

ADNABOD KNOWING ARDUDWY



Summer 2008

What is Adnabod Ardudwy-Knowing Ardudwy?

Adnabod Ardudwy-Knowing Ardudwy is a project sponsored by the Merioneth Historical and Record Society and is based on academic research into the cultural and historical significance of farm and field names in Ardudwy.

The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and has the support of 4 major partners – The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, The National Trust and Gwynedd Council.

Where is Ardudwy?

Ardudwy is the ancient name of the area which extends from near Beddgelert in the north, to Barmouth in the south, with Harlech in the west and Trawsfynydd in the east. It has a unique archaeological and historical landscape which is of European importance.

Aim and Objectives of the project?

The main aim of the project is to raise the awareness of the residents of Ardudwy, and the public world-wide, to the rich

archaeological, historical and cultural heritage of the area.

How? By arranging and offering a wide range of activities for children and adults which include talks and lectures, seminars and conferences, guided walks and practical workshops, visits to locations and buildings of historical significance and a comprehensive website that reflects some of Ardudwy's rich heritage. Support is also offered to other local history societies in the area.



-  Ardudwy
-  Bronze Age Tracks
-  Cymer Abbey Lands

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How it started

The Council of the MHRS responded enthusiastically when Dr Rhian Parry suggested the possibility of an application, by the Society, for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This grant would share her research on field names in Ardudwy with a much wider audience. Initially, a Steering Committee helped her with the application to the HLF. When the grant was awarded, it became the Management Committee of the project. It has 15 members.

The committee includes members of the Council of the MHRS and representatives of local historical societies. This gives an invaluable link with the work of those societies. It meets regularly in the Meirionnydd Archives where it is possible for the committee to view slide presentations and the progress of the website.

Members of the committee enthusiastically support the project

and work hard by giving advice on all aspects of the project. This includes suggesting topics and speakers for workshops, meetings and a range of other activities. In particular, the committee supports the very important work with local groups and four local schools. Help with the preparation of newsletters and posters means that the project has good publicity. The committee also ensures that the project remains on track by having regular financial reports.

The project has advanced the work of the MHRS significantly into new areas of expertise. The Society hopes to build on the success of the project by developing a wider range of interests for its members and encouraging new, young members to join.

Gerald W. Hughes

Chairman of Adnabod Ardudwy Management Committee and Merioneth Historical and Record Society



The Royal Commission

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales is the national body of research and record for the historic environment of Wales. Established in 1908, and currently celebrating its Centenary year, it is now a Welsh Assembly Government Sponsored Body and home to the National Monuments Record of Wales. The Commission works closely with other heritage organisations in Wales and internationally to develop and promote understanding of the archaeological, built and maritime heritage.

The Royal Commission is pleased to support the Adnabod Ardudwy initiative, and has already contributed aerial photography and other learning resources to schools in the area, as well as participated in archaeological and aerial photography workshops for the community. Research on the ground with our historic buildings experts has included tree-ring dating, or dendrochronology, of very early houses in Ardudwy including Llwyn-du, Llanaber, with other properties scheduled for future work. In such a rich



archaeological and historic landscape as Ardudwy, where the Royal Commission has carried out work on and off throughout the twentieth, and now the twenty-first, centuries, we feel it is important to support this excellent community initiative.

Readers are directed towards our online archaeological database for Wales, www.coflein.gov.uk, a vast resource containing written descriptions, photographs and other documents. Whether you are investigating your local community, researching, managing the environment, doing picture research, looking for excellent learning resources, or just exploring our country's rich heritage, we hope this website and our linked on-line database Historic Wales, will help you to discover more about the buildings, landscapes, sites and history of Wales and about the resources and services we provide.

Dr Toby Driver

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Gwynedd Council

Gwynedd Council has been another invaluable partner in the Adnabod Ardudwy project from its outset. A great deal of support, directly and indirectly, has been given by the council and some of its officers. Special support has been offered by the Archives, Libraries and Schools services. Four schools in Ardudwy are actively involved in the project. Each school have chosen a local theme which interests their pupils and teachers and which meets the needs of the National Curriculum and the aims of the project. Gwynedd Archives staff have assisted pupils to research

and record their findings at the Record Office and there is a close link between the Archives service and the project's Management Committee.

The Council, with the agreement of the Ordnance Survey has a contractual agreement with the Adnabod Ardudwy project to deliver elements of the life-long learning agenda in Ardudwy and thus allows it to share its licence to show OS maps on the world wide web.



Pupils from Ysgol Dyffryn Ardudwy with John Dilwyn Williams of Gwynedd Archives Services.

The National Trust in Ardudwy

The restoration of the old medieval hall-house at Egryn shows how the National Trust is working with the Adnabod Ardudwy project.

Since the restoration work began

in 2006 we have held open days over five weekends. Local people have been given a chance to share their knowledge and personal experiences of this fascinating farm



Gwynedd Archaeological Trust and the Adnabod Ardudwy Project

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust has been a partner in the Adnabod Ardudwy project since the early stages, and has been on hand to provide the project co-ordinators with some information and advice regarding the development of the website. Trust staff have also assisted the project by attending meetings relating to the progress of the project; providing interpretative material for the accompanying walks; and presenting talks, including a contribution to the MHRS/Adnabod Ardudwy Conference at Plas Tan y Bwlch in September 2007.

A key aim of the project was to bring together the tithe map data from Rhian

Parry with other existing datasets in the local area. The Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) held by the Trust is one such dataset. Information from the HER is included in the website to facilitate interpretation of the landscape by identifying the locations of known features of archaeological and historical interest. The HER covers all aspects of human activity in the landscape from early prehistory to the twentieth century, and it is hoped that these records will compliment the tithe map information in order to create a fuller picture of past environments. In addition, it will be possible for people who find out new information to pass this back to the Trust,

which will allow us to enhance our records too.

We hope that the Adnabod Ardudwy website will emphasise the success of an holistic approach to studies of the past, and demonstrate that by bringing together different information from different places we can learn far more.

If you would like to know more about Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, please visit our website www.heneb.co.uk, call us on 01248 352535, or email us at: gat@heneb.co.uk

Nina Steele

Historic Environment Record Archaeologist



David Longley, Chief Archaeologist of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) at Moel y Glo during the making of a programme for BBC Radio Wales. David is explaining the significance of a Bronze Age mound of burnt stones to Sian Pari Huws and Catrin Davies of the company, Unigryw. This is an example of the project working with one of our partners to link archaeology in the landscape with farm and field names. The project is gaining much from the expertise of professionals in the field.

with Trust staff. The knowledge, images and documents that have been shared at these open days will form part of an information package that will enable future visitors and the local community to understand the context of this wonderful area.

The Adnabod Ardudwy project has been represented by the project leader at each of these open days and this involvement has enabled a wider range of people to be

involved with both projects.

Without doubt, one of the highlights of these open days for me was hearing the poetry that was written in praise of the Egryn family in the 1600s being recited for the first time in 400 years. It was a special event that gave us a glimpse of the world of the lesser noblemen of this area in the seventeenth century.

We are already discussing ideas with the project leader to extend our link

with the Adnabod Ardudwy project and make more use of the huge resource of interesting information that her personal research and the project has created. It's been a perfect example of working in partnership, with both projects being enriched by working together.

Richard Neale

*West Snowdonia & Llŷn property Manager
The National Trust*

Workshops

A number of workshops, in Welsh and English, have been held to promote a better understanding of Ardudwy's rich historical and archaeological heritage. Topics have ranged from a medieval Latin document to oral testimony gathered at the beginning of the twenty first century.

Sue Passmore, a former archivist and author of numerous important articles in the *Journal of the Merioneth Historical and Record Society* offered workshops on 'The Record of Caernarvon' a medieval Latin document which contains The Extent of Merioneth compiled in 1420. The document lists the names of lands of free men and those bonded to the Crown. Many of these names have survived to this day and can be seen on Ordnance Survey maps.

'A further study in landscape development' was the topic of a workshop conducted by Dr Della Hooke (Birmingham University) another academic known to readers of the Merioneth county history journal. By concentrating on the landscape of Llanaber she illustrated how farms developed in the area and how the study of field names could be used to recreate a medieval agricultural landscape.

It was the study of landscape from a different perspective, namely ' Interpreting aerial photographs of Ardudwy' and the value of aerial archaeology that was the topic which Dr Toby Driver (Royal Commission) discussed. He offered guidelines on interpreting and discussing oblique and



Record of Caernarvon workshop

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The archaeological landscape of Ardudwy –above Pen Dinas and Egryn

vertical air photographs. He emphasised the art of mapping archaeology from aerial photos and he set a number of valuable exercises for the workshop participants.

Rheinallt Llwyd (Aberystwyth University) in workshops on 'Oral history' emphasised that information safeguarded and transmitted orally was often invaluable to community historians. Participants had the opportunity to listen to a selection of tape recorded interviews recorded some years ago with Ardudwy residents. Some of the practical and technical difficulties encountered in safeguarding oral testimony were analysed in detail.



Oral history workshop

LLANTANOC. In eadem Villa sunt quedam pcell terri libe vocat Ymmwlich & Havodweñ apud Merthyr que oñant in Compo Ville de Tranvenyth Et in eadem Villa de Llantanoç est vna Gauell terri Natie Et sunt hereð dce Gauell Rerit ap gwyñ & Moelgwañ & dant inde Dño Prinç quolibet ùmino quatuor terminoꝝ sup dcoꝝ vj. viij. Sm^a p Annũ . xxvj. viij.
Et oñies hereð & tenenð de Gauell soluent ppartem suam de v. s. de Stauř soluend ut sup in festo Scti Martini in yeme p terri Natia de Iskevyn
Et oñies hereð * * * * dce Gauell soluēt Dño Prinç vj. viij. de Releũ vj. viij. de Gobr et vj. viij. de Amobr qñ &c. Et debent Secũ ad molendinũ Dñi de Treffthyñ & llanpedir Et faç cariagiũ Dñi hoie & equo capient p die ij d. cum victu diurno

Getting to know Ardudwy - Guided walks and visits



Near Moel y Glo

There is no better way of getting to know an area than by walking its landscape and visiting historical buildings. It is no surprise that some of the most popular activities have been the guided walks to locations of archaeological interest and the visits to some historical houses. Guided walks

were arranged to places such as Moel y Glo, Nant Pascan, Bryn Cader Faner, Cwm Moch, Coedty Mawr, and visits to historical houses such as Llwydu near Llanaber, Byrllysg in Dyffryn Ardudwy and Llanfihangel y traethau Church.

The visit to Moel y Glo offered



Llanfihangel y traethau churchyard

the opportunity for a walk up to the Bronze Age track way that connected Mochras near Llanbedr with Trawsfynydd and beyond. It was also an opportunity to consider some nearby field names as recorded in the 'Tithe Schedules' and to study some field patterns and interesting ruins before

returning through the hamlet of Eisingrug.

The visits to the historic farmhouse Llwyndu, near Llanaber, parts of which belong to the sixteenth century, proved extremely popular. And so did the visits to Llanfihangel y traethau Church under the guidance of Rev Robert Hughes the former rector. Not far from the church porch there is an unique inscribed stone with a Latin inscription which claims that the first church was built by 'Hoedlyw' in the twelfth century. Other gravestones in the cemetery provide ample evidence of local farm names and many of those buried there had maritime associations.



Near Byrllysg

Getting to know Ardudwy - Website



The launch of the bilingual website Adnabod Ardudwy (www.adnabodardudwy.org.uk) was the culmination of more than a year of hard work and determination. Since the project was officially launched in April 2007 the creation of a comprehensive website was one of the main objectives of the project. Now the residents of Ardudwy and the wider world can appreciate the historical and cultural heritage of the area.

Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas the Assembly Member for Meirionnydd and President of the Assembly officially initiated the project in April 2007 and also launched the website at Theatr Harlech on 10 July 2008. In his address he emphasised the importance of different levels of history and “the importance of rediscovering local and regional history” and he added: “when using this website and this project we will



Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas with pupils of Ysgol Tan y Castell.
Photo: Nigel Hughes

repossess the history of Ardudwy – this remarkable part of Merioneth”.

In addition to providing full information about the Adnabod Ardudwy project and

the numerous activities offered the website also provides valuable links to other establishments and societies that are relevant to the project. For example, it is possible for local history societies that already exist in Ardudwy to add their programme of events to the website and thus create a fuller picture of activities in the area.

One of the most remarkable features of the website are the sections which allow users to look at a wide range of maps relating to the area including Ordnance Survey maps, Tithe maps and 3D maps especially created to illustrate developments in the history of Ardudwy and its landscape over the centuries. In addition there are aerial photographs and details of field names in the area and maps showing the vegetation cover of Ardudwy at five different historical periods. This offers potential users a website that is unique and invaluable.

ADNABOD ARDUDWY
KNOWING

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Maps showing the vegetation cover of Ardudwy at different historical periods

Bronze Age

The first visitors to Ardudwy arrived some five thousand years ago.

The coastal storm shores of sand and gravel may have been further out than they are today. Scattered pines and the damp alder woods edge the salt marshes. Further inland, the gentle slopes are covered with open, oak woodland. Then the woods become a little thinner, emerging on occasional flat plateau. The river Dwyrdd flows on both sides of Ynys Llanfihangel-y-traethau. Inland, craggy mountains with steep rocky cliffs, appear to the east. Birch trees grow thinly along the highest margins of the uplands. The land becomes increasingly bare and marshy in places.

■ Bronze Age Track Way

Iron Age

Sand dunes have built up in front of pebble beaches on the shallow, emerging modern coastline of Ardudwy. It is 600 years before Christ. Tidal flats around the estuary give way to marsh. The slopes look different and the heavy rain has encouraged the trees to grow in dense oak woodlands along the coast and up into the valley of the river Ardro. In places, there are small clearings of damp lowland oak and alder woods. Further up, the trees are replaced by birch and bracken on upland clearances. Cattle graze the rough pasture and heath



Four primary schools in Ardudwy have already taken part in the Adnabod Ardudwy project with each school having chosen a theme relevant to their own community. The schools are **Ysgol Cefn Coch**, Penrhyndeudraeth; **Ysgol Tan y Castell**, Harlech, **Ysgol Llanbedr** and **Ysgol Dyffryn Ardudwy**. Pupils have done fieldwork in their area to see at first hand some historical evidence. They have also benefited from the expertise of Gwynedd Archives staff who have explained to them the significance of some historical documents and how best to use them.

Pupils at **Ysgol Cefn Coch** chose to study the methods used by travellers to cross the Traeth Bach from Minffordd to Llanfihangel y traethau Church in the south on the one hand and the Traeth Mawr northwards. They also visited the old Inn at Rhos where Nan Griffiths told them several local stories.

Pupils at **Ysgol Llanbedr** decided to follow the river Arthro upstream to Capel Salem y Cymerau (Salem Chapel of the



Do you know the name of this ruin?

confluence) and from there along the excellent nature trail through an ancient oak woodland before emerging on the open mountain. They also saw a ruined farmhouse and studied field names nearby as recorded in the Tithe Maps.

A visit to the eighteenth century farmhouse, Byrllysg, was the choice of pupils from **Ysgol Dyffryn Ardudwy**. They explored the remains of a Romano-British hill fort nearby and part of a drovers' road. They also talked to Heather

Jones at Byrllysg and heard some of the history of the farmhouse and her husband's family history, a family associated with the area for centuries.

Pupils at **Ysgol Tan y Castell** have decided to analyse the names of fields close to their school to identify evidence relating to the building of the castle and the establishment of the borough of Harlech. They have done some practical fieldwork and taken detailed

measurements noting the precise location of some ancient monuments near Moel Goedog using GPS.

The availability of the Adnabod Ardudwy website will be a valuable additional resource to enable school children to better understand their historical environment. Details of their work will be put on the website.



Pupils of Ysgol Llanbedr on their walk



Pupils of Ysgol Tan y Castell near an ancient monument



Pupils of Ysgol Dyffryn Ardudwy at Byrllysg



Pupils of Ysgol Cefn Coch at Rhos

Still recording field names

The above aerial photograph of Drws Ardudwy shows part of Cwm Nantcol and some Maesygarneidd fields. In the centre we see fields such as Ddol, Cae Coch, Cae Main, Cae Carnedd, Cae ucha'r afon, etc. These are names that appear on the 1840 Tithe Schedules. At times, however, field names are mis-spelt or corrupted. It is, therefore, interesting to compare these recorded names with those currently used.

There are more than 14,000 Ardudwy field names recorded in the Tithe Schedules. But no field names are recorded for the parishes of Nantmor, Llanfrothen, Maentwrog, Ffestiniog and Llanelltyd.

Our immediate priority is to collect field names in these areas. And since there are no Tithe maps for these parishes we will be



Cwm Nantcol and Drws Ardudwy

recording the names on current OS maps as they appear on the Adnabod Ardudwy website.

Small groups and individuals, in the above named areas, are eagerly collecting field names and noting their sources.

This work is invaluable and safeguards information that might, otherwise, be lost for ever.

If you have testimony you could provide please get in touch with us through the website by clicking on the CONTACT link.

FUTURE EVENTS

- Recording field names.
- Display of old photographs and films relating to Barmouth and Dyffryn Ardudwy with Gwilym Hughes at the Dragon Theatre.
- A number of workshops including 'Common Land Enclosures' (Dr Colin Thomas); 'Aerial Archaeology' (Dr Toby Driver); 'Palaeography' (Dr Susan Davies); 'Sources for local historians'.
- A number of guided walks – weather permitting!
- Numerous lectures to groups and societies.

Check our website for the latest information.

This newsletter has been published by the Adnabod Ardudwy Management Committee.

Editor: Rheinalt Llwyd.

Photos: Rhian Parry.

Designer: Elgan Griffiths.



Two launches



Rhian Parry, project leader, with Lord Elis-Thomas launching the website on 10 July 2008.

Photo: Nigel Hughes

Launching the project in April 2007. A report in *Y Cymro* reproduced with the editor's permission.

Remember also the events organised by the Merioneth Historical and Record Society. If you have enjoyed this newsletter why not join the Historical Society? Contact the Membership Secretary through the link on the Adnabod Ardudwy website or through Archifdy Meirionnydd, Ffordd y Bala, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 2YF.