

a long-term water ingress into the core of the wall, that was probably the main cause of its partial collapse and bulging.

The watching brief conducted during the ground reduction works failed to uncover any unmarked burials and showed that the removed soil had all accumulated against the churchyard wall during the late 19th century and early 20th century.

Jean-Yves Robic, Cardiff Archaeological Consultants (Report 2022-04)

POWYS

ABBEYCWMHIR, Gelynen (SO 02713 71483)

This abandoned farmstead was surveyed by the Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust in November 2020 as part of archaeological investigations in Upper Cwmhir valley, described by Bezant *et al* (2021).

Gelynen (at 360m OD) is one of four historic farmsteads in the Upper Cwmhir valley which were progressively abandoned as a result of enclosure during the 19th century, or as a result of amalgamation due to agricultural depression in the 20th century. The steading formed a small part of the extensive post-monastic estate which came into being when William Fowler purchased the home grange of Cwmhir Abbey in 1565. The property was put up for sale by the Fowlers in 1781 when it consisted of 52 acres of intake fields plus an area of hill grazing, but was not sold. The Layton Cooke report on various prospective purchases by Thomas Wilson *c* 1820 described Gelynen as having 50 acres of enclosed land and 28 acres of sheep walk and a steading consisting of cottage, stable and beast house. A new dwelling was recommended, but the present remains do not match any of the Cooke designs. The Census return for 1911 describes Gelynen as 'unoccupied'.

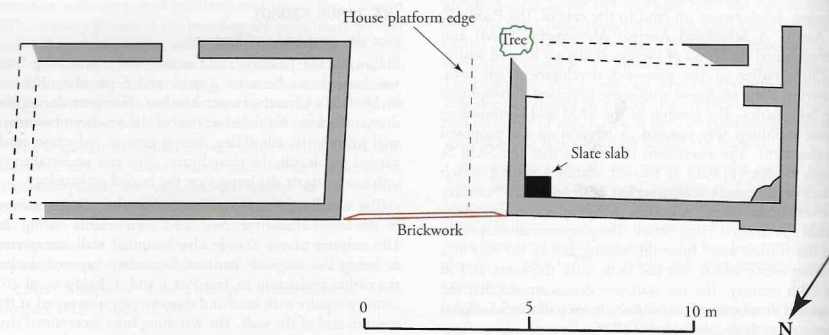
The house is built upon a platform constructed at right angles to the contours of the land. A clear footprint of the building remains along with good sections of the walling, although currently tree growth covers the site. The dwelling itself consists of a stone-built single cell structure with internal chimney and bread oven. It measures 8.73m by

5.42m externally, with an entrance door in the south-east corner. A slate salting slab is still in place. Rubble from the inward collapse of the walls has prevented examination of the floor area. The adjoining agricultural building measures 10.0m by 5.07m-5.26m. There is no evidence of a wall at the eastern end of this structure, but there is a pedestrian doorway in the south wall. The 5m gap between the two buildings appears to have been roofed to create a storage area, although the full width is hampered by the edge of the platform, up to 1.22m wide, on which the house is constructed.

Julian Lovell, Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust (PRN 53208)



Gelynen slate salting slab and adjacent walls



Plan of Gelynen showing the dwelling and adjoining agricultural building (based on a survey by Phil Olivant)

ABBEYCWMHIR, Llanerch-dirion**(SO 02701 71782)**

This farm unit (at 360m OD) was surveyed by the Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust in July 2021 during a community heritage excavation carried out as part of archaeological investigations in Upper Cwmhir valley, described by Bezzant *et al* (2021).

In the Fowler sale document of 1781 this farmstead appears as Wilson's Land, a name now lost, consisting of 30 acres of cultivation plus hill grazing unspecified. The Layton Cooke survey of 1820 records 36 acres of enclosed land and 49 acres of sheep walk. The unit consisted of a dwelling with a shed serving as stable, a turf store and beast house - but today nothing remains of this above ground. There is also no sign of the dwelling itself as a result of more recent landscaping and the construction of an access road for the current farming. The Surveyor's Ordnance Survey map of 1817 indicates two buildings on this site, and this supports the depiction on the map which accompanied the Cooke report, which indicates the position of at least one building. The Layton Cooke report recommended that Llanerch-dirion be amalgamated with nearby Gelynen. This was eventually achieved in the 1860s as a result of enclosure.

A small-scale excavation of the area revealed a floor made of pitched stones of the sort commonly found in agricultural buildings. The rounded stones were set vertically into a clay matrix whilst the larger stones permitted access and drainage. The drain was a covered channel lined with random rectangular stones, 15cm square, which ran downslope. The excavation also revealed a number of post-holes, confirming the presence of a timber structure. These will be the subject of further investigation.

The site first appears to have been levelled to create a platform for the creation of the farm unit. Upon this



*Aerial photograph of Llanerch-dirion excavation
(photo by Julian Ravest)*

were constructed a number of curvilinear banks. The purpose of these is unclear, but they possibly relate to stock handling, or else to small scale cropping or gardening. A brief investigation of the banks closest to the beast house revealed the presence of a clay lining, suggestive of a pond for drinking water, or for sheep management. A similar arrangement upon an adjacent encroachment site still holds water after 200 years.

Julian Lovell, Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust (PRN 143672)

ABBEYCWMHIR, Cwm Ffwrn (SO 02342 72002)

This farm unit (at 380m OD) was excavated and surveyed by Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust in 2021/2 during a regular community heritage excavation as part of archaeological



Aerial photograph of Cwm Ffwrn (photo by Julian Ravest; survey by Phil Oliviant)

investigations in Upper Cwmhir valley, described by Bezan *et al* (2021).

Of the three farmsteads which are the subject of this investigation, Cwm Ffwrn displays a different character. At the time of the 1781 Fowler Estate sale it consisted of 52 acres, much the same as that recorded by the Tithe survey of 1840. However, unlike the other farms recorded here, it lacked a conventional field system. Instead, the land was divided into just two large areas, 19 acres of arable and meadow and a further 34 acres of pasture. The 'fields' are divided by an obvious bank which contours around the hillside. There is also a circular enclosure of 25m diameter, as yet unexplained, but possibly the site of a shepherd's shelter.

The farm was amalgamated in the 1860s, but the building continued to be used for accommodation until the 1880s when it was decommissioned and deliberately collapsed inwards. Encroachment was a serious problem in Radnorshire, and may have prompted this action.

The farmhouse was well-built, dating from the first half of the 19th century. A good grade of rubble stone formed the construction but amongst this were pieces of dressed stone which may have originated from the Cwmhir Abbey site. The free-standing structure measures 8.76m by 6.26m/6.35m. The walls had a thickness of 24" (61cm). The doorway to the outside has a slabbed cill and exterior doorstep. Removal of the over-burden revealed a two-chambered structure. The main room contained a fireplace with the chimney built into the wall, rather than as an external structure, with ironwork hearth fittings, a pot hook and the remains of a cast iron pot. A bread oven had been built into the wall to the left of the hearth. The floor was laid with flagstones, some of which had been removed. The smaller chamber appears to have been divided by a lath and plaster wall, and this contained a drainage outlet, suggesting that it may have functioned as a dairy, a common feature in local farmhouses. Surviving plasterwork within the main room shows the shadow of a stairway which indicates an upper floor height of 2.5m. The layout of the upper chamber is a matter for speculation with no firm evidence available.

Finds at floor level include pottery sherds from the 19th century, generally of poor quality, and the remains of small glass bottles.

The site also contains a platform area with some signs of revetment and some stone building materials. This will be the subject of a further investigation in due course.

Julian Lovell, Abbey Cwmhir Heritage Trust (PRN 53207)

Reference

- Bezan, J, Lovell, J, Ravest, J, Walters, M, and Olivant, P, 2021, Survey of an Upland Landscape on the Golan Grange of Abbey Cwmhir, Radnorshire, *Archaeology in Wales* 61, 95-100.

ABERBECHAN, Lower Gwestydd (SO 12603 93379)

In November 2022 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a Historic Building Recording in connection with the proposed conversion of traditional barns into 4 residential dwellings at Lower

Gwestydd, Aberbechan, a farmstead dating from the 17th century. The historic building on the south range was no longer extant at the time of the survey. The east range was a cattle shed constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century. The attached northern range, formerly a milking parlour, was constructed in the mid-late 19th century, but had been completely rebuilt. The west range comprised a threshing barn and a stables, of which the latter was constructed in brick, which may have been a later development of an originally wholly timber-framed construction. The date of the barn is uncertain, but it may be contemporary with the 17th century house at Lower Gwestydd.

Will Logan Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (Report 1921; Project 2659)

BRECON, Balihelig Road (SO 03747 28087)

In March 2022 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a building survey in connection with proposals to redevelop St David's House, Balihelig Road, Brecon; a former workhouse built in the early 19th century. After the formation of the Brecknock Poor Law Union in 1836, it was agreed that a workhouse capable of holding 100 inmates should be constructed in Brecknock. This workhouse was established on land provided by Sir Charles Morgan, a prominent landowner and Member of Parliament for Brecon and the county of Monmouth. After the Public Assistance Institution was wound up in 1948, the building became St David's Hospital for geriatric patients which closed in 1990, becoming a hall of residence for Christ College Public School.

The survey revealed that much of the original building complex had survived and some of the original features including the chimney stacks were still partially extant, however, most of the original windows and the roof structure had been replaced. The interior had been subdivided and there was little evidence of any surviving finishes or interior details relating to its former use as a workhouse. However, the basic layout and form of the building was still discernible.

Will Logan Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (Report 1862; Project 2607)

BRECON, Havard House, Brecon (SO 04459 28462)

In May 2022 the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust carried out a building survey in connection with proposals for the conversion of Havard House into a separate dwelling and three flats. Havard House was constructed in 1619 by the Havard family, whose origins trace back to the Norman Conquest.

The survey identified a number of details relating to the original form of the 17th century house, which had evidently undergone a change of aspect, with the principal elevation originally facing south. The staircase was in its original location but had been remodelled at a later date. Two large chimney stacks and part of the cellar also dated from the 17th century. However, most of the decorative interior details were 18th century or later in date, as were most of the window apertures which were contemporary with the remodelling of the Georgian frontage facing onto Glamorgan Street to the north. The house was much extended during the 18th and probably early to mid-19th century, comprising