derek Jones has received an award as a badger friendly farmer!



Gatekeeper

Red Admiral



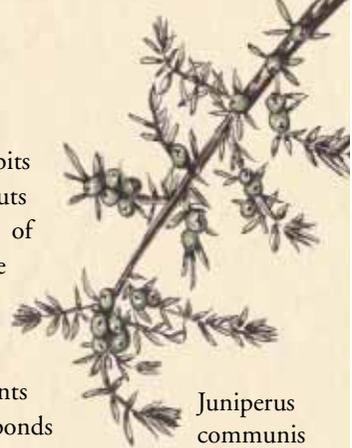
Yellowhammer

The area is also blessed with bird and butterfly life. In addition to the more common bird varieties, some threatened species also do well in Gwaenysgor, including yellow hammers and tree sparrows. Herons, buzzards and ravens have enjoyed a recent increase in the area.

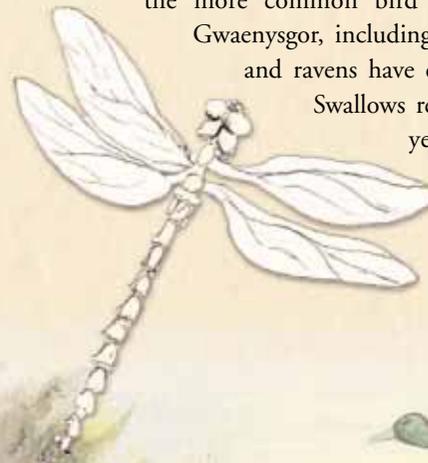
Swallows return to the same nests year after year and winter migrants are regular visitors. The various ponds attract water fowl.

Other small mammals abound. Rabbits enjoy a cyclical existence between bouts of myxomatosis, but sadly numbers of hares which used to be common have diminished in numbers over the last twenty years.

But many species such as moles, rodents and amphibians thrive. The chain of ponds sustains many of these animals.



Juniperus communis



Comma



Ravens



Footpaths

Gwaenysgor is proud of the fact that it was the first parish in the AONB to have all its footpaths open. This was achieved by the work of the Gwaenysgor Conservation

Group. The footpaths are important historical markers in the landscape and represent rights of way which have been established over the centuries. They were originally the routes between various villages, hamlets and farms, paths to water sources, to common grazing, to the open field systems of the Middle Ages, to the lead mines, to the quarries, to the church and to neighbours. While their origins are mostly forgotten, they continue to be used by walkers following in the footsteps of their forebears for recreation.

In 1971 the Offa's Dyke National Footpath, in the north and west of the parish, was officially opened. Offa, Anglo-Saxon king of Mercia (757-796), had the dyke built along the



Small White

Fieldfare



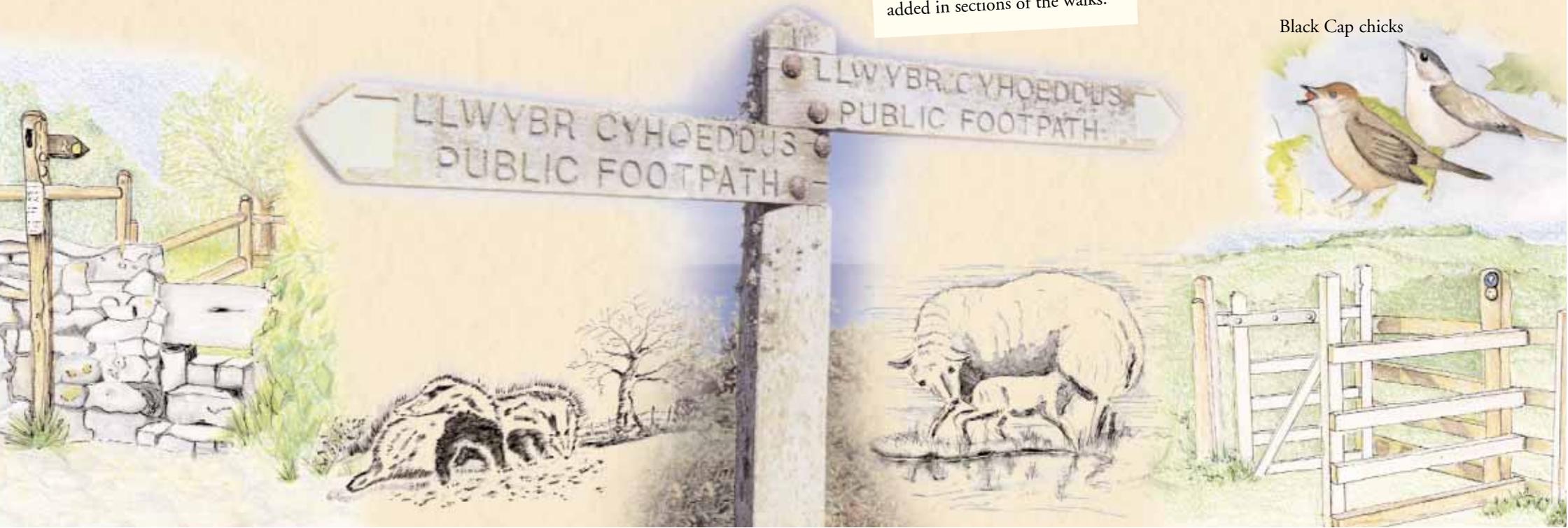
then border between England and Wales to keep the Welsh out of what is now England. The path follows the putative route of Offa's Dyke from the North Wales coast at Prestatyn to the South Wales Coast at Chepstow.

A booklet entitled *Walking with History* has been produced and is available from the community council.

To mark the millennium, the community council of Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor created a Millennium Trail, which links the two villages and includes loop walks from each village.

To make the countryside more accessible to less able people, kissing gates and steps have been added in sections of the walks.

Black Cap chicks



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All of the art work has been done by members of the successful Gwaensgor Art Group.

The Conservation Group would like to express their gratitude to the Art Group, whose competent contribution has meant that has been truly a village project.

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References

Walking with History: A Guide to the Trelawnyd and Gwaensgor Millennium Trail (2000) by Roger Hadley with Ken Davies, is available from David Smith, Trelawnyd and Gwaensgor Community Council, Trelawnyd



On Common Ground: An Exploration of the History of a North Wales Village from 1850-2000 (2003) by Roger D. Hadley, is available from Clare Wenger Hadley, Tir Gwelyog, Gwaensgor, Flintshire, LL18 6EW, Telephone: 01745 856377.



Gwænysgor

