

# The R.C.A.H.M. Wales

## in my Time

### 1949–89

by

PETER SMITH

*This is an account of the work of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales during the working lifetime of its present Secretary. In his very personal account, Peter Smith traces the development of the work of the Commission from the immediate post-war years to the publication of the recent Policy Review. When the Royal Commission was established in 1908 the scale of the task ahead was scarcely recognized. During the twentieth century there has been an ever-increasing awareness of the importance of historic buildings and the numbers so recognized are now such that it is no longer reasonable to expect the Commission to make a detailed record of all such structures in every parish, as had once been thought possible. The difficulties of reconciling the need to record a very large number of monuments—to make an inventory as required by the Royal Warrant—with the practical problems of limited staff and resources, and the ever-widening academic horizons, are explained. The author describes his first appointment as Junior Investigator in 1949, the several shifts in his career with the Commission and the changing work and policy of the organization. The accompanying photographs illustrate the wide range of monuments recorded by the Commission; an Appendix containing twenty figures further illustrates and explains points made in the text.*

It was an accident that brought me into contact with what was to be my life's work. By pure chance, sometime in the spring of 1949, I met Herman Ramm while each of us was on our way home after the day's work in London. Herman I had known at Oxford, and after the usual exchange of greetings, I learned that he was employed by a body of whose existence I had hitherto been unaware, to wit the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. The life-style of an employee of this august organization as described by Herman seemed most agreeable: a life spent mainly in the delectable county of Dorset, the daytime in the open air recording its antiquities, the evenings relaxing in country hostelries. I felt it was one that would suit me better than that of an architect rebuilding bomb-battered Britain, a task for which I was

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Peter Smith was appointed a member of staff of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in 1949. He has been Secretary of the Commission since 1973.

at that time preparing myself.<sup>1</sup> However, Herman discouraged me from thinking of a post on this English Commission as he explained there were unlikely to be any vacancies for some years. He added, however, that there existed in Wales a similar body which was soon to be reorganized under 'an engineer' and would shortly be recruiting. He gave me the Cambridge address of the engineer and suggested I made enquiries. I wrote to Cambridge, but for some time heard nothing further, and had almost forgotten about the incident when a postcard arrived with what was to become A.H.A. Hogg's familiar signature, telling me that two posts would shortly be advertised and I should write to the Civil Service Commission if I was interested. When the literature arrived it appeared I was reasonably well-qualified apart from my ignorance of the Welsh tongue, the possession of which was described as 'an advantage'. I went to the library in Winchester where I always spent my holidays and borrowed the only work on the Welsh language on the shelves. A quick perusal made it clear that I was unlikely to learn it in time for an interview, although the struggle to master it has not ceased from that day to this.

My parents thought the prospects of a non-Welsh-speaker being appointed were about zero, and discouraged me from proceeding further. However, I felt 'nothing ventured, nothing gained', filled in my form and somewhat to my surprise received a summons to appear before the Civil Service Commission in Northumberland Avenue. My main hope lay in my portfolio of artwork which every student of architecture accumulates and which included a number of measured drawings of historic buildings, notably the Beaufort Tower of St Cross Hospital and the south front of Hampton Court Palace. With my father's help I managed to carry these to the train and to Northumberland Avenue. I was ushered before the Appointments Board staggering under the weight of my portfolio. To my relief I was not addressed in the Welsh tongue, and indeed the Kensingtonian accents of the interviewing panel did not suggest it had any great familiarity with the 'language of heaven'. One of them I recognized as Sir Cyril Fox and he led the interview. He asked to see my portfolio and, on opening it, became very enthusiastic with that infectious enthusiasm which those who remember him will never forget. I began to feel I had made an impression. Ever since I have always advised candidates never to go empty-handed to an interview. Among the questions put to me by Sir Cyril was one enquiring whether I could interest myself in surveying Welsh farmhouses as it was evident from my portfolio I had not looked at anything smaller than a manor house or a large church. The question was prophetic. My other interrogator was a much younger man who was anxious to learn if I had any experience of excavation. I admitted I had helped Richard Atkinson as a weekend digger, and on one occasion, with the help of a friend

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1. One reason for my disillusionment was the realization that I was not being trained to design in the historical styles I so much admired. If I could not build them I had better record them. The modernist revolution had just invaded the schools of architecture and it was the doctrines of Le Corbusier rather than Vitruvius which were being taught. It gives me some satisfaction, forty years later, to witness a return to the historical approach and to hear the denunciations of the monuments of the modernist movement by an eminent royal personage. The shock today to the followers of Le Corbusier must be as great as that currently being experienced by the followers of Marx. The wheel of fashion, architectural and political, has indeed come full circle.

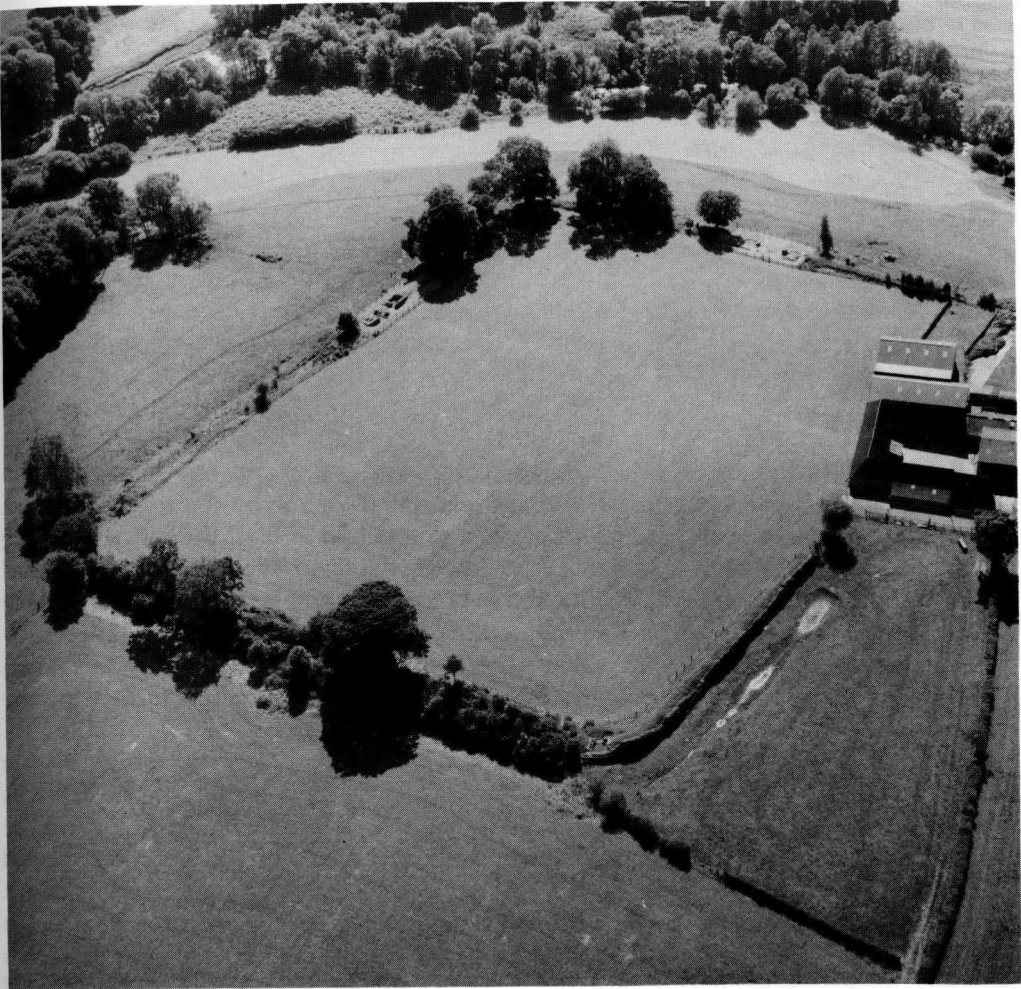




I. Amongst the earliest man-made monuments to survive in Wales are the chambered tombs of the Neolithic Age (c. 4500–2500 BC) illustrated by Maesyfelin (St Lythams, Glam.), *above*, Dyffryn Ardudwy (Merioneth) and Cist Gerig (Treflys, Caerns.), *below*, left and right







II *opposite*. The most characteristic monument of the Iron Age is the hill-fort, magnificently represented by Treceiri, crowning the summit of Yr Eifl (Llanaelhaiarn, Caerns.). The round huts within the walls constitute a complete prehistoric township making Treceiri an outstanding prehistoric monument

III *above*. In contrast with the irregular defensive enclosures built by the native tribesmen are the symmetry and regularity of the forts of their conquerors, the invincible infantry of Imperial Rome, who consolidated their hold on Wales by such forts as the Brecon Gaer



had even put a spade through a bank we thought might be Roman. 'And have you published your results?' asked the interrogator. 'No, because we found nothing' I replied. 'Even so, you should always publish'. And so I learnt the first rule of archaeology, not 'publish and be damned' but 'publish or be damned'. However, my non-publication was this time forgiven, because a few days later I opened an official letter, offering me the post of Junior Investigator on the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales at a starting salary of £350 per annum.<sup>2</sup>

Mr Hogg gave me till November to sit the R.I.B.A. Intermediate Examination (B.Arch. under today's rules) and then I made my way to Wales. In the later stages of the then seven-hour journey from Paddington by the Cambrian Coast Express I got into conversation with an elderly Welsh nonconformist minister who took an interest in the young Saxon (or more strictly Angle) who was seeking work in his country. He warned me that the Principality was seething with nationalist feeling, and, as the Celtic twilight descended on us, I began to wonder if my stay was likely to be of long duration, especially when I began to see daubed over bridges the legend *Senedd i Gymru mewn pum mlynedd*. This was translated for me by the minister as 'A parliament for Wales in five years' which as a slogan had at least the merit of being never out of date! Well that was in 1949. There is still no Welsh parliament, and my career was not prematurely terminated, as I feared might be the case, in the early nineteen-fifties as a result of a nationalist uprising.

On the day following my arrival at Aberystwyth I met the people who were then working for the Commissioners and began to learn a little of the history of the organization in the employment of which I was to spend the rest of my working life. The executive head was the Secretary, Mr A.H.A. Hogg, recently lecturer in the engineering faculty in Cambridge, but whose life's passion was not driving tunnels or building bridges but prehistoric archaeology. In this field he had made his name excavating native settlement sites in Northumberland. It was he who had pressed me for my excavation experience. He not only directed the Commission's work generally but with the help of one Senior Investigator, W.E. Griffiths, dealt with Roman and pre-Roman monuments and carried out all the large site surveys. On the architectural side—that the division in the organization between 'buildings' and 'earthworks' was fundamental soon became obvious—there was with my arrival to be a slightly larger team consisting of the Senior Investigator, C.N. Johns, who until the British evacuation of Palestine had worked as an archaeologist for the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, and another Junior Investigator, D.B. Hague, who had abandoned the practice of architecture. A retired master-mariner, Captain Lewis, looked after the office, dealt with routine clerical work and with one finger typed all that was needed. The captain was a colourful figure who hailed from Aberaeron

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2. Although the salary was small even by the money values of the day, the post was better than it looked, as it was the cadet grade to the career grade of Senior Investigator to which promotion could be expected after a few years of satisfactory service. The cadet/career relationship of many Civil Service appointments (e.g. Assistant Principal/Principal) seems not so strong as once was the case and has tended in the Commissions to be replaced by the system of Curator grades resulting in a less certain ladder of promotion in smaller steps.





IV. The rocky terrain of Gwynedd provided building materials for walls which have survived to this day at the Romano-British village, Din Lligwy, Anglesey, *above*. In less stony areas, ancient settlements are often revealed only by air photography as in the case of Tir-newydd (Guilsfield, Mont.), *below*



and whose salty conversation often recalled his youth spent before the mast, sailing the seven seas on his father's windjammer. He took some time to accustom himself to office procedures, and a volley of nautical oaths would often announce he had put the carbon paper in the wrong way round. The entire Commission staff was housed in two small rooms in the top of an office building rather grandly called Pearl Assurance Chambers. The investigators then, and indeed for long afterwards, were responsible for all other duties: search, survey, description, editing, illustration and photography. It was not until 1963 that the Commission acquired its first technical officer, Mr H. Brooksby, a photographer, and not until 1966 that it acquired its first illustrator in Mr D.J. Roberts. Out of these recruits were to grow two important office departments.<sup>3</sup>

I soon picked up a little of the Commission's history. Along with its sister Ancient Monuments Commissions in Scotland and England (Ireland having been for some reason overlooked among the then constituent parts of the United Kingdom), it had been set up in 1908, its basis being the simple words of a Royal Warrant: 'to make an Inventory of the Ancient and Historical Monuments and constructions connected with or illustrative of the contemporary culture, civilization and conditions of life of the people in Wales from the earliest times and to specify those which seem most worthy of preservation'—(Pls I-XVI). The Commission itself was a body of distinguished (and unpaid) scholars nominated by the Crown under the leadership of a Chairman also nominated by the Crown. Our first Chairman was Sir John Rhys while the present holder of this office is Professor Glanmor Williams. These Commissioners appointed a salaried executive staff headed by the Secretary. Its first Secretary had been Edward Owen, the son of a chief constable of Anglesey, a civil servant in the India Office, and reputedly the first Welshman to enter the Civil Service by the then new competitive examinations. He was Secretary from 1908 until 1928 when he retired at an advanced age having been appointed like a judge 'during good behaviour'. With an absolutely minimal staff<sup>4</sup> he had covered a great deal of ground, but the fact that his first Inventory, that of Montgomeryshire, published in 1910, did not include a solitary reference to the half-timbered houses which are the county's most conspicuous antiquity suggested that the Commissioners took a rather narrow view of what fell within their remit. Nevertheless, castles, parish churches, Roman forts and Iron Age hill-forts and megaliths were conscientiously recorded and illustrated. However, in the course of time the quality of the Welsh Inventories fell

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3. At the time of my appointment a knowledge of photography, heraldry, and architectural drawing, as well as of Welsh, were described as among desirable but not essential qualifications for the aspiring Investigator. It was only the failure of one competition to find a candidate with professional qualifications in both archaeology and photography that led the Commission to settle for a photographer pure and simple. The recruitment of professional photographers and graphics officers has led to a great improvement in the Commission's illustrative work, even though it has resulted, from time to time, in demarcation disputes from which the original, all-investigator staff, was free.
  4. Among whom was Edward Thomas, killed in the battle of Arras in 1917 and now considered the finest of the war poets. Perhaps he felt composing inventory entries did not make sufficient demands on his literary skills! I am indebted to Mr John Musty for drawing my attention to Edward Thomas's brief Commission career.



V. Inscribed and sculptured stones constitute the most informative material remains for that period of Welsh history between the departure of the Romans and the coming of the Normans. They also form the principal material witness to Christianity before the earliest surviving churches of the twelfth century. The Houelt stone, *left*, and the 'Samson' stone, *right*, are both at Llantwit Major (Glam.), an important centre of early Christianity

below the standards achieved by the sister Commissions although none could complain of the speed the ground was being covered. Edward Owen's last inventory was the county of Pembroke, published in 1925, which received a very unfavourable review from Mortimer Wheeler.

On Owen's retirement the Commission's staff was reorganized and a new secretary, W.J. Hemp, till then Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Wales, was appointed. Under Hemp the Anglesey Inventory was produced, arguably the best inventory published by any Commission up to that date (1937). The format was brought into line with those of the English and Scottish Commissions, but the introductory and analytical matter was much more extensive. Undoubtedly Hemp had been fortunate in the choice of his chief assistant, Leonard Monroe, who had been chief assistant to the architect Percy Thomas before the latter won the Swansea town hall competition. Although Leonard Monroe once told me that leaving Percy Thomas's office had been the greatest mistake of his life, there is no doubt that architecture's loss was archaeology's gain, and Leonard Monroe is one of its unsung heroes, as any study of the Commission's Anglesey archive will show. The Caernarvonshire inventory was planned to follow Anglesey but was overtaken by the War. Hemp retired in 1946. A Commissioner, C.A.R. Radford, stepped into the breach as Secretary until a successor to Hemp could be found, but this proved difficult. Radford had no wish for the post on a permanent basis and when he left after two years, the Commission staff, by then reduced to two (W.E. Griffiths and D.B. Hague), was led by W.E. Griffiths as Acting Secretary until Hogg's appointment. Thus the colleagues with whom I was to work from 1949 onwards had all been appointed after the War and there was no continuity with the old staff. Along with the break in the staff there was also a break in siting. Before the Second World War, the Commission had worked from London. During the War it had been evacuated to Cricieth where the Secretary had a house, and after it—I suspect at the instigation of the Chairman, Thomas Jones, who was very fond of the place—it was moved to Aberystwyth. Until Hogg arrived there was some doubt whether it might not be moved back to London though there were those who favoured Cardiff. However, Hogg decided that Aberystwyth's central position in Wales as well as its proximity to the National Library offered overriding advantages, and in Aberystwyth it has remained ever since.

Within a week of my arrival in Aberystwyth I was told I had been attached to C.N. Johns (the Senior Investigator) and was to start making the architectural survey of the south Caernarvonshire parish of Penmachno. Thus began a life pattern that lasted until the end of the Caernarvonshire survey, a week or a fortnight in North Wales in the field followed by a rather longer period in the office writing up the notes and plotting the surveys and preparing the illustrations. I shall never forget my first bright and frosty winter in Snowdonia, raising my eyes to the blue snow-flecked peaks that formed our western horizon, as we walked from farmstead to farmstead talking our way in, and (often with greater difficulty) talking our way out again. In those days it was still possible to meet people who spoke English with difficulty or hardly at all. The electrification of rural Wales had only just begun and some farms still relied on rush-lights for illumination. Rationing was still in force, though its effect on the food supplies of Penmachno was not noticeable.<sup>5</sup> I had gathered that our



Commissioner, Sir Cyril Fox, was about to establish by his work in Monmouthshire a new branch of archaeology, namely the study of the historic farmhouse, and henceforth unlike earlier days, no farmhouse however modest which might be deemed to date from before the Industrial Revolution was to be overlooked. However, the Industrial Revolution was where it all stopped. It never occurred to me when working near the then still-active slate quarries of the region, with the little narrow-gauge steam engines assembling their train-loads of slates, that within my lifetime these would become ancient monuments or that Penrhyn Castle, which was then viewed as a Victorian monstrosity, would become a monument worthy of record. In those days we recorded little after 1750 and nothing after 1850. Indeed one of my earlier tasks was to walk round the chapels of Llandudno and Bethesda to see if any bore a date-inscription earlier than 1850 which would have entitled them to some brief note in the inventory. None did, or we might still be working on the volume!<sup>6</sup>

Indeed one of the fundamental problems facing the Commission is the growth of the area of survey. I came in myself with the rise of vernacular architecture to academic respectability. But since then at one end of the scale it is now perceived that far more can be extracted from the field monuments of the pre-historical landscape than was once realized (Pl. IV), while at the other, industrial monuments and Victorian architecture are now deemed worthy of study (Pls XV-XVI) as are also farm buildings, mainly eighteenth or nineteenth century in date, which now form a special sub-section of vernacular architecture (Pl. XVI). Indeed there are those who would have us record everything built before 3 September 1939. However, when we were working in Caernarvonshire we paid scant attention then to anything dating from the Industrial Revolution. Even so it took us, from A.H.A. Hogg's appointment, fifteen years to complete the survey of Caernarvonshire. Although, apart from one cathedral, two very large castles and two remarkable walled towns, the architecture was fairly simple, the county was very rich in pre-historic monuments including early villages (Pl. IV) and the most impressive hill-forts in the British Isles (Pl. II).<sup>7</sup> Moreover the method of search was most thorough. For the 'earthwork' monuments the air photographs

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5. For the Commission petrol rationing was the more serious problem. Petrol rationing was abolished during one of my fortnights in Caernarvonshire. I remember one Sunday strolling along A5, the Holyhead road, and it was as quiet as the grave. By the following Sunday petrol rationing had been abolished, and the growth of traffic was startling. The age of the motor car and its attendant problems had arrived.
  6. Of course had we been undertaking the survey today under the rule that everything over a hundred years old is an antiquity, then most Welsh chapels would qualify for our attention, for the great majority were built or rebuilt in the period 1850-1914, the peak years being, I should judge, the sixties, seventies and eighties of the last century when Wales experienced a surge of enthusiasm for religious building which might almost be compared with the spirit which raised the cathedrals and abbeys of western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Pl. XV). Although those years of chapel-building zeal are almost within living memory they now seem as remote as Nineveh and Tyre.
  7. The hill-forts of Treceiri in Arfon and Garn Fadrun and Garn Boduon in Llŷn contained, besides the fortifications, the still-standing remains of the dwellings of their builders which places them in a class above the famous hill-forts of the South Downs.



VI. Apart from those built (or rebuilt) in Victorian times, Welsh parish churches date largely from the century before the Reformation. They vary from such simple mountain shrines as Llangelynin standing alone among the Caernarvonshire hill pastures, *above*, to the stately perpendicular elegance of the richly-endowed borderland church, Gresford, *below*





VII. Other contrasts in church design are indicated by the 'barrel' roof of Llandyfalle, *above*, characteristic of south-east Wales, and the open roofs of Bangor-on-Dee, *bottom left*, and Llansilin, *bottom right*, characteristic of north-east Wales



were scanned before any ground survey (Pl. IV). For the buildings the site of every building noted or named on the first Ordnance Survey was ringed on one of the recent six-inch maps, and had to be visited. There was no suggestion that the survey was to be considered in any way merely selective or representative; the intention was to include *everything*. Even if experience proved that only a very small proportion of the buildings noted on the first survey were of any great age—many having been built just before or reconstructed since the survey—it was a point of honour that nothing which qualified for inclusion should be overlooked. No doubt the thoroughness of the search was itself a major factor in the protracted timetable.

The last Caernarvonshire volume was published in 1964. We had by then turned south and started on Glamorgan. It soon became apparent that although the prehistoric monuments of Glamorgan were no more difficult or numerous than those of Caernarvonshire (if anything less so), the architecture was in another league altogether. In Glamorgan, or at least in the south of the county, we were encountering the sort of problems which faced the English Commission in Dorset: historic architecture in almost unrecordable quantities. If we think in terms of stone castles, for example, Anglesey had one, Caernarvonshire had five, but Glamorgan had forty—more than the whole of north Wales! Although surprisingly poor in pre-Reformation hall-houses, south-east Glamorgan seemed to have sub-medieval storeyed houses galore, and whereas in Caernarvonshire dressed stonework was the exception, in Glamorgan it seemed the norm. I worked in Glamorgan long enough to grasp the fact that there was a problem, but before arriving at a solution I received the opportunity of a lifetime. I was asked to take over the recording of threatened buildings all over Wales.

The reason for this was the absorption in 1963 by the Commissions of the old National Buildings Record. The N.B.R. was an organization which, in effect, had been set up to supplement the work of the Commission, to accumulate record material *quickly*, unimpeded by the duty to publish, or the instruction to omit nothing. For it had come to be realized that while the Commissions soldiered on with their perfectionistic county survey, monuments were being lost unrecorded in areas where no work was being done. The N.B.R. had been set up during the Second World War to form a rapid collection of records of buildings, chiefly photographic, at a time when the national heritage was gravely threatened by enemy action, but the Record continued after the war and remained an organization separate from and independent of the Commissions. There were in fact two N.B.R.s, one in Edinburgh serving Scotland, and one in London serving both England and Wales. The staff was quite small, but one of its photographers, Bernard Mason, had achieved an impressive photographic cover of the architectural monuments of North Wales. Under the new dispensation the English Commission took over the English side of the N.B.R. while the Welsh Commission notionally took over the Welsh side. I say notionally because no staff transferred, and for many years—because of a legal technicality which only slowly sorted itself out—no original records either. However, the Commission received resources to set up its own records section, now renamed the National Monuments Record, in Aberystwyth. In effect we now had to create a properly ordered archive covering the whole of Wales, whereas up to that time our duties were deemed discharged with the publication of the county inventories. In addition we were to



make some sort of record of threatened monuments ahead of inventory publication. An executive officer, Mr E.W. Whatmore, was recruited to place what records we held in some sort of order and to establish a card index according to a system devised by the Secretary and Mr C.H. Houlder.<sup>8</sup>

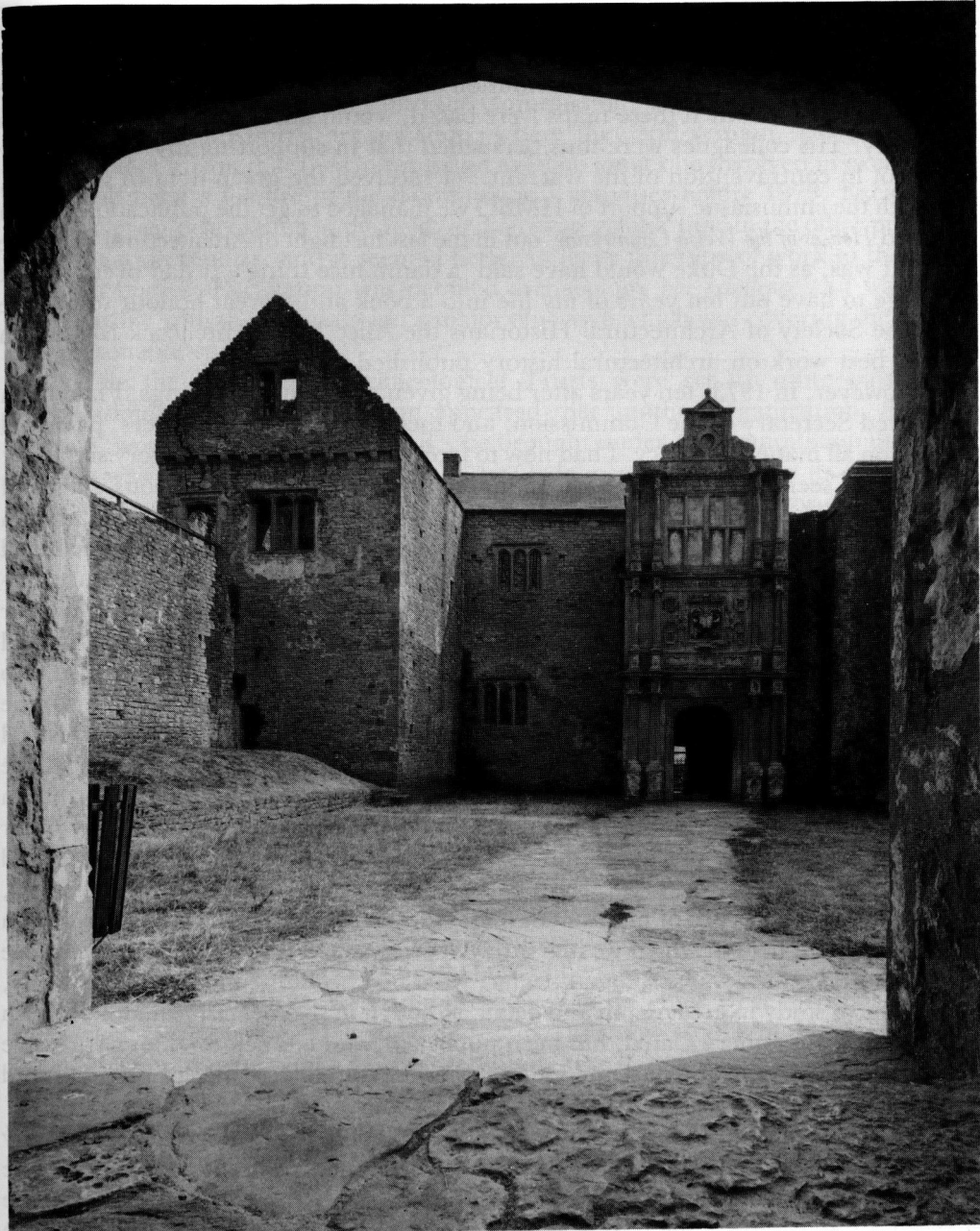
I was transferred from inventory work to emergency recording for the N.M.R. As domestic architecture was deemed to be most under threat, I was advised to concentrate on this. It was a simply marvellous directive releasing me from the narrow constraints of inventory survey and giving me the freedom to travel all over Wales. I had slowly been developing an awareness of the many regional contrasts within the Principality. I was conscious of the fact, for example, that although believed to be a common house-type in Wales, there appeared to be no long-houses<sup>9</sup> in Caernarvonshire and Anglesey, that although believed to be an 'upland' type of roof there were very few crucks in Anglesey, Glamorgan or Pembrokeshire. I was also aware that the early domestic architecture of the borderland counties was immeasurably richer than that of the western counties, and that, within a mountainous terrain that was in its physical topography fairly homogeneous, there were surprising differences in material culture. It was indeed my good fortune to be specializing in a field where the easy gains were still there for the making. Although much useful groundwork had been done many peaks were still waiting to be scaled. The state of vernacular architecture in the fifties might be likened to the state of geographical exploration in the late fifteenth century. The development of my thinking had been greatly stimulated by my membership since 1954 of the Vernacular Architecture Group. However, the threatened buildings portfolio made everything very much easier. I began to build an index of building features which I started to map, and I had begun to envisage an extended article in one of the archaeological periodicals when I was honoured by an invitation to lecture on the subject to the Society of Architectural Historians at their Bangor meeting. There Bruce Allsopp suggested I had the material for a book rather than an article. But before I could start negotiations with him as a prospective publisher I had a second stroke of good fortune, and that was the proclamation of Architectural Heritage Year 1975, then some years in the future. The Commissioners felt that they ought to celebrate this year by some suitable publication and asked me if I could submit an outline proposal to them. The crux of the problem was whether my projected book could be described as an 'Inventory', which is what the Royal Warrant demanded. What I had produced was a history—

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8. The executive officer also became responsible for general administration and detailed financial control as well as establishment matters, all of which had previously been the responsibility of the Secretary assisted by Senior Investigators. Eventually the archival work had to be separated from the general administration, and a separate Archives Officer appointed with her own staff concentrating exclusively on the development of the N.M.R. While the number of field Investigator posts has tended to remain static, the N.M.R., along with other specialist sections, has had some staff increases. I must pay tribute to the important role of Mr Houlder in developing the N.M.R., pressing for adequate staffing, and seeing that the published inventory alone could not fulfil the Commission's warrant.
  9. Long-house defined as house and byre conjoined with intercommunication at the point of entry. In its developed form the house is entered through the byre (Fig. 8).



VIII. The Norman keep at Chepstow, *above*, proclaimed the arrival of the stone castle in Wales. Raglan, *below*, was built by the native Herbert family, when Welsh magnates were playing a major part in the deadly fifteenth-century power struggle





IX. In the sixteenth century the castle evolved into the castellated manor-house instanced by Old Beaupre (St Hilary, Glam.) whose courtyard features a porch, dated 1601, embellished with the orders of classical architecture

not quite the same thing. The meeting wavered, wrestling with its conscience, when Dr A.J. Taylor intervened decisively. He understood, he said, that my proposed history would include a large number of distribution maps. Supposing I were to publish the lists of the sites on which these maps were based, would not those lists constitute an inventory? His colleagues were thus persuaded that in supporting my venture they were not in contravention of the warrant.<sup>10</sup> I received the green light to go ahead, and with the enthusiastic support of HMSO we managed to get the publication, which I named *Houses of the Welsh Countryside*, out in the last fortnight of Architectural Heritage Year. It was, as the Duke would have said 'a damn nice thing'. It had been a great privilege to have put ten years of my life into a book and a great honour to receive from the Society of Architectural Historians the Alice Davis Hitchcock Medallion for the best work on architectural history published in 1975.

However, in 1973, ten years after being given threatened buildings, I had been appointed Secretary of the Commission, and thereby the Commissioners' principal adviser on all matters of policy. I had now to face up to the general inventory situation. Glamorgan seemed an almost insurmountable mass of work in various stages of completion. The most advanced were the Prehistoric, Roman, and Early Christian volumes. All that remained to do was to see these through the press. The medieval and later monuments were arranged in a chronological order. Deeming Prehistoric-Early Christian as Vol. I, Churches and Abbeys would be Vol. II, Medieval Secular Monuments would constitute Vol. III (part i Castles, and part ii Houses and Settlements). Post-Reformation Houses would constitute Vol. IV, itself divided into part i the Greater Houses, and part ii Farmhouses and Cottages. Such a programme when finished would take us to the Industrial Revolution. But what of the Industrial Revolution to which Wales had made such an important contribution? In 1973 the Chairman, Professor Grimes, decided that the industrial monuments lobby had a case and that we should publish volumes on industrial monuments as on any other historical monuments. But how? Should we attempt an all-Wales survey of selected industrial monuments up to a certain date, or should we, at least as a pilot study, attempt a particular type of monument in depth. This was deemed the easier option for working in a field in which we had little experience and it was decided to produce an Inventory of the Swansea Canal. In fact what had been intended as a pilot study, turned into a study in great depth and detail, although in the meantime another Welsh canal, the Montgomery Canal, has been published, and has achieved an impressive record of sales. As in the past the Commission has preferred studies in detail and in depth to less profound research covering a wider field.

To try to push Glamorgan through to completion became the greatest of my preoccupations as Secretary, but as this work went forward the changes in the organization of official archaeology continued. The first major change, the incorporation in 1963 of the N.B.R. and the recording of threatened buildings I have already described. Ten years later was seen the establishment of the Archaeological

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10. Oddly, when the second edition of my book was published I was reproached in certain quarters for publishing 'inventory' material in addition to the historical narrative. It was by then felt that the archive was the proper place for inventory material. The wheel of fashion had come full circle!



Trusts, which were set up to deal with threats to earthwork sites as against buildings.<sup>11</sup> The object of the Trusts was to carry out excavations of sites threatened for example by afforestation or roadworks. While the N.B.R. had, many years after its establishment, been brought into the Commission, the Trusts were set up quite outside the Commission's organization, where they still remain. However, their establishment meant that the Commission need no longer be involved in excavations which had been a feature of the Commission's activities before 1973. Excavations took up a great deal of time in the field, and an even greater time in the office preparing the excavation reports, and it seemed better to leave this type of work to these new specialist bodies. Excavation was detailed archaeology *par excellence* and was really incompatible with the Commission's major objective which was covering the ground at a reasonable speed.

While the excavating Archaeological Trusts were set up quite outside the Commission's organization it soon appeared that another organization, formerly separate, would, following the N.B.R., be brought under the Commission umbrella, and that was the Archaeology Branch of the Ordnance Survey. From its earliest days the O.S., in the nature of things, had needed to map major prehistoric and historic antiquities, and as far back as 1920 O.G.S. Crawford was appointed as the first Archaeology Officer. After the Second World War, Crawford's successor, C.W. Phillips, became head of the O.S. Archaeology Division which was greatly expanded. A major part of its work was the maintenance of a comprehensive card index of sites which became the basis of the archaeological information recorded on the maps. However, in the early seventies, faced by government pressure to aim at financial self-sufficiency, the Survey began to cut back on those activities which were not obviously remunerative, and the Archaeology Division under these financial pressures was slowly run down. This created great alarm amongst archaeologists, and after a working party had looked at the problem it was decided to transfer the archaeological record, along with what was left of Archaeology Division's staff, to the Commissions which were to assume responsibility for the accumulation and supply of archaeological information, the Survey having only the responsibility for seeing that the information that had been assembled by the Commission was transferred to the maps. Thus the Commission acquired additional posts, one archival post which was attached to the National Monuments Record, and three survey posts which were incorporated into the National Archaeological Survey, or N.A.S., as a new section of the Commission.

Following shortly on the Ordnance Survey transfer came the authorization and finance to appoint an investigator specifically in charge of air photography, a technique which has revolutionized the study of earthwork monuments (Pls II-IV). Thus throughout my time the Commission's resources had slowly expanded as indeed had its field of responsibilities. But in 1987 this progress came to an end with a sudden demand for economies. As a result we have virtually ceased to recruit or to replace

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11. The establishment of the Trusts coincided with the onset of severe unemployment which the Trusts with the help of government grants were able to do something to alleviate. However, the effect has been to allocate more money to Roman and prehistoric archaeology than to the recording of later monuments.



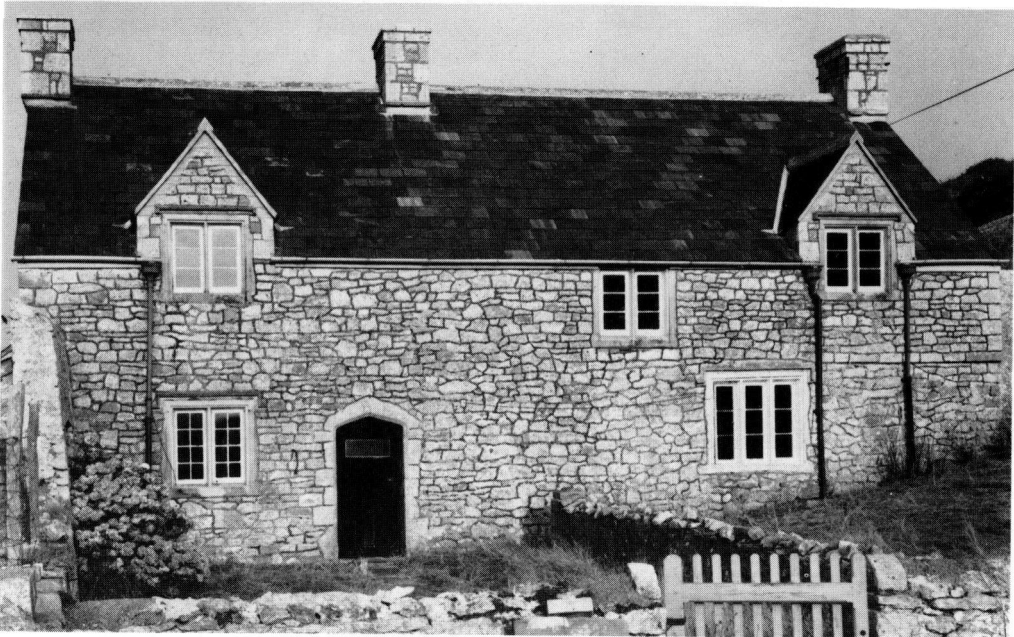


X *opposite*. In contrast are the hall-houses of the Borderland. The cruck and aisle-truss hall, Plas-ucha (Llangar, Mer.), was rescued as a result of representations made by the Commission

XI *above*. Llwyn (Landrinio, Mont.) is a good example of the cruck-framed hall-houses built in the early sixteenth century by a rising rural middle class



XII. The Commission has identified several types of storeyed house which in the late sixteenth century replaced the hall-house. A lateral-chimney type, *above*, is Plas-ucha (Llanfair D.C., Denbs.). In contrast, is Sutton (Ogmore, Glam.), *below*, built with the hall chimney backing on to the entry







XIII. Typologically later than the houses, *opposite*, is the lobby-entry Talgarth (Trefeglwys, Mont.), *above*, built 1660-70 and characteristic of the Upper Severn. Pen-y-bont (Beddgelert, Caerns.) *below*, dating from 1791, is typical of countless single-storeyed cottages built in West Wales during the early Industrial Revolution, too numerous to record in detail



staff on resignation or retirement and we are contracting, without any contraction of the responsibilities laid on us. At the same time we were faced with the Policy Review. To help our sponsors (and the sponsors of the other two Commissions) assess our future a firm of business consultants was called in to look at our activities. These consultants made certain recommendations, the most important of which was that we were to continue in existence as independent bodies. This recommendation has been accepted as the basis of the Policy Review, the full further details of which have at the time of writing yet to be decided.

I am now approaching the end of my long official career, and it is perhaps a good moment to pause and take stock of the work achieved so far, survey the problems facing us and the alternatives before us now that, after the uncertainties of the last year or two, the Policy Review has decided that we are to continue. I hope the decision will meet with approval and the world will feel we have justified our existence. In the course of its history the Commission has accumulated a vast amount of information both in its published inventories and in the ever-growing collections of records kept in the N.M.R. I think that the Commission has thrown light on many aspects of Welsh life by its interpretation of these monuments, and without its labours our appreciation of many areas of Welsh history would be much the poorer, while I flatter myself we have revealed aspects of historical geography not previously suspected (Figs 11-14). The Commission has, in addition, by placing monuments in context, helped the formulation of informed policies of preservation while use of its detailed knowledge has contributed to the work of intelligent restoration (Pl. X).

Throughout their history the Commissions have been torn between rapid but shallow survey, and in-depth survey which takes much more time, and this still remains our problem. In this context it was not made clear in 1908 whether listing monuments worthy of preservation was the primary object of the exercise, because if it was, brevity and speed rather than detail were required. However, it may be that this was not the main objective in the government's mind because as early as 1882, long before the establishment of the Commissions, another department of state, the Office of Works, had been charged with drawing up lists of 'scheduled' ancient monuments uninhabited and not in use. In 1947 further legislation called for the listing of historic buildings. In contrast with the scheduled ancient monuments, the listed buildings might be occupied and in use and indeed normally were so. Thus, over the years there grew up three different types of lists: on the one hand the scheduled monuments lists and the historic buildings lists, which provided a minimum of information but a measure of protection and which were produced quickly; and on the other hand the Commission's lists which provided a great deal of information but no protection and which were produced slowly.

When the Royal Commissions were first set up it seems that the government of the day did not see them as being *directly* involved in the protection of ancient monuments, but rather responsible for the accumulation of information, on which decisions to protect or to restore could be based. If the government had intended direct involvement it is likely that our legislators would have arranged for the Inventories to be prepared by a branch of the Office of Works. Nevertheless, the government probably envisaged that even a detailed Commission survey could be

carried out fairly quickly, in a matter of a few years, after which the Commission could report and be dissolved. It was perhaps for these two reasons that Royal Commission form was chosen as the constitutional vehicle for the undertaking. A Royal Commission could more easily offer independent advice than a government department under a minister, and it could be wound up when its work, not expected to be of long duration, had been completed.

It has, however, since become clear that the archaeological and architectural survey of Great Britain is a vastly greater task than was envisaged in 1908, and that the completion of the work in any final sense is an unattainable goal. History is an unending process; as the years pass and as society and technology change, so ancient monuments, like history itself, are in a continuous process of creation. At any moment in time one of the first questions an Ancient Monuments Commission has to ask itself is at what period will it stop, although accepting there will be no final terminal date, but only a terminal date *pro tempore*.

When the Commissions were founded the English Commission recorded nothing later than the death of Queen Anne. For the Scottish Commission history stopped slightly earlier, with the Anglo-Scottish parliamentary union of 1707. The Welsh date limits have been less precise. The Welsh Commission never regarded the Welsh 'Acts of Union' of 1542-6 as a terminal date, even though one distinguished Welsh historian had implied that for him Welsh history had come to an end even earlier, in 1284, with the overthrow of the house of Gwynedd and the proclamation of the Statute of Rhuddlan. Yet when do we stop? The earlier limits may seem laughable today, yet there can be no doubt that a terminal date must be set, and the later that date is fixed, the more there will be to record, and the more impossible it will become to cover the ground it in its entirety. If, for example, we attempted to record every monument in Glamorgan up to 1914, what hope would there ever have been of our moving on to any other county?

Is there a way out of this dilemma? Can it be resolved by applying a principle of selectivity? There are those who object that this is like asking the Ordnance Survey to map only areas of the national territory that the Survey regards as interesting. On the other hand, is there for us any alternative? We are never going to get the staff to record everything up to 1850, never mind 1914 or 1939. At some point in our work we will have to be selective. We are never going to have the resources to record in detail every Victorian street, every nineteenth-century colliery, every steel works, every railway station, significant and representative though everyone of these may be and in terms of the Royal Warrant 'illustrative of the contemporary culture, civilization and conditions of life of the people of Wales from the earliest times'. For the British people as a whole modern times appear to begin with the start of the Industrial Revolution which may reasonably be equated with the accession of George III in 1760. I would propose that we should not—indeed we cannot—record every monument built after that date, and after 1760 we have to be selective. If 1760 is accepted as a date after which selection is exercised we still have to ask ourselves whether there should be a date after which we do not attempt any recording. I feel the only practicable solution is to apply the hundred-year-rule, and accept that there can be no final terminal date. But even with the hundred-year-rule we still need to be selective;



XIV. Houses showing the influence of Renaissance aesthetics are Plasauduon (Carno, Mont.), *above*, and the Rectory (Llanbedr, Denbs.), *below*. Plasauduon's front porch and rear kitchen only modify the locally traditional sub-medieval plan. At the Rectory the change to the Renaissance symmetrical elevation (and central-stairway plan) is complete





otherwise we end up like a traveller attempting to ascend a descending escalator which is constantly gaining on him, as antiquities are being created quicker than they are being recorded.

Even applying the hundred-year-rule could expose us to criticism. For indisputably some industries have been created and become obsolete within the last hundred years, and some even within our own lifetimes. When a technique becomes obsolete, the buildings which housed it soon vanish. I can remember seeing in early childhood a huge and monumentally impressive by-product works being built on the banks of the Derwent, the most modern plant of its kind in Europe we were told. Returning to scenes of my early life last year I noticed it had been demolished. I feel that recording in the traditional way such a monument of modern industry is quite beyond any resources we have, or are ever likely to have, bearing in mind such monuments call for knowledge of technology—of chemical engineering—that none of our staff is likely to possess. In such cases all we could hope is that the engineer's original design drawings have been kept and not thoughtlessly thrown away. All we could offer would be a rapid photographic cover, and the briefest of brief descriptions. But the plant of which I talk, and whose site is now being landscaped, was built on the site of an earlier monument of industry. Somewhere more than fifty years ago and now buried under mountains of modern industrial debris, I remember seeing a late-seventeenth-century date-inscription commemorating the works of the iron-master, Ambrose Crowley, cut in the walls of one of his dams. I suppose I have to admit that had the English Commission recorded Crowley's iron works at Winlaton Mill which still stood (no doubt with subsequent modifications) until the early thirties, we should be in its debt.

The successive disappearance both of Ambrose Crowley's iron works and the Consett Iron Company's by-product works built on its site, raises perhaps the second of the questions facing the Commissions, and that is the extent to which recording should be influenced by the threat of immediate destruction. Should the English Commission have been recording such threatened monuments of early industry rather than say the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and should we have given the time we gave to the Edwardian Castles to the monuments of the Welsh slate industry? In fairness to the English Commission it has to be admitted it was not to know that the ancient universities would not become targets for the Luftwaffe, whereas the Welsh Commission could not easily have envisaged circumstances in which the Edwardian castles might have been destroyed. How far policy should be influenced by the possibility of destruction is perhaps the second of our virtually unanswerable questions. Our surveys have always tried to be comprehensive. I think even today, certainly at the time it was produced, our county survey of Caernarvonshire would have been severely criticized had it concentrated on the monuments of the slate industry at the expense of Caernarvon Castle and Bangor Cathedral, on the grounds they were not in any particular danger. However, in our subsequent survey of the landowners' houses of Glamorgan we were dealing with some monuments which were as secure as human ingenuity can make them, and some which were visibly crumbling to their ruin. To have included the second, but excluded the first would have produced a gravely distorted historical picture.

A further question facing the Commission is not what we should publish, but whether we should publish at all. From 1908 until the Policy Review this question had scarcely been asked. The unquestioning assumption from 1908 until the late seventies was that a comprehensive inventory of the ancient monuments of the kingdom was possible and that it should be published. It was the English Commission, faced with the immense architectural wealth of southern England, and the fact that of the three Commissions it had covered by far the smallest proportion of its share of the national land area, which first propounded the doctrine that the N.M.R. collection, largely unpublished, constituted the inventory, and that the publications were to be considered as its occasional by-products, the distillation of information which was otherwise held in the archive. There is here a clear analogy with a historian producing an analysis of a series of events without attempting to reproduce in detail the documents on which the narrative is based. The recent Policy Review enquiry has laid much stronger emphasis on the record and less on the Commission's traditional publication role. However, against this it has to be remembered that a record unpublished is not easily accessible to the majority of potential users. At the same time there is, without the discipline of publication, the temptation on the part of those investigators gathering the often contradictory and confusing information in the field, to shy away from assembling it in an orderly manner in a way which will make each monument intelligible in its context and make it easy for its relative importance to be assessed. A collection of field information in a record, vital preparatory stage though it no doubt is, cannot be regarded as anything but an interim measure until the published reasoned record is produced, preferably by the same people who carried out the survey, because no one—and this is a point of very great importance—will ever know the material in its entirety as well again as those who carried out the fieldwork. Only by publishing can useful historical conclusions be drawn from the vast amount of field survey, which, without these conclusions, loses much of its point. Only by publication can we fulfil our role as a research organization drawing significant historical conclusions from our survey work rather than just supplying factual information to those who ask for it. It is these historical conclusions significantly enlarging our historical insights which are the most important ultimate outcome of our work.

Having answered satisfactorily, I hope, the publication question, I need to address myself to perhaps the most difficult question of all, and that is how to arrange publications. Let me begin by saying that there is no perfect way; each way meets certain needs best. First there is the traditional layout of the county by county survey of all antiquities arranged by civil parishes, the method used by all Commissions until not so long ago, and the method last used by the Welsh Commission in the Caernarvonshire inventory, in spite of the unsuccessful attempts of my predecessor to persuade his Commissioners to change it to the typological arrangement he felt was more rational. Perhaps I might say a few words about this layout, its merits and its disadvantages. The system was to arrange all the entries by civil parishes. Within the parish monuments were to be in a historical/typological order but as the civil parishes were themselves arranged in alphabetical order there was no overall historically (or geographically) intelligible pattern. The method no doubt originated with the *Victoria History of the Counties of England* from which many of the early English

Commission staff had been drawn, and commended itself to those who were chiefly interested in one particular monument, or one particular parish, but for anyone whose interests were broader in their nature, in the general history of an area or the evolution of a monument type, the parish system had its disadvantages and they are serious. The first is that neither the parish names nor their boundaries are well known, nor do they always correspond closely to the often better known but not parochially-defined localities which occupy them. I remember a bizarre illustration of this fact. Once, not long after my appointment, I was trying to find in our archive references to Caernarvon Castle under Caernarvon, but could not find them because unknown to me Caernarvon Castle was in the parish of Llanbeblig! How many of us are familiar with boundaries of the civil parish in which we live, or are even certain of its name? Quite apart from this, however, the parish arrangement meant that monuments which were historically quite unrelated to each other, such as an iron-age hill-fort and a parish church might appear on the same page because they happened to fall in the same parish (Fig. 1). On top of this the parishes were arranged in an alphabetical order within the county. In this way was confusion worse confounded because the alphabetical order inevitably led to a totally erratic geographical order. It is true that for anyone whose interest was the history of his own parish, and whose main sources might be documents arranged by parishes, the system had something to recommend it but to anyone with a broader field of enquiry, or whose main interest was a particular period, or type of monument, the arrangement was about as maddening as could be devised.

However, the arrangement by parishes was abandoned as much for reasons of expediency as for reasons of principle. As I stated earlier, Glamorgan was less rich than Caernarvonshire in its prehistoric antiquities, but almost immeasurably richer in its architecture. The net result was that the prehistoric Roman and early Christian material was ready for publication long before the architectural survey was complete, and it was decided to go ahead and publish this material rather than wait for the slower, architectural, ships in the convoy to catch up. Once the initial break was made, it was felt that it might as well be complete, and that we would publish the rest of the county by topic rather than by parish, the county now assuming the role of the parish within which antiquities had always been published in their historical order. This meant that most different types of monument, e.g., houses, castles or churches, would need at least a volume to themselves. The next logical step was to publish all the material in a historical order, so that the inventory itself read more like a history than like a dictionary or a gazetteer. The inventories would reflect, like the monuments themselves, the onward march of the centuries. So we arranged both Glamorgan IV i *Greater Houses*, and Glamorgan IV ii *Farmhouses* (placing different social classes in different volumes as a further analytical refinement) in a historical and typological order rather than in a geographical or parochial order. My defence of this solution would be that arranged thus it may be just a little harder to find the individual monument or the monuments which exist in a particular area than it was under the old arrangement, but it is infinitely easier to make historical sense of the material when it is displayed in this way, and I hope that when the series is finished, with castles and churches each having volumes to themselves, that the new inventory



XV. A Methodist chapel, Capel y Garn, Bow Street, Cards., *above*, built in 1833, but refaced in 1901, represents the earlier 'meeting-house' chapel, built broadside on to the street. The Baptist chapel, Bethel, Baker Street, Aberystwyth, built in 1838, *below*, represents the later 'auditorium' plan, gable-end to the street

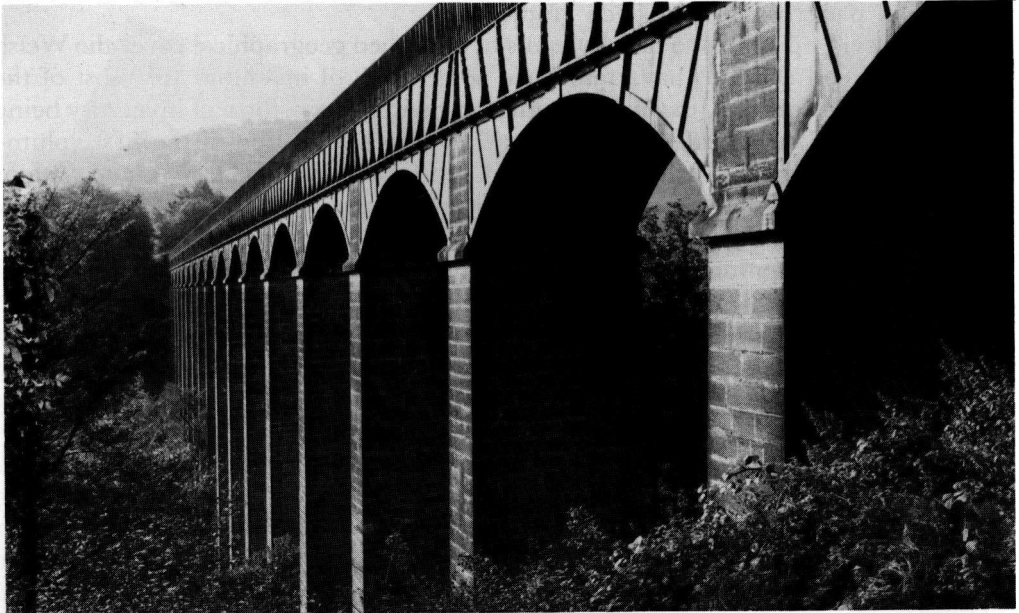




publication pattern will have been vindicated.

If we review progress to date in terms of published geographical cover the Welsh Commission can claim to have published some form of inventory for most of the historical Welsh counties, the only counties now without any form of inventory being Monmouthshire and Cardiganshire. However, the publication of the first volume of the county history of Cardigan, to which Commission staff will have made a major contribution, should provide at least a provisional inventory up to the end of the Early Christian period for this county as well. But it has to be admitted that the provision of a full county inventory of each Welsh county to today's standards is still a long way ahead, because most of the early inventories, certainly every inventory published before the Anglesey inventory of 1937, fall far below this level. The question must therefore be asked if there is any way of covering the ground more quickly, of avoiding being bogged down for years in the intensive survey of a single county, such as the protracted, and not yet completed survey of Glamorgan? One possibility is the all-Wales survey, making Wales as a whole, rather than the county, still less the parish, the basic unit. Such a survey can pursue the single-topic inventory further by picking out the outstanding examples, giving them alone detailed treatment, and merely listing all the known instances of the rest. Moreover, the wider the area, the more comprehensive is the typological cover and the more informative are the regional contrasts. One example of this approach was my book which deliberately did not attempt detailed descriptions, but listed all known examples of over sixty different features of structure, ornament and plan, an instance of each being illustrated. While I was under no illusion that we had uncovered every example, I knew we had a representative collection, and moreover one which indicated those areas of the Principality where particular features were likely to be found. I do not think either of the other Commissions can claim to offer such a comprehensive survey of domestic architecture (Figs 4-7, 11-12). Another example of an all-Wales inventory, now in an advanced state of preparation, will be a revised and up-dated edition of Nash-Williams's *Early Christian Monuments of Wales*. This is somewhat different from *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* in that it will describe in full and illustrate every known example of a type of monument which constitutes almost our only source of archaeological information about a long period of Welsh history (Pl. V). It is also assumed that a very high proportion of the monuments ever likely to be discovered will be found in a work which will be as close, as any work of scholarship is every likely to be, to the definitive and final.

Another all-Wales volume which the Commission ought to contemplate would be a study of religious buildings, parish churches and chapels, the two types of building providing an admirable foil for each other (Pls VI-VII, XV). It is a work that it ought to be possible to complete within six or seven years but only if one did not attempt a detailed description of every known building, but provided illustrations in depth only of good or characteristic examples, and reinforced the picture by distribution maps illustrating characteristic features. A few experiments have shown how rewarding this might be in the case of the parish church (Figs 15-16). I do not yet know whether local or denominational variations in chapel design might equally enrich our knowledge of Welsh historical geography.



XVI. Monuments of industry and agriculture now claim attention. Contrasts in scale are provided by the Pontcysyllte viaduct, *above*, completed in 1805, and an obscure Merioneth corn barn, *below*. The size and the quantity as well as the speed of obsolescence and decay pose almost insuperable problems with some of the later monuments



A further reflection on the Commission in my time, and my ideas for its future, concerns illustration. I have always felt that a monument, which is, after all, a three-dimensional object, is more effectively illustrated than described. In the words of the old Chinese proverb 'one look is worth more than a thousand words'. When I started in 1949 the view was that a plan, and possibly a photograph, was enough, and for the rest one relied on a long description (Fig. 1). I was never wholly satisfied that many people read these long descriptions, or would be able to pick out the salient features from the whole series of descriptions which of their nature cannot make very gripping reading. In my contribution to *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* I first experimented with the use of three-dimensional cutaway drawings which could show a building in all its detail far better than any description and in my book I developed further this method of presentation (Figs 4-7). Here I avoided either trying to incorporate a description of a monument as part of a narrative, or as part of an inventory appendix which is the alternative. I remember one of our Commissioners, the late Raymond Wood-Jones, sometime editor of these *Transactions*, whose untimely death just after his retirement was one of architectural scholarship's great losses, telling me how he had wanted to organize his celebrated book on the Banbury Region in the form of narrative and inventory appendix, and how his supervisor, Professor R.A. Cordingley, had prevailed upon him to try to incorporate the descriptive matter into the narrative with what the author thought were unfortunate consequences for its readability. My own solution has been rather different, relying much more heavily on the illustration rather than on the description—the captioned illustration being the primary source of information, and these arranged in a historical order so that the inventory so arranged could of itself tell a historical story. Fortunately changes in the last twenty years in the development of printing technology have made his solution much simpler and less expensive to apply than would have been the case a generation ago. The offset-litho printing technique has made the production of illustrations, both line and half-tone, so much easier and so much cheaper, and it is now easy to have them placed where they are needed in the text.<sup>12</sup>

My final thought is to ask the question why we are doing this work at all? What is the purpose of recording monuments '... illustrative ... of the life of the people of Wales from the earliest times ...' to quote again from the Royal Warrant? Is it primarily a guide to conservation policy, what to preserve and in what way? Or is it helping to create a picture of the past, a picture which, unrecorded, will be lost forever? In many ways what we are producing is a sort of Domesday Book, whose value can only appreciate with time. We have only to imagine how eternally grateful we would have been had William the Conqueror asked his commissioners to make more than a record of the yields and rents and tenantry of the estates into which his newly won kingdom was divided, but also asked them to provide an account of

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12. It seems to me that the illustrative method is particularly appropriate to the age of television, when the public as a whole receives its information by images rather than by the written word. I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that two of our inventories, one prehistoric and one architectural, each lavishly illustrated, have been chosen as models of British publishing for exhibition at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

the buildings of Anglo-Saxon England much of which the new Norman Lords were soon to sweep into oblivion. Had this Domesday Commission been asked to produce a record of all monuments dating from before October 1066, what an invaluable document it would now be, a document for which, if it existed, any British government would to-day be willing to pay untold millions of pounds! The true value of what we are doing now will only fully be perceived far in the distant future.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The illustrations are taken from The National Monuments Record collection and are mainly the work of the staff of The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales; Plate II is an Air Ministry photograph; Plate III is a Cambridge University Aerial Photography Unit photograph; Plate IV lower is a Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust photograph.

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XVII. Commissioners and staff of the R.C.A.H.M. Wales at Edleston House, Aberystwyth, on 30 November, 1989. *Top row* (from left to right) G.A. Ward, B.A. Malaws, H.A. Sherrington, M.R. Apted\*, L. Alcock\*, J.G. Williams\*, Glanmor Williams †, P. Smith, C.J. Spurgeon, H.J. Thomas, S.L. Evans, J.B. Durrant, D.M. Hughes, S. Spink, M. Parry, H. Brooksby, C.R. Musson, C.W. Green, D.W. Evans. *Bottom row* D.M. Browne, N.P. Figgis, L.M. Jones, R.G. Nicol, N.J. Glanville, A.J. Parkinson, R.A. Jones, J.B. Smith\*, G.J. Wainwright\*, R.W. Brunskill\*, I.N. Wright, R. Haslam\*, S.R. Hughes, D.J. Percival, C.A. Griffiths, C.H. Houlder, F.L. James, C.S. Briggs.

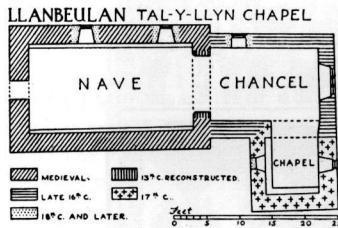
\* Commissioner † Chairman of Commissioners

Edleston House was built in 1898 for an Aberystwyth physician, Dr Bonsall, inspired, so it is said, by a villa he had seen in Spain. Sadly, the Commission is soon to vacate this poem of a building for the upper floors of a modern structure erected in 1960.

## Appendix

Attached here is a selection of figures illustrating points made in the text. Fig. 1 illustrates a page of the Anglesey inventory showing monuments arranged by parishes and with the emphasis on the written word. Fig. 2 is a page of Volume IV pt ii of the Glamorgan inventory with monuments arranged by historic county and monument type and the emphasis on the illustration. Figs 3-10 illustrate some types of house which the Commission's researches over the last thirty years have revealed as characteristic of the Welsh scene. They also show the importance of illustrating a monument as a three-dimensional object and not merely as a plan, showing the whole *character* of a building in a way that a written description is incapable of conveying. Figs 11-16 show the importance of the distribution map in conveying an instant picture, and also the rapid and significant advances in knowledge that can be achieved by an all-Wales approach. Figs 17-18 illustrate the representation of prehistoric monuments utilizing new graphics techniques while Figs 19-20 instance illustrations covering the new field of industrial monuments. These also typify the advances in historical and geographical knowledge that have been achieved by the work of the Welsh Commission over recent years.

<sup>a</sup>(2). CHAPEL OF ST. MARY, TAL-Y-LLYN (Pl. 30), stands  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m. S. of the parish church, to which it is a chapel-of-ease. The *Nave* is mediæval, the *Chancel* a rebuilding of the late 16th century and the *South Chapel* an addition of the 17th century. The small 12th-century font is noteworthy.



**Architectural Description**—The *Chancel* ( $16\frac{1}{2}$  ft. by 11 ft.) has a 17th-century fleur-de-lys gable finial on the E. wall; the late 16th-century E. window is of three round-headed lights in a square frame with moulded label (Pl. 47). In the N. wall is a modern window.

The *Chancel-arch* has chamfered jambs terminating on the W. side in stops of 13th-century type, but the four-centred arch suggests a reconstruction in the 16th century.

The *South Chapel* (9 ft. by 8 ft.) has an original 17th-century rectangular window in the E. wall and a similar (blocked) window in the W. wall. A narrow stone bench runs round the S. and W. walls. The gable has a fleur-de-lys finial.

The *Nave* (25 ft. by 13 ft.) has in the N. wall two modern windows and in the W. wall a doorway with roughly-pointed head of uncertain date, possibly 14th-century. A stone bench runs along the N. and S. walls. The bellcote is modern.

The *Roof* of the nave has two massive trusses of the late 15th century and one to the W. of the 17th century. The chancel has one late 15th-century and one 17th-century truss, and over the opening to the chapel is a 17th-century truss.

**Fittings**—*Communion Table*: 18th-century remade; *Communion Rails*: with turned balusters, dated 1764. *Fonts*: (1) small rectangular bowl (Pl. 59), one face decorated with filled chevrons, another with expanded-arm cross on short shaft; 12th-century; (2) octagonal gritstone bowl with roll moulding at base, on octagonal stem with necking; 15th century. *Seating*: narrow benches without backs; one bench-end dated 1786.

Condition—Fair.

G—(383)

**Churchyard**: The church has been built on a low circular mound about 120 yds. in circumference; the present churchyard wall partly following its margin.

**SECULAR** :—

<sup>a</sup>(3). TAL-Y-LLYN, house in S. part of parish  $\frac{1}{2}$  m. N. of St. Mary's Chapel, of two storeys; the walls are roughcast and the roof slated. It was built in 1597, but has been largely reconstructed and the original plan is lost. An E. wing retains original windows on both floors; those in the gable end (Pl. 104) each of eight lights with moulded transoms and mullions and with pointed pediments above. The side windows of four lights are similar in detail, but only have pediments on the ground floor—in that on the S. are initials and date <sup>1597</sup> H W M W (Pl. 105). The W. wing retains two original two-light windows in the ground floor on the S.; on the gable end are two small single light windows, one to each floor, both now blocked. The interior is entirely modernized.

Condition—Good.

**UNCLASSIFIED** :—

<sup>a</sup>(4). Y WERTHYR, hill fort, crowning a low knoll above the marshes around the Afon Caradog,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  m.

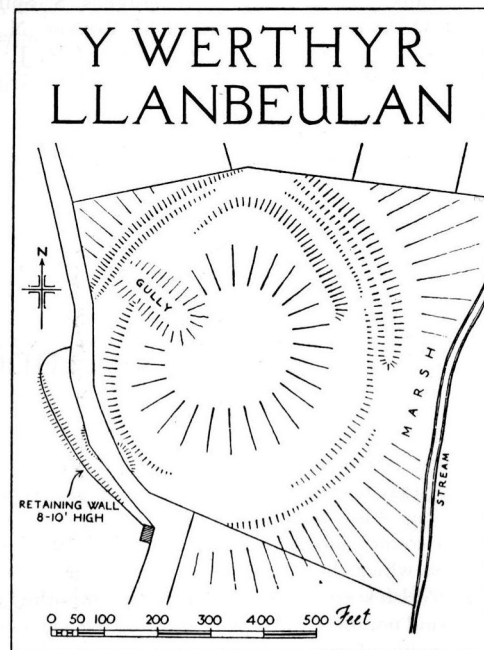
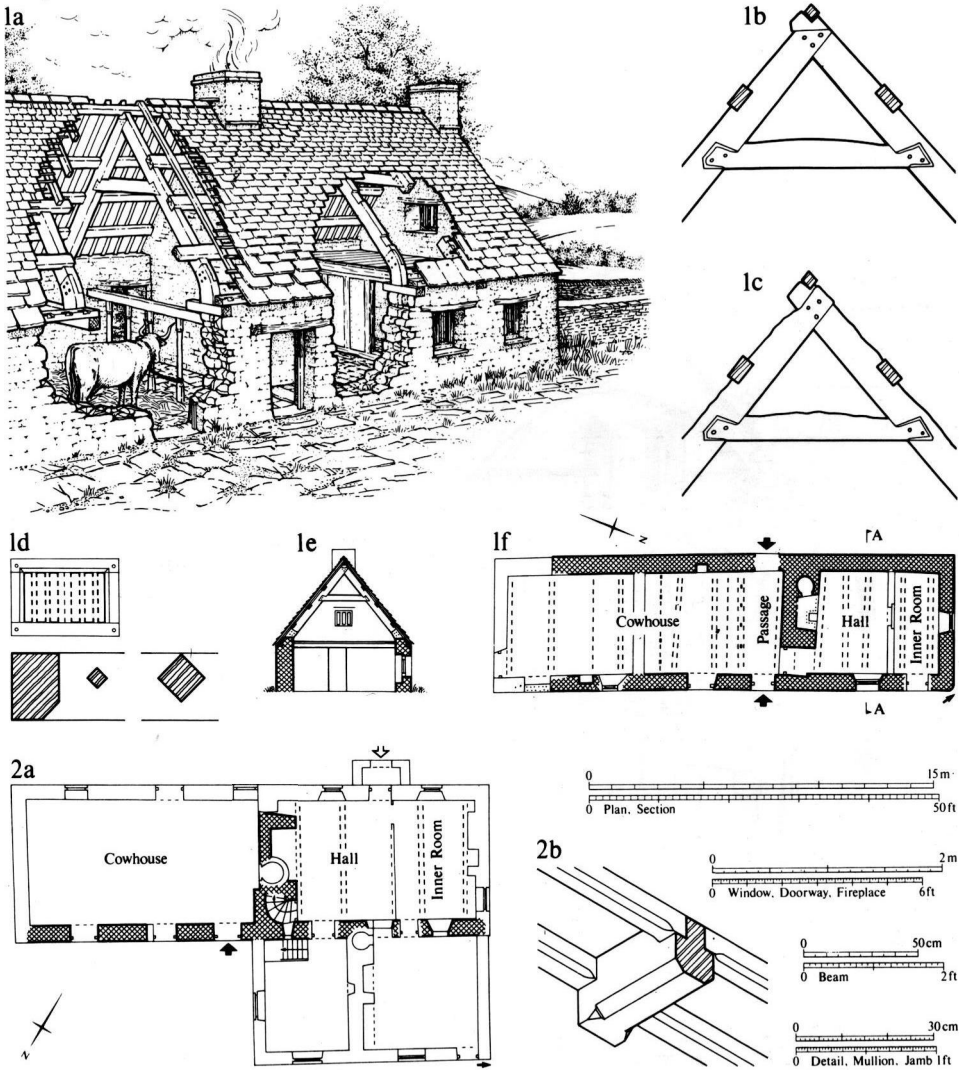


Fig. 1

Page 41 of the Anglesey Inventory, illustrating a county inventory arranged by Civil Parishes, monuments of different age and type in close proximity, and the emphasis on the written word

HEARTH-PASSAGE HOUSES



BL87) Three-unit long-houses with hall between narrow inner room and cowhouse – Gelli-gaer, Blaenau.

1 Cefn-bach (133), 17th cent.: a cutaway view from S.E., b and c apex of roof trusses over hall chamber, d hall window, e section A-A, f ground floor.

2 Bryn-rhe (88), early 18th and 19th cent.: a ground floor, b hall ceiling.

Cefn-bach is a fine example of a modest long-house which survived as an outhouse when a new dwelling was constructed in 1849. Until recently the house remained as built, although the cowhouse had been extended. Note the jointed base to the curved foot of the principal rafters.

Evidence of the earlier house at Bryn-rhe came to light when the building had fallen into ruin, the south wall and both gables having been rebuilt and a direct-entry plan formed.

Fig. 2

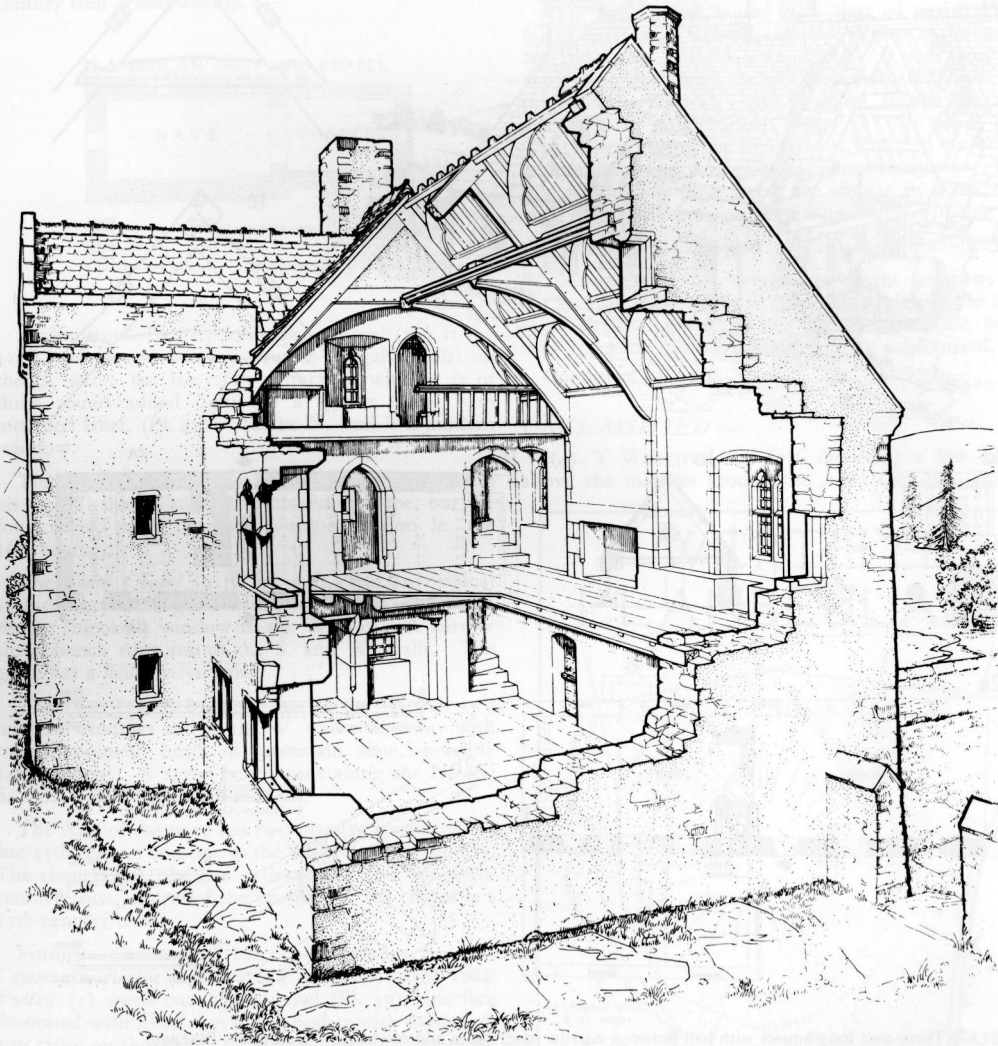


Fig. 3

Garnllwyd (Llancarfan), page 164 of the Glamorgan Inventory Vol. III, ii *Medieval Non-Defensive Secular Monuments* illustrates a house in the tower tradition. The cutaway makes it possible to comprehend at a glance a structure which cannot succinctly be described. The castle, tower, and first-floor hall are well represented in Glamorgan. However, there are few upper-class and hardly any peasant hall-houses in this otherwise richly-endowed county



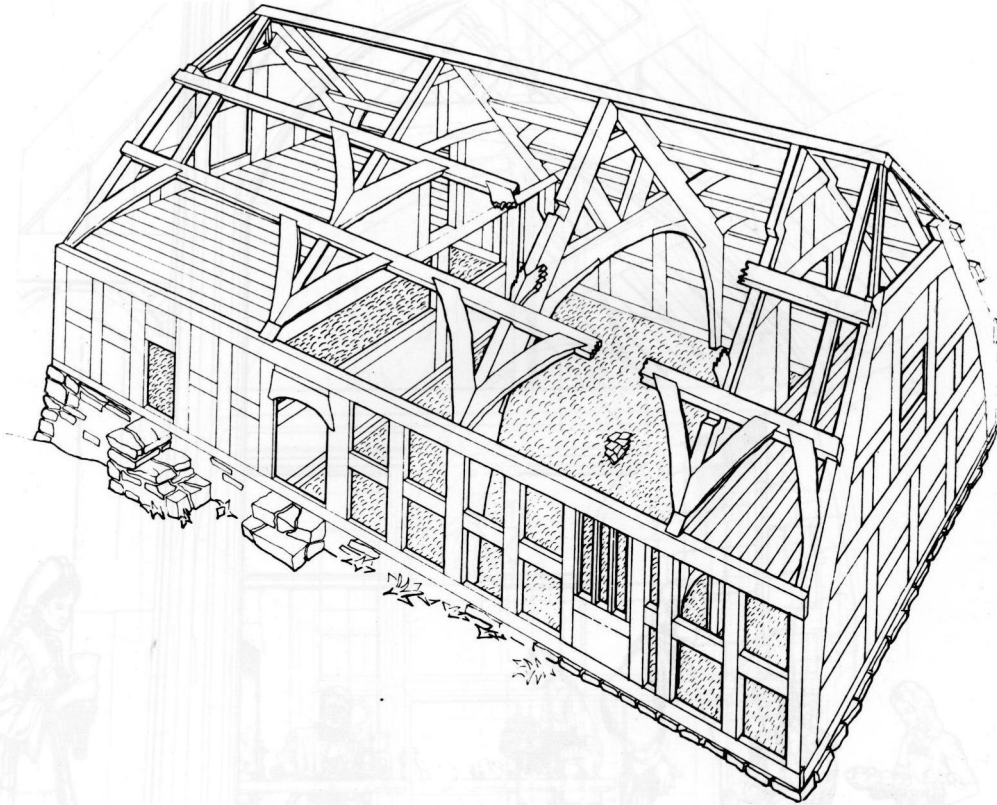


Fig. 4

In contrast Rhos-fawr (Llanfyllin, Mont.), a half-timbered cruck and box-framed, borderland hall-house, probably a long-house, and probably the home of a prosperous tenant farmer. It illustrates the earliest type of Welsh farmhouse to survive in quantity, dating from the early Tudor period. The recording in detail of such houses (mainly in north-eastern Wales) has been a major Commission contribution to our understanding of the evolution of Welsh society. Rhos-fawr was a particularly important find, a complete pre-Reformation hall which had never been 'modernized' by the insertion of a fireplace and chamber over the hall but had survived unaltered as a farmbuilding. In a few decades it is unlikely that any such key buildings will still exist in their entirety. From *Houses of the Welsh Countryside*, page 55

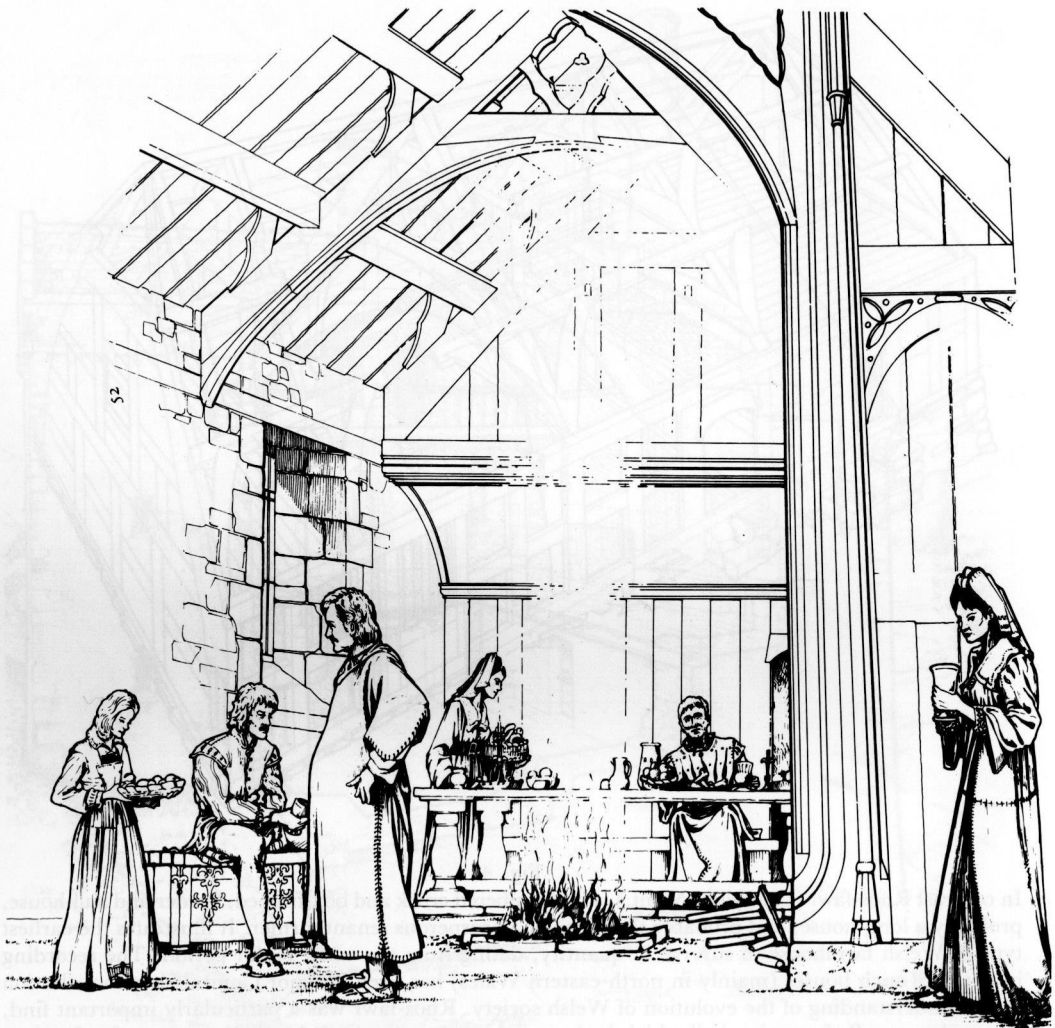


Fig. 5

A pre-Reformation hall-house interior looking towards the dais partition. Here an animated drawing of Penarth-fawr (Llanarmon, Caerns.) brings to life a scene which would here have been impossible to record with a photograph because of the number of features which have to be inferred. There were, for example, only fragmentary indications of the dais canopy. Such houses illustrate the life of most of the Welsh gentry whose 'design for living' was clearly very different from the towers of the Scottish lairds and Irish chieftains but clearly very similar to that of many a west-Midland squire even down to the spere truss and cusped roof



Fig. 6

The medieval hall-house interior looking towards the passage. Again only a drawing can capture the scene in its entirety. The structural details are difficult to describe without paragraphs of complex prose, and even so, not easy to follow, while many of the features, hidden under later plasterwork, were impossible to photograph. Plas Cadwgan (Rhostyllen, Denbs.) as illustrated in *Houses of the Welsh Countryside*, page 616. This revised drawing was made possible by a minute structural examination following the demolition and partial reconstruction of the hall at Avoncroft Museum of Buildings

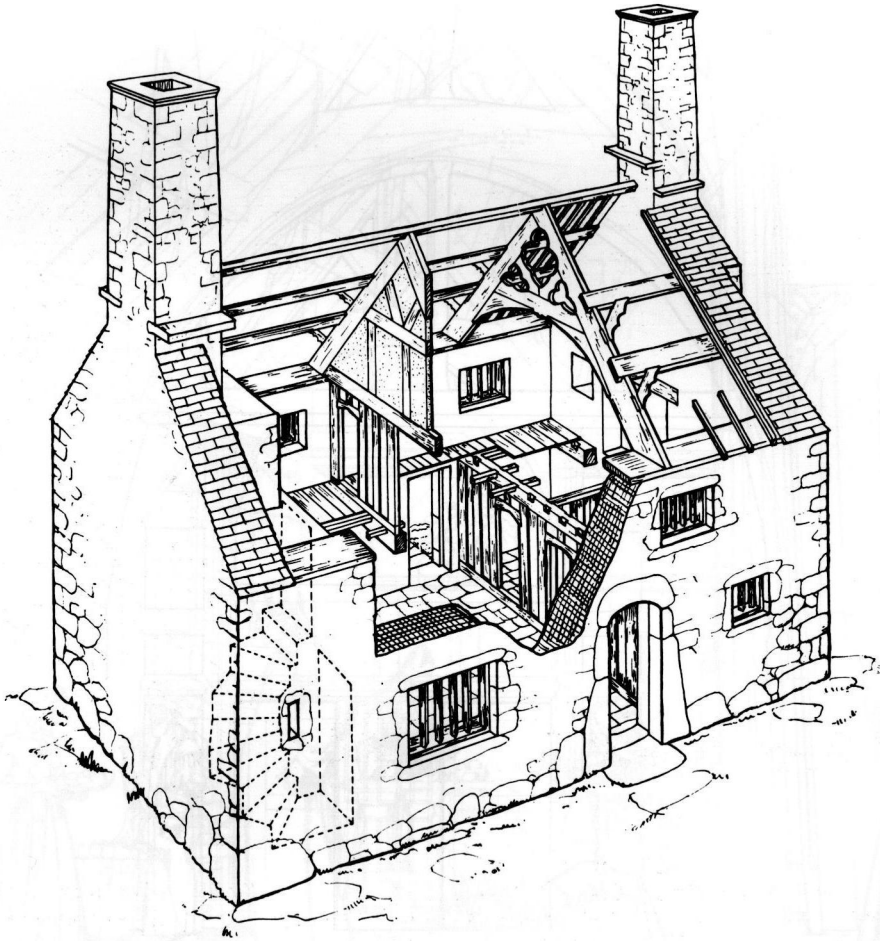


Fig. 7

A late-sixteenth-century sub-medieval, storeyed, end-chimney, direct-entry house typical of north-west Wales. The identification of early Welsh farmhouse types has been one of the fruits of the Commission's policy of intensive investigation. A rapid listing would not yield information on this scale. The salient features of the house are the 'direct entry' into the hall (uncomplicated by an internal fireplace) the end fireplace, the focal point of the room in place of the dais partition of the medieval hall, and the space beyond the cross-passage clearly defined by the design of the partition as domestic in character.

The most typical sub-medieval storeyed house in Gwynedd was clearly not a long-house



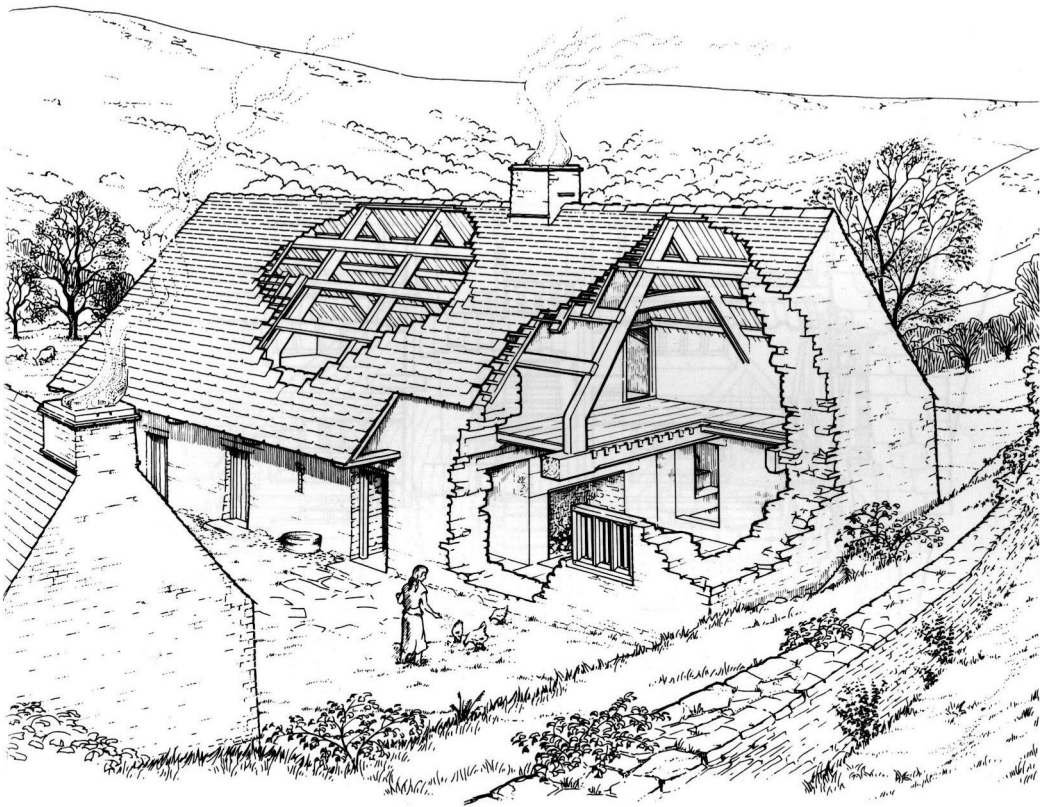


Fig. 8

In contrast Gelli (Glyncorrwg), a sub-medieval long-house from the *Blaenau* of Glamorgan. The site was of particular interest as a will of 1727 reveals that the bakehouse (on the left) was deemed suitable for use as a dower-house. How many bakehouses were so used? The domestic accommodation was originally minimal, consisting of the hall on the ground floor and a chamber over. The house was later enlarged to the rear. Presumably the loft over the byre was also used as a rough bedroom by the farm servants. A recent policy of the Commission has been to illustrate houses in their setting as instanced in the above illustration from *Farmhouses and Cottages*, Glamorgan Inventory, Vol. IV, Pt. ii

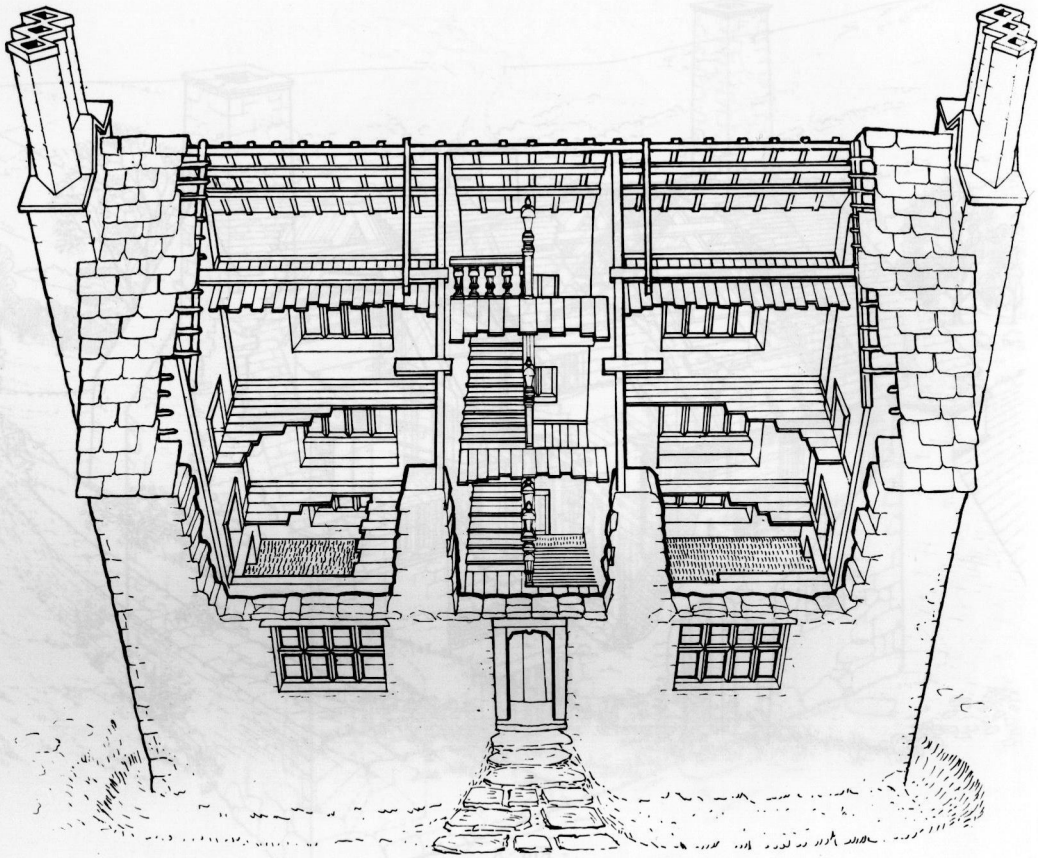


Fig. 9

'Coming events cast their shadows before.' Tŷfaenor (Abbey Cwmhir, Rads.) anticipates the Victorian farmhouse plan as early as the mid seventeenth century. The discovery of one of the rare forerunners of a type of plan, the central stair-passage plan, that was for a time to become universal, justified a very detailed drawing. Instances before the eighteenth century are very rare. Although undated, Tŷfaenor has good mid-seventeenth-century stair and doorway details which suggest it was built about 1650 when Richard Fowler was High Sheriff of Radnorshire

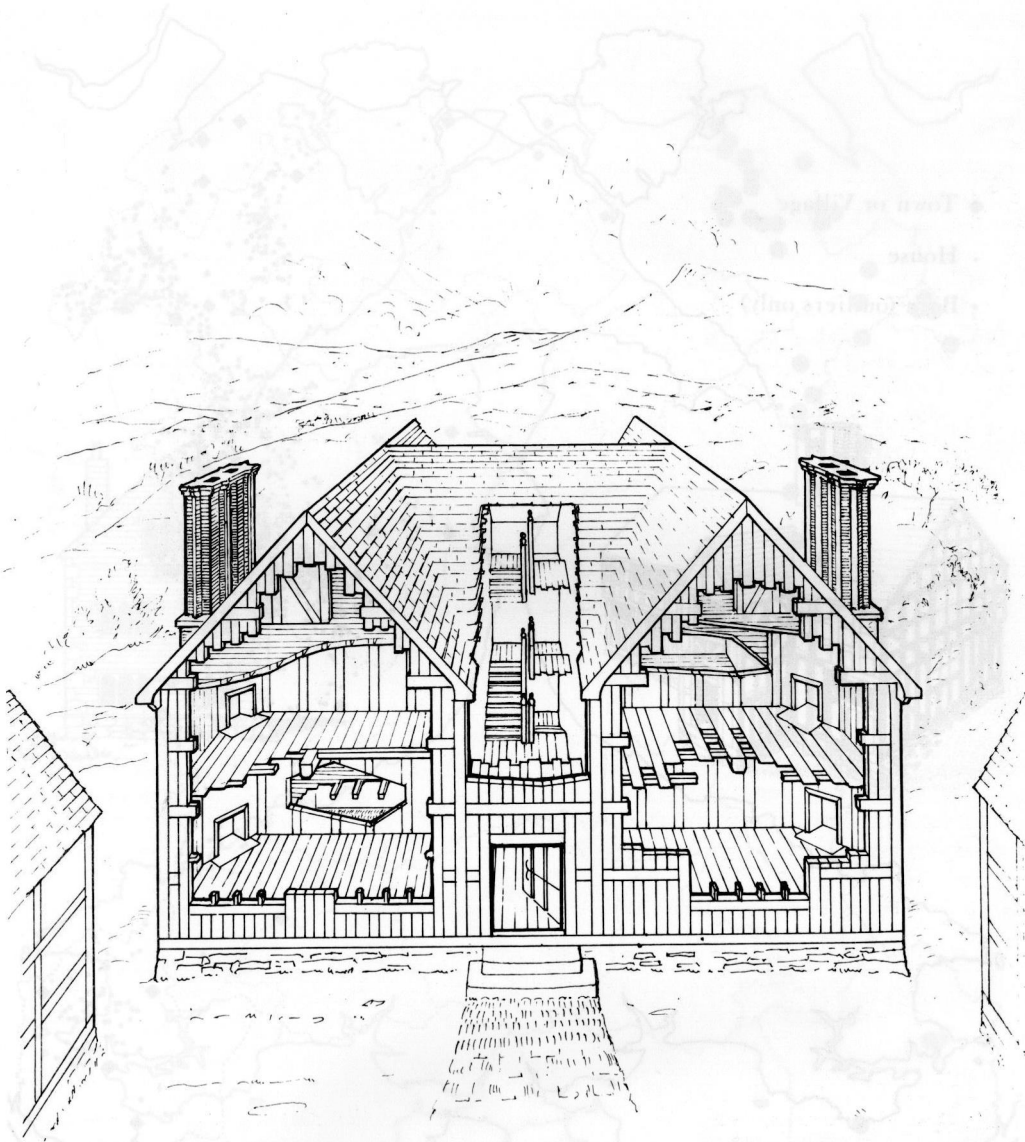


Fig. 10

Plasnewydd (Llanwnnog, Mont.) is another seventeenth-century example of a plan form which was to dominate the design of domestic architecture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The importance of such houses and their place in an evolutionary time-scale can only be demonstrated in an all-Wales volume. Even a county will not afford sufficient range. The emergence of the central stair-passage house and its domination of British scene in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is an important aspect of our history. The plan is so much taken for granted that it is difficult to realize that it was devised in comparatively recent times

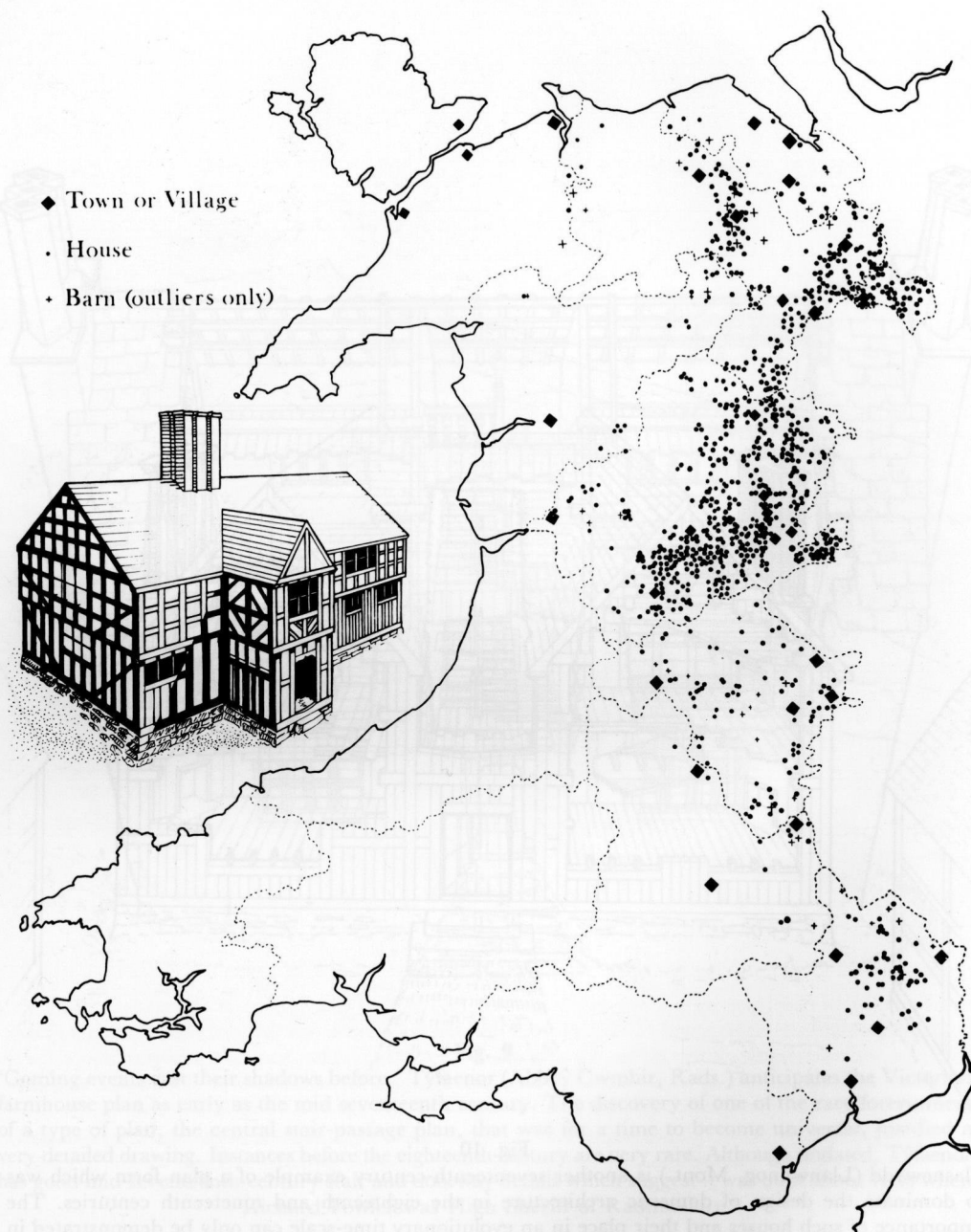


Fig. 11

Distribution map of half-timbered houses in Wales. This map, published in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (1975), vol. V, is an updated version of a map published ten years previously in *Houses of the Welsh Countryside*. Although ten-years fieldwork has more than doubled the number of known sites it has not changed the basic pattern first established



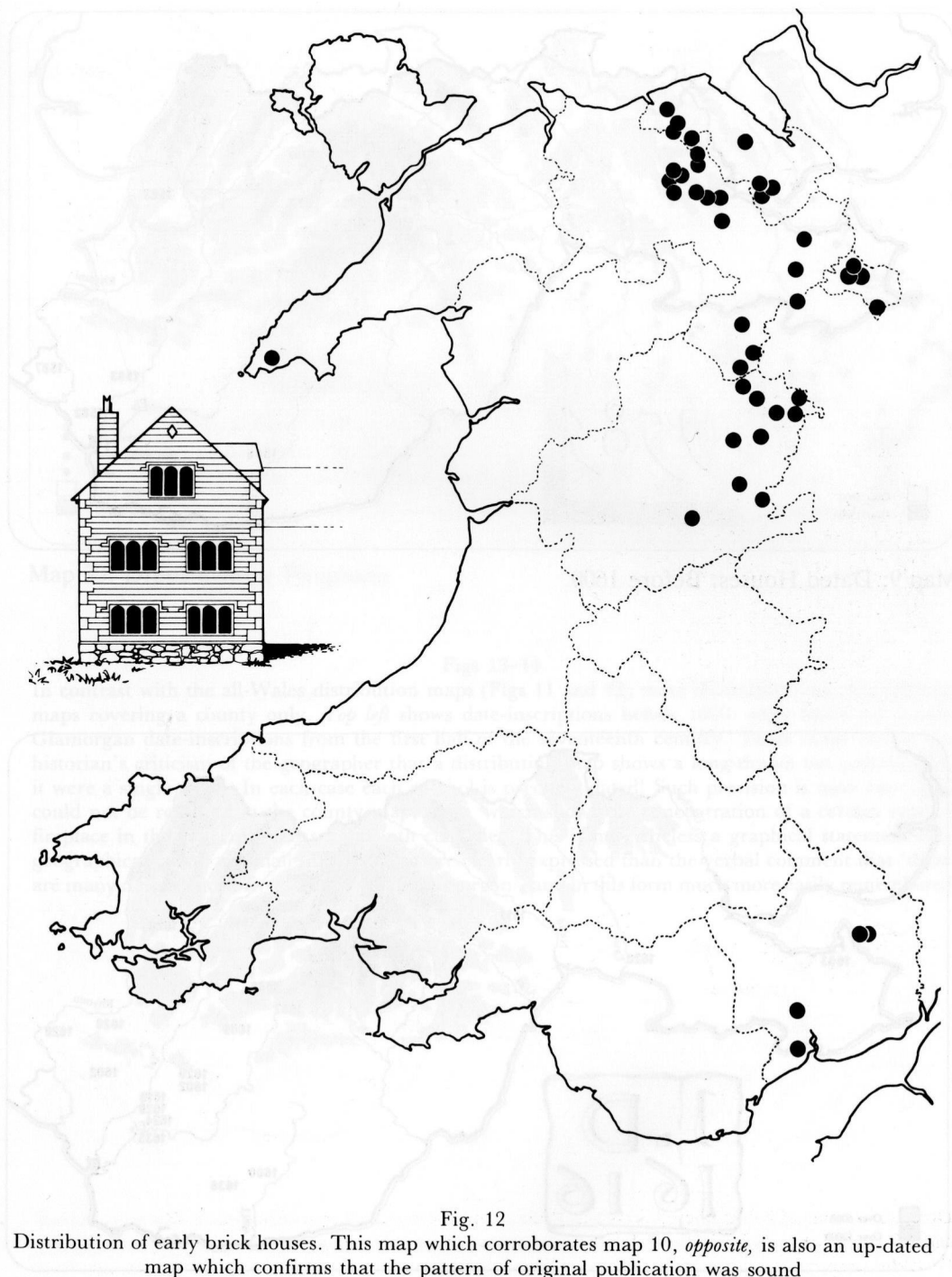
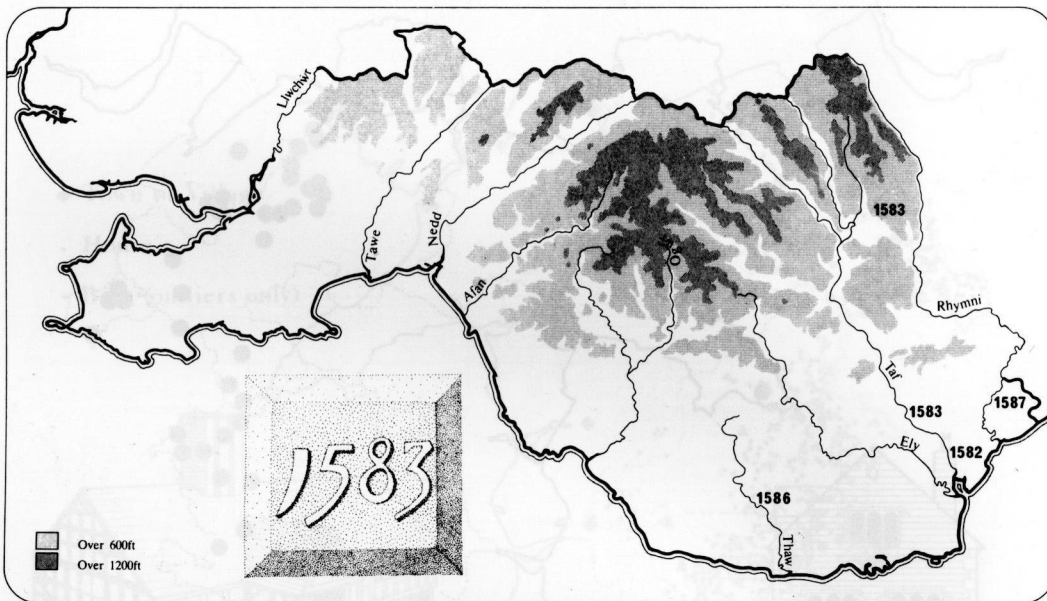
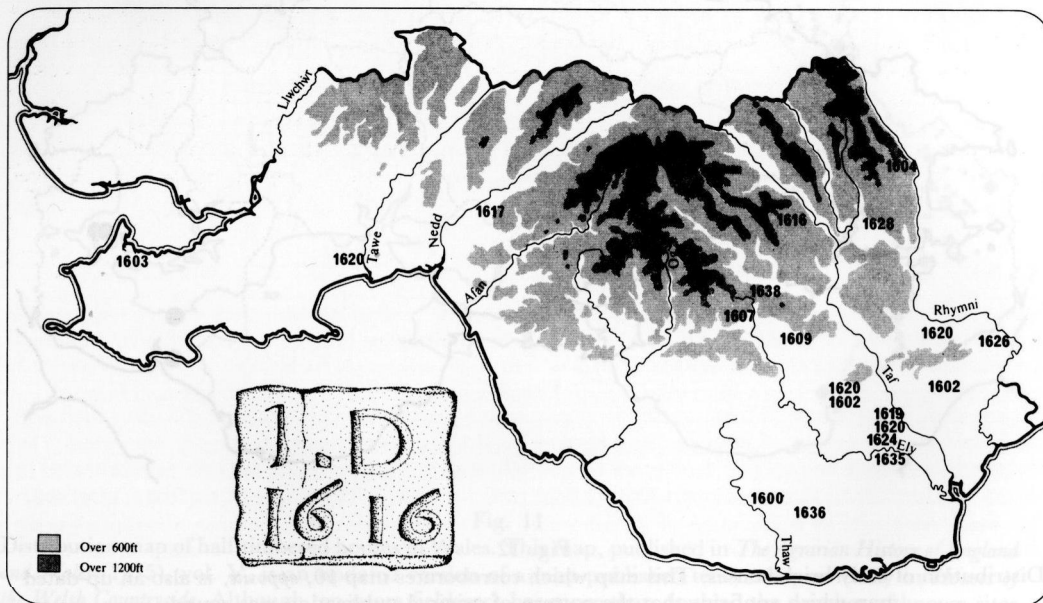


Fig. 12

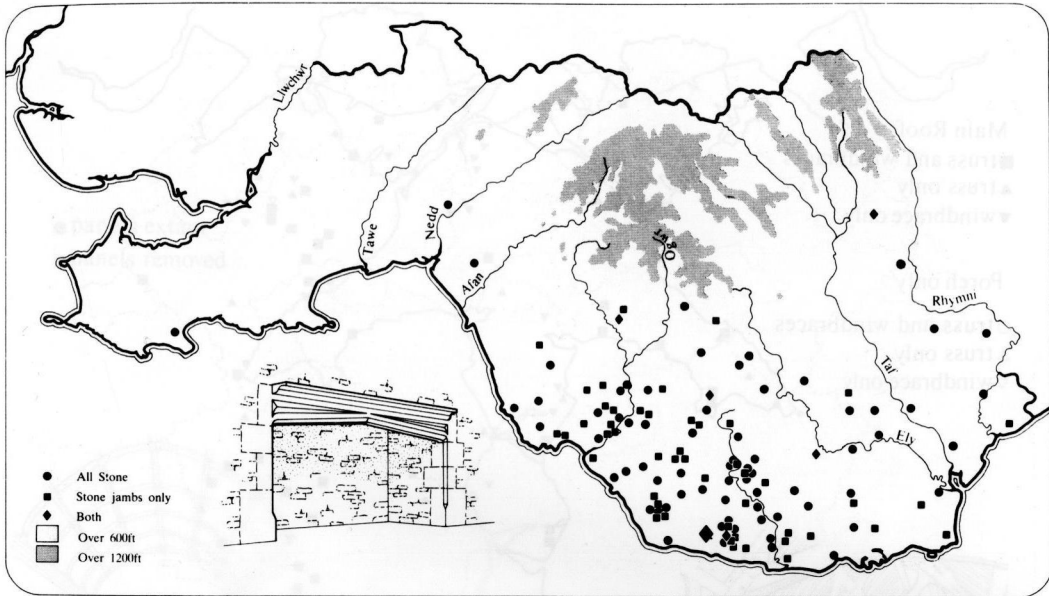
Distribution of early brick houses. This map which corroborates map 10, *opposite*, is also an up-dated map which confirms that the pattern of original publication was sound



Map 9: Dated Houses: Before 1600



Map 10: Dated Houses: 1600-1649



Map 33: Dressed-stone Fireplaces

Figs 13-14

In contrast with the all-Wales distribution maps (Figs 11 and 12) these illustrations are examples of maps covering a county only. *Top left* shows date-inscriptions before 1600, while *bottom left* shows Glamorgan date-inscriptions from the first half of the seventeenth century. These maps escape the historian's criticism of the geographer that a distribution map shows a long-drawn out process as if it were a single event. In each case each symbol is precisely dated! Such precision is most rare, and could not be repeated in the county map, *above*, which shows the concentration of a certain type of fireplace in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is nevertheless a graphical statement of a geographical fact of no small importance more clearly expressed than the verbal comment that 'there are many dressed-stone fireplaces in south Glamorgan', and in this form much more easily remembered

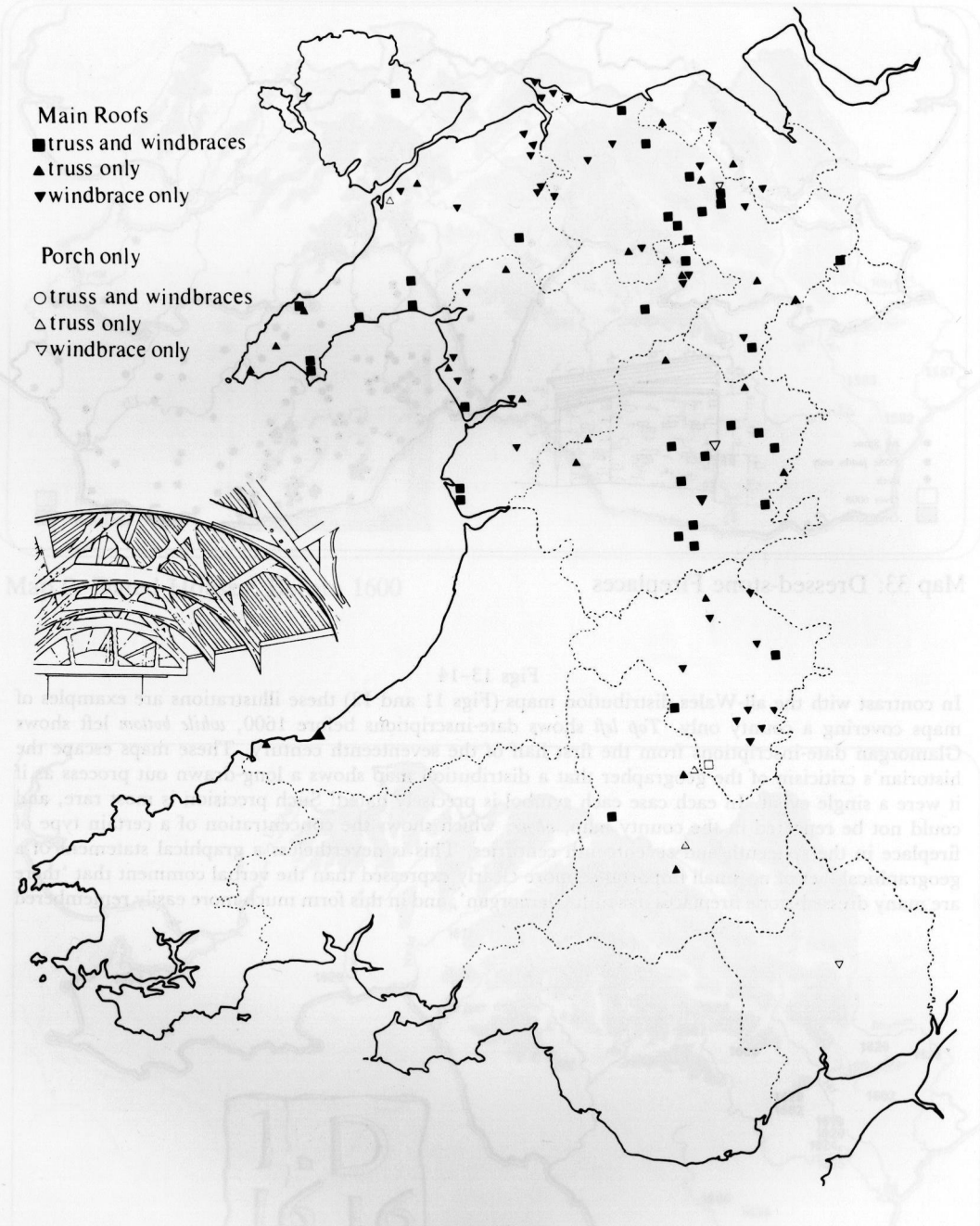


Fig. 15

Contrasting patterns in ecclesiastical architecture. Church roofs with cusped decoration show a marked north-easterly pattern



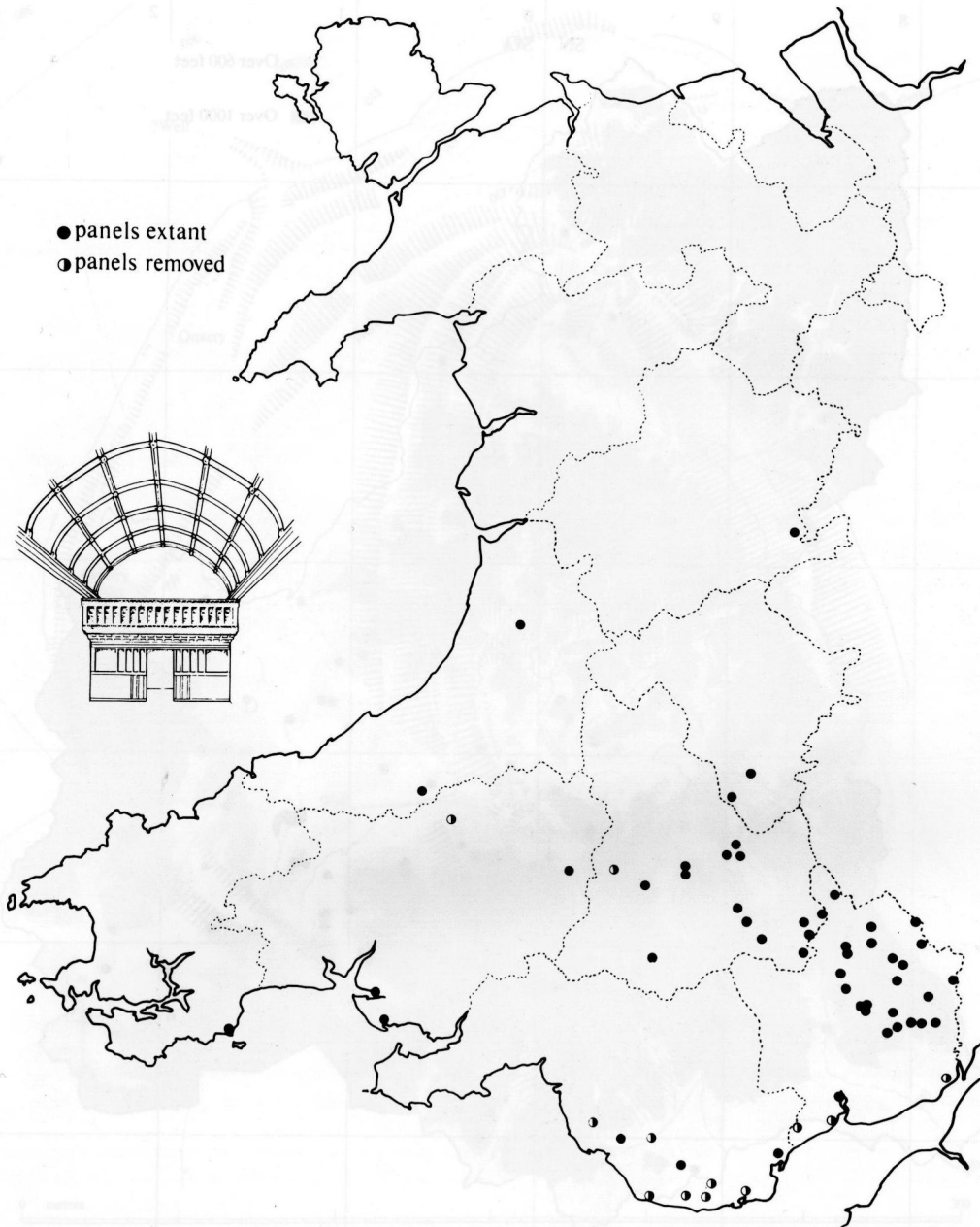


Fig. 16

Church roofs with barrel ceilings. This pattern complements the map opposite and helps to explain it. Such maps instance the fruits of an all-Wales approach and illustrate the important advances in historical-geographical knowledge for which the Commission has been responsible

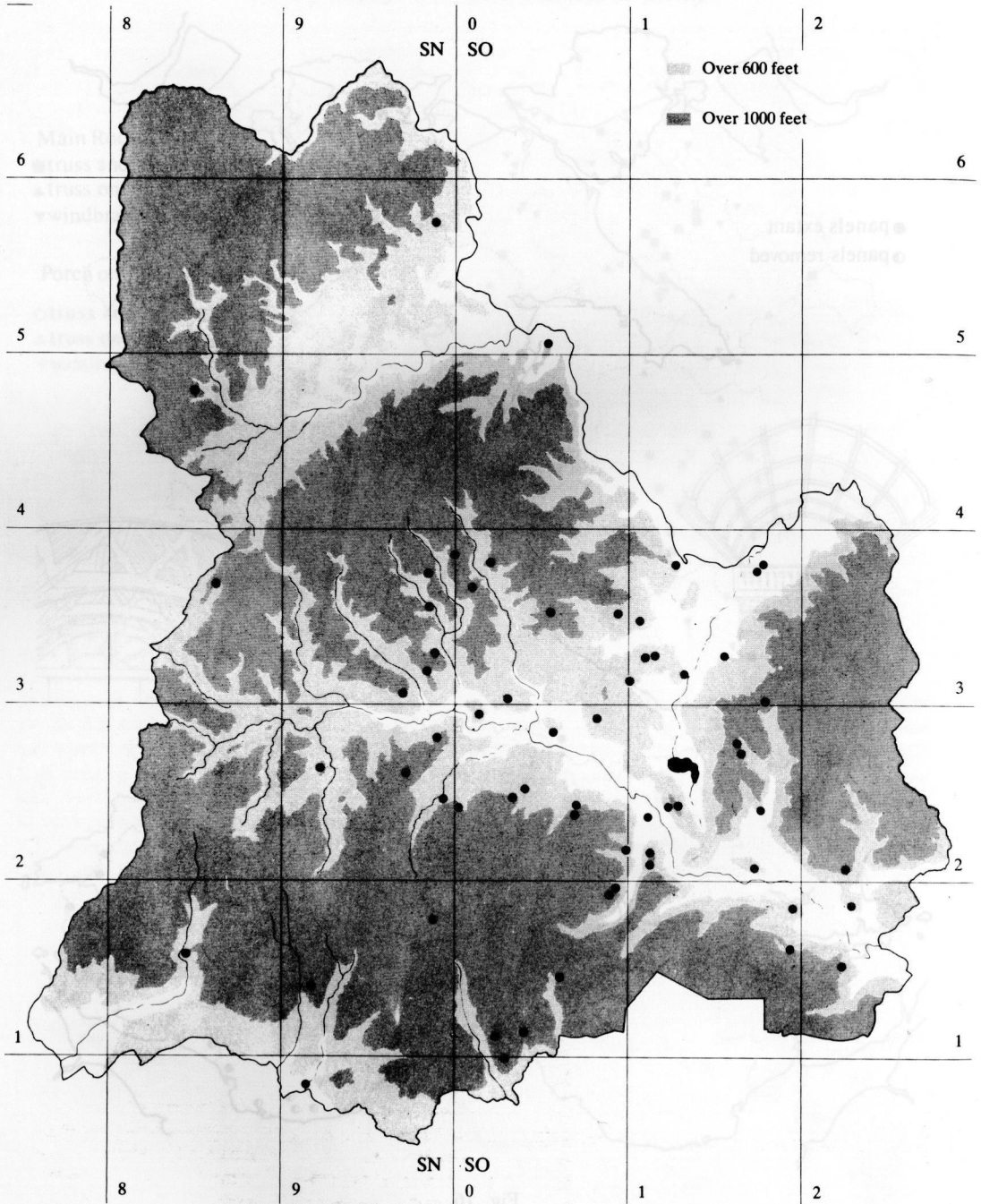


Fig. 17

Hill-forts and related structures in Brecknockshire. The Commission record of prehistoric and Roman monuments now includes the county of Brecknock whose hill-forts circle the headwaters of the Usk

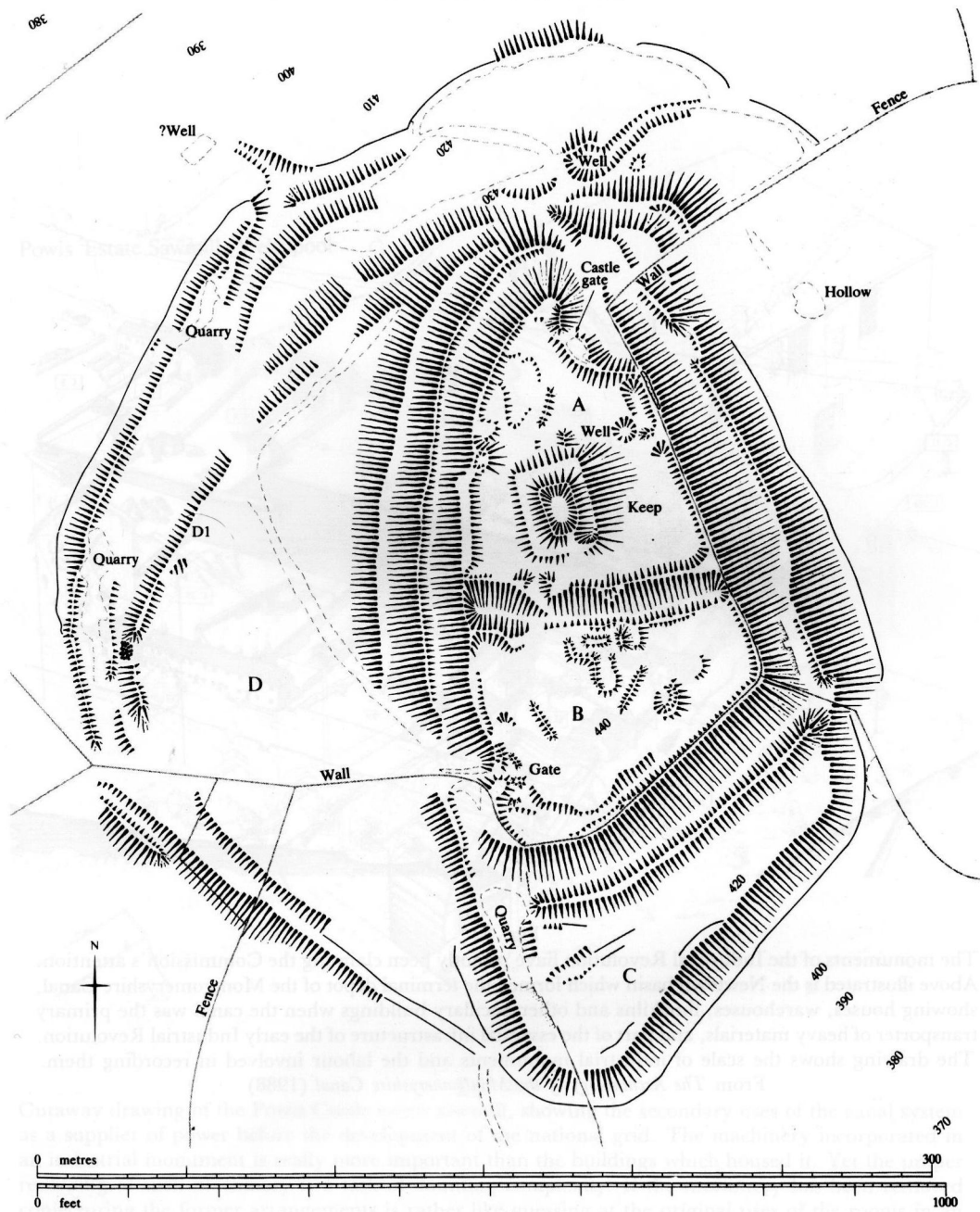


Fig. 18

Advanced graphics techniques applied to the illustration of a hill-fort, the contours indicated in white and not therefore to be confused with ancient structure.  
Castell Dinas in the recently published Brecknock volume

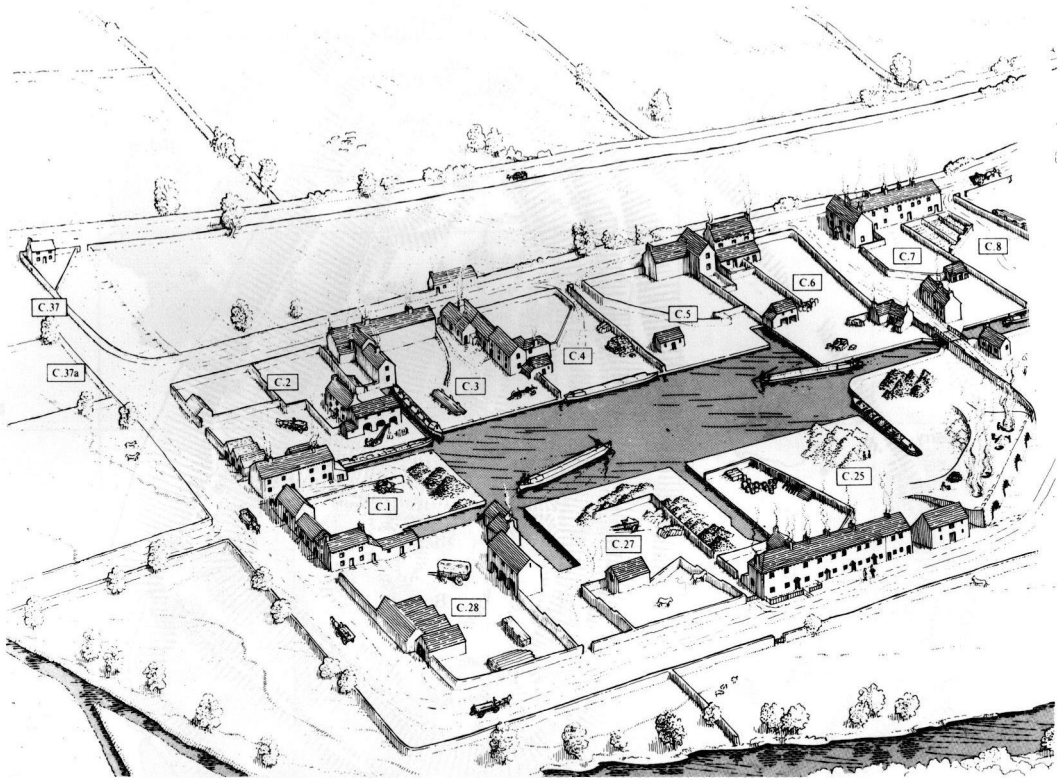


Fig. 19

The monuments of the Industrial Revolution have recently been claiming the Commission's attention. Above illustrated is the Newtown basin which formed the terminal depot of the Montgomeryshire Canal, showing houses, warehouses, limekilns and other ancillary buildings when the canal was the primary transporter of heavy materials, and part of the essential infrastructure of the early Industrial Revolution. The drawing shows the scale of industrial monuments and the labour involved in recording them.

*From The Archaeology of the Montgomeryshire Canal (1988)*



Powis Estate Sawmill, Welshpool

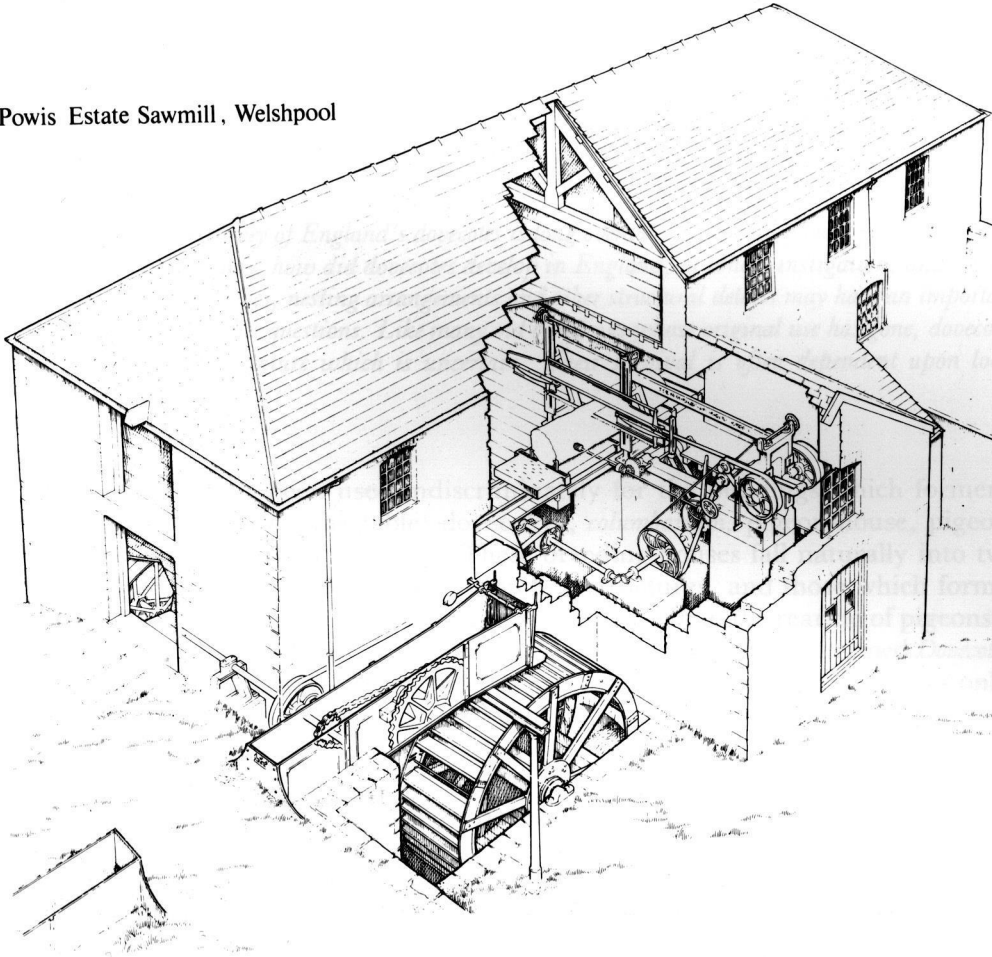


Fig. 20

Cutaway drawing of the Powis Castle estate sawmill, showing the secondary uses of the canal system as a supplier of power before the development of the national grid. The machinery incorporated in an industrial monument is really more important than the buildings which housed it. Yet the proper recording of such machinery is a task of daunting complexity. If the machinery has been removed conjecturing the former arrangements is rather like guessing at the original uses of the rooms in an ancient but much altered house