

PEN-Y-PENMAEN

Pen-y-Penmaen was a small-holding about 300 ft under the summit of the former Braich-y-Dinas hill fort on Penmaenmawr Mountain (1500ft). It has, along with Braich-y-Dinas, since been quarried away. The Cottage was on the extreme western boundary of the Parish of Dwygyfylchi, the boundary being the back wall of the cottage, the other-side of the wall was in Llanfairfechan Parish. The front of the cottage looked out over Penmaenmawr.

The occupant and land owner at Pen-y-Penmaen on the 1836 Dwygyfylchi Tithe Map was a Mr. Morris Rowlands. (*insert tithe map cutting, discription and narrative)

The following text was extracted from an article, "Old Houses in Dwygyfylchi Parish" written in the 1970s by Historian Ivor E Davies: *"At an altitude of 1,200 feet on the south of the mountain's summit cone there was a sturdy cottage - "Penpenmaen" (Penmaenhead); the rock on which it stood was quarried away 60 years ago. There was a dwelling of some sort on its site as far back as 1472 - it is mentioned in a deed of that date which describes it as "Hafoty" Penpenmaen "- Hafoty" is a summer dwelling - it tells of the ancient custom when the lowland farmer with his family and his flock of sheep or herd of cattle moved to a shelter of some kind to mountain grazing over the summer months."*

There still exists an extremely steep path from Penmaenan leading to where the cottage would have been which the occupants would have used for access, they could also have used the path up from Llanfairfechan, either way it must have been an arduous journey carrying provisions up.

An extract from the Barry Herald of 1899 reports an interesting anecdote which occurred in the summer of 1890: *"An old lady over 70 years of age, who brought her weekly stock of provisions in a large basket up the steep ascent from Llanfairfechan village. One hot Saturday, soon after commencing her upward climb, she sat down to rest. Mr. Gladstone (former and yet to be again Prime-Minister, who at the time was over 80 years old), seeing her, entered into conversation. She chatted freely, and detailed the contents of her basket. He lifted it, and finding it heavy, offered to carry it for her. The offer was accepted, and the veteran statesman bore the basket-load to the whitewashed farm cottage near the summit. "Did you know that was Mr. Gladstone who carried your basket for you, inquired one of a party of tourists, "No, indeed; I didn't know Mr. Gladstone" replied the old lady, "but I do know that he is a kind gentleman, whoever he is."*

Pen-y-Penmaen must have been quite isolated in some winter months, Ivor Davies in his article also mentions: *"A story is told of Hugh Jones of Penpenmaen Cottage making a great harvest of the fleeces from many sheep lost in a great snowstorm in 1881."*

An interesting old photograph (c1890) shows the single-storey cottage of Pen-y-Penmaen, with presumably the family at the door. (*insert photograph)

A later aerial photograph of Pen-y-Penmaen (c1924) shows a second floor has been added to the cottage. The viewer can also see the extent of what has been quarried away. (*insert photograph and OS maps)

