



Discovering Old Welsh Houses

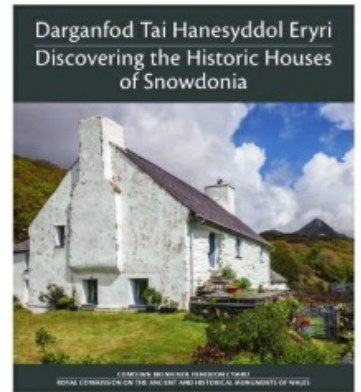
Patrons: Sir Simon Jenkins FSA, FRSL. Dr Eurwyn Wiliam MA, PhD, FSA

Discovering Old Welsh Houses.

It all started with the Beddgelert History Society excavating a ruined sixteenth-century house in Nantgwynant in 2000. We hoped to date some timbers belonging to this ruined house that had been reused in a nearby cowshed. We first heard about dendrochronology in 2004 and obtained a grant of £400 from the Snowdonia National Park Community for Prof. Nigel Nayling from Lampeter to assess timbers in this cowshed and three nearby sixteenth-century houses; in 2005 two of these houses dated and we became hooked on dating more. We have since visited over 1,000 houses across North Wales and assessed around 138 for tree-ring dating, in partnership with the Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory. We have completed 160 house histories, all written by volunteers, and have commissioned 74 professional building reports. This would not have been possible without the financial support of many grant-aiding bodies to whom we are very grateful. We have raised £252,000 in grants along with additional match-funding through subscriptions & special events. All our Annual reports & Financial statements can be seen online at the Charity Commission website (Reg No 1131782)



We thank the staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historic Monuments of Wales, and especially Richard Suggett, for their support and advice. This collaboration resulted in the joint publication in 2014 of the critically well received illustrated book.



Discovering the Historic Houses of Snowdonia.



In 2018, Heritage Angel Awards Wales was established to encourage voluntary activities in five aspects of Welsh heritage.



Discovering Old Welsh Houses was one of thirteen organisations across Wales to enter the "Best Heritage Research, Interpretation or Recording" category and was short-listed as one of three organisations to go forward to the finals. These were held in Caerphilly Castle in November 2018 where the Group received a "highly commended" certificate. We were delighted by this recognition of the importance of the heritage work undertaken by our members across North Wales. In 2020 – 2021, during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have held monthly Zoom lectures, which have proved very popular, and we have widened the scope of our bilingual quarterly Newsletters to include a range of articles contributed by members. Both these features will be continuing. This year we have also been working hard preparing a searchable database of all houses so far visited and are carrying out a comprehensive parish-based search for houses built before the middle decades of the eighteenth century. We have also used the period of lockdown to completely re-design our website. While our main lecture series will continue to be delivered by Zoom, we very much look forward being able to meet together face to face at local events and visits. We were recently described as 'the most successful community architecture group in Wales and maybe in the UK'.

So, a special THANK YOU to our members for all your contributions to our growing and enthusiastic organisation. We look forward to an exciting and interesting future and to welcoming new members in the coming years.

Margaret Dunn 6th October 2021