

Pengwern Hall



Pengwern Hall today.

The exploits of Cyndylan, prince of Powys, from around the 9th century, are told in the Old Welsh Canu Heledd (a cycle of poems named after Cyndylan's sister), possibly dating from the 9th century but not recorded until later, and this ode records the destruction of Cyndylan's Hall at Pengwern.

Stand forth, maidens, and survey the land
Of Cyndylan; Llys Pengwern, is it not in flames?
Woe to the youth that longs for good fellowship.

There is much conjecture about the location of the Llys Pengwern mentioned in the Canu Heledd, with various possibilities in Shropshire (including Shrewsbury) and Denbighshire.

However, Pengwern in Llangollen was certainly an important early-medieval settlement, home of the ancestors of the Mostyn family. It has been suggested that the original house was the home of Tudor Trevor, Earl of Hereford, Lord of Chirk and the Tribe of March, in the early 10th century.

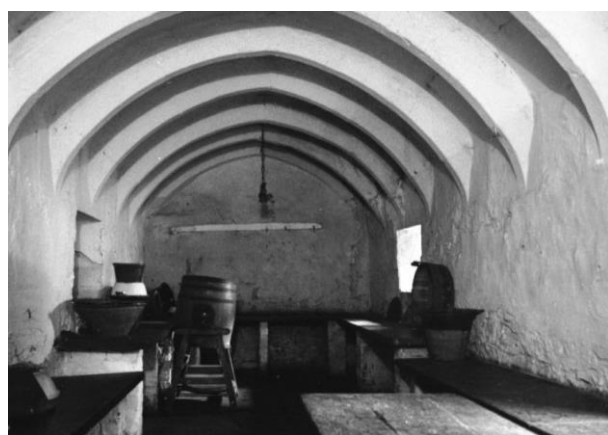
Rhys Sais, who died 1073, owned this district of Nenheudwy. Lord Iorwerth of Pengwern, born around 1170, was Seneschal to Prince Madog founder of Valle Crucis Abbey, and Bishop Trevor II was of this family. Iorwerth of Pengwern witnessed the charter given by Prince Madoc to Valle Crucis in 1234, and his son, also Iorwerth, witnessed charters for Madoc's son and grandsons. By the earlier 15th century a settlement at Mostyn had become the family's main residence. However, Pengwern remained in their ownership until the middle of the 19th century.

Local tradition is that Pengwern was a convent and grange of Valle Crucis Abbey, however this is not documented anywhere. However, In the Extent of Chirkland, in 1391, Pengwern was recorded as being held by Iorwerth Du, son of Eden (Ednyfyd) Gam.

The main house, replacing an earlier structure, was built in the 17th century and then extensively remodelled in brick in around 1770 by Sir Roger Mostyn. It was enlarged again in the late 19th century, with new windows and other changes. Some of the earlier structure, however, remains in use as farm buildings. The house is of 3-storeys, in an H plan, with pebbledash elevations, a slate roof and red brick stacks with projecting chimney breasts to each end. Internally the house has been extensively altered but retains chamfered cross beam to dining room. Set high into the kitchen wall is an inscribed former cheese-press stone.



The cheese press stone being used as a door lintel.



The undercroft.

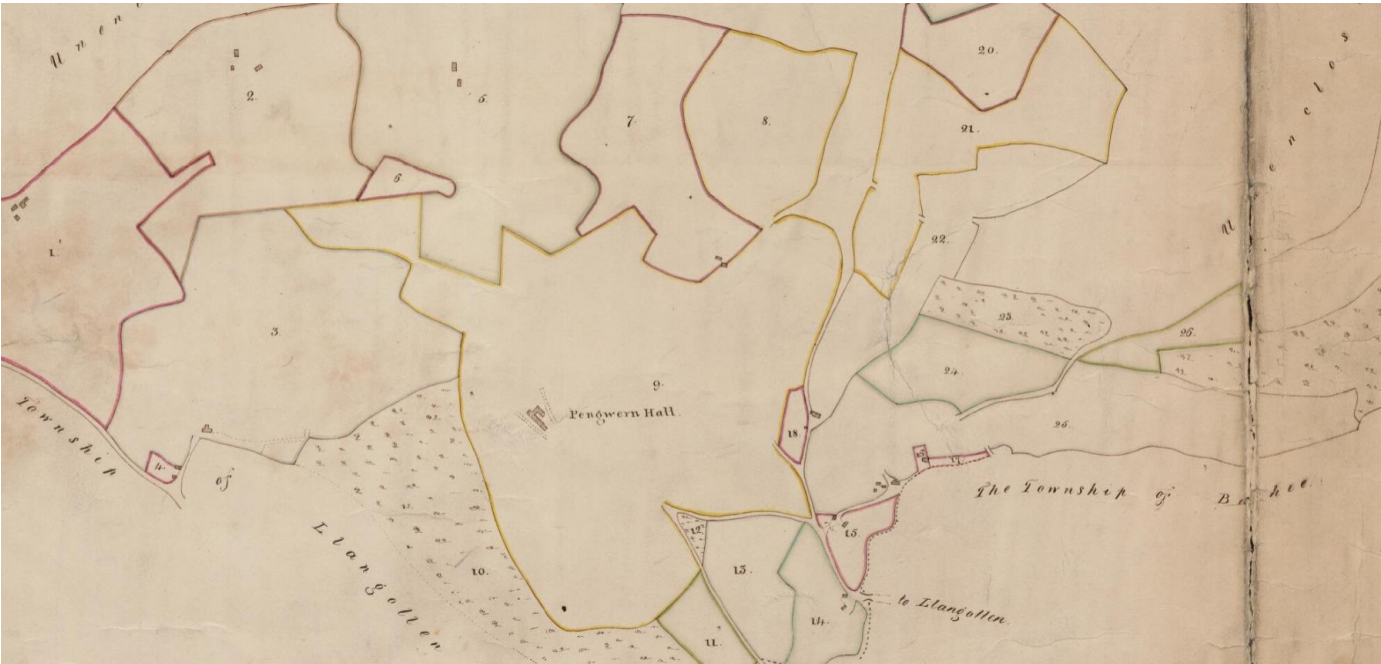
Attached at right angles to the south west rear of Pengwern Hall is a 2-storey short medieval 13th/14th century cross range linking the main house with its parallel agricultural range. It is possible that this medieval part was built by Lord Iorwerth of Pengwern when he was Seneschal to Prince Madog (ruler of northern Powys) in the early 13th century. Later alterations are probably contemporary with the 17th century building. Within the cross range is a 9-bay barrel vaulted undercroft with pointed and chamfered stone ribs. to the doorway.

In 1827, W.T. Simpson visited Pengwern Hall, and recorded his observations in his book *Some Account of Llangollen and Vicinity*. He remarked that 'There are two vaulted rooms (the use of which I cannot conjecture) standing at the end of the present house; and they are, I think, part of the old palace'. He went on to say:- 'The place is now in the occupation of a very respectable farmer. Sir Thomas Mostyn, Bart. is the proprietor, in whose family it has been a great many years. I find that Tudor



Trevor, who in the British genealogies is reckoned to be lineally descended from Vortigern, that unfortunate King of the Britons, who first invited the Saxons over into his country, married Gwladdis (some call her Angharad), daughter of Howell Dda, King of all Wales, by whom he had issue three sons; from the eldest of whom, Llwydocca, this family of Mostyn is descended in a direct male line'.

The tithe map and apportionment for Pengwern, from 1839, shows Pengwern Hall as being still owned by the Mostyn family, but being run as a 122 acre farm by Edward Edwards.



The tithe map (above) and apportionment (below) for Pengwern, done in 1839, shows Pengwern Hall Farm (and indeed much of Pengwern Township) belonging to the Mostyn family. Pengwern Hall was a farm, in the tenancy of Edward Edwards.

Land Owners	Occupiers	Number of Acres	Form and description of lands and premises	State of Cultivation	Quantity of Acres	Amount of Rent Charge apportioned upon the several lands and premises payable			
						By the Tithe Owners	By the Tithe Owners	By the Tithe Owners	By the Tithe Owners
The Honorable Edward Mostyn Lloyd Mostyn	William Parry	1	A Farm part of the Pengwern Estate	Arable Meadow and Pasture	31 0 17	4 0 2 1/2	2 0 11	2 0 11	14 2 1/2
	John Edwards	2	A Farm part of the Pengwern Estate	Arable Meadow and Pasture	27 2 29	3 7 6 1/2	1 14 5 1/2	1 16 5 1/2	12 0
	David Edwards	3	A Farm part of the Pengwern Estate	Arable Meadow and Pasture	36 2 6	4 2 4 1/2	2 2 1 1/2	2 2 1 1/2	14 7 1/2
Maurice Lewis Representatives		5	A Farm part of the Pengwern Estate	Arable Meadow and Pasture	38 3 12	4 10 9 1/2	2 6 4 1/2	2 6 4 1/2	16 0 1/2
	Jonathan Hughes	6 20	A Farm part of the Pengwern Estate	Arable Meadow and Pasture	30 0 2	2 14 10 1/2	1 8 0	1 8 0	9 8 1/2
Edward Edwards		8 21	Pengwern Hall Farm	Arable Meadow and Pasture	122 1 20	15 6 2	7 18 4	7 18 4	2 16 1 1/2
	Green Owners	11	Lythacumbard	Meadow and Pasture	7 0 4	13 8 1/2	6 11 1/2	6 11 1/2	2 4 1/2
George Humphreys		13 28 27	A Farm part of the Pengwern Estate	Arable Meadow and Pasture	69 1 38	4 8 7 1/2	2 5 3 1/2	2 5 3 1/2	18 8

Edward Edwards and his family only farmed at Pengwern Hall for a short period, as, by 1851, 30 year old John Wynne had taken over the tenancy of the farm, living there with his aunt, Elizabeth Green (who was 13 years his junior), who was the housekeeper, and five servants/farm labourers.

In 1853 and 1854, Pengwern Hall Estate was sold away from the Mostyn family property portfolio. It would appear that, at this time, it was purchased by John Dickin, a coal merchant from Chirk and Shropshire, who would, 15 years later, build Ty'n Dwr Hall on part of the land acquired.

Pengwern Hall, however, continued to be rented out. In 1871 the census recorded just four visitors at the Hall, Martha Talbot a silk merchant's wife, Anne Icklestone, a farmer's wife, Robert Hill, a draper's assistant and Charlotte Hartlet, a domestic servant. Unfortunately, the census did not indicate who they were visiting. In 1881, the Hall was in the occupation of 73 year old Edward Lloyd and his wife Grace, who were farming the 301 acres. However, by 1887, the tenancy had transferred to farmer David Davies.

The 1887 rates book for Pengwern shows the Hall as being owned by John Dickin and occupied by David Davies. Four years later the census showed that the 60 year old farmer living there with his wife Anne and sons John, Robert and David William.

28

PARISH OF LLANGOLLEN.

ARREARS.				RATE.													
Number.	Due, or if excused.			If excused, write the word "excused."	NAME OF OCCUPIER.	NAME OF OWNER.	Description of Property Rated.	Name or Situation of Property.	Estimated Extent.			Gross Estimated Rental.			Rateable Value.		
1	£	s.	d.	3	4	5	6	7	8			9			10		
689					David Davies	Pengwern John Dickin Esq	House Land	Pengwern Hall	247	1	17	190			165	10	
690					Joseph Davies	do	do	Sauygraig	126	3	12	94			86		
691					do	do	do	grawdduallh	66		12	22			19	15	

The 1887 rates record for Pengwern Hall.

At some time in the following ten years, David Davies died, but Anne and their two youngest sons continued to live at Pengwern Hall. Eventually, the youngest son David William Davies took over the farming at the Hall, living there with his own family until he died in 1926.

Pengwern Hall continued to be a working farm, with Thomas Morris, his wife Elisabeth and their young daughter Eluned farming there in 1939.