

The Gnock

A History of Cnwc Farmstead 1726 -1947



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Description of the ruins, plan of Cnwc and drawing of Cwnc
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Introduction

The ruins of Cnwc farmstead, variously referred to as Gnock, Gunnock, Gnoc and Knock, is situated on a platform cut into the hillside at grid reference ST 233 939 high up on Rhywsg Fach ridge between the Cwm Gofappy and Cwm Carn valleys. In the past this location was situated in the Mynyddmaen hamlet, one of three subdivisions within the parish of Mynyddislwyn. The name 'Cnwc' is unusual for the uplands of Gwent and its specific origins at this location are lost.

The Welsh appellation 'Cnwc' is thought to have its origins in the Irish Gaelic language. The Irish played an important part in post Roman Wales and founded ruling dynasties in the kingdoms of Dyfed and Brycheiniog (Brecon), both place-names themselves being of Irish origin. Some Irish words were adopted by the Welsh, one such word was 'Cnwc', derived from the Gaelic Cnoc, meaning hillock, mound or protuberance. The term is a very common place name in Ireland, especially in Galway, Sligo and Mayo where it was usually anglicised into Knock. The name is quite common in Pembrokeshire but much less so in Gwent.

It does however seem particularly appropriate to this particular Cnwc farm as it lies in a notch at the terminal point of the Rhyswg Fach ridge high above the Carn valley

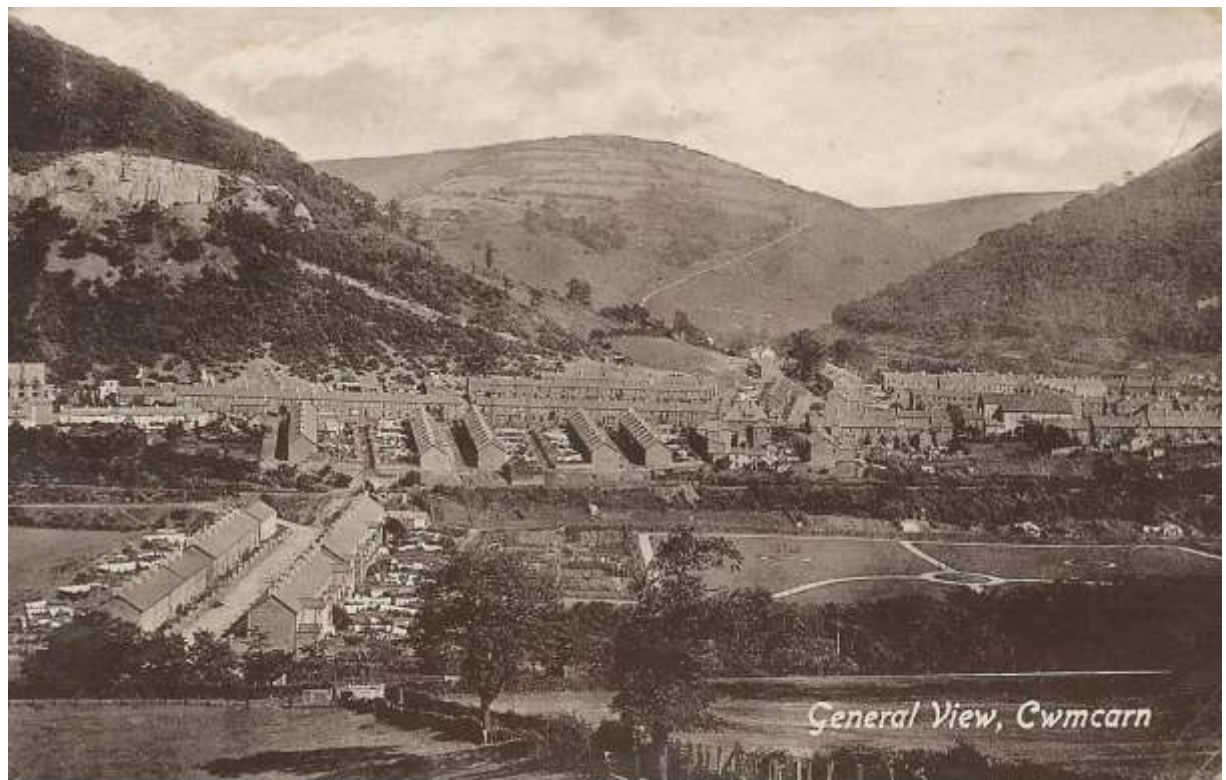


Figure 1 looking across the Ebbw Valley up at the site of the Cnwc farm in the 1920s. The track up to the farms on the Rhyswg Fach ridge can clearly be seen.

The main building which included the living accommodation and a cow house was an ancient Welsh longhouse as described Paul Davis below.

Description of the ruins

a long-ruined farmstead located on a narrow shelf on the steep northern slopes of the Cwm Carn valley. All the early walls have a prominent splayed base, and the full plan was only recovered after much digging through the rubble in 1991; therefore, the phased interpretation shown above should be treated with some caution. The remains consist of a downhill-sited longhouse, with an added room (a stable?) at the lower end, and a cottage-like cross-wing at the rear. The restricted site may explain the absurdly small living area - just one narrow room squeezed in between the hillside and the disproportionately long cowshed. The steep embankment makes it unlikely that the house end was once much longer and has been shortened; but it is conceivable that the fireplace has been moved from its original position, hence the unusual distance between the chimney stack and the cross-passage doors. However, no convincing evidence for such an alteration was detected in the ruinous fabric of the building.

No timberwork survived apart from the remains of a chamfered doorframe leading from the cross-passage into the hall. This room had a large fireplace recess with an inserted brick oven in the back, the remaining jamb of a window opening, and a doorway leading through to an added cross-wing. The rubble here was poorly preserved and affected by later rebuilding, but it appears there was a straight flight of stairs leading up to the loft, apparently within an outshut that extended along most, if not all, of the rear lateral wall. The cross-wing contained a dairy and parlour, with its own entrance from the yard; however, the walls show clear evidence of rebuilding on more than one occasion, so its original layout and function may have been changed. Perhaps significantly, the cross-wing on the 1846 tithe map is depicted much shorter than shown on the above plan, as if only the dairy room was then in existence.

The land was acquired by the Forestry Commission around 1921 and the property improved; the external walls were rendered and the floor level of the 'parlour' was lowered to gain more headroom (presumably the room in the cross-wing is meant, though one suspects that the reference could be to the original longhouse). The building was damaged by an accidental fire in 1945 and was thereafter left to fall into ruin. There were two outbuildings on the east side of the house, as well as a small walled garden and a circular stone-lined well.

The buildings are of pennant sandstone with a mixture of clay pointing and lime mortar. The structure was roofed with stone slates.

The residents of Cnwc Farm

This was a small tenanted farm within the Manor of Abercarn. The estate was in the possession of the Earl of Pembroke and his

descendants from 1559 up to 1722 after which it was sold by the second Viscount Windsor to the Burgh family who resided a Troy House at Monmouth. In 1787 the Abercarn estate was sold to Samuel Glover of Birmingham who, as an industrialist, was looking to exploit

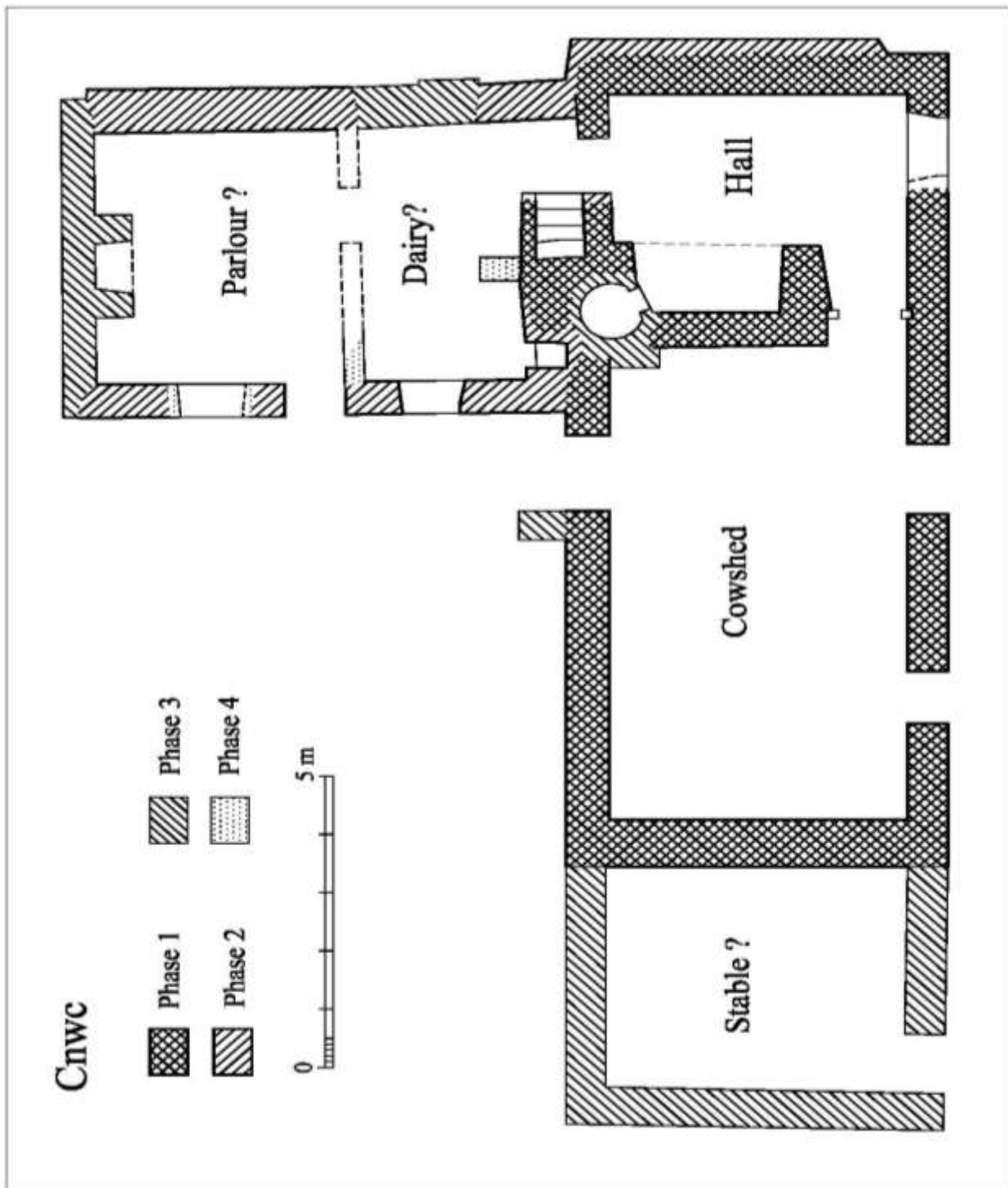


Figure 2 Plan of Cnwc showing the development of the main buildings from the 17th century to the 19th century (Paul R. Davis)

the mineral wealth of the south Wales valleys. Glover was already active in the area being the sole owner of Abercarn Ironworks from 1788 however in 1807 the estate was sold to Richard Crawshay who passed on his ownership to his daughter, the wife of Benjamin Hall of Hensol Castle. It was their son, also Benjamin Hall and his wife Augusta, nee Waddington, who would play a prominent role for much of the nineteenth century as Lord and Lady Llanover.

The original longhouse consisting of the hall and the cow house appears to have been constructed in the late seventeenth century when the lands were in the possession of the Earl of Pembroke. This may be the original building on the site or alternatively it could have replaced an earlier hafody, possibly of the long hut variety. However no archaeological excavations have been carried out at this site and, as such, we can offer nothing more than conjecture about its early history. By the beginning of the nineteenth century this small hill farm would have provided a fairly meagre living and as a consequence it was tenanted by many people through the century.

The earliest reference to tenants of the farm identified so far comes from the Manor of Abercarn rent book of 1726 which refers to a William Edward who was paying 3s, 10d per annum for the tenancy of 'Knock' farm. By 1742 a family by the name of Water(s) or Walters have taken up the tenancy.

The surnames Water, Waters and Walters are patronyms, which are based on the given name of one's father, grandfather, or an even-earlier male ancestor. Water and Waters are literal translations of the Welsh Christian name Gwallter and Walters is the anglicised equivalent John Water is named on the 1742 rent book for the manor and again on the 1752 Mynyddislwyn parish record, where he is referred to as John Walter of Gnock for the baptism entry of his son Walter (who may have been known as Walter John). According to the same parish record John Water of Gnock was buried in Mynyddislwyn church yard on the 17th July 1762.

One year later on July 19th 1763 an affidavit was filed at Llandaf on behalf of Isabella Water of the parish of Mynyddislwyn, widow. An affidavit is a written statement confirmed by oath or affirmation, for use as evidence in court. These are often used in property disputes and divorce proceedings and are taken in the presence of a notary. It is possible that John Water may have died suddenly without completing a will forcing his widow to contest his property over the claims of other family members. Isabella is named as the widow of a John Water of Mynyddislwyn and although it isn't possible to determine exactly if this is John Water of Gnock. Even if this is not the correct John Water the inventory that accompanies the affidavit does give us some indication of the material possessions of a tenant farmer in the valleys of Western Monmouthshire during the mid-

eighteenth century and therefore remains pertinent to the discussion of the history of this hill farm.

The actual affidavit is largely illegible but it does state that
 Isabella Water of the parish of Mynyddislwyn in the County of Monmouth widow, was accompanied to the hearing by George Waters of the parish of Kelligare (Gelligaer) in the County of Glamorgan yeoman and David Sampson of the parish of Kelligare in the County of Glamorgan yeoman

The Inventory of the possessions of John Water, Deceased 1763 reads thus:

An Inventory completed of all and singular the goods, chattels and credits of John Water, late of the parish of Mynyddislwyn in the County of Monmouth and Diocese of Llandaff deceased made And appraised on twenty first day of June in the year of our Lord 1763 by William Thomas and David Thomas appraisers as follows that is to say:

	£	S	D
<i>First his wearing apparel valued at</i>	4	0	0
<i>Also three cows and one heifer at</i>	8	0	0
<i>Also two oxen</i>	6	0	0
<i>Also two calves</i>	0	12	0
<i>Also two horses</i>	4	10	0
<i>Also twenty seven sheep</i>	4	10	0
<i>Also one pig</i>	0	12	0
<i>Also two covers and a half of wheat at</i>	3	7	6
<i>Also five covers of barley at</i>	0	18	0
<i>Also Six covers of oats</i>	6	0	0
<i>Also four acres of hay</i>	3	0	0
<i>Provisions in the house at</i>	0	10	0
<i>Also four beds and their appurtenances</i>	10	0	0
<i>Also four chests and two cupboards</i>	2	14	0
<i>Also four small boxes and one old chest at</i>	0	10	0
<i>Also two tables</i>	1	1	0
<i>Also four chairs</i>	0	12	0
<i>Also another three chairs</i>	0	4	0
<i>Also one cradle</i>	0	4	6
<i>Also two benches</i>	0	2	0
<i>Also wooden vessels</i>	1	0	0
<i>Also one frying pan and one toaster</i>	0	3	0
<i>Also one laundering box</i>	0	1	6
<i>Also two iron pots and one marmet (?) at</i>	0	12	0
<i>Also one brass skillet?</i>	0	3	0
<i>Also one slicer (?), 1 tongs and one bakestone at</i>	0	3	0
<i>Implements of husbandry</i>	1	5	0
<i>Also four sacks at</i>	0	10	0
<i>Also one bit (?) and one bridle</i>	0	8	0
<i>Also one riding saddle</i>	0	10	0

<i>Also two table cloths (linens for the tables) at</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Also ten pewterr(?) and two pewter(?) and one pewter candlestick, one tankard and twelves spoons</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Also earthen vessels</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Also lumber goods</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Also ready money (cash in the house) at the time of the deceased death the sum of</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Total of</i>	<i>£75</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>0</i>

The inventory above shows that John Water was a comparatively wealthy tenant farmer and this value of £75, 14 shillings would have an approximate value of nearly £15,000 today. Waters may have been a yeoman farmer and was likely to have been copyholder of the farmstead and its lands. However life in the south Wales of the mid eighteenth century was still hard and, more often than not, brief with very high infant and child mortality and an average life span of around 40 years. Waters was certainly not an old man at the time of his death. Just two years after John Water's death the Mynyddislwyn parish register records that on the 7th day of May 1764 David, son of John Water of Gnock, was buried in the same church yard. The Waters, later Walters, appear to have remained on the Rhyswg and the name crops up several times over the next fifty years in various documents. Thomas Walter is named on the Manor of Abercarn sale document of 1789 as holding 33 acres of Rhyswg lands (Tir y Rhyswg) worth £2 20s. This is described as mainly pasture with just over an acre of woodland. Further to this David William Walter holds sundry lands and a tract of unenclosed pasture on Mynydd Rhyswg amounting to 83 acres valued at £2. However if we were to follow the patrynomic system the family name would have become John (and later Jones) and there are later references to a Walter John and a William John (and later Jones, a resident at nearby Pen-y-Pant farm, who was a prominent Baptist at the founding Mount Moria Church in Risca in the early nineteenth century.

The Early Nineteenth Century

Evidence from the land tax assessments made between 1804 and 1829 suggest that the Walters family had retained the lease of Gnock while not actually farming there themselves. The Walters may have held a copyhold lease and this was either sold, or reverted around 1815 to the Manor of Abercarn, who were the owners of the freehold to the property. From 1818 ownership is attributed to Benjamin Hall (and later the devisees of). Benjamin Hall the elder had taken ownership of the Manor of Abercarn in 1809 from his father in law the Merthyr Ironmaster Richard Crawshay. Just a year earlier it had been Hall who had purchased the manor on behalf of Crawshay from the Glovers. There were a number of tenants of the farm during the early years of the nineteenth century. Thomas Davies appears on the 1806 land tax assessment and Howell Howell on the assessments for 1808,

1814, 1818 and 1819. Nothing is known about these aside from the fact that they do not seem to have stayed long at Gnock, perhaps preferring to move on to a larger and more productive Abercarn Estate farm as soon as the opportunity arose.

The Pritchards at Gnock

Thomas Prichard was born in 1795 and lived at Cnwc (Gnoc) Farm with his wife Joan and young son Thomas during the early 1820s. John had married Joan Thomas, born about 1798, on 12th April 1819 at St. Tudor's Church, Mynyddislwyn (Mynyddislwyn Parish register). They were to have 2 boys: Thomas baptised on 18th June 1821 at St. Tudor's, abode Gnoc (although they give the surname of Thomas on the record, this is may be a recording error) and Edward baptised on 27th July 1823 at St. Tudor's, abode Gnoc. Sadly Thomas senior died on 23rd March 1823 in his 28th year from causes unknown and was buried at St. Tudor's on 26th March 1823. He is described on the record as an illiterate farmer resident at Cnwc, or Gnoc, Farm, Mynddmaen, Monmouth. At the time of his death Joan, his wife was still carrying the younger son Edward.

Thomas and Joan's son Edward Prichard, was born in July 1823 in Gnoc Farm (Cnwc), Mynyddislwyn, He married Jane Jones 30 May 1844 in the Parish Church of St. Michaels, Machen and died on the 19 Jul 1899 in Ynys Howell Farm, Upper Machen, Ynysddu.

A David Thomas is listed as occupying Gnock farm on the land tax assessment of 1829 when the farm was valued for tax purposes at just 9 shillings. According to Stephen Miles Pritchard, a descendent of Thomas and Joan's, the old style Mynyddislwyn marital register records that their wedding at St. Tudor's Church in 1819 was consented by a David Thomas who he believes is probably Joan's father or brother. It is therefore not inconceivable that the David Thomas listed on the land tax survey ten years later is the same and that Joan and her two boys would remain at Gnock in the company of her brother David. A supportive unmarried, or perhaps recently widowed, brother would provide a degree of security to the widow and her children that would allow the family to fulfil its tenancy obligations to the Manor of Abercarn rather than being obliged to look elsewhere for employment or habitation. Without hard evidence though we may never know the truth of this.

By the time of the 1841 Joan, who by then had reverted to her maiden name of Thomas, is resident at the Tram and Horses Inn, Clawplayf, Mynyddislwyn (ref: Stephen Miles Pritchard). Her son Edward Pritchard turns up again on the 1871 census for Upper Machen where he is a resident of Nantyeisiad and described as a collier. By 1881 he and his family had relocated to the Sirhowy valley and is a tenant farmer of 22 acres at Ynys Howell farm where he was to remain and

until his death in 1899. The family later relocated to Ty Damson on the bank of the Sirhowy River near Cwmfelinfach.



Figure 3 The Cnwc farmstead as featured on the Mynyddislwyn Tithe Map of 1841 (NLW)

		CNWC.		17	0	5	0	6	11	0	8	9
Jones, Thomas	2471		Pasture	1	2	37	0	0	8	0	0	5
	2472		"	1	0	16	0	0	4	0	0	2
	2473		Brake	0	1	3						
	2474		Arable	1	1	24	0	0	4	0	1	6
	2475	Occupation Road		0	1	14						
	2476		Arable	1	2	98	0	0	5	0	2	1
	2477		Rough Pas	2	2	20	0	0	10	0	0	5
	2478		Pasture	4	3	38	0	1	9	0	0	11
	2479		Arable	3	2	10	0	0	10	0	4	4
	2480		"	1	1	3	0	0	4	0	1	6
	2481		Pasture	1	2	12	0	0	6	0	0	3
	2482		Pasture	1	2	36	0	0	7	0	0	4
	2483		Arable	1	3	17	0	0	5	0	2	3
	2488		Pasture	2	0	26	0	0	9	0	0	5
	2489		"	3	0	36	0	1	4	0	0	9
	2490		Arable	2	0	31	0	0	6	0	2	8
	2491		"	1	2	22	0	0	5	0	2	0
2492		"	0	3	10	0	0	2	0	1	0	
2493	Homestead		0	2	26							
2494		Arable	1	0	23	0	0	4	0	1	5	
2495		"	1	3	34	0	0	5	0	2	4	
2496		Pasture	2	1	14	0	0	10	0	0	5	
2497		Arable	1	2	0	0	0	4	0	1	10	
2498		Rough Pas	18	0	7	0	3	4				
				59	3	7	0	15	5	1	7	0

Figure 4 Cnwc as featured on the 1839 tithe apportionment for Mynyddislwyn (NLW)

The Tithe and Field Names

The Mynyddislwyn tithe apportionment of 1839 describes the farmstead as consisting of 23 parcels of mainly arable land and pasture totalling 59 acres 3 roods and 7 perches. Unfortunately the field names have not been recorded on the apportionment and are now lost. The farm, owned by Sir Benjamin Hall Bart, was tenanted in 1839 by a Thomas Jones who paid a tithe rent of 15 shillings and 5 pence to the perpetual curate and £1 and 7 shillings to the appropriator who would have been the Bishop and diocese of Llandaf. Further to this of course the tenant of Cnwc would have been required to pay a rent to the Abercarn Estate and possibly also make themselves available to work for the estate from time to time but by the 1840s this would have been an opportunity to earn a few days' wages rather than a manorial duty.

1841 and 1851 Census returns for Cnwc

Just two years after the apportionment a new tenant, although sharing the same surname, has appeared at Cnwc. James Jones (born at Llanthewy Mon), aged thirty, and is described as the farmer at 'Gunnock Farm'. Also in residence is Elizabeth, his wife, also aged thirty, their children: William aged 4; Morgan aged 2; and the baby Mary who is just 6 months old. In addition to the Jones family there are two female servants Rachel Lewis aged 25 and Ann Meryfield aged 12. By the time of the 1851 census James has relocated down to what was soon to become Cwmcarn, village, still referred to at this time as Abercarn, and is described as a 38 year old widower working as a haulier along with his younger son Morgan aged 12. His eldest son William, now aged 13 is described as a scholar which is unusual for the 1850s as schooling was neither compulsory nor free. It seems likely then that James was a relatively prosperous self-employed haulier and this fact might be confirmed that two servants reside with the family: Thomas Thomas, aged 33, described as a servant and haulier and Madge Morgan, a 37 year old unmarried mother with a daughter Catherine who is just 4 months old. Madge Morgan is described as a house servant. In this role Madge would have been required to fill the shoes of the deceased Mrs Jones and would have experienced monotonous 18-20 days cooking, washing and cleaning for the family. James would eventually remarry, father another 5 or so children and by 1861 he is described as a publican residing in Lower Abercarn.

At the time of the 1851 census yet another family have tenanted the Cnwc farmstead. Thomas Rogers (32) farmer of 60 acres, his wife Amy (22) and their 12 month old son Thomas. This family could not have stayed long at Cnwc as by the 1855 electoral register Thomas George has taken residence. It seems likely that this was the same Thomas

George who had been the freeholder at Penrhiwfawr farm. If this is the case this Thomas would be aged 67 at this time and was the brother of Edmund George of Pant Farm Newbridge who was employed as the Woodward of the Llanover Estate. This Newbridge George family may have been related the George family of yeoman farmers who had once held the freehold to Abercarn Fawr Farm in what is now Cwmcarn. Thomas George had retired from Penrhiwfawr and was resident of Newbridge at the 1851 census along with his wife Rachel, aged 64.

1860s and 70s

It has not been possible to locate the census details for Cnwc at the time of the 1861 census and the 1871 census does not identify the farm, however there are two farms referred to as 'Pen-y-Pant' one of which was occupied by Henry Francis. This occupation is also confirmed by the 1868-70 electoral register and it could be the duplicate entry for Penypant is Cnwc. The entry for this other 'Pen-y-pant' reads Phillip Jones (25) farmer of 97 acres, Mary (24) wife, William H. (1 week) son, Elizabeth Watkins (20) sister in law/farmer's daughter, and James Harwood (13) who is described as farm servant. Phillip Jones the tenant in 1871 resided at Canalside cottages Abercarn at the time of the 1881 census. He may have been the grandson of David Jones (78) a retired farmer who had previously tenanted Little Russog (Rhyswg Fach) in 1841 and Abercarn Fawr farm in 1851. By 1891 Phillip Jones had relocated to a farm at Trelleck near Monmouth.

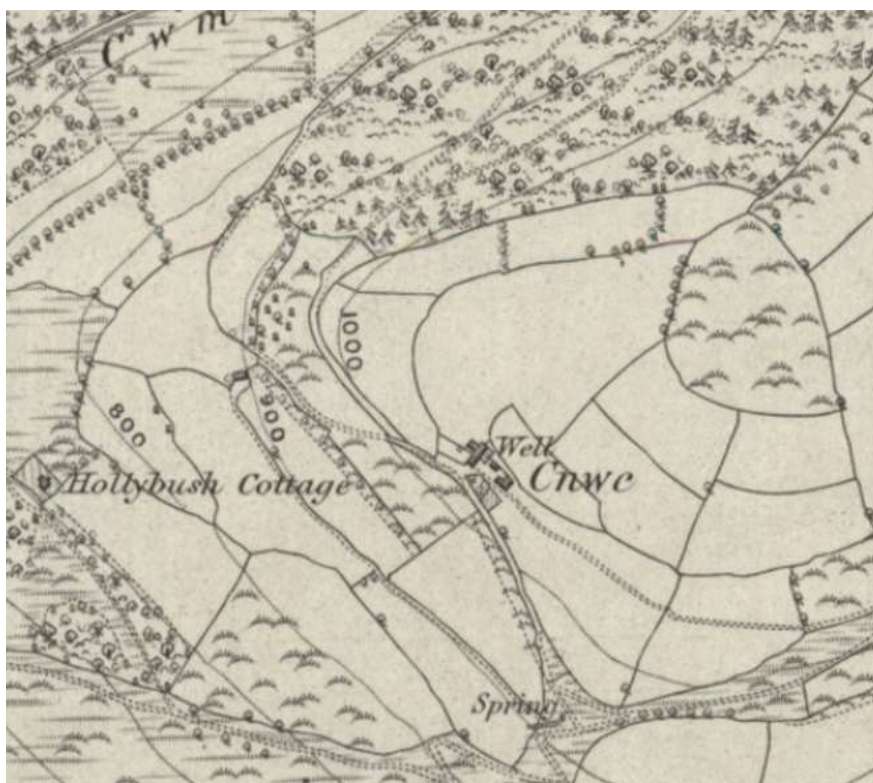


Figure 5 The Cnwc as it appeared on the 1878 Ordnance Survey map (NLS)

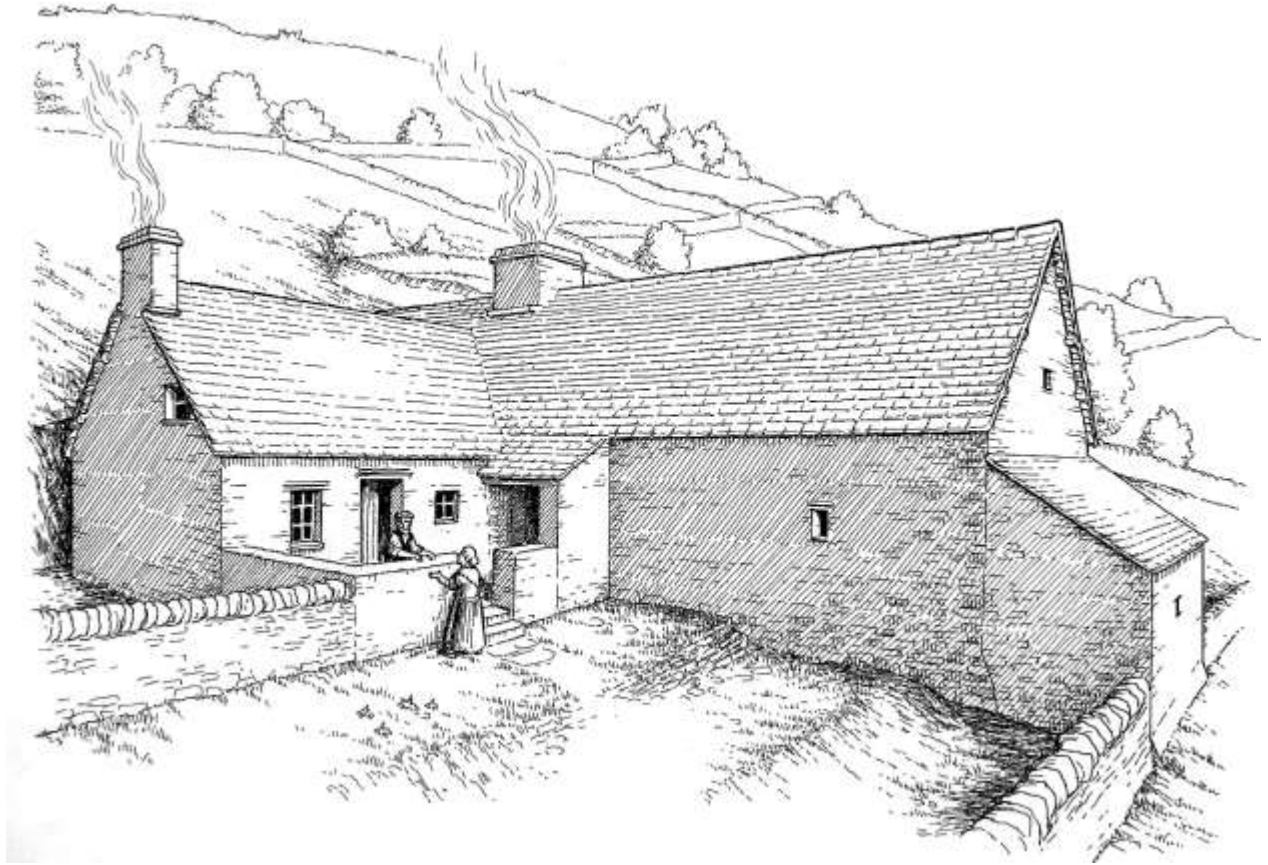


Figure 6 Reconstruction of Cnwc seen from the west side, as it may have appeared around 1880 (Paul R. Davis)

The John Family at Cnwc

By the time of the 1881 census William John and his family had relocated to Cnwc from Gnoll Fach cottage, a small holding on Twyn-y-Gnoll hill above High Meadow House. According to Mrs Mafys John, her great-great grandfather William John was born at Nash near Bridgend around 1823. As a young man he walked over the mountains in search of work and eventually settled in the Ystrad Mynach /Maesycwmmmer area on the Monmouthshire/Glamorgan border. By 1851 the family had settled in the cottage at Gnoll Fach with its associated small holding. The 1851 census reads William John (28 year's old, born Bridgend Glamorgan abt 1823), farmer of 6 acres, Rachel John (30 years old born Mynydd Islwyn 1821) and their children: Ann (4) Noah (2), William and one servant named Leah Edwards aged 74. William was to remain at Gnoll Fach until at least 1878 and by the time of the 1881 census his son Noah was tenancing the cottage and lands. The 1881 census for Cnwc reads William John (59), Farmer of 120 acres (born Nash Glamorgan), Rachel (61) wife and their family Isaac (21), Jacob (19), and William Evans, their adopted son who was aged 11. They also had one farm servant Daniel Jones (70), living with them. Members of the John family were to remain at the Gnock until the early years of the twentieth century.



Figure 7 Isaac John, the son of William John of Cnwc, was born circa 1860 (Mrs Mafys John)

By 1891 William's son Noah had joined his father on the Rhyswg as he, by now a widower, and his family had taken residence at nearby Rhyswg Fach farm. The 1891 census for Abercarn records two separate residences at Cnwc: Gnock farm and Gnock cottage. Residents at the farmhouse are listed as William John (68) farmer, Rachel John (71) farmer's wife, Jacob John (29) farmer's son, Miriam Matthews (4) granddaughter, and one domestic servant Maggie Price (16). The real mystery though is the existence of Gnock cottage as this is the one and only time the cottage is mentioned in a census. It is possible that one of the farms outbuildings may have been converted for occupation for a time and it appears likely that this was a small single story building, possibly located in the yard to the far right of the farmhouse. In 1891 it was occupied by three people Isaac John (31) a coalminer who William's third son and had been born at Gnoll farm in 1860, Ada John (27) Isaac's wife and their young son Evan John (2). Isaac had married Ada Williams during the second quarter of 1888. Isaac would remain a collier and the family would later reside at Tredegar Place, North Risca (1901) and 19 Darren View (Commercial Street) Abercarn by which time Isaac's wife Ada had died and he had remarried Eliza Victoria Page in 1905. Isaac was to live until the age of 90, a long life for a collier, and his death was registered in March 1950.

The death of Mrs John, Gnock Farm, Cwmcarn, on 30th September aged 75 years was announced in the Cardiff Times on 6th October 1894 and four years later William died at the farm on 3rd December 1898 aged 77 years. Their youngest son Jacob then became the tenant. Nine months prior to his father's death Jacob had married Margaret Jenkins who was 11 years his junior. Margaret was the step daughter of Lemuel Anthony who tenanted Ty'r y Wain farm on Mynyddislwyn. By the time of the 1901 census Jacob and Margaret have a young son named Lemuel aged 2 years. Margaret must have had a high regard for her step farmer to name her first born son after him. The census further lists Jacob John (39) farmer, Margaret (28) his wife and Jacob's niece Miriam Matthews (14) who is described as a housemaid/domestic servant. Jacob and Margaret were to have two more children, both daughters. It was during this period that the John family of Gnock became embroiled in a cruelty case as reported in the Evening Express on 13th September 1901:

ABERCARN CRUELTY CASE.

A very painful story was told to the Abercarn magistrates yesterday, when Jacob John and Margaret John, husband and wife, Gnock Farm, Cwmcarn, were charged with wilfully ill-treating Lily Matthews, fifteen, in such a manner as to cause her unnecessary suffering. Mr. W. Lyndon Moore, Newport, prosecuted for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and Mr. Horace Lyne defended. Mr. Moore in his opening statement remarked that the complainant's life for a few years had been a continual misery to her, and if the girl could be believed she had been treated in other than a natural manner. Florence E. Clutterbuck, fifteen, daughter of an Abercarn collier, said Mrs. John acknowledged to her that she threw a glass at the girl, and witness afterwards saw a mark on the girl's back. Mrs. John then ordered the girl to the barn, where she had her food served her. The female defendant was subsequently ill in bed and asked for the girl to be brought to her, and also a stick. She then pulled the girl over the bed by the neck and struck her with the stick, breaking it in three places. The same night she was ordered out of the house, and had to stay out all night. Complainant was unable to use her right arm in consequence of the treatment. Defendants were fined £5 each, with £ 5 costs.

This issue was obviously considered very serious at the time and the £10 in fines and costs would be the equivalent of several hundred pounds today and, of course, it would have ruined the family's reputation in the village. Sadly Jacob John died at Gnock Farm on 29th September 1909 aged just 49 years and after his death his wife and their children relocated to 17 Commercial Road, Cwmlinfach and are listed as follows on the 1911 Census: Margaret John (38) widow; Beatrice Margretta John (9); Rachel Blanch John (7); and Lemuel (12). Just up the hill at Ty'r y Waun farm, no more than a 20 minute walk away was Margaret's mother Elizabeth Anthony, now a

74 year old widow and her still unmarried brothers Thomas and John Jenkins.



Figure 8 Jacob John (1860-1909), possibly photographed at the time of his wedding to Margaret Jenkins in 1898 (Mrs Mafys John)

Industrialisation Comes to the Nant Carn Valley

The Nant Carn valley began its long slow process of industrialisation during the first half of the nineteenth century. The first colliery in the valley was sunk at the bottom of Cwm Gofappy in 1836. This was the Abercarn No. 6 and was sunk by the Monmouthshire Iron and Coal Company. It consisted of a shallow shaft just 60 yards deep sunk to the Tillery seam. Millbrook Terrace, a row of houses for the colliery workers, was provided by the company at the bottom end of what is now the Cwmcarn Visitor Centre Car Park. The colliery manager Ebenezer Rogers and his family lived at Abercarn Fach, an ancient farmstead, which was remodelled into a 19th Century Gentleman's house. This house and its grounds was sub-let to Rogers by William Lewis who himself leased it from the Manor of Abercarn.

In 1876 a new shaft was sunk by the Ebbw Vale Co across the Carn brook from Cwmcarn Mill. However, this was initially just the downcast shaft of the Prince of Wales Colliery Abercarn. Cwmcarn Steam Colliery did not become a separate mine until 1912 when it was

in the ownership of the Ebbw Vale Iron & Coal Company. A further shaft was sunk in 1914 and after this the modern mining village of Cwmcarn, with its rows of terraced houses, soon took shape. By 1918 there were 716 men employed and mining, rather than farming, became the main enterprise in the valley for the next 50 years. The industrialisation associated with the coal industry was to have a profound effect on the both the population and economy of the Carn valley and for the Cnwc it would mean that farming would never again be the sole pursuit of its inhabitants.

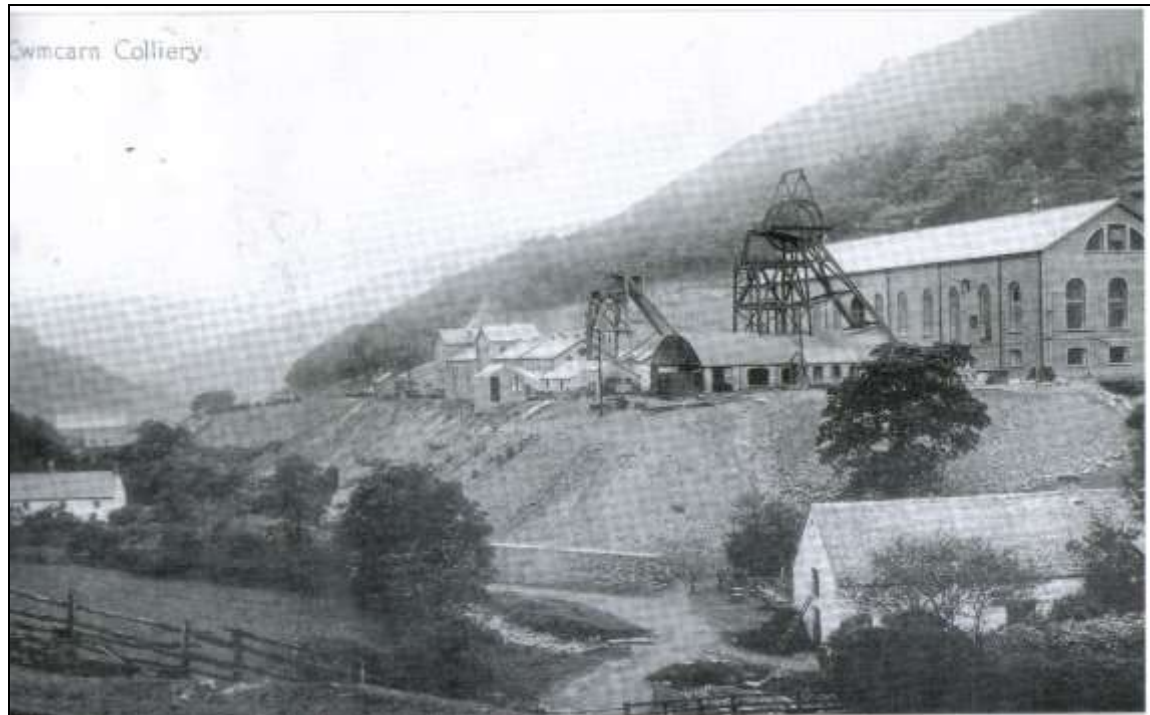


Figure 9 Cwmcarn Colliery in 1914

It also seems likely that the Herbert family who now owned Llanover Estate were content to lease the farmhouse and its lands separately, and in doing this allowing the house to be split up into separate residences which could be rented by different tenants. This would pay dividends as it would allow the Estate to cash in on the shortage of housing for the industrial workers now beginning to flood into the valley to seek employment at the new colliery.

By the time of the 1911 Census the farmhouse was already divided into two separate dwellings both described as having two rooms. 'The Gnock' was lived in by Reuben Carpenter a 32 year coalminer, Martha (27) his wife and their children: a son Reuben aged 3; and daughter Queenie aged 4. While 'Gnock Farm' was inhabited by James White (26) a haulier underground, Ada H. (23) his wife and their young daughter Phyllis aged just 1 year old. It is notable that both are employed in the coal industry and neither would have considered themselves farmers, although one or both may well have continued as small holders during their time at Cnwc. Reuben Carpenter had been

born at Pontypool but the family soon relocated to Crumlin where his father Thomas was employed as a colliery labourer. Thomas had been born Pensford in Somerset in 1841 while his wife Sarah, five years his junior, had originated from Tydu in Bassaleg. The family would later relocate to Newbridge and by the time of the 1901 census Thomas was self-employed as a shoemaker and the family had taken in four single male boarders including Joseph and Lewis Cohen who had immigrated to Wales from Russia. At this time Reuben is listed as a coalminer boarding at Shaftesbury Street in Newport. Significantly this Carpenter family were not the same as that which farmed at nearby Ty'n Y Ffynnon farm in 1901, although both had their origins in Somerset no obviously link between them can be established. The second family the Whites were also originally from Somerset. James Whites' family were resident at Ramping Row at the time of the 1901 census. Both eldest son James and his father Enoch White, born at Thornbury around 1860, are described as 'coalminer underground' on the census. Enoch had come to Cwmcarn prior to 1881 and had lodged with the Gooding family, also from Somerset, while employed as a stone quarryman. By the 1911 Census Ramping row was referred to as Millbrook Terrace and Enoch, his wife Ellen and their younger 7 children ranging from 23 to 6 years of age were residents of number 12. James wife Ada, born Hodges, was from Risca and her father had also been employed as a collier. The Whites and Carpenters were just the first of several families who were to reside at Cnwc until the early 1920s when the lease for the farm and its lands was acquired by the newly established Forestry Commission.

The electoral register of 1913 continues to name Reuben Carpenter as the occupant of 'Gynock' the Whites having already vacated the property. Reuben being the sole eligible voter at this time would have been still been resident with his wife and children at the farm. By 1915 two new residents are named Arthur Hiley, and Albert Russell, both of whom may have resided with their wives and young children at the house. Arthur Hiley is almost certain to be the same person who is described as a boarder in the home of Richard & Harriett Terrett at 29 Alexandra Place Newbridge. In 1911 Arthur who was born at Lydbrook in the Forest of Dean Gloucestershire around 1889, is described as a single 'coalminer hewer'. Albert Russell is not so easy to identify but he could be the Albert Edward Russell who resided with his family at 37 High St Fleur De Lis Mon. on the 1911 census as, at this time he was employed as a 'coal miner underground'. Both Arthur Hiley and Arthur Russell appear to have stayed only briefly at Cnwc, possibly waiting for one of the new terraced houses in Cwmcarn to be constructed. On the 1918 electoral register only one name, Arnold Russell is listed. Arnold, born 1892, may be the same who appears with his family at 17 Lewis Terrace Hafodyrynys Crumlin Mon. This Russell family also had their origins in the Forest of Dean at Ruardean and all the adult males in the family were employed as coalminers/hewers. Women aged 30 and over gained the vote in 1918 so not

surprisingly the next two electoral registers, of 1920 (autumn) and 1922 (spring) feature who it may be assumed are a married couple Charles & Alice Barrow. Unfortunately it has not yet been possible to identify either the origin or occupation of this family, although significantly the Cnwc is once again referred to as Gnock Farm.

The Forestry Commission at Cnwc Farm

The Forestry Commission was established as part of the Forestry Act 1919 and was set up to increase the amount of woodland in Britain by buying land for afforestation. During the 1920s the Commission focused on acquiring land to begin planting out new forests of fast growing conifers; much of this land was previously used for agricultural purposes. During the Great Depression the Forestry Commission's estate continued to grow so that it was just over 360,000 hectares of land by 1934. The low cost of land, and the need to increase timber production meant that by 1939 the Forestry Commission was the largest landowner in Britain. The Commission appears to have taken a tenancy on Cnwc farmstead around 1921 but the actual 999 year lease on the farm and its fields was not agreed with the Trustees of Lady Llanover's Will (The Llanover Estate) until 1928 with the change of ownership occurring on 1st June of that year.



Figure 10 Arthur Williams, left, at Pen-y-pant in the 1950s (Bryn Williams)

The first residents we can identify with any certainty as Forestry Commission tenants are a young local couple called Arthur and Ethel Williams who took residence at Cnwc in 1921 when Arthur was employed by the Forestry Commission. Arthur Williams was born in Buttington near Welshpool in 1900, however his parents separated and he was brought back to south Wales by his mother, along with his siblings, to live at Henllys where family lived. Ethel Williams was a Cwmcarn girl born at Rees Terrace in 1902 to her parents James and Emily Burge. James was a collier who had originated in Nailsea Somerset where his family were horse traders. He was well known in the locality and although a coalminer always had interests in keeping sheep and other agricultural pursuits. Arthur and Ethel would stay at Cnwc up until 1924 when Arthur took work in the colliery and their eldest son Raymond was born. They would remain at Cwmcarn for a few years before relocating to Henllys for a period of time in the 1930s. In 1940 they returned to Cwmcarn to take on the tenancy of nearby Pen-y-Pant Farm, remaining there until 1966.

At some point in 1922 the Williamses were joined at Cnwc by a young freshman forester by the name of Gosling who had been appointed Forester-in-Charge of the Llanover Forest. Arthur Gosling was born on July 26th 1901 in the village of Newland, Gloucestershire in the Forest of Dean. In this sense he was born a forester and he certainly became dedicated to forestry throughout the whole of his life. He was educated at Bell's Grammar School, Coleford, and after about two years as a Junior Draughtsman in the Air Ministry, he enrolled as a student at the Forestry Commission's new Forester Training School at Parkend in the Forest of Dean. Arthur qualified and in 1920 became Assistant Instructor with the rank of Foreman at the school the Forestry Commission had at that time at Burley in the New Forest. He was to stay at Cnwc to supervise the provisional forestry work in the Ebbw Forest until 1925 when he applied for and entered Edinburgh University to study Forestry at his own expense. Perhaps as a consequence of this wise investment in education Arthur Gosling would later rise to lead the Forestry Commission between 1948 and 1962 as its Director General. He would also be knighted for his service to Forestry and is still remembered in his native Gloucestershire by the 'Gosling Ash' the tallest and finest ash in the Forest of Dean which can be found at Mailscot Wood at Coleford.

In his book 'Forest Service - The first forty five years of the Forestry Commission of Great Britain' (David & Charles 1969) George Ryle, himself a former Deputy Director General, remembers Gosling's time at Cnwc:

Another little old place at Llanover forest, The Cnwc, came into the plans for improvement in about 1921. A rather impoverished small holding, it was to be made a fit lodging for a new young bachelor Forester. But the difficulty was that the parlour ceiling was only 5ft 10 in high whereas young Arthur Gosling touched the scale at 6ft 4 in. The problem was solved by sinking the flagstone floor nine inches below ground level, and if the Cnwc had not been demolished and its stones put into the bottoming of a new haulage road by the time Sir Arthur Gosling had risen to the top rung of the Forest Service ladder, it might have been preserved as a fitting monument to a notable Director General. P186-187 George Ryle 'Forest Service' 1969 (David & Charles, Newton Abbot)



Figure 11 Director General of the Forestry Commission, Sir Arthur Gosling (1901-1982) pictured in 1956. He had resided at Cnwc in the early 1920s (NPG)

Thankfully George Ryle got it wrong about the demolition of the old longhouse and as Bryn Williams who lived at nearby Pen-y-Pant farm recalls “a barn was situated some way down the hillside towards Hollybush Cottage. This was knocked down by the Forestry Commission in order to build an area adjacent to the forest road where timber could be placed.” This demolition probably took place in the 1950s as the barn is still evident on the 1953 Ordnance Survey map. Arthur Gosling and Arthur Williams last appear as residents of Cnwc on the electoral register for the Cwmcarn District of Abercarn in the autumn of 1924 and there is no register entry for Cnwc after that time until 1928. During this period the farmstead may have occupied from time to time by itinerant Forestry Commission workers, however

there were no permanent residents and the buildings would have been shut for at least some of this time. It may have been during this period that the cement rendering was applied to the exterior of the longhouse in order to make it water tight. Unfortunately this was a flawed idea as it would have stopped the building from 'breathing' leading to a greater damp problem than previously caused by condensation.

The next couple to reside at Cnwc were Caswelltyn and Mary Edwards who appear for the first time on the 1928 electoral register. Caswelltyn would have got the house at Cnwc as a result of his job on the forestry as the farm and its lands were leased for 999 years by the Forestry Commission from Llanover Estate from June 1928. Caswelltyn, alternatively Caswalliam, on the 1881 census, had been born to Jacob and Margaret Edwards in 1880 while they were tenanting Abercarn Fawr Farm in what is now Tribute Avenue Cwmcarn.

The Edwards family seem to have had a keen interest in Welsh culture as another son is named Talyesin. Caswelltyn was born at the farm shortly after the family had relocated from Sychpant farm on Mynyddislwyn. At the time of the 1901 census Caswelltyn was living at lodgings at Ynysddu Post Office and employed as a grocer's assistant. He married Mary-Ann Sullivan in the second quarter of 1905 and by 1911 the couple had three daughters Ethel May (5), Winfred (3) and Rosalie, known as Rose (1) and were residing at 2 Yew Tree Cottages near Mynyddislwyn Church. At this time Caswelltyn was employed underground as a colliery ostler whose responsibility it was to take care of the pit ponies. The last entry for the Edwards, unmarried daughter Rosalie, at Cnwc was in the 1932 electoral register. Rosalie J Edwards was to marry Arthur R Redman at Newport in March 1935 and without information to the contrary it might be fair to assume that the Edwards family were to remain in the Cwmcarn area.

The Duffields at Cnwc

The Duffield family who appear at Cnwc on the Abertillery Constituency electoral register of 1933 had long resided at Pontywain the next village south of Risca, situated just within the parish and urban district of Risca where William Duffield was employed as a helve maker and later as a colliery tipper. To give his name in full William Henry Duffield was born in 1867 in 'the village' at Caerleon, on the Christchurch side of the River Usk, to a family of woodcutters. His father William Duffield, a woodcutter, born at Christchurch in 1828, and mother Mary-Ann was eight years her husband's junior and originally from Breconshire. This association with wood appears to go way back as William Duffield's father Lewis was also a woodcutter, born at Christchurch in 1806 while his wife Catherine, born 1807, found employment as a midwife after her husband's death in the 1860s. William Henry was William and Mary-Ann eldest son and

they were eventually to have eight children in total. In 1881 when William is still a school boy his mind would have been fast turning to a life working with his father in the woods. He may also have spent time with his neighbour William Lewis, a widowed wood hurdle maker, honing his skills in woodcraft. Another neighbour at this time was the blacksmith William Young (27) and he may have further encouraged the younger William to enter a skilled occupation which might complement his own. Certainly by the time of 1891 census William Henry, now aged 22, was skilled in the art of woodcarving and turning being employed as a helve maker crafting the branches left by his father as waste wood into finely produced tool handles.

By the mid-1890s the opportunities provided by working with wood were diminishing in the Caerleon area due in part to cheap factory produced tools. As a result William Henry sought a better life where the heavy industries of the south Wales valleys provided opportunities for a skilled man who could repair tools. At the time of the 1901 census William had relocated to Crosskeys near Risca and had married Elizabeth Hoskins. The census lists William H Duffield (30) still employed as a helve maker, his wife Elizabeth (24) and their two children Elizabeth K (5) and William E (2). By 1911 William had been employed in the coal industry as a tipper working above ground and the family had moved into their own terraced house at 10 Coronation Place, Pontywaun. The family had grown significantly in the first decade of the twentieth century and now numbered 6 children Elizabeth Rosina (15), William Ewart (12) Blodwen Ethel (9) Harry Victor James (7) Edna Rosmond (4) and Edward Charles (2). Two more children, a boy and a girl, were born to the family over the next few years. The family would remain at Pontywaun until the early 1930s when they relocated to Cnwc. By the late 1930s they were resident in John Street Cwmcarn and the core of the family would remain in the village, and play a prominent part in the community, up to the present day. Barbara White who today resides at Ty'n y Ffynnon farm in the Carn valley is the granddaughter of William Henry Duffield being the daughter of William's youngest son Brinley Llewellyn Duffield who was born in July 1914. Barbara was brought up in the family home at John Street, where her parents resided along with her grandparents, and the subject of the family's time at Cnwc would often come up in conversation. In August 2017 I got the opportunity to speak at length with Barbara at her home at Ty'n Y Ffynnon farm and what follows is a summary of that interview.

“My Grandfather, William Henry Duffield, was born in 1867 in one of the old cottages near the Ship Inn at Caerleon. He had always worked with wood and was a carpenter and woodcutter until work on the forestry came along and after that he had the saw mill at Pontywaun Bridge, in front of the Spiritualist Church, which he built himself. Grandfather, father and uncle all worked there together until I was in my teens. Grandmother's family, the Hoskins were all from the Fedw

near Devauden and there are still Hoskins there today. One of the family kept the little pub there and in the village church there they can be traced back to the sixteenth century. My great grandmother Elizabeth Hoskins was the first to come to Cwmcarn and she lived at the Graig Cottage. Grandfather lodged with the Hoskins at Graig cottage when he first came to the area and that is how he met grandmother and after a while they ended up married.”

“My grandparents had 8 children in total, father was the youngest and was born in Nant Carn Road Cwmcarn. Father, Brinley Duffield, was born in 1914 and so he was in his late teens living at the Gnock. Grandfather was by then working on the Forestry and he was offered the Gnock as a place that he and his family could live. As teenagers the Duffield children would go to dances in Newbridge and walk home up to the Gnock. Father used to walk with his brother and two younger sisters and the girls always used to talk about how the boys used to try to scare them walking home in the dark.”

“Father didn’t really provide any descriptions of the farmhouse but recalled that the house had a very big fireplace and the old fashioned stone stairs went up around the top just like Ty’n y Ffynnon. Four of the Duffield brothers all slept in the same room together up until their teens. Father would recall that there was a stone barn near the farmhouse where their pony Megan lived. The family had a couple of fields there but there was only a little bit of ground around the Gnock by that time that hadn’t been taken for plantations. There was a well next to the house and he always remembered his mother getting the water from the well. However all that side of the valley eventually became dry due to the undermining by the pits. They had a good garden as most of their vegetables and fruit came from there and it was while they were digging the garden that they dug up the handful of old coins. Most of these are unrecognisable but there is a silver one from the time of Elizabeth I. It actually has writing on it and a rough sort of face and you can definitely see Elizabeth I. Father always talked about the view from the Gnock. They used to sit out the front and they could see right down the valley, but once the trees grew up the view was lost. The house must also have been quite a drafty place because he would often recall that the snow used to blow in and there were a couple of winters when the brothers woke up their beds were covered in snow. There were a few outbuildings there and when I was a child there were still good foundations there and you could see them clearly. I believe that the other buildings were knocked down when the Forestry planted the fields there. There is only one photograph taken at the Gnock and that is of one of my aunts sitting on an outside wall but you cannot see the house in the photo. I also have a photograph of grandfather with three workmates who worked on the forestry just sitting among the heather eating their sandwiches. It was the early days of the forestry because they were still planting then.”

“The house was small but not overly cramped because there were only ever 4-5 of the children there at any one time because the oldest siblings had grown up and left. Some of the children went away to

work in their teens. The eldest was a girl Aunty Rose (Elizabeth Rosina) and she had married when she was 18 and had children at the same time as her mother had her youngest sibling. One aunty went to London to nurse. The eldest son, William Ewart Duffield, was killed in the First World War. His name is on the cenotaph in Cwmcarn Park. He was only 15 when he went to war as he lied about his age to go. I remember that grandmother had a letter from him saying how terrible it was and she kept that until she died. It is an awful letter but written in the most beautiful handwriting. William and a few of the boys from Nantcarn went to war because they saw it as a big adventure. I think that Uncle William survived about a year on the battlefields of Flanders.”

Commentary - research via Ancestry.com confirms that William Ewart Duffield was killed in France 3 December 1917. He was in the 2nd Battalion of South Wales Borderers.

“Father and his brother Victor Duffield worked on the forestry as soon as they finished school. Uncle Victor always lived close by and worked with father and grandfather. The other siblings didn’t. The girls all went into service and one brother Edward went to live in Weston-Super-Mare as soon as he was old enough. He found work as an electrician and stayed there all of his life. None of the family ever worked in the pit.”

“As far as near neighbours were concerned Father always talked about Rocky Harris. He lived halfway down to the village in the little ramshackle bungalow called Hollybush Cottage. He used to chase the Duffield children because they used to wind him up and then run off. Father also used to talk about the Wyatts at Rhyswg Ganol who were there from the 1920s up until 1945. Noah John was their uncle and father often came up to Ty’n y Ffynnon to play in the 1930s when the John family lived there. Ron Hoskins was father’s first cousin. Ron was brought up on the Graig later lived at Rhyswg Fach farm for a number of years prior moving to Chapel Bridge Farm at the Spiteful in the late 1950s.”

“After leaving the Gnock the family moved down to John Street and Grandfather started the saw mill business on Pontywain Bridge. He was a helve maker by trade and used to make tool handles as a side-line when he was working on the forestry. At the saw mill they made shovel handles and that sort of thing, and they also made props for the pit. They had lathes down there and they did a lot of wood turning. The saw mill was a tin hut just like the spiritualist church and eventually father and his brother Victor came off the forestry to work for their father. They were there when I was born and remained there until the Nineteen Sixties. Of course Grandfather William Henry Duffield was best known for being the conductor of Cwmcarn and District Male Voice Choir. When I was little everyone use to say that I was the conductor’s granddaughter. William was a very well-known musician locally. At one time they were a large choir of over 100 men. I have photographs of the Choir which were taken in the grounds of Abercarn Fach (the Doctors) and she also has a few cups and other things commemorating the Choir. It amazes me that considering how poor they all were they were all dressed up in white shirts and dinner suits.”

“There were three generations of Duffield’s in that little house in John Street. My sister and I were both born there and mother and father lived there with my grandparents. Both grand parents lived to a ripe old age well up into their 80s. Grandfather died first although I still vividly remember that he always made us children sing for him.”
Barbara White, Cwmcarn August 2017

The Lewises at Cnwc

The final Forestry Commission resident of Cnwc was Henry Job Lewis who, along with his family, occupied the farm between 1937 and 1942. Henry Job Lewis was born at Pontywain in Risca parish in 1888 to Job Lewis, a collier born at Camerton Somerset, and his wife Sarah. Henry’s father Job had been born ‘Job Lewis Parsons’ and the the Parsons family had been resident at Pontywain since before 1861. Sadly Job passed away aged 36 in 1890 so the Census completed in the following year shows Sarah a widow along with her children George (15), Ada (11), Henry (3) and Florrie (1).



**Fig. 13 Henry Job Lewis (1888-1962) on the pathway up to Cnwc in the early 1940s
(Mrs Molleen Jones)**

In the days before the Welfare State Sarah would have taken in laundry to make ends meet which, with some limited financial assistance from son George who was employed locally as a coalminer and daughter Ada who was employed as a domestic servant, would have been sufficient to feed the family and keep a roof over their heads in their home village of Pontywain. Eventually in the late 1890s Sarah was to remarry and by the time of the 1901 census she is Mrs Stanley having married William Stanley (50), a coalminer, and relocated to along with her three Lewis children and two additional infants to Croespenmaen. Henry Job Lewis married his wife Eliza Ann, known as Annie, in 1909 and a year later their eldest son William was born. Henry was at this time a collier and the family resided at Kendon Crumlin. At some point in the 1920s work in the local collieries dried up and Henry was forced to find employment elsewhere. Luckily he not only found employment with the Forestry Commission but was provided with a tied cottage. This was a real stroke of luck because at the time those employed as labourers by the Commission received a very meagre wage.



Figure 13 Henry and Annie Lewis pictured outside Cnwc (Mrs Molleen Jones)

Molleen Jones recalls that:

“In the late 1920s grandfather Henry Lewis, worked for the Forestry Commission and they moved around quite a bit because of this. However by 1932 the family lived in a tied forestry cottage at the isolated Trwyn farm, situated high above the upper Gwyddon valley. There were three sons William, George and Jack (John Henry) plus mam, Mary Molleen and Grandmother Annie. Mother was born in Crown Street Crumlin in 1920 and went to Crumlin High level school when she lived there. While at the Trwyn she would walk to school at West End Abercarn and when the teacher found out she couldn’t believe how far mother was walking. Her teacher told her that if she brought a flask he would give her a hot drink to take home with her. Grandad used to meet her on her way home from school sometimes and the sisters remember that one time their mother saw a snake on a tree which frightened her. After this her dad would come down with a stick to walk her home. As a child mother would play with Sadie Jones who also lived at Trwyn in the old farmhouse. Their friends the Hammetts lived down in the valley at Brook Bungalow and Mary and Sadie used to bathe in a pond near that bungalow.”

In 1938 the family relocated to Cnwc, and around this time their second son George joined the merchant navy sailing out of Barry. The following year George sailed from Liverpool but sadly went down on the SS Castlemoor when it was sunk in the Atlantic on 25 February 1940.

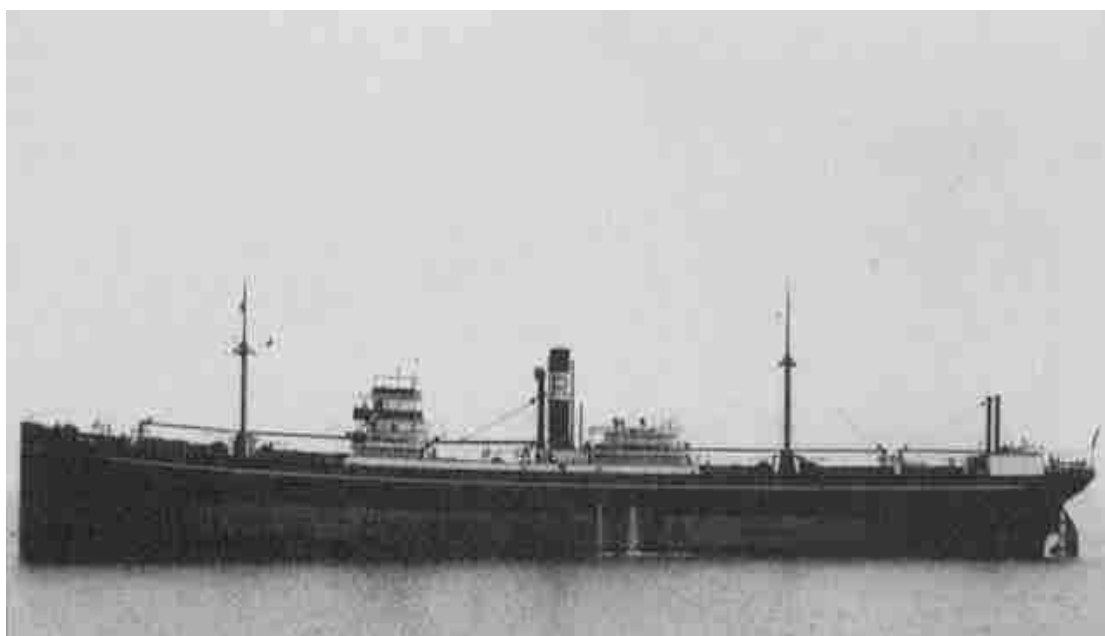


Figure 14 SS Castlemoor 1940. Convoy HX 20: The cargo ship was last seen in the Atlantic Ocean 800 nautical miles (1,500 km) west of Ouessant, France. There was no further trace and the vessel was presumed foundered with the loss of all 42 crew –see memorial in Appendix 2

The 1939 census register completed at the beginning of World War Two provides us with the following information on the Lewis family:

Name	DOB	Occupation	Marital status
Henry J Lewis	28 Nov 1887	Forestry Worker	married
Eliza A Lewis	04 Jul 1887	Unpaid Domestic Duties	married
John H Lewis	11 Jun 1914	Incapacitated	single



Figure 15 Annie and Mary Lewis, soon to be Mrs Gulliford, at Cnwc (Mrs Molleen Jones)

John H Lewis or Jack as he was more generally known, was the youngest of the Lewis boys. According to Molleen, his niece, he was disabled as a result of accident when he had fallen on a salmon tin as a small boy. The family lived up at the Trwyn at the time of the accident. Unfortunately Jack had got blood poisoning from the rust off the tin, this had caused blood poisoning and, as there was no penicillin at the time, he had to have his leg amputated. He also had an open wound on the other leg all his life. The family used to have to bake the bandages in the oven for him to dress the wound. In spite of his disability Jack walked up and down from the village with his two

sticks when the family lived at Gnock. There was no car access at Gnock but eventually when the family moved down to Cwmcarn village and he gained employment with Remploy Jack got a motorised bike and later upgraded this to a disabled car.

Mary Molleen Lewis married Robert Gulliford married at Caerleon in the late summer 1941. Her daughter Molleen recalls that *“mother was married from the Gnock, and the telegraph boy Gogerty walked up from the village to deliver a telegram around this time. In 1942 the young couple moved into Rock Cottage down in the Carn valley. During this period uncle Jack would stay with mother for company at Rock Cottage as her dad was away in the army.”* Eventually Henry Job Lewis had to give up his job with the Forestry Commission as a result of his work on the forestry, he had developed a beat knee (Prepatellar bursitis). After this Mr and Mrs Lewis and their son Jack moved to Nant Carn Road Cwmcarn. Henry Job Lewis died 29 August 1962 aged 74 at the Royal Gwent Hospital. At this time the family lived at Newport Road Cwmcarn.

The Last Days of the Gnock

So in 1942 the Cnwc was vacated for the last time by the Forestry Commission. Much of the forestry work in the Carn and Gwyddon valley's had now been completed and the Commission no longer needed to employ as many labourers as previously. Subsequently the Cnwc once again became available to rent and as Bryn Williams of nearby Pen-y-Pant farm remembers *“by the 1940s the Gnock had only 2 fields remaining as the rest had been planted with conifers.”* Bryn's elder brother Ray 'Basky' Williams and his wife, Constance, lived at Cnwc from 1943 to 45. Raymond A J Williams's marriage to Constance L Beard was registered at Caerleon, in December 1943. Ray worked as a lorry driver and didn't farm the fields so they were incorporated into those of his father Arthur's farm at Pen-y-pant. One day in the summer of 1945, shortly after VE Day, when Ray was at work and his wife was over at Pen-y-pant visiting her in-laws, a clothes horse full of washing placed close to the fire to dry caught alight. The blaze spread to the wooden beam above the old inglenook fireplace setting the chimney and then house alight. The farm had largely burnt down by the time the fire brigade arrived and Bryn remembers being told that they were lucky that as the war in Europe was now over they hadn't broken the blackout rules, which would have been the case only a few weeks before. It may be that there was an intention to rebuild because 'Cnwc Farm' remains on the electoral register up to 1948 when Constance L Williams and Mary M Gulliford are recorded as residing there however by this time the charred remains were beginning to collapse in on themselves and, during the summertime, the surrounding yard and garden was becoming overgrown with vegetation.

So Cnwc farm remained a ruin and eventually the last two remaining fields were planted with conifers by the Forestry Commission. The last resident Ray 'Basky' Williams died in 2003 but, as his son Brian lives nearby in Newbridge, the Williams family are still local to Cwmcarn. Bryn Williams, Basky's younger brother, and his wife Barbara, long-time residents of Newport, still regularly visit the village and the ever popular Forest Drive Visitor Centre.

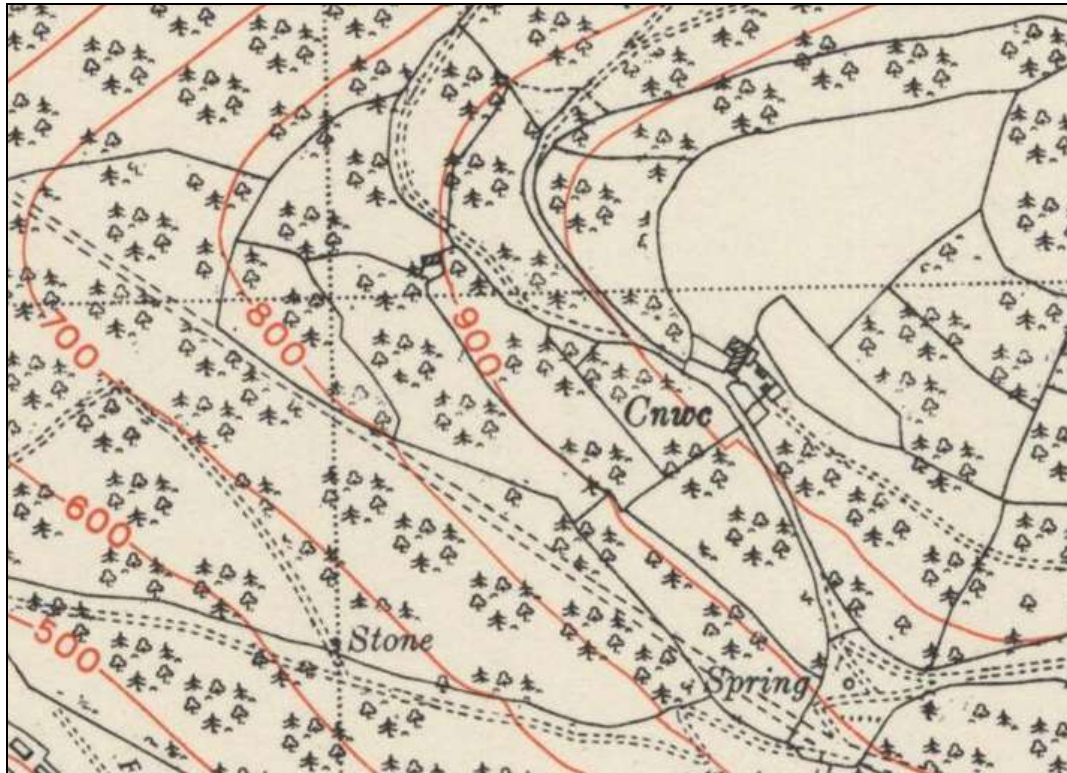


Figure 16 The 1945 Ordnance Survey map shows the farmstead under Forestry Commission lease surrounded on three sides by forestry plantation. Only one field and one small paddock remain unplanted. (NLS)

Appendices

Appendix One

The ruins of Cnwc farmstead



At the top of the track up the hillside nearing the farmstead



The first view of the side of the ruined long house



A sideways view of the longhouse with the cow house to the left and living accommodation uphill to the right. The two sections are separated by the entrance to the cross passage



The entrance to the cross passage. You would have originally turned right into the cow house and left into the hall



Looking into the cross passage door way. The back of the original fireplace would have been to your right as you entered. To pass into the hall you would take a sharp right and turning left you would see the large inglenook fireplace



The remains of the well shaft. It was blocked up but now the infill is sinking fast.



The lower end of the cow house



The lower pediment of the cow house which was strengthened with concrete in the 1920s.



The front of the farm house. This is the exact area where the photograph of Henry and Annie Lewis was taken back in the early 1940s.



The front of the farm house. The same view as above from a slightly different angle



A sideways view looking across the living accommodation towards the hall



The rear of the farmhouse which would have formerly been separated from the hillside by a bailey

Appendix Two

The Forestry Commission deed map of 1928 of the property leased for 999 years from the Llanover Estate



Appendix Three

OBITUARY SIR ARTHUR GOSLING, KBE, CB, FRSE, FRICS

Arthur Hulin Gosling, who died on August 8th at Cerne Abbas, Dorset at the age of 81, was Director General of the Forestry Commission from 1948 until 1962. He spent 43 years with the Forestry Commission during which time he served at every level from Forest Worker to Director General and in three countries. His unrivalled experience and the grasp of essentials that distinguished him proved of immense value both to the Forestry Commission and to forestry as a whole during one of the most formative periods in our history.

Arthur Gosling was born on July 26th 1901 in the village of Newland, Gloucestershire in the Forest of Dean. In this sense he was born a forester and he certainly became dedicated to forestry throughout the whole of his life. He was educated at Bell's Grammar School, Coleford, and after about two years as a Junior Draughtsman in the Air Ministry, he enrolled as a student at the Forestry Commission's new Forester Training School at Parkend in the Forest of Dean. He qualified and in 1920 became Assistant Instructor with the rank of Foreman at the school the Forestry Commission had at that time at Burley in the New Forest.

In 1922 he was appointed Forester-in-Charge at Llanover Forest, Monmouthshire which now forms part of Ebbw Forest. In 1925, he applied for and entered Edinburgh University to study Forestry at his own expense under the late Professor Stebbing.

He proved to be a brilliant student taking the Younger Medal and graduating with distinction in 1928. Later that year he fulfilled an early ambition when he was re-appointed to the Forestry Commission, this time as District Forest Officer.

For ten years from 1928 he served as the District Officer in Argyll and in 1931 he married Jane at Thornhill, Dumfriesshire. At this time in his career he was obviously much concerned with the protection and safety of the Commission's developing new plantations and he wrote several articles in the Forestry Commission Journal during that period — all concerned with matters of protection against various agencies including sheep, voles, fire and wind.

In 1938, he was promoted to Divisional Officer in Charge of West Scotland at Glasgow and in 1940 he became Assistant Commissioner for Scotland.

Immediately after the war came the really meteoric part of his career when he became successively Director of Forestry for Scotland in 1946, Deputy Director General in 1947, and Director General in July 1948 in succession to Sir William Ling Taylor. He was to occupy this post for no less than 14 years until he retired with typical tidiness at the end of the Government's financial year on 31 March 1962.

He was one of the most able, dedicated, and enthusiastic foresters I have known.

His tall and slightly aquiline figure and features and his somewhat gruff 'no nonsense' manner was at times a little daunting especially to junior staff. However, it soon became apparent to everyone that he was a man of great warmth and kindness who took a close personal interest in his staff. He was resolute and single minded in pursuit of what he believed to be the best interests of forestry. He was also highly professional and master of his trade and at no time in his career did he lose sight of or contact with the practical realities of growing trees successfully. He was contemptuous of humbug and bureaucracy and his strength of character and professionalism had the vitally important effect of generating trust and confidence amongst all who worked with him. He admired individual initiative and practical achievement above all else and as the Forestry Commission became larger and more complex, he fought hard to avoid as he put it 'the danger of paper records superceding good plantations in importance'.

Like all men of achievement in any field he was inspired by vision — in his case the future contribution our new forests can make to society, including the prospect of the 'plus' monetary entry in the balance sheet as the Forestry Commission's plantations matured. Gosling worked under Lord Robinson as Chairman from 1945-52. Here were two strong characters who worked well together and they were together leading the

British delegation to the Sixth Commonwealth Forestry Conference in Ottawa when Lord Robinson died in September 1952. Lord Radnor became Chairman in 1952 and for ten years he and Sir Arthur were to work together as a good team combining efficiency and rapid development of the public Forest Enterprise with an increasing rapport and support for private forestry.

To my generation Sir Arthur will always be associated with the 'growth years' of the 1950s and early '60s. He achieved many things, but perhaps his greatest achievement was to prepare and steer British forestry into its period of unprecedented expansion, culminating in 1961 when the combined planting achievements by the Forestry Commission and private sector exceeded 40,000 hectares per annum for the first time. In his period as Director General, the Commission's plantation area was more than doubled and under his direction many changes were brought about. These included the change from a defence-based to a commercial/social-based forestry policy after the Zuckermann Report of 1956 and setting up of the private timber growers' organisations following the Watson Report. This was also a period of exceptionally rapid technical development and he did much to encourage this through his support for research and his interest in innovation.

He was an active member of the then Society of Foresters for many years, being a Fellow from 1930 until his death, and also President during 1952 and 1953. He was also an enthusiastic believer in the Commonwealth and in the promotion of forestry in the Commonwealth. He was Chairman of the Standing Committee of the

Commonwealth Forestry Conference for several years and led the Delegations to the Commonwealth Forestry Conferences in the UK in 1947, in Canada in 1952 and to the Seventh Conference in Australia and New Zealand in 1957 as well as to the World Forestry Conferences in Helsinki in 1949 and in Seattle in 1960. For many years he played a leading part in the affairs of the Commonwealth Forestry Association on its Executive and Governing Council and as Vice-Chairman and as Chairman for ten years following his retirement from 1963-72. He was appointed CB in 1950 and created KGB in 1955 for his services to British forestry.

After retirement in 1962 he was appointed Chairman of the Footpaths Committee, set up by the Government, which published its report a year later. In 1967 he was made Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Forestry in Rural Parks. He also served as Vice-Chairman of the Dorset Naturalists Trust. In his spare time he was a skilled craftsman in wood and no mean performer on the golf course. We have lost a fine forester who did much to shape British forestry during the period of its greatest expansion.

G. D. Holmes

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Appendix Four

The S.S. Castlemoor Memorial at Tower Hill, London

