

DWYGYFYLCHI: A SHORT HISTORY

The railway station opened in 1849 and was named Penmaenmawr, after the famous hill, as it was thought that Dwygyfylchi was too difficult for visitors to pronounce. However, the railway provided cheaper and quicker communication with the rest of Britain, as well as creating tourism here and in other parts of North Wales on a much larger scale than had been seen before, and the seaside resort of Penmaenmawr was born. Expansion was rapid up to the 1890s, when the new resort reached its peak.



Penmaenmawr station

Much of this progress within Dwygyfylchi and Penmaenmawr was due to the enterprises of the Darbishire family who came to the area because of the railway; Samuel Duckenfield Darbishire was solicitor to the Chester and Holyhead Railway Company, and bought the Pendyffryn Estate in the 1850s. They gave a lot back to the parish they now called home including education, firstly converting the old tithe barn in the grounds of the church in Dwygyfylchi into a school and later building the Glan y Rafon school in 1862 with the help of the British Schools Society.



Local quarrymen, 1880

Agriculture wasn't the only form of employment in the parish. For years pebbles had been taken from the beach to surface the streets in the rapidly expanding towns of Cheshire and Lancashire. Local men saw an opportunity and began to roughly shape blocks of scree from the slopes of Penmaenmawr and Graiglwyd, and sold them to visiting captains of trading vessels who did not want to return to Merseyside empty. Two enterprising businessmen from Runcorn recognised the value of the product and came to inspect the source of the stone. In 1835, quarrying began on the slopes of Penmaenmawr, with the sea rather than the roads being used to transport the heavy product. Before long others began quarrying at Graiglwyd. Quarrying required men, and they and their families needed accommodation. As a result, a new settlement developed below the quarries at Penmaenan, consisting of terraced cottages, shops, chapels and a school.



Hay making

Around 1840 the Rev. Emilius Nicholson travelled through Dwygyfylchi and wrote: "the road is continued by a slow descent into a rich plain, chequered with cornfields and meadows which continue along the margin of the sea. This little plain called Dwyg-y-fylchi, is situated in a recess of the mountain screened from every harsh wind and open to the sun, it is characterised by a most luxuriant fertility. One year in particular, its crop of barley was reaped, and some portion of it ground, on the 10th July".

The introduction of the railway in 1847 had little impact upon the existing economy of the parish - quarrying was to continue to rely on sea transport, and the parish of Dwygyfylchi was quite self-sufficient, needing only a few imported items to make life bearable, such as coal and some manufactured goods.

Dwygyfylchi was a relatively isolated rural farming community made up of scattered farms and smallholdings before the construction of roads such as the A5. Prior to this the headlands of Penmaen Bach and Penmaenmawr created a series of obstacles for travellers, forcing them to journey along the sand when the tide was out or face a strenuous climb over the hills. The unification of Britain and Ireland in 1800 saw increased demands to improve roads through North Wales after Holyhead was chosen as the ferry port for Dublin. During the 1820s Thomas Telford began to work on the A5 from Shrewsbury to Holyhead via Bangor, which included the construction of a new road blasted around the lower precipitous edge of Penmaen Bach.

THE CYNEFIN PROJECT

Tithe maps and their associated apportionment indexes are an excellent resource when carrying out house or family research. They provide the researcher with an invaluable picture of Wales in the 1840s as they are the most detailed record of their period, with over a thousand maps covering 95% of Wales.

In 2014 work began on the Cynefin Project to repair and digitise these maps. As a part of the project volunteers helped to transcribe over 27,000 apportionment documents and link them to the relevant locations on the maps. The project was run by a partnership led by Archives and Records Council Wales, with the National Library of Wales and the People's Collection. Most of the funding came from the Heritage Lottery Fund with support from The Welsh Government through MALD.

These interactive tithe maps can be accessed online via cynefin.wales and have also been provided for the National Library of Wales places.library.wales and the People's Collection www.peoplescollection.wales



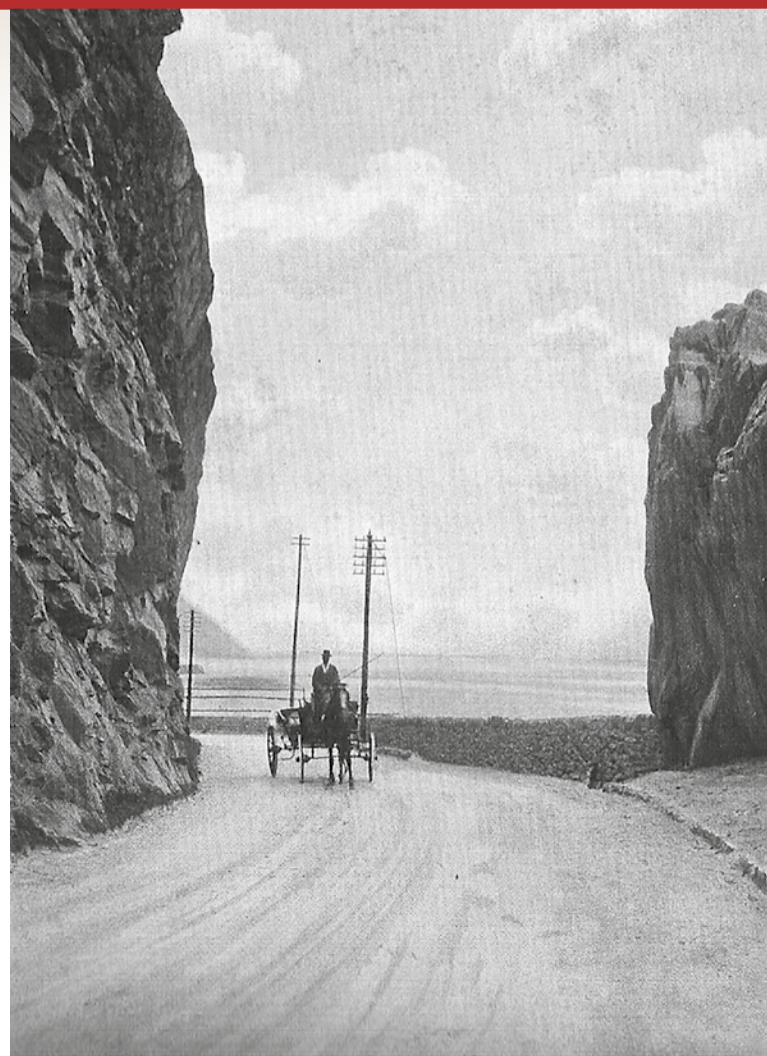
HOW TO GET TO DWYGYFYLCHI

Dwygyfylchi WALK

BY CAR: Dwygyfylchi is located off the A55. If you are travelling westbound use junction 16a. If on A55 eastbound you need to take junction 16, and then the first left. There is no car park in the village so please be considerate where you park.

If you wish to visit Penmaenmawr you need to leave the A55 at junction 16 and follow the signs into Penmaenmawr. There is a large car park by the library behind Spar near the crossroads.

BY BUS: Information on local bus services is available from TravelineCymru (0300 200 22 33) www.traveline.cymru



PLACES OF INTEREST IN DWYGYFYLCHI

St. Gwynan's Church

The present structure was built in 1889, replacing a simple rectangular building from 1760. This was preceded by a cruciform church of unknown date.

Old Mill Road - Ysgubor Wen Road

The route followed by travellers to and from the old Sychnant track when the tide was in!

Glanrafon Road

Route to and from the shore near Penmaenbach. The road was used when travellers had been 'caught by the tide' and were unable to continue their journey along the sands, which was the recognised highway until 1772.

Pendyffryn Hall

Late 18th century home of Smith family. Later the home of Darbshire family who developed the quarries at Penmaenmawr.

Sychnant Roads

The present road was opened in 1772 as part of the turnpike road from Llanrwst to Bangor. The engineer was Sylvester, who was also responsible for improving the route around Penmaen Mawr.

Y Glyn

Built in the 1840s by W. C. Harris, the father of Robert Harris (1849-1919), the famous Canadian portrait artist.

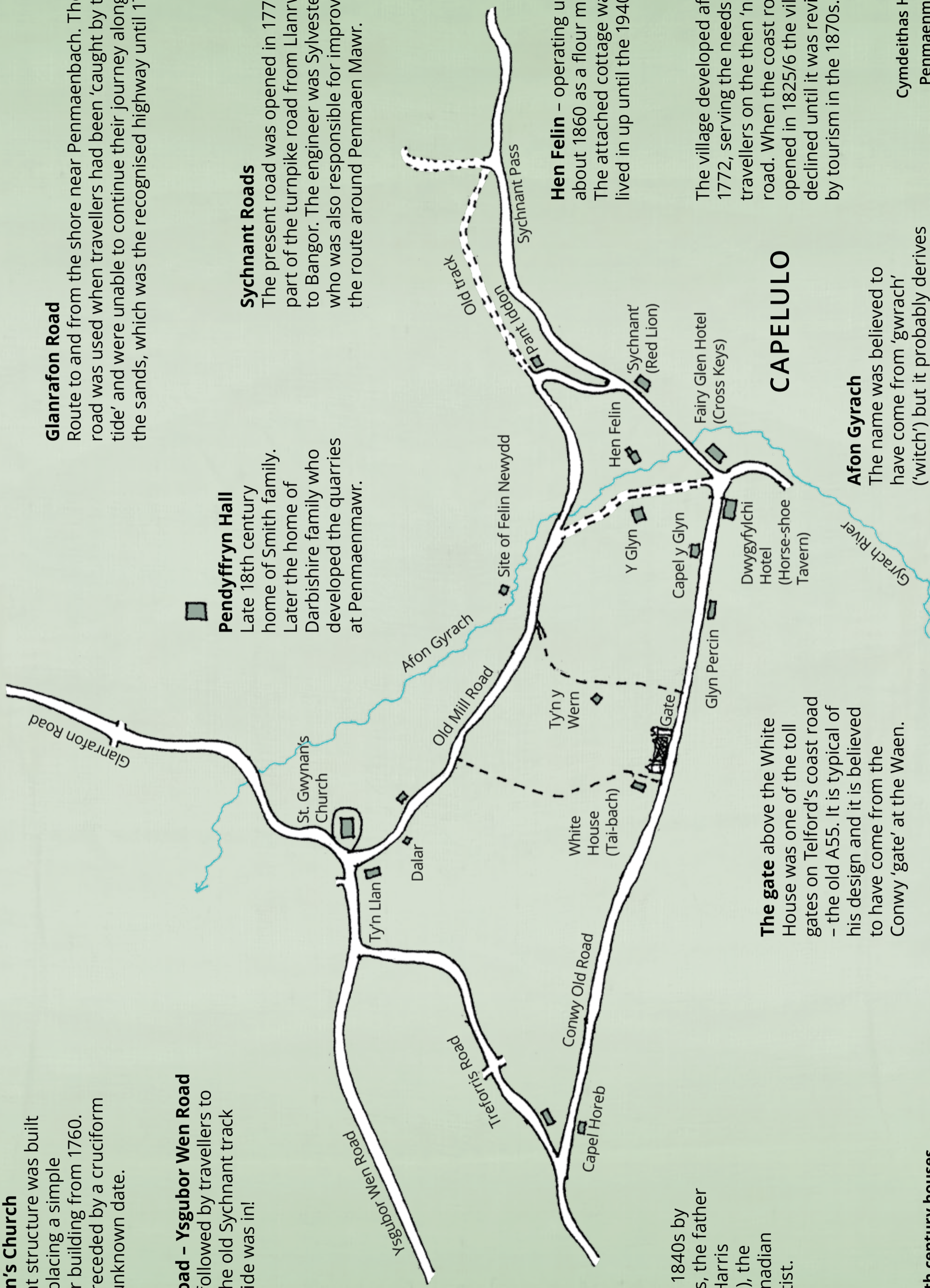
The gate above the White House was one of the toll gates on Telford's coast road - the old A55. It is typical of his design and it is believed to have come from the Conwy 'gate' at the Waen.

Afon Gyrach

The name was believed to have come from 'gwrach' ('witch') but it probably derives from 'curragh', Irish for 'bog'.

Hen Felin - operating until about 1860 as a flour mill. The attached cottage was lived in up until the 1940s.

The village developed after 1772, serving the needs of travellers on the then 'new' road. When the coast road opened in 1825/6 the village declined until it was revived by tourism in the 1870s.



18th and 19th century houses
Some in ruin/altered/sites built upon

Cymdeithas Hanes
Penmaenmawr
D.R. 93