



CYMCDEITHAS HYNAFIAETHWYR A NATURIAETHWYR MÔN CYLCHLYTHYR • NEWSLETTER

ANGLESEY ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY AND FIELD CLUB
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A very warm welcome to the Spring Newsletter. We have enjoyed some first-class lectures over the winter months to keep up our spirits and the cold at bay. To complete this set of excellent talks, we hope you can join us for the last lecture in the series, 'The road to Wylfa: a nuclear North Wales?' by Dr Marc Collinson (Bangor University). Marc's talk will follow the AGM on the 15th May. Looking ahead to the summer months, please see our list of excursions on page 12.



Gwibdaith i Lannau Hanesyddol Porthaethwy - Awst 30ain 2025

Â haf heulog yn suddo'n sarrug i hydref gwlyb a gwyntog, ymgasglodd yr Hynafiaethwyr ym Mhorthaethwy i fwynhau taith o amgylch ei lannau hanesyddol dan arweiniad abl Joanna Robertson.

Yng Nghoed Cyrnol, estynnodd Joanna wahoddiad i bawb oedi ennyd tra creodd hithau ddarlun o'r fan mewn amser a fu. Cafwyd bwyell carreg Neolithig, yrnau claddu'r Oes Efydd, ac arian Rhufeinig yma - ymddengys i'r llecyn culfain hwn o'r Fenai fod yn groesfan bwysig ers canrifoedd. Yn ystod y Canol Oesoedd, tir comin oedd Coed Cyrnol, ac arferai'r porthmyn orffwys y gwartheg yma cyn eu nofio i Arfon ac ymlaen i'r marchnadoedd mawrion yn Llundain. Ond roedd pysgota'n bwysig hefyd, ac wedi cyrraedd glan y dŵr ar gyrion Ynys Tysilio, tynnodd Joanna sylw at olion y coredu hynafol a'r hen felin heli.

Wedi croesi'r sarn, daeth yr aelodau at Eglwys Tysilio - eglwys fechan ar safle yr hyn oedd unwaith yn gell mynach. Mae'r eglwys bresennol yn dyddio i'r 1400au, ac yn ei mynwent mae cerrig beddau o lechen syml yn ogystal â chofebau diweddarach o farmor hardd yn tystio twf cyfoeth a statws y trefolion. Ymysg y rhai sy'n gorwedd yma mae'r bardd Cynan; rhai aelodau y teulu Davies - entrepreneuriaid llwyddiannus y 19eg ganrif; beddau symlach llafurwyr lleol; a chofeb lladdedigion y ddau Ryfel Byd.

O Ynys Tysilio gellir gweld pont rheilffordd Britannia ddyluniwyd gan Stephenson ac a gorwyd yn 1850. Cyfeiriodd Joanna at Ynys Gorad Goch, un o sawl ynys sydd yma. Siambr coch i penwaig roddodd yr enw nodweddiadol iddi, ac yn ddi-os ei choredau yw'r gorau ar y Fenai.

Gan adael Ynys Tysilio, troediodd yr aelodau lwybr y Promenâd Belgaid. Yn ystod y Rhyfel Mawr, bu'n rhaid i drigolion Mechelen yng Ngwlad Belg ddianc wedi i'r Almaenwyr oresgyn eu gwlad, ac er mwyn dangos eu gwerthfawrogiad o'r croeso gawsant ym Mhorthaethwy, aethant ati i adeiladu'r promenâd. Wedi ei gwblhau yn 1916, mae'n ymestyn o Ynys Tysilio at Carreg yr Halen.

Excursion to the Menai Bridge Historic Waterfront - August 30th 2025

As a glorious summer sank sullenly into a squally and damp early autumn, the Antiquarians gathered in Menai Bridge for a trip round its historic waterfront, ably led by Joanna Robertson.

At Coed Cyrnol, Joanna invited members to pause as she conjured images of a place in times gone by. Neolithic stone axes, Bronze Age burial urns and Roman coins were found here - this narrowest point of the Menai Strait has been an important crossing for centuries. During the Middle Ages, Coed Cyrnol was open common where drovers kept cattle before swimming them to the mainland and on to London markets. But fishing was also important, and on reaching the shoreline at Ynys Tysilio, Joanna pointed out the remains of old fish weirs and an ancient tidal mill.

Crossing a narrow causeway, members reached St Tysilio, a small church on what may have been the site of a monastic cell. The present church dates back to the 1400s, and its cemetery contains early slate headstones and later opulent marble monuments highlighting the townspeople's growing wealth and status. Among those buried here are the Welsh poet Cynan; some members of the Davies family - successful 19th Century entrepreneurs; the simpler graves of local workmen; and a memorial to those who perished in the two world wars.

From Ynys Tysilio it's possible to see one of two world-famous Anglesey bridges - Stephenson's Britannia railway bridge which opened in 1850. Joanna pointed to Ynys Gorad Goch, one of a number of islands in the Strait. Its name can be translated as 'island of red weirs'. Its fish traps are

undoubtedly the best on the Strait, and a fish smoking chamber built in 1824 which turned herring a vibrant red colour gave the island its idiosyncratic name.

Leaving Ynys Tysilio, members strolled merrily along the Belgian Promenade. During WWI refugees from German-occupied Belgium fled to Menai Bridge and, grateful for the welcome they received, built the promenade. It stretches from Ynys Tysilio to Carreg yr Halen and was completed in 1916.



*The group pose by an enormous, intricately-carved boulder - one of the many starting points for the Anglesey Coastal Path.
Photo Ann Huws*

Mae'r llanwau gwahanredol yn nau ben y Fenai yn peri cerhyntau cryfion mewn dau gyfeiriad. Mae'r dŵr yn corddi'n ffyrnig gan beri i'r rhan hon o'r Fenai fod yn hynod beryglus. Dim rhyfedd felly i Nelson gyhoeddi: "Os gallwch hwylio'r Fenai, gallwch hwylio unrhyw ran o'r byd!" Ond mae'n ardal gwarchodaeth bwysig hefyd ac yn cynnal pob math o fywyd môr: sbyngau, gwymon a chwrel; pysgod fel draenog y môr, mecryll a phenwaig; adar o bob math, a mamolion fel morloi, morhychod a dyfrgwn.

Gyda'r Fenai yn crymu tua'r pwynt culaf, arhosom funud ger Carreg yr Halen. Yn y 1900au cynnar, taenwyd tywod dros y graean sydd ar glwtyn bach o draeth ger y graig er mwyn creu traeth cysgodol i'r ymwelwyr a heidiai i'r dref. Wrth sefyll yma, rhannodd yr aelodau eu hatgofion o'r HMS Conway, llong hwylio ddrylliwyd ar y glannau cyferbyn yn 1953, a llosgi'n ddiweddarach. Mae olion ei hysgerbwdd brau i'w gweld ar lanw isel hyd heddiw.

At ddiwedd y 1500au, roedd tref Porthaethwy yn magu siâp, a'i fferiau cyntaf yn dyddio o'r cyfnod hwn. Ond roedd cerhyntau twyllodrus yn peri teithiau peryglus a collwyd llawer bywyd. Yn 1800 pan ymunodd Iwerddon â Phrydain Fawr, roedd disgwyl i'w haelodau etholedig fynychu'r senedd yn San Steffan, ac o ganlyniad roedd sicrhau ffordd mwy diogel a chyflym o deithio yn hanfodol. Comisiwynwyd Thomas Telford i ddylunio Pont Menai, fe'i cwblhawyd yn 1826, a phryd hynny hi oedd pont grog fwyaf y byd.

Yn edrych dros y bont eiconig, Pier y Tywysog oedd calon bywyd morwrol y dref. Dyma safle un o'r myrdd fferiau fu'n croesi'r Fenai ers y Canol Oesoedd, ond gyda'r gwaith o adeiladu'r bont heidiodd gweithwyr yn eu cannoedd i'r ardal - pob un angen nwyddau, offer a bwyd. Gwelodd Richard Davies, siopwr pell-weledol o Langefni, ei gyfle: roedd rhaid storio'r nwyddau - adliadodd yntau warws. Troliwyd y nwyddau i'r warws o'r glanfeydd bychain ym Mhorth y Wrach a Phorth Daniel; tyfodd y fenter; prynodd y teulu eu llongau eu hunain i gario llechi ac ymfudwyr i Ogledd America. Erbyn diwedd y 19eg Ganrif, daeth llongau stêm ag ymwelwyr o Lerpwl i dref oedd bellach yn ganolfan gwyliau lwyddiannus.

Gyda'n gwibdaith yn dirwyn i ben, prysurodd aelodau sychedig tua'r bwytai lleol i fwynhau coffi a chacen neu, wedi argymhellid dwy o'n haelodau iau, i gelateria newydd y dref i flasau hufen iâ Eidalaid yn fwrwm o flasau dyfeisgar. Fanila a chnau cyll, neu siocled gyda lemnw rhywun?

Ann Huws

The differential tides at two ends of the Strait cause very strong currents to flow in both directions. The water churns making this part of the Strait particularly dangerous. Small wonder Nelson declared: "if you can sail the Menai Straits, you can sail anywhere in the world!" But it is also an important conservation area that boasts many species of marine life: sponges, seaweeds and cold-water coral; fish like sea bass, mackerel and herring; shore and wading birds; as well as larger mammals such as seals, porpoises and otters.

Just before the Strait arches towards its narrowest point, we paused near Carreg yr Halen. During the early 1900s, fresh sand was spread on a patch of shingle overlooking the islet creating a sheltered beach for visitors. Here, members shared memories of HMS Conway, a wooden sailing ship which ran aground on the opposite shore in 1953, then caught fire. The remains of its rotting carcass can still be seen at low tide.

Towards the end of the 1500s Porthaethwy town began to take shape, and the first ferries across the Strait date from this time. But treacherous currents made the crossing dangerous and many lives were lost. In 1800 when Ireland became a part of Great Britain, its elected representatives were expected to attend the Westminster Parliament, so safer and quicker means of travel were essential. Thomas Telford, was commissioned to design the Menai Suspension Bridge, completed in 1826, and the biggest suspension bridge in the world at the time.

Overlooking the iconic bridge, Prince's Pier was the heart of maritime life. It was the site of one of many ferries that had crossed the Strait since medieval times, but construction of the new bridge brought an enormous number of labourers - all needing materials, hardware and food. Llangefni store keeper Richard Davies spotted a business opportunity: goods needed storage - he built a warehouse. Goods were trundled to the warehouse from small landing places at Porth y Wrach and Porth Daniel; the business grew; the Davies family bought ships of their own to carry slate and migrants to North America. By the end of the 19th Century steamships from Liverpool came too, bringing tourists to a thriving holiday resort. Porthaethwy was henceforth known as Menai Bridge.

As the excursion drew to its close, thirsty members turned to local cafés for coffee and conversation or, on the recommendation of two young members, to the town's newly-opened gelateria for real Italian ice cream bursting with innovative flavour combinations. Vanilla with hazelnut, or chocolate with lemon anyone?

Ann Huws

Excursion to Oriel Môn, Bedd Branwen and Llanbabo Church Saturday, 27th September

Despite our last excursion of the summer falling on a wet and windy autumn day, the fieldtrip led by Frances Lynch Llewellyn and Prof. Sara Elin Roberts raised our spirits and more than compensated for such dreary weather. Our rendezvous point was Oriel Môn where Frances showed us a selection of Bronze Age finds from Ynys Môn, including the Collared urn discovered at Bedd Branwen in 1813 and smaller accessory vessels brought to light during her excavations at the site in 1967.

At Elim, Llanddeusant, Frances led the way across a windswept field to where the ground rose slightly and we came to a large stone - in shape, rather like a giant, inverted flowerpot with flattened top and rounded sides. On closer inspection, we could see that this large stone, which has a central split from top to bottom, stood at the centre of a raised, grassy platform in the surrounding landscape. The remains of a stone revetment can still be seen in places along the outer edge. We had reached Bedd Branwen.

Frances explained the complex sequence of this prehistoric site. The earthworks represent the remains of a Bronze Age cairn ring, topped in its final phase by an earthen mound to create a Bronze Age barrow, c.1400 BC. The barrow was constructed around the central stone, an earlier prehistoric monument, which appears to have been the focal point for the later Bronze Age burial activity. The excavation



Frances explaining the sequence of monument development at Bedd Branwen

in 1967 uncovered a series of cremation burials. The first burials at the site took the form of three cremation burials in urns – two in association with smaller accessory vessels. These were then covered by the ring cairn. At a later stage, after construction of the mound, a further group of urned cremations were inserted into the barrow. Grave goods in the form of amber and jet beads from this barrow cemetery, which potentially held up to 12 individuals, highlight a trade network of exotic goods with connections outside Wales. A curious rite, which has been recognised elsewhere on Ynys Môn, was the deposition of pairs of infant ear bones placed in three smaller pots and accompanying adult cremations.

Whilst no medieval burials have been found at the site, it has mythical associations with the grave of Branwen, sister of Bendigeidfran (a king and giant) featured in the Mabinogi. Sara unpicked the legend for us – written down for the first time in the fourteenth-century *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, it drew on earlier oral traditions. Branwen had an arranged marriage to Matholwch king of Ireland. This was a union that was expected to cement good diplomatic relationships between the two countries. Instead, it is tragic tale of intrigue, betrayal, revenge and a supernatural cauldron of rebirth. Due to a spiteful and violent attack on the horses of the Irish retinue by Branwen's half-brother, Efnisien, Branwen was ill-treated in Ireland. In distress, she sent a message to Bendigeidfran to rescue her. A bloody battle ensued and many died on each side, including Bendigeidfran. Listening to Sara paint such a vivid and colourful picture, we were transported back through the mists of time to an earlier fantastical age. The story ends when Branwen dies of a broken heart and is buried on the banks of Alaw – the river that is located a stone's throw from Bedd Branwen.

From Bedd Branwen, we made our way to St Pabo's Church, Llanbabo - an atmospheric, stone-built, single-celled church. It is set within a curvilinear enclosure, indicative of earlier Christian or prehistoric use. We were fortunate to have Andrew Davidson within our party, whose knowledge of church archaeology and Welsh history helped to set the site within its historical and landscape context. The earliest parts of the present church date to the twelfth century. Some restoration took place in the early twentieth century by Harold Hughes. Of note, is the twelfth-century font and the fourteenth-century carved stone memorial to the fifth-century legendary King Pabo. This fine sculptured monument, which depicts Pabo with crown and sceptre, was found broken in the church graveyard in the seventeenth century. It now stands upright in the nave. Interestingly, it is believed to have been sculpted by the same hand that produced the Eva Stone in Bangor Cathedral and the effigy of St Iestyn in Llaniestyn Church.

KJP



AAS members stand at the edge of the prehistoric earthwork



Bedd Branwen: central stone



St Pabo's Church, Llanbabo



Monument to King Pabo



Detail of doorway to St Pabo's

Professor Dan Hicks: Augustus Pitt-Rivers at Penrhyn (19th September 2025)



Professor Dan Hicks

Photo Ann Huws

Dr Gareth Huws introduced the evening's speaker, Professor Dan Hicks, professor of contemporary archaeology and curator of world archaeology at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Drawing on his work at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Professor Hicks' recent book, *Every Monument will Fall: a story of remembering and forgetting* (2025), explores archaeological thinking within the political and social contexts of the nineteenth century. Professor Hicks' lecture shared this fascinating research with us, providing a critical analysis of the life and times of Pitt-Rivers – a man of his time but also one that changed the face of archaeology by employing innovative new archaeological methodologies.

Lieutenant-General Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers was born Henry Lane Fox in 1827 and inherited the additional surname Pitt-Rivers in 1880, along with a vast fortune passed down through the maternal family line from his great uncle, Edward Gordon Douglas-Pennant, the first baron of Penrhyn, owner of Penrhyn Quarry. A connection with North Wales was also forged by Pitt-Rivers' marriage to Alice Stanley who had family connections to Anglesey.

Pitt-Rivers had a long and distinguished military career. He was instrumental in developing rifle technology and training soldiers in effective rifle use. As a result of this expertise, he was tasked with trialing the rifle as the service weapon of the British Army in Crimea. This interest in technological development merged with his passion for archaeology and anthropology, shaping his ideas not just on weaponry but also on material culture. From a young soldier, he was an avid collector of artefacts from across the world.

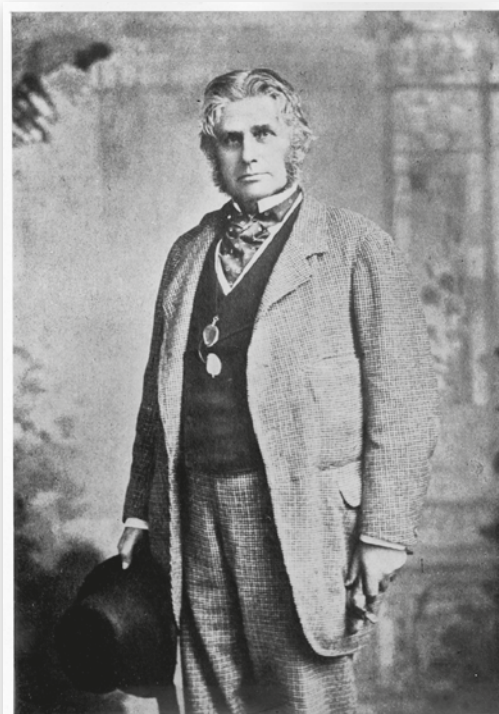
In 1875 he exhibited his collection at Bethnal Green Museum, East London. It was a typological display with collections organised by type and arranged in what Pitt-Rivers called a 'hypothetical series', representing what he perceived as a hierarchy of technological development, influenced by his work on rifles but also by contemporary ideas such as Darwin's evolutionary theory.

Over thirty years (1852-1882), and by the time Pitt-Rivers inherited his fortune, he had amassed a huge collection of objects, which formed the backbone of the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1884. Founded with 30,000 objects, the museum now holds more than 300,000 objects.

As Professor Hicks explained, Pitt-Rivers applied his evolutionary thinking to all objects in museum collections, regardless of their cultural role or function. This type of interpretation created a particular view of the past and contemporary societies - one which viewed some cultures as 'primitive' and in need of improvement. By arranging artefacts in a subjective hierarchy, with little regard to context or chronology, it propagated the notion of cultural supremacy, ideas firmly embedded within the colonial mindset of the age. And whilst Pitt Rivers was an advocate of bringing archaeology and education to all, the narrative embedded in his museum also promoted a social status quo bias and reinforced the nineteenth-century class system as the natural order of things. These are challenges that the Pitt Rivers

Museum has had to address in terms of museology. It has worked hard to update interpretation and decolonise its collections, whilst also fostering an appreciation for the range, scope and history of its collections.

As well as curating the Pitt Rivers Museum, Pitt-Rivers became the first inspector of Ancient Monuments in 1883 and started the process of scheduling ancient monuments. In this role, he was able to protect and bring to public attention the importance and value of the prehistoric past. He was an enthusiastic fieldworker and brought military precision to his excavations, carefully recording all finds and using new excavation methods which uncovered more of a site, leaving section baulks, so that the chronological phases of a site could be seen. He is credited as establishing archaeology as a scientific discipline. His open-site excavation technique is particularly evident in his later digs, for example at Wor Barrow, Cranborne Chase, the estate he inherited as part of his inheritance in 1880. Professor Hicks drew our attention to the similarities between Pitt Rivers' large-scale excavation methods and slate extraction technology, which he observed through family connections in North Wales.



Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=20596594>

Pitt Rivers actively promoted himself as an archaeologist – it was an important part of his life and identity. In later life, he placed 'medalets' at the bottom of every trench he dug. These metal tokens had images on the obverse depicting archaeological tools, artefacts and a human skull. On the reverse was the text, 'opened by A. Pitt Rivers F.R.S.' It also included the date. Pitt Rivers was also one of the first to write the excavation date on his finds. These were deliberate acts to write himself into the archaeological record and firmly place himself into the object's biography.

Pitt-Rivers is also renowned for carrying out fieldwork and excavations in North Wales. In 1868 while staying at Penrhyn Castle, he excavated two cairns on Moel Faban, finding flints and a Bronze Age urn. On Anglesey, he recovered human remains from Twyn y Capel.

Drawing the lecture to a close, Professor Hicks reflected on the legacy of Pitt-Rivers and the importance of contextualising the collections at our museums – both within the mindsets of the early archaeologists who created the collections and with regard to the social conditions under which they were acquired.

‘Treasure Island, new acquisitions and exciting new developments at Oriel Môn’

Joanna Robertson, AAS Chair, warmly welcomed our evening’s speaker, Kelly Parry, Senior Manager at Oriel Môn. Kelly’s talk provided a fascinating insight into the work going on behind the scenes at Oriel Môn in preparation for its new exhibition, Trysor (Treasure), which opened on the 28th of March this year. This exhibition displays exciting new acquisitions but also a selection of important and interesting objects placed on public display for the first time from the museum’s existing collections. We were thrilled to be given such a preview and settled down to enjoy a sparkling lecture that highlighted the exceptional range and diversity of Oriel Môn’s archaeological collection.

Kelly began by explaining the legal definition of treasure and the process of acquiring new objects. In 2023, the 1996 Treasure Act was amended to include all metal objects over 200 years old in addition to a new ‘significance’ criterion to cover objects deemed to be of important cultural value. These changes have widened the range of artefacts made available to museums for purchase.

Many of the new finds to come to light over the last few years have been found by metal detectorists – Covid greatly increased metal detecting as a hobby. There is a legal requirement to report treasure finds within 14 days of discovery to the local coroner and, if declared treasure, it has a value placed on it by the British Museum. It is at this stage that museums are given the opportunity to acquire the object. Luckily, with the help of grant funding, Oriel Môn was able to acquire some spectacular new pieces for its collection. But as Kelly pointed out, sometimes high prices can be prohibitive for museums and, sadly, this may mean objects are sold into private hands and consequently removed from the public sphere.

An Iron Age hoard of 16 gold coins was the first new acquisition Kelly brought to our attention. Discovered in Llangoed, this find represents the only Iron Age coin hoard to be found in Wales and is of national importance. Minted in Lincolnshire by the Corieltavi tribe, there is some speculation as to how the hoard ended up on Ynys Môn – was it a gift, a votive deposit, or perhaps a form of barter in a pre-monetary economy? This hoard also demonstrates international links - the images on the coins are based on the coins of Phillip II of Macedon (359-336 BC), which circulated widely on the continent. Local tribes adopted the designs but adapted them to suit their own artistic cultural preferences. In the case of the Corieltavi coins, the result is a heavily stylised depiction,



Kelly Parry



Ram’s head
with kind permission of Oriel Môn

representing the wonderful abstract, curvilinear designs so characteristic of the British Iron Age.

Another spectacular find of Iron Age and Roman artefacts to go on display came from Llanfair Mathafarn-Eithaf. Iron Age chariot fittings, Roman fibula brooches and coins make up this assemblage. But the *pièce de résistance* from this site is a small metal ram’s head of beautiful craftsmanship. Its function is unknown, but it may have been part of a chariot fitting. A weighty Roman copper cake (40lbs/20kilos) also formed part of the finds from this site. The artefacts were discovered in a marshy field. This has led to the speculation that they were ritual deposits close to a sacred spring.

In terms of interpretation, we are on firmer ground at the next site on Kelly’s list of new acquisitions. Recent fieldwork on the airfield at RAF Valley by the MOD, alongside a team of veterans from Operation Nightingale, uncovered a bridle bit and a decorated terret ring. These objects are considered to represent additions to the assemblage of Iron Age weaponry and metal work retrieved in the 1940s from Llyn Cerrig Bach, a site of Iron Age votive deposition adjacent to the airfield. After conservation at Amgueddfa Cymru they will return to Oriel Môn.

As Kelly showed us the variety of objects curated by Oriel Môn, we were amazed at the extensive range - artefacts that demonstrate the rich history and culture of the island. The collection is eclectic with a wide chronological span: from objects of adornment such as beautiful Bronze Age beads in faience and lignite which accompanied the dead in the Bronze Age cemeteries of Ynys Môn, to tools and weaponry in the form of stone and bronze axes, which throw light on the technologies of the past.

Not all the objects in the new exhibition have national or international significance. Some speak of personal ties between one person and another.

One of the most evocative objects that Kelly brought to our attention was a small seventeenth-century posy ring, inscribed on the inside with the words, ‘though absent, yet constant’. A poignant reminder that museums are repositories not just of objects but also help to preserve the intangible heritage of hearts and minds.

If you haven’t already visited the Trysor Exhibition, don’t miss out, it runs until the 4th April, 2027.

KJP



Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf assemblage
with kind permission of Oriel Môn



Cwm Cadnant Bronze Age penannular gold ring
with kind permission of Oriel Môn

Darlith Goffa Syr Ifor Williams: Tachwedd 21ain 2025

O'r Bom i Butlin's: gweddnewid Gogledd Cymru yn y 1950au a'r 1960au - Dr Mari Elin Wiliam, Prifysgol Bangor

Gyda'i ffraethineb cynhenid, camodd Donald Glyn Pritchard ymlaen i groesawu'r aelodau a chynnig trosolwg o hanes a chefnidir Syr Ifor Williams, cyn cyflwyno Dr Mari Elin Wiliam o Brifysgol Bangor i draddodi'r ddarlith goffa. Ei maes yw Hanes Modern o ddiwedd Oes Fictoria i'r 21ain ganrif gyda'r ffocws ar hunaniaeth cenedlaethol a bywyd bob dydd yn y Gymru fodern.

Taflodd ei darlith olau ar brosiectau isadeiledd mawr a thra gwahanol ddaeth i Ogledd Cymru yn y 1950au a'r 1960au, a'u heffaith ar y tirwedd a'r bobl, eu hunaniaeth a'u Cymreictod.

Wedi ymosodiadau atomig ar Hiroshima a Nagasaki yn 1945, nis gellid gwadu dyfodiad yr Oes Niwclear. Yn dilyn diwedd yr Ail Ryfel Byd, bu twf aruthrol mewn twristiaeth torfol gyda'r bobl gyffredin yn awchu am browla'r byd newydd. Roedd y genie allan o'r botel, a'r ddau ddiwydiant yn newid tirwedd, cymunedau a Chymreictod am byth.

Datgelodd Dr Wiliam y bu sôn yn 1956 am godi tair atomfa niwclear yng Ngogledd Cymru: Trawsfynydd, Ynys Môn ac Edern yn Llŷn. Roedd Plaid Cymru yn galw am 'ffatri atomig' yn Bala, a Goronwy Roberts, aelod seneddol Sir Gaernarfon, yn pryderu bod lefel diweithdra Gogledd Cymru cyn uchod â 13% - chwe gwaith y cyfartaledd cenedlaethol.

Roedd Cymru a chymunedau cymreig yn daer o blaid yr atomefydd: prysurodd Plaid Cymru i gefnogi codi atomfa yn Nhrawsfynydd, ac ymddangosodd erthygl yn *Y Cymro* o blaid atomfa yn Edern gan fynnu bod y gymuned yn gref: wedi'r cyfan roedd wedi ymdopi ag efaciwîs, y Llu Awyr, a gweryll y Pwyliaid. Bu miloedd o'r diwaith oedd o blaid adeiladu'r atomefydd yn gorymdeithio yn Nyffryn Nantlle a Thrawsfynydd gyda'u baneri yn bloeddio: *Pylons before Poverty*.

Ond ofnai eraill yr effaith gatastroffig ar dirlun a chymunedau pe bai'r atomefydd yn dod. Oni fyddai'r tyrau concriid a'r peilonau'n hagrau'r wlad, a dieithriaid yn gorlifo'r fro gan lygru'r iaith a thanseilio'r hunaniaeth Gymraeg? Meddai Saunders Lewis: "Ni ddylid gwerthu'r dyfodol i beilonau er mwyn saig o fwyd." Taer wrthwynebai chwirydd Plas-y-n-Rhiw codi atomfa yn Edern. Aethant ati i gasglu deiseb gyda thirfeddiannwyr ariannog yn cefnogi, a gwyr dylanwadol fel R S Thomas, Iorwerth Peate a Saunders Lewis yn eilio.

Ni fu atomfa yn Edern - ai effaith gwrthwynebiad yr elite llewyrchus oedd hynny? Gyda thristwch, meddai Glyn Roberts: "Os na ddaw atomfa i Ben Llŷn, bydd yr ardal yn dai haf ac ysgolion gweigion." Eironig mai hynny fu tynged Pen Llŷn heb atomfa, ac Ynys Môn gydag atomfa!

Ond nid atomefydd oedd yr unig her i Gymreictod Gogledd Cymru yr 20fed ganrif. Yn y 1930au, prynnodd yr entrepreneur Billy Butlin lain o dir ar bentir yn Llŷn, ac ar gais y Morlys cododd wersyll hyfforddi yno. Wedi'r Ail Ryfel Byd ddod i ben, prysurodd Mr Butlin i addasu'r safle yn wersyll gwyliau. Unwaith eto roedd ymateb rymys o blaid ac yn erbyn. Yn 1944, ffurfiwyd y Llŷn Defence Committee i geisio cadw Llŷn fel cadarnle Cymreictod a moesoldeb yn erbyn cyfalafiaeth Butlins. Cyffelybiai Saunders Lewis y parc gwyliau i wersyll-garchar, ac yn fodd o grynhoi ymwelyr mewn un lle yn hytrach na'u bod yn heidio fel pryfed i bob cwr o'r wlad.

Ond roedd y bobl lleol o blaid y gweryll gwyliau a gwelwyd gorymdaith o'r diwaith yn cefnogi'r datblygiad. Yn ddyd busnes craff, prysurodd Billy Butlin i fanteisio ar Gymru a

Sir Ifor Williams Memorial Lecture November 21st 2025

From the Bomb to Butlin's: transformation of North Wales in the 1950s and 1960s - Dr Mari Elin Wiliam, Bangor University



Dr Mari Elin Wiliam

With his customary ease, Donald Glyn Pritchard stepped forward to welcome members, and to present a brief history of Syr Ifor Williams before introducing Dr Mari Elin Wiliam of Bangor University to deliver the Memorial Lecture. Her field of study is Modern History from the late Victorian Age to the 21st century, focusing on national identity and everyday life in modern Wales.

Her lecture shone a spotlight on large-scale but very different infrastructure projects that came to North Wales in the 1950s and 1960s, and their effects on landscape and people - their identity and Welshness.

Following the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the atomic age was born. Post-World War II brought unprecedented growth in mass tourism as the man in the street developed an unquenchable urge to explore this new world.

The genie was out of its bottle as both industries changed landscape, communities and Welshness forever.

Dr Wiliam revealed that, as early as 1956, plans were mooted to build three nuclear power stations in North Wales: Trawsfynydd, Anglesey and Edern in Llŷn. Plaid Cymru called for an 'atomic factory' in Bala; Goronwy Roberts, MP for Caernarfonshire, agonised about the 13% level of unemployment in North Wales - six times the national average.

Welsh people and communities were all for nuclear power stations: Plaid Cymru supported an atomic plant at Trawsfynydd; an article backing a nuclear power station in Edern appeared in *Y Cymro*, insisting the community was robust: it had coped with evacuees, the RAF and the Polish Camp. Thousands of the pro-nuclear power unemployed marched in Nantlle and Trawsfynydd, their banners proudly proclaiming: *Pylons before Poverty*.

But others feared a catastrophic effect on landscape and communities if nuclear power stations were built. Would the concrete reactor blocks and towering pylons disfigure the landscape, and outsiders flood the country polluting the language and undermining Welsh identity? As Saunders Lewis said: "*We must not sell our future to pylons for a bowl of gruel.*" The sisters of Plas-y-n-Rhiw were fiercely opposed to a nuclear power station in Edern. They set up a petition, wealthy landowners supported it, and men like R S Thomas, Iorwerth Peate and Saunders Lewis joined in.

The nuclear power station never came to Edern - did the prosperous elite's opposition hold sway? Yet with great sadness, Glyn Roberts wrote: "*If the atomic power station **doesn't** come to Pen Llŷn, the area will be nothing but holiday homes and empty schools.*" How ironic it is to acknowledge such indeed was Pen Llŷn's fate **without** a nuclear plant - and Anglesey's **with** one!

But nuclear power stations weren't the only threat to Welsh communities of 20th century North Wales. In the 1930s, the entrepreneur Billy Butlin purchased a parcel of land in Llŷn and, at the request of the Admiralty, set up a training camp. After World War II ended, Mr Butlin turned the site into a holiday camp. Once again, voices were raised in support and in protest. In 1944, the Llŷn Defence Committee was formed in an attempt to preserve Llŷn as a bastion of Welshness and morality against Billy Butlin's capitalism. Saunders Lewis likened the holiday park to a concentration camp which would at least keep visitors in one place instead of roaming every corner of the country.

Once again, local people were all for the holiday camp and a procession of the unemployed supported the development. Mr Butlin, an astute

Chymreictod gan ddefnyddio treftadaeth i hybu a hysbysebu: "... retains much of the heritage of the Welsh Princes of old." Erbyn 1948 roedd gwersyll gwyliau Butlins yn rhan o'r 'brand' gwyliau Cymru.

Roedd eraill yn gweld manteision twristiaeth: yn 1948 ffurfiwyd Bwrdd Croeso Cymru i farchnata Cymru fel cenedl llwyr wahanol i weddill Prydain. Hysbysebwyd Môn - Benllech a Cemaes yn arbennig - fel: "the sunny island of Anglesey"; "sun-drenched and splendid beaches and bays"; "you could stay forever". A dyna'n union wnaeth llawer ohonynt - aros am byth!

Wrth gloi darlith ddisglair, cydnabyddodd Dr Wiliam mai cymhleth yw'r drafodaeth o hyd. Bydd atomfa newydd ym Môn cyn 2050 - diwydiant wnaiff gynnig gwaith ond erydu'r hunaniaeth Gymraeg. Parc gwyliau yw Butlins hyd heddiw, ac mae Abersoch gerllaw yn bentref enfawr o dai gwyliau moethus - ond yr ysgol ar gau oherwydd prinder plant lleol. Ai parc thema fydd Trawsfynydd cyn bo hir? Man ble caiff ymwelwyr rythu ar ddehongliad sterilaidd o'n gorffennol diwydiannol fel y rhyfeddant at ein chwareli a'n pyllau glo heddiw? Wrth droi tuag adref, gofynai rhai beth yw gwir gost y prosiectau goruwch-gyfalafol hyn, a phwy sydd yn wir elwa yn y pen draw?

Ann Huws

businessman, took advantage of Wales's appeal - using its heritage to promote and advertise: "... retains much of the heritage of the Welsh Princes of old." By 1948, Butlins holiday camp was part of the Wales tourism 'brand'.

But others in Wales saw the advantages of tourism too: in 1948, a Wales Tourist Board was formed to market Wales as a nation very different to the rest of the UK. Anglesey - Benllech and Cemaes in particular - was advertised as: "the sunny island of Anglesey"; "sun-drenched and splendid beaches and bays"; "you could stay forever". And that's precisely what they did - they stayed!

Closing a sparkling lecture, Dr Wiliam acknowledged the argument remains complicated. A new nuclear power station will operate on Anglesey before 2050 - an industry which will provide jobs but erode Welsh identity. Butlins remains a holiday camp; nearby Abersoch is a large community of luxury holiday homes, but its school is closed for lack of local children. Will Trawsfynydd be a theme park before long? A place where tourists gawp at sanitised interpretations of our industrial past, much as they marvel at our quarries and coal mines today? Heading for home, members debated the true cost of these mega-moneymaking projects, and who really benefits from them in the end?

Ann Huws

Friday 16 January 2026 – Oriol Ynys Môn

Dr Gareth Huws – 'Anglesey's Ireland' – Plas Newydd estate and its holdings in County Louth.

It was with pleasure that Joanna (AAS Chair) welcomed Dr Gareth Huws, Trustee and very active member of the AAS Society, to give the evening lecture. Drawing on his extensive research, Gareth's talk focused on the historic interrelationship between Wales and Ireland which developed through the acquisition of land in Ireland by Welsh landlords.

Gareth explained that amongst historians there is a common misconception that, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, estates in Ireland were largely owned by English landlords, particularly if those landlords were absentees. However, historical records demonstrate that this was not the case - Welsh landlords played a major part. To illustrate this point, Gareth used the Plas Newydd estate as a case study – an estate which in the late nineteenth century had extensive land holdings on Ynys Môn (13,770 acres) and, until the mid- nineteenth century, was the second largest landowner in County Louth with 8,000 acres.

The history of the acquisition of land in Ireland goes back to Nicholas Bagenal, the son of a tailor in Newcastle-under-Lyme. As a young man he seems to have been a bit of a tearaway and was involved in a brawl in which he was accused of killing a man. To save his skin, he escaped to Ireland and became a mercenary, fighting with Con O'Neill, 1st Earl of Tyrone. He clearly made his mark as a soldier and, on the recommendation of O'Neill, received a royal pardon. After a stint fighting in France, he returned to Ireland in 1547, having risen through the ranks to become Marshall of the Army in Ireland. He was knighted by Edward VI in 1551 and was given lands in Ireland around Newry. The links with Plas Newydd began with his marriage to Ellen Griffith, daughter of Edward Griffith of Penrhyn. As co-heir to the Penrhyn Estate, Ellen brought both land and house (Plas Newydd) to the marriage. Gareth drew our attention to Nicholas' brief in Ireland – to 'civilize' the Irish people and extend English power – a sign that, by the sixteenth-century, the burgeoning concept of empire and a colonial mentality were part and parcel of land acquisition.

As Gareth deftly took us through the descendants of Nicolas and Ellen, we see the Plas Newydd Estate increase in size and influence. Well-connected marriages draw in the Bayley family line. In 1737, Nicholas Bayley married Caroline Paget, a rich heiress from landed aristocracy, owners of the Beaudesert Estate in Staffordshire. By the time we reach 1815, the first Marquess of Anglesey was the owner of Plas Newydd



Dr Gareth Huws

estate. It now held land in Wales, England and Ireland. This was an estate with power, status and influence. It had extensive agricultural lands but also drew wealth from the extraction of coal, lead, slate and copper mines.

Through a meticulous analysis of estate documents, Gareth has been able to compare estate management and agricultural practices in Wales and Ireland. His research has also highlighted the treatment and care of tenants in both countries and the disparities between them.

In the 1830s and 1840s, stark differences can be seen in the annual returns received between the Marquess's estates in Ynys Môn and Louth. For example, in 1836 the annual rent received from Ynys Môn was £8,000; from Louth £5,800. Whilst Plas Newydd had more extensive lands on Ynys Môn

and could expect higher returns, Gareth drew our attention to the money spent by the estate on disbursements (money paid in Wales and Ireland to improve the lives of tenants). Per head, the tenants in Ynys Môn received more generous disbursements, which helped to support, amongst other causes, dispensaries, schools and the maintenance of churches. On average, the ledgers show Plas Newydd tenants in Ireland received only a third of that paid in disbursements to tenants on Ynys Môn. Gareth suggested that for absentee landlords, as the owners of Plas Newydd were for much of the time, distance severed the direct communication between landlord and tenant and thus the plight of a tenant would not be so evident – out of sight, out of mind.

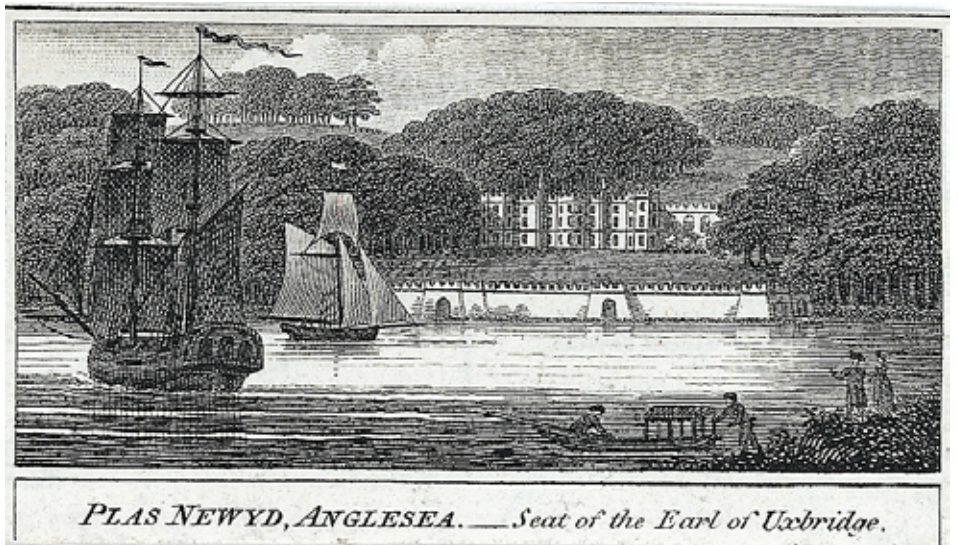
1846 was a turning point in the fortunes of the Plas Newydd lands in Ireland. Whilst there had been decline shown in the years leading up to this, the potato famine of 1846/7 was the last nail in the coffin. The dependency in Ireland on one crop – the potato – coupled with the retention, in some areas, of the Clachan system, a traditional open-field method of farming, where tenants farmed scattered plots of good and bad land, and held land in common, meant that farms were not viable and tenants could not pay their rent. Whilst the Plas Newydd Estate attempted to alleviate some of the suffering, it was too late. Gareth read some heartrending records of monies provided by Plas Newydd for coffins to bury the dead or for passage to America.

On Ynys Môn, whilst some tenants were also feeling the pinch, overall the economy was on the up, fuelled by the construction of the railway

and expansion of the port at Holyhead. In Ireland, circumstances were dire. The Marquess had three mortgages on the go to keep all his estates going. On the death of the Marquess in 1854, his son auctioned the Irish estates, thereby ending three hundred years of landownership.

Gareth's engaging and thought-provoking lecture showed that large, landed estates were centres of power and influence, but their finances were finite. Without sufficient investment in rural estates to improve the land and lives of their tenants such enterprises were doomed to failure. And what of those poor tenants in abject poverty in Ireland? They had little choice but to take the offer of a ticket to America and leave their homelands.

KJP



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plas_Newydd_\(Anglesey\)#/media/File:Plas_Newydd,_Anglesey_-_seat_of_the_Earl_of_Uxbridge.jpeg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plas_Newydd_(Anglesey)#/media/File:Plas_Newydd,_Anglesey_-_seat_of_the_Earl_of_Uxbridge.jpeg)

Chwefror 20fed 2026

Melinau Gwynt Môn - Dr Warren Kovach

Gydag Ynys Môn yn gwgu dan gymylau glaw, prysurodd yr aelodau o'u pentrefi pellennig a thyrru i'r Oriol i wrando darlith gyfareddol ar hanes melinau gwynt yr ynys wedi ei thraddodi gan Dr Warren Kovach.

Wedi cyflwyno'i wefan (www.anglesey-history.co.uk/cy/hanes-mon) taniodd Dr Kovach ei sgwrs trwy ddiffinio ystyr 'melin'. Yn ei ffurf symlaf, dyma ddyfais sy'n torri defnyddiau soled yn ddarnau llai trwy dorri neu falu.

Enghraifft gynhanesyddol o felin syml yw breuan gyfrwy - carreg fawr ag arwyneb ceugrwm, gyda charreg llai yn cael ei gwthio 'nôl a blaen â llaw drosti er mwyn malu grawn. Maes o law daeth breuanau tro - eto'n gweithio â llaw, carreg uwch yn troi tros garreg is, a'r grawn yn tywallt trwy hopran ganolog i gynnig malu cyflymach. Gallai awtamateiddio - ynni dŵr, gwynt neu anifail yn troi y garreg uchaf - sicrhau dull cyflymach a mwy effeithlon fyth o falu grawn, pannu gwlan, neu dorri cerrig.

Credir fod melinau dŵr cynharaf Môn yn dyddio o'r 13eg a'r 14eg ganrif, a melinau heli fel Tre'r Gof ger Trearddur, Ynys Tysilio ger Porthaethwy, a Bodior ger Rhoscolyn yn ymddangos yng nghofnodion y 16eg and 17eg ganrif.

Yna daeth y melinau gwynt, ac er y credir fod melin wynt yn troi yn Niwbwrch yn 1303, un arall ym Miwmares yn 1327, a'r map o Ynys Môn luniwyd gan John Speed yn 1610 yn dangos melin wynt yn ymyl Castell Biwmares, y gyntaf i'w dyddio'n ffurfiol yw Melin Gallt-y-Benddu Llanerchymedd a godwyd yn 1737-38.

Yn ystod y 1740au, daeth trindod o drallodion i Fôn: sychder yn amharu ar effeithlonrwydd y melinau dŵr; cynydd ym mhoblogaeth yr ynys; Deddfau Yd yn gwthio prisiau grawn i'r entyrchion. Gan hynny roedd rhaid tyfu mwy o rawn, ac adeiladu llawer o felinau newydd i falu'r grawn hwnnw.

Aeth Dr Kovach ymlaen i ddisgrifio nifer o felinau gwynt Môn, sut oeddynt yn gweithio, a hanesion rhai o'r melinwyr oedd yn eu cynnal. Enghraifft nodedig yw Melin Drylliau neu Melin Caerau ger

February 20th 2026

The Windmills of Anglesey - Dr Warren Kovach

As a rain-soaked Anglesey sulked under leaden skies, members fled water-logged communities and thronged to Oriol Môn for an absorbing lecture on the island's windmills, ably and eloquently delivered by Dr Warren Kovach.

Introducing his website (www.anglesey-history.co.uk/cy/hanes-mon) Dr Kovach began by defining the term 'mill'. In its most basic form, a mill is a device that breaks solid materials into smaller parts by cutting, grinding or crushing.

A saddle quern is a prehistoric example of a basic mill - a large lower stone with a concave surface on which a smaller hand-held stone moved back and forth to crush grain. Rotary querns - hand-operated, an upper stone rotating on a lower stone as grain poured through a central hopper - appeared later and ensured faster grinding. Automation whereby the moving upper stone was turned by water, wind or animals offered an even faster more efficient method of grinding grain, fulling cloth or crushing stone.

Anglesey's earliest watermills seem to date to the 13th and 14th centuries, with tidal mills such as Tre'r Gof near Trearddur, Church Island near Menai Bridge and Bodior near Rhoscolyn appearing in

16th and 17th century records.

Windmills came later and there are accounts of a Newborough windmill operating in 1303, another in Beaumaris in 1327, and John Speed's 1610 map of Anglesey shows a windmill near Beaumaris Castle. But the first formally dated windmill is Melin Gallt-y-Benddu near Llanerchymedd which was built in 1737-38.

During the 1740s, a triad of troubles beset Anglesey: drought adversely affected the efficiency of watermills; the island's population increased; the new Corn Laws raised grain prices, more grain had to be grown, and the grain needed milling. So the race was on to build new windmills to meet the demand.

Dr Kovach went on to describe some of Anglesey's windmills, how they worked, and the stories of the millers who ran them. Melin



Dr Warren Kovach

Photo Ann Huws

Llanrhuuddlad. Cenhedlodd William Rowlands, y melinydd yn yr 1840au, linach o felinwyr cyhyrog; bu saith o'i feibion yn gweithio fel melinwyr ym Môn, a saith o'i wyrion i'w dilyn. Serch hynny, llosgi'n ulw yn 1914 fu tranc Melin Drylliau.

Mae'n bur debyg fod melin ddŵr ar safle Melin y Bont (Melin Isaf, Bryn Du) yn y Canol Oesoedd, ond erbyn 1825 roedd melin dau-ynni dŵr a gwynt yno. Ynnddi roedd siafft canolog yn cysylltu olwyn ddŵr ar y llawr isaf gyda hwyliu ar y llawr uchaf, a grym y ddau'n troi'r meini malu. Bu'r felin yn gweithio'r system ddeuol tan 1930; parhaodd fel melin ddŵr yn unig tan 1973 pan y'i difethwyd â than. Mae'n dŷ haf bellach.

Adeiladwyd Melin y Borth ym Mhorth Amlwch o frics yn 1816, a hon yw'r felin wynt uchaf ym Môn. Mae iddi saith llawr a phedwar pâr o feini oedd yn gallu malu 70 bwsawl grawn mewn awr.

Ond y felin wynt enwocaf ym Môn yw Melin Llynnon a godwyd yn 1775-76 ar gost o £529 11 swllt. Yn yr 20fed ganrif, dioddefodd ddifrod wedi cyfres o stormydd. Gyda'i thynged yn y fantol, rhuthrodd y cyngor sir i'r adwy a'i phrynnu yn 1978 am £10,000. Dygwyd y meini a'r peiriannau ymaith i'w hadfer, ac atgyweiriwyd y tŵr. Agorodd y felin yn 1984 fel atyniad twristaidd, ac ar waethaf sawl rhwystr yn Oes y Llymder, mae'r felin yn cynhyrchu blawd eto, a'r granar yn gartref siop deisennau a siocled lwyddiannus.

Mae un o'r ychydig felinau gwynt diwydiannol ym Môn yn sefyll ar gopa Mynydd Parys. Defnyddiwyd y felin i bwmpio dŵr o siafftiâu dyfnion y gloddfa gopr. Wedi ei hadeiladu yn 1878 roedd ganddi bum hwyll yn hytrach na phedair, ond yn 1904 gorfy iddi gau gan fod cloddio copr yn gostwng. Mae Mynydd Trysglwyn (Mynydd Parys) yn denu miloedd o ymwelwyr bob blwyddyn - rha'n awchu am grwydro'i dirwedd arall-fydol, eraill yn ysu i ymchwilio'i orffennol diwydiannol. Ac mae'r safle wedi ymddangos mewn sawl ffilm a chyfres deledu hefyd.

Wrth gloi darlith hynod ddiddorol, datgelodd Dr Kovach mai tyrau dadfeiliedig yw nifer o'n melinau gwynt bellach - storfeydd salw a thoeau amrwd i'w cadw'n sych. Ond erys sgôp i ymchwilio'u hanes cymdeithasol ac economaidd. Wedi torreth o gwestiynau brwd o'r llawr, daeth Joanna Robertson - cadeirydd y Gymdeithas - â chyfarfod llwyddiannus i ben.

Ann Huws

Drylliau or Melin Caerau near Llanrhuuddlad is a prime example. William Rowlands, its miller in the 1840s, founded a dynasty of millers: his seven sons became millers, as did seven of his grandsons. Sadly, Melin Drylliau was destroyed by fire in 1914.

There may well have been a watermill at Melin y Bont (Melin Isaf, Bryn Du) in medieval times, but by 1825 a dual-power water and wind mill stood on the site. A central shaft connected a water wheel on the ground floor to sails on the upper floor, and their combined power turned the millstones. The mill operated this dual system until 1930; it continued as a watermill until 1973 when it was destroyed by fire; it is now a holiday home.

Melin y Borth at Porth Amlwch was brick-built in 1816, and is the tallest windmill on Anglesey. It has seven floors and four pairs of millstones which could grind up to 70 bushels of corn per hour.

But the most famous Anglesey windmill is Melin Llynnon built in 1775-76 at a cost of £529 11 shillings. During the 20th century a series of storms damaged the mill. With its future in the balance, the county council came to its rescue and bought it in 1978 for £10,000. Its millstones and machinery were removed for restoration and the tower repaired. The mill reopened in 1984 as a tourist attraction, and despite some setbacks during the austerity years, it is producing flour again, and its granary is home to a very successful patisserie and chocolaterie business.

One of the few industrial windmills on Anglesey stands on Parys Mountain. This mill was used to pump water from the deep shafts of the copper mine. Built in 1878, it had five sails instead of four, but closed in 1904 when copper extraction declined. Parys Mountain draws thousands of visitors each year - some to roam its alien-world landscape, others eager to explore its industrial past. The site has featured in many films and television series too.

Concluding an absorbing lecture, Dr Kovach revealed that many of our former windmills are now little more than dilapidated towers, roofed over and used for storage, yet there is still scope for exploring their social and economic history. After fielding a myriad of questions from the floor, Joanna Robertson - Society Chair - brought a successful meeting to a close.

Ann Huws

Mawrth 20fed 2026

Yr Athro Sara Elin Roberts - Cyfraith Hywel mewn Llawysgrif: y Gyfraith ysgrifenedig yn y Gymru Ganoloesol.

Â machlud godidog yn coroni Gwanwyn cain, prysurodd yr aelodau i Oriel Môn i fwynhau Darlith Goffa Thomas Alan Roberts ar Lawysgrifau Canoloesol Cymru. Ond yn gyntaf, brasgamodd Joanna Robertson, Cadeirydd y Gymdeithas, ymlaen i groesawu cynulleidfa frwd, ac i gyflwyno ychydig o hanes Thomas Alan Roberts. Gŵr diymhongar, Alan Clifton i'w gyfeillion, ymddiddorai yn hanes Môn, meddai ar wybodaeth eang o'r gwasanaeth Post, stampiau, cardiau post a phensaerniaeth eglwysig. Ac ar ei farwolaeth, cymynroddodd yn hael i'r Gymdeithas.

Yna daeth yr Athro Sara Elin Roberts ymlaen i draddodi'r Ddarlith Goffa ei hun. Ei man cychwyn oedd trosolwg cryno o'i gwaith bob dydd sef astudio, dehongli a golygu llawysgrifau canoloesol. Eglurodd fod llawysgrifau canoloesol wedi eu hysgrifennu â llaw ar femrwn croen llo neu ddfad. Credir mai'r Mynaich Gwynion (y Sistersiaid) ddaeth a ffermio defaid i Gymru - o ganlyniad ysgrifenydd llawysgrifau Cymreig ar



Yr Athro/Professor Sara Elin Roberts

March 20th 2026

Professor Sara Elin Roberts - Cyfraith Hywel in Manuscript: the written Law of Medieval Wales

As a fiery sunset provided a fitting finale to a fine Spring day, members sped to Oriel Môn to savour what promised to be an illuminating Thomas Alan Roberts Memorial Lecture on the Medieval Manuscripts of Wales. But first, Society chairperson Joanna Robertson, strode forward to welcome an enthusiastic audience, and to present some of Thomas Alan Roberts's story. A modest man, known to his friends as Alan Clifton, he was enthralled by the history of Anglesey, possessed a vast knowledge of the Postal Service, stamps, postcards and church architecture, and on his death left the Society a very generous bequest.

Then Professor Sara Elin Roberts stepped forward to deliver the Memorial Lecture itself. She began by offering a concise overview of her 'day job' which is to study, interpret and edit medieval manuscripts. She revealed that they were hand-written on calf- or sheepskin parchment. Cistercian monks brought sheep farming to Wales, so Welsh manuscripts were

femrwn croen dafad, a gallai un croen roi pedair tudalen o femrwn. Wrth gwrs, roedd memrwn croen llo o ansawdd gwell, yn ddrutfawr, ond yn sicrhau llawysgrifau o safon uwch.

Byddai'r sgrifellwyr yn cynhyrchu inciau eu hunain - yn aml o afalau'r deri, ond gyda phlanhigion eraill yn cynnig lliwiau gwahanol. Mae Efengylau Lindisfarne a Llyfr Kells yn esiamplau gogoneddus o lawysgrifau canoloesol o'r ansawdd uchaf posib. Ond araf a llafurus oedd gwaith sgrifellwyr, ac fel mae delweddau'r llawysgrifau'n tystio, clerigwyr a mynaich oeddynt, yn ysgrifennu gyda chwylsyn, ac yn gweithio yng ngolau dydd.

Serch hynny, mae'r sylwadau a ychwanegwyd i'r llawysgrifau gan y sgrifellwyr yn taflu golau pellach ar y cyd-destun diwylliannol a rhyngweithiad y sgrifellwr â'r testun. Nododd sawl sgrifellwr y byddai 'angen diod' wedi gwaith (wel, rydy ni i gyd wedi cael dyddiau fel yna onid ydym?), a nododd un arall 'Dewi Brefi, helpa fi'. Tybed oedd yntau'n brwydro i orchfygu darn anodd? Oherwydd eu bod wedi eu ffurfio o ddefnydd naturiol, mae'r llawysgrifau'n frau a rhaid eu cadw'n ofalus a than reolaeth. Gall llygod, pryfetach a thamprwydd beri difrod di-ben-draw, ac mae'r llawysgrifau'n fregus i dân hefyd. Gan hynny, gallwn fod yn sicr fod llawer ohonynt ar goll neu wedi eu distrywio.

Pwysleisiodd yr Athro Roberts y cyfraniad anferthol ac amhrisiadwy wnaethpwyd i'r maes astudiaeth hwn gan gyfrol holl-bwysig Daniel Huws: *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes c.800–c.1800* a gyhoeddwyd yn 2022. Dyma waith ysbrydoledig sy'n cyflwyno rhestr lawn a disgrifiadau manwl o bob llawysgrif Cymreig. Ynndo, mae Daniel Huws yn pennu rhif ar gyfer pob un fel bo modd adnabod pa rai ysgrifenydd gan yr un sgrifellwr.

Yna aeth ymlaen i ystyried Cyfraith Hywel Dda - cyfreithiau crefyddol a bydol y Gymru ganoloesol yn trin a thrafod bywyd Cymreig fel mae'n ymddangos yn llawysgrifau'r cyfnod. Mae 43 o lawysgrifau Cyfraith Cymreig, yn dyddio cyn 1500, gyda'r mwyafrif wedi eu hysgrifennu mewn Cymraeg Canol, ond rhai mewn Lladin. Mae tri llyfr o bwys arbennig: Llyfr Cyfnerth o Bowys, Llyfr Blegywryd sy'n ymwneud â'r Deheubarth, a Llyfr Iorwerth y credir iddo gynrychioli Cyfraith fel y'i gweinyddwyd yng Ngwynedd.

Llyfr Cyfnerth sydd yn cynnig y ddolen gyntaf i Fôn: mae copi o'r llawysgrif wedi bod ym meddiant Stâd Meyrick ym Modorgan ers y 17eg ganrif, a dyma'r unig gopi sydd wedi aros mewn dwylo preifat. Cafodd ei ysgrifennu gan sgrifellwr o safon yn gweithio mewn mynachlog - Llantarnam neu Cwmhir efallai - yn hanner cyntaf y 14eg ganrif. Bu'r sgrifellwr yn ysgrifennu testunau cyfraith eraill hefyd, yn ogystal â chopi o'r llawysgrif enwog Peniarth 2, sef Llyfr Taliesin. Ond sut ddaeth y copi hwn i Fodorgan tybed? Rhaid cofio bod llawer o'r llawysgrifau wedi symud yn dilyn diddymu'r mynachlogydd - tybed ai dyma ffawd llyfr Bodorgan hefyd? Ac er fod y sgrifellwr yn ŵr abl, roedd y memrwn yn salw. Dangosodd yr Athro Roberts dwll anferth mewn un rhan!

Gellir nodi'r ddolen arall i Fôn wrth astudio'r testunau Lladin. Mae'n amlwg fod un (Lladin C) wedi ei ddefnyddio oherwydd mae'n dangos arwyddion o glosio - diffiniadau neu esboniadau wedi eu hychwanegu i'r testun pan fyddai'r sgrifellwr yn ansicr o rywbeth. Yn Lladin C, mae cyfeiriad at Aberffraw, ac mae trafodaeth o werth ych gan nodi bod pris gwahanol '*ultra Menai*'. Oedd y sgrifellwr ym Môn ac yn cyfeirio at dir tu draw i'r Fenai? Ymhle ym Môn ysgrifenydd y copi tybed? Ni wyddwn yn siwr, ond mae bron yn sicr mai clerigwr oedd y sgrifellwr. Onid yw Llanfaes neu Caergybi yn fynachlogydd posib? A phinacl darlith yr Athro Roberts? Ffotograff go arbennig o gopi Bodorgan ei hun!

Daeth darlith ddysgedig a disglair i ben, atebodd yr Athro Roberts gwestiynau lu gan gynulleidfa wedi ei chyfareddu, cyn i bawb droi am adref â'u pennau'n llawn llawysgrifau cywrain a delweddau llygar y sgrifellwyr canoloesol fu'n eu copïo.

Ann Huws

usually written on sheepskin parchment, and one sheepskin could produce four sheets of parchment. But the more expensive calfskin parchment ensured much higher quality manuscripts.

Scribes produced their own inks - often from oak galls, but other plants provided scope for different colours. The Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels are magnificent examples of the very highest quality medieval manuscripts. But the scribe's work was slow and painstaking and as images in the manuscripts reveal, scribes were clerics or monks writing with a quill and working in daylight.

However, comments added to the manuscripts by scribes give an insight into the cultural context and the scribes' interaction with the texts. Many scribes wrote of 'needing a drink' after work (well, we've all had days like that haven't we?); and one wrote 'Dewi Brefi, help me'. Perhaps he was struggling with a tricky passage? Because they're made of natural products, manuscripts are delicate and must be kept in controlled atmospheres - rodents, insects and damp can cause untold damage, and manuscripts are vulnerable to fire too. Therefore, we can be certain that many were lost or destroyed.

Professor Roberts emphasised the enormous and invaluable contribution made to this field of study by Daniel Huws's monumental book: *A Repertory of Welsh Manuscripts and Scribes c.800–c.1800* published in 2022, an inspired work which provides a full list and description of all Welsh manuscripts, to which Daniel Huws allocates a number so that it is possible to identify which were by the same scribe.

She went on to ponder the Laws of Hywel Dda - religious and secular laws of medieval Wales covering aspects of Welsh life as shown in the manuscripts of the time. There are 43 Welsh Law manuscripts, dating from before 1500, most written in Middle Welsh, but some in Latin. Three redactions, or books, are of particular interest: Llyfr Cyfnerth from Powys, Llyfr Blegywryd linked to Deheubarth, and Llyfr Iorwerth which is thought to represent Law as practised in Gwynedd.

Llyfr Cyfnerth offers Professor Roberts's first direct link to Anglesey: a copy of the manuscript has been in the possession of the Meyrick estate at Bodorgan since the 17th Century, and is the only copy still in private hands. It was written by a particularly able scribe working in a monastery - Llantarnam or Cwmhir perhaps - in the first half of the 14th Century. This scribe also wrote other law texts, as well as a copy of the manuscript known as Peniarth 2 or the Book of Taliesin. But how did it get to Bodorgan? Many manuscripts were moved after the dissolution of the monasteries - was this the fate of the Bodorgan copy too? And although the scribe was competent, the parchment was terrible - Professor Roberts showed an enormous hole in one section!

The second link to Anglesey can be found by studying the Latin texts. One known as Latin C has clearly been used as it shows signs of 'glossing' - definitions or explanations added to the text when a scribe was unsure of something. In the text of Latin C, there are references to Aberffraw, and a discussion of the value of an ox indicates that the price was different '*ultra Menai*'. Was the scribe on Anglesey and indicating land on the other side of the Menai? Where on Anglesey was the copy written? We can't be certain, but as the scribe was surely a cleric, Professor Roberts suggested the Llanfaes or Caergybi monasteries as possible contenders. And her *pièce de résistance*? A remarkable photograph of the Bodorgan copy itself!

A sparkling and scholarly lecture drew to a close, Professor Roberts deftly fielded questions from an entranced audience, before we all trooped for home, our minds full of intricate manuscripts and images of the medieval scribes who copied them.

Ann Huws

Archifau Ynys Môn / Anglesey Archives
Rhestr o eitemau sydd newydd ar gael / List of items recently available

Acc. No.	Cat. No.	Covering Dates	Title
5907	WR/430	1889 - 1900	25" to 1 Mile OS Maps
6521	WSM/633	[c. 1910] - 1988	Miscellaneous negatives, positives and copy photos of Menai Bridge, Llangefni, H.M.S. Conway, Swtan and Cae Cwta Mawr
6536	WM/2238/53 - 61	2012 - 2020	Additional Diaries of Ken Owen
6618	WM/2771	[c. 1910] - 1919	Llyfrau yn cofnodi hanes Parchedig T.C. Williams
6638	WM/2780	2013	Lluniau Swper Ffarwelio Mrs Bevan a Mrs Huws, Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern
6640	WDAAM	1936 - 2011	Rhaglenni a Chyfansoddiadau Eisteddfod Môn
6738	WM/2826	[c. 1870] - 1951	The Diaries and Papers of Thomas Jones, Newborough with an interesting insight to the Marram Grass Matt Making Industry
6777	WR/428	1901 - 1926	Folder of annotated and shaded maps. A mix of OS maps 6" to 1 mile with stamps for University College Bangor Agricultural Department and Anglesey War Agricultural Executive Committee plus sea charts
6810	WM/2861	1889	Particulars And Conditions of sale Clwch Mawr, Llechcynfawrwydd
6813	WM/2864	1991 - 1994	Notebook found in the Midland Bank, Menai Bridge of those who signed keys in and out for Beaumaris Branch
6814	WAA/8/15	[c. 1905]	Items from Bodelffra kept by Mrs Mair Sladden and sent to Oriel Môn
6817	WM/2870	[c. 1956] - 1975	2 motor fuel ration books; sheet of fuel coupons; vehicle registration card and driving licence
6827	WM/1551/14	1992 and 1997	Report and Correspondence by Dr. Kath Davies, Oriel Môn re the Anglesey Antiquarian Society Collection held at Oriel Môn
6834	WQCE/224	2025 Dec.	Y Gofrestr Etholwyr - Fersiwn Llawn
6835	WM/2881	1952	Grand Boxing Tournament pamphlet held at the town hall, Holyhead
6836	WDAAL and WDAAM	1849 - 2018	Rhaglenni Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru a Eisteddfod Môn
6837	WDR/32 - 40	1948 - 2004	Rhaglenni Eisteddfod yr Urdd
6838	WR/429	1984 - 1999	Printed maps to aid family history research from The Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies
6841	WM/2595/1/33 - 50	2020 - 2026	Newsletters: Menai Bridge and District Civic Society
6842	WM/2707/3/12 - 15	2022 - 2025	Royal Anglesey Yacht Club Handbooks
6843	WM/2782	1932	Letter written by Megan Lloyd George to James W. Platt, a customs officer based in Holyhead, replying that she could not attend one of the dinners he was hosting
6845	WM/2724/2/38 - 55	2022 - 2026	Puffin Magazine

New Archive Accessions will be published in the Autumn Newsletter

Archifau Ynys Môn

Ffôn 01248 751930 neu archifdyarchives@ynysmon.gov.uk

Llun i Mercher trwy apwyntiad yn unig.
10.00am to 4.00pm

Plis gweler ein gwefan am mwy o fanylion:
<https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Residents/Archives/Visiting-Anglesey-Archives/Plan-your-visit-to-the-Archives.aspx>

Anglesey Archives

Phone 01248 751930 or archifdyarchives@ynysmon.gov.uk

Monday to Wednesday by appointment only.
10.00am to 4.00pm

Please see our website for more information:
<https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Residents/Archives/Visiting-Anglesey-Archives/Plan-your-visit-to-the-Archives.aspx>

AAS EXCURSION PROGRAMME 2026

On **Saturday 27.06.2026 at 1:00pm Parys Mountain and Amlwch Excursion** led by Rob Crossley and Frances Llewellyn

1.00pm Park in the official Car Park off the B5111 (the Rhos y Bol to Amlwch road).

We will explore the mine area which has a Roman and possibly earlier history, but whose main flourishing was in the 18th and early 19th century.

We will then go down to Amlwch Port (where there is another Car Park just beyond the harbour)

Sadly, the Museum is not open at the moment, but we will visit the harbour area and the exhibition about Anglesey's Coastal Path.

If you want to come - and for any enquiries - contact Frances. flynchllewellyn@gmail.com or 01248 364865

Saturday 25th July at 12noon - A DAY AT THE SEASIDE

Join Dr Mari Wiliam and Joanna Robertson for an enlightening and fun day in the North Wales Seaside resort of Rhyl.

Please travel by train or bus and meet outside the magnificent railway station; there is also ample car-parking there.

This is a walking tour; there will be time for ice creams, fish and chips and tea!

Please contact joannar2010@gmail.com for further details.

Numbers are limited to 25 and the booking deadline is 18th July.

Saturday 12.09.2026: time tba. **Visit the Trysor Exhibition at Oriel Môn** followed by excursion (to be arranged). Further details coming soon and will be posted on the Society's website [https](https://www.hanesmon.org.uk/aaswp/) (see below) - or contact: Ian Jones, ian.jones7@sky.com

We are hoping to arrange at least one additional summer excursion – details will be posted on the Society's website <https://www.hanesmon.org.uk/aaswp/>

The next edition of the newsletter will be published in Autumn 2026. Please forward any articles to: Karen Pollock, Tanffordd Bach, Glanrafon, Llangoed, LL58 8SY or kjo.pollock@pm.me

The production of this newsletter has been a team effort.

With much thanks to all contributors of this NL for reports, photos and articles.

You can view and print the pages off our Website.
Gallwch weld a printio y tudalennau oddiar ein Gwefan.

Web Site / Safle Gwe
www.hanesmon.org.uk/aaswp/