

Bwlchroser

Yn 1984 bu i'm priod, Joan, a minnau ymddeol a gwerthu ein siop a swyddfa bost ym Mhenrhyncoch a chael ein hunain heb unman i fyw. Tra'n chwilio am gartref newydd, rhentiwyd Bwlchroser, tŷ fferm ym Montgoch, gan y gŵr a brynodd ein siop. Roedd y tŷ yn gant oed ac roedd y tai allan yno o hyd: adeilad gyda tho asbestos; corlan ddefaid; yr hyn a fu yn feudy; ystabl gyda tho asbestos; a'r ochr draw i'r hyn a fu'n hen dŷ hir, gweddillion hoewal (cartws) – roedd y drws a arweiniai ohono i'r hen dŷ wedi ei lenwi â rwbel. Roedd y cyfan yn galw am ei achub ond nid oedd ar werth. Bu raid chwilio am rywbeth arall, ond yn ofer.

Roeddem wedi cytuno i rentu'r tŷ fferm am dri mis ac roedd y cyfnod yn dod i ben. Penderfynodd y perchennog werthu'r tŷ fferm ynghyd â'r tai allan a 24 erw o dir. Edrychwyd drachefn ar yr hen dai allan a'u cael yn gynhesach na'r tŷ fferm lle roedden ni'n byw; roedden nhw'n is i lawr a'r cerrig llwydion fel pe'n pelydru cynhesrwydd. Roedd fframwaith simnai'r hen dŷ hir yn amlwg ac roedd simnai arall hanner ffordd i fyny'r mur gyferbyn gyda thyllau yn y mur lle bu distiau'r to gynt. Roedd yno ddrws isel nodweddiadol gyda ffenest o bobtu, bellach wedi ei llanw â rwbel, a dwy ffenest arall lle bu'r ail lawr a'r rheini eto wedi eu llanw, a'r archdrafau yn eisiau. Roedd y gorlan ddefaid wedi ei thoi gyda hen lechi maluriedig yn cael eu cynnal gan hen drawstiau gyda phegiau pren yn eu cadw ynghyd. Roedd y beudy yn ychwanegiad mwy diweddar; fe'i cynlluniwyd i ddal deg o wartheg, pum buwch bob un i'r ffermwyr a'i wraig eu godro; dyna'r cyfan oedd yn ymarferol cyn dyddiau trydan. Roedd y stabl hefyd yn ychwanegiad diweddarach gyda dau gôr ac uwchben ysgubor gyda mynediad i'r stabl, ac o'r tu allan roedd grisiau cerrig a drws. Roedd y llawr yn llawn pryf ac yn berygl i gerdded arno; ond yr ysgubor yna a werthodd y lle i mi – roedd yr olygfa o'r mynyddoedd o'r drws yna yn aruthrol.

Ystyriaethau ymarferol: roedd gennym beth arian o werthu'r siop ond ddim llawer dros ben. Pe byddem yn prynu, byddai'n

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In 1984 my wife, Joan, and I retired and sold our shop and post office in Penrhyncoch. Being without anywhere to live we rented Bwlchroser, a farmhouse in Bontgoch, from the man who had bought our shop, but we were looking for a permanent home. The house was about a hundred years old and the old farm buildings were still there: a building with an asbestos roof; a sheep fold; what had been a cowshed; a stable, again with an asbestos roof; an old long-house and beyond it the remains of a carriage shed – the door which had connected it with the old house had been filled in with rubble. It all cried out to be saved but it wasn't for sale. We looked in vain for somewhere else. We had agreed to rent the farm house for three months and the time was almost up. The owner decided to try to sell it, together with the old farm buildings and 24 acres of land.

We looked again at the old buildings. We found them warmer than the farmhouse where we lived; they were lower down and the grey stones seemed to radiate warmth. The chimney of the old long-house was clearly visible and there was another chimney on the opposite wall, half way up, and holes in the wall where the roof joists had once been. There were the typical low door with a window on either side, now filled in with rubble, and two other windows on what had once been the second floor. Again the windows were filled in and the architraves were missing. The sheep fold was still slated with mostly broken slates, held up by old beams with wooden pegs still holding them together. The cowshed was a more recent addition, designed to hold ten cows, five each for the farmer and his wife to milk; that was all they could manage before electricity was used. The stable again was a more recent addition; there were two stalls and a granary above with access to the stable, and from the outside there were steps and a door. The floor was worm eaten and dangerous to walk on, but that granary sold the place to me. The view over the mountains from that door was fantastic.

Practicalities: We had some money from the sale of the shop but not much left over. If

rhaid prynu'r cwbl – roedd rhaid cael lle i fyw. Beth fyddai'r gost? Roeddwn yn lled heini ond nid yn adeiladydd. A oedd modd cael cymorthdal? Penderfynwyd prynu'r cwbl a cheisio cynllunio pethau wedyn.

Daeth yn amlwg nad oedd cymorthdal i'w gael yr adeg hynny ar gyfer y math yma o adeiladau. Nid oedd y Banc yn orobeithiol; ie, caem fenthyca ychydig ar y tŷ a'r tir, ond nid llawer. Penseiri, adeiladwyr, arolygwyr! Honnodd un adeiladydd y gallai chwalu'r cyfan a chodi byngalo newydd dymunol o fewn ein modd, ond ni fedrai roi pris am ail-adeiladu. Nid oedd gennyf boced diwaelod. Felly roedd rhaid cael amcan o'r draul cyn y gallwn ddechrau. O'r diwedd cynigiodd arolygwr raglen o'r gwaith gyda phrisiad a chanfod dau adeiladydd a fyddai'n gweithio i'w raglen. Mi fyddwn i yn archebu'r holl ddefnyddiau a byddai'r adeiladwyr yn trefnu unrhyw lafur ychwanegol angenrheidiol. 'Nawr roedd modd dechrau.

Buom ddeunaw mis yn ceisio trefnu; dywedwyd yn awr y byddai'r cwbl wedi ei orffen mewn chwe mis. Llwythi o dywod a sement, sgaffaldiau, coed, trawstiau dur i atgyfnerthu! Roedden ni'n peintio ein hunain a hefyd yn canfod is-gontractwyr ar gyfer peth gwaith arbenigol fel toi, plymio a gwaith trydanol ac eraill ar gyfer cloddio lle i'r tanc carthion. Darn anodd oedd y trawst cylchol, y ffrâm goncrid wedi ei hadeiladu ar ben yr hen furiau, yn gwbl sgwâr a soled gyda thrawstiau'r to yn gorffwys arni. Am ein bod yn awyddus i gadw'r hen drawstiau derw, roedd rhaid adeiladu'r prenau to hyn heb unrhyw gynhaliaeth gysylltiol fel sy'n arferol mewn tŷ cyffredin. Golyga hyn fod angen i't trawst cylchol fod yn berffaith a hefyd roedd angen mwy o drawstiau to a rheini'n gryfach. Mi archebais i'r coed a thrwy gamsyniad, gofyn am rai 2½ modfedd yn lle rhai 2 fodfedd. Fe wnaeth y cyflenwr gamgymeriad arall gan anfon rhai 3 modfedd. Felly gorffennwyd gyda tho hanner cyn gryfed eto â'r angen. Bu raid cyflogi contractwr arall ar gyfer toi a rhaid oedd dewis rhwng llechi ffug am tua £1,500, llechi o Sbaen am tua £4,000 neu lechi o Gymru am £6,000. Fe wyddem pa rai yr hoffem ond rhaid oedd dewis y rhataf. Archebwyd ffenestri a danfonwyd un dros ben; dywedwyd wrthym am ei chadw gan y byddai y costiai yn ormod i'w dychwelyd. Yna fe ddymchwelodd darn o un mur ac fe

we bought, we had to buy the lot; we had to live somewhere. What would it cost? I was fairly active but not a builder. Could we get a grant? We decided to buy the lot and then try to work it out. It transpired that no grants were available at that time for this sort of building. The Bank was not very optimistic; yes we could borrow a little on the farmhouse and the land but not much. Architects, builders, surveyors! One builder said that he would pull down the lot and build a nice new bungalow within our budget but wouldn't quote for rebuilding. I didn't have a bottomless pocket so that somehow I had to get some idea of the cost before I could start. At last a surveyor produced a programme of work with costings, and found two builders who would work to his programme. I would order all the materials and the builders would arrange for any extra labour that might be required. Now we could start.

We had been eighteen months trying to work it out; now we were promised that the work would be done in six months. Loads of sand and cement, scaffolding, timber, steel girders for reinforcing! We were doing the painting ourselves and were also finding sub-contractors for some specialist work such as roofing, plumbing, electrical work, and a few others for such work as digging a place for the septic tank. The difficult part was the ring beam, a concrete frame built on top of the old walls, absolutely square and of course solid and on which the roof beams rested. Because we wanted the old oak beams kept, we had to build these roof timbers without any joining supports as is usual in an ordinary house. This meant that the ring beam had to be perfect and also that we needed more and stronger roof timbers. By mistake I ordered 2½ inch timber instead of 2 inch; then the supplier made a mistake and delivered 3 inch timber; so we ended up with a roof half as thick again as needed. For roofing we had to have a separate contractor. We could get man-made slates for about £1,500, Spanish slates for about £4,000 or Welsh slates for £6,000. We knew what we wanted but had to decide on the cheapest. We ordered the windows and had one extra arrive. We were told to keep it as the cost of transport to take it away would be prohibitive. Then part of the wall fell down and we decided to put the window in; this we have found very useful. These are



Bwlchroser, 1985.



Bwlchroser, 2001.

benderfynwyd defnyddio'r ffenest i gau'r bwlch. Bu'n fendith fawr.

Dyma rai o'r problemau y bu'n rhaid inni eu hwynebu a'u datrys ar y pryd; ond yn y diwedd, ymron ar amser, mudwyd i'r tŷ. Roedd wedi ei orchuddio ag eira ond o'r diwedd roeddym y cael cysgu yn yr hen adeiladau. Fe or-wariwyd ond roedd y Banc yn derbyn hynny; roedd sicrwydd gwarant da.

Fe gymerodd amser maith i werthu'r hen dŷ fferm; felly oedd y farchnad a bu'n rhaid derbyn pris isel am fod rhaid gwerthu i foddhau'r Banc. Fe wnaeth y prynwr elw mawr wrth werthu'n ddiweddarach, ond nid oedd modd i ni fyw gyda gor-ddrafft mawr, yn cynyddu bob dydd. Roedd yn gas gennym yr hen dŷ. Roedd ein tŷ newydd yn llawn cariad a chynhesrwydd ac wrth ein bodd. O'r diwedd gallem ei drosi'n gartref. Symudwyd yr enw, Bwlchroser, o'r tŷ fferm i'n cartref newydd.

Yr hyn oedd gennym yn awr oedd hen gorlan wŷn, gyda'r hen drawstiau, wedi ei rhannu'n ystafell eistedd, ystafellfwyta a chegin, ystafell ymolchi ac ystafell gysgu. Roedd yr hen feudy yn awr yn ddwy ystafell gysgu, yr hen stabl yn olchdy. Arhosodd y tŷ hir yn hen dŷ gyda choridor hir o'r gegin i'r stabl. Ystafell at bob galw oedd yr ysgubor. Roedd yr hen drawstiau yn y golwg yn yr ystafell eistedd, y gegin a'r prif ystafell gysgu. Yn ôl arbenigwr roedden nhw ddim iau na 400 oed. Nid oedd y trawstiau eraill yn werth eu cadw.

Symudwyd y plaster oddi ar furiau'r hen dŷ, y tu fewn a thu allan a'u pwyntio. Gosodwyd drws a ffenestri newydd a pheintwyd y llawr gyda phaent lino. Ar y to gosodwyd dalennau triphlyg o bolicarbonad. Yn awr roedd gennym rhywbeth rhwng conserfatori a thŷ gwydr ac fe benderfynwyd ei alw'n orendy. Adnewyddwyd ein bwrdd biliards a'i osod yno. Gyda llechi oddi ar y to mi wnes gafn a'i lenwi gyda phridd; gosododd Joan blanhigion ynddo. Yn awr roedd gennym adeilad gyda bwrdd biliards yn y canol, cwt potio ar un ochr a mainc crefftwr digon ddim a silffoedd ar y llall. Y Nadolig cyntaf daeth yr holl deulu (tua 25) am ginio yn yr orendy.

Yr hoewal (cartws) oedd y nesaf inni ymosod arno; cliriwyd y drws rhyngddo a'r tŷ. Roedd dŵr wedi rhedeg i lawr o'r tir uwch a chasglu'n bwll y tu ôl i'r adeiladau.

only some of the problems that we had to face and deal with at the time but eventually, almost on time, we moved in. The house was covered in snow but at last we were sleeping in the old buildings. We had over-run our budget but the bank stood for it; they had good security.

It took a long time to sell the old farmhouse; the housing market was like that and we had to accept a low price because we had to sell to satisfy the Bank. The buyer, who has since sold, made a very substantial profit. We could not live with a big overdraft, getting bigger every day. We hated the old house; our new house was full of love and warmth, we loved it. At last we could get down to making it into a home. We moved the name Bwlchroser from the farmhouse and set about it.

What we now had was the old sheep fold with the old beams divided into a sitting room, a kitchen-dining room, a bathroom and a bedroom; the old cow shed was now two bedrooms; the old stable was a laundry room; and the old long house remained an old house. There was a long corridor from the kitchen to the stable and the granary was a general purpose room. The old beams were exposed in the sitting room, the kitchen and the number one bedroom. According to an expert they were no less than 400 years old. The other beams were squared timber and not worth keeping.

The plaster on the walls of the old house, inside and out, was removed and replaced with pointing. The windows and door we uncovered and replaced, the floor we painted with lino-paint. The roof we replaced with triple polycarbonate sheets. We now had a cross between a conservatory and a greenhouse; for want of a better name, we would call it an orangery. We had a billiard table which we reconditioned and put in it. With slates off the roof, I built a trough which I filled with earth and Joan then filled with plants. We now had a building with a billiard table in the middle, a potting shed on the one side and a rather useless handyman bench and rack of shelves on the other side. The first Christmas all the family (about twentyfive) came for dinner and we accommodated them in the old house or orangery.

The coach house was next to be tackled; we cleared the door from the old house.

Yn awr roedd rhaid ei ddisbyddu. Mi dyrchais draen o dan y garej a'r lôn; roedd modd wedyn concritio'r garej, ei doi a rhoi tarmac ar y lôn. Ond fe ddechreuodd y dŵr gronni yn awr o flaen y tŷ ac felly arweiniwyd y dŵr i wneud pwll go iawn. Gorlifodd hwnnw fel y bu raid gwneud pwll ychwanegol gan arwain y gorlif o hwnnw i'r cae.

Roedd y tir o flaen y tŷ yn weddol wastad; rywdro roedd wedi ei godi gyda rwbil a cherrig mawr yn gymysg. Yn ystod yr adeiladu roedd un o'r muriau wedi disgyn a'r cerrig wedi eu hychwanegu at y rwbil. Hwyrach y dylwn sôn fod yr oes rhew ddiwethaf wedi terfynu tua'r fan hyn, a phan giliodd yn ôl gadawodd ar ei ôl haen o gerrig mawr crwn. Yn ôl yr arfer adeiladwyd y tŷ yn wreiddiol gyda'r cerrig hyn (defnyddio beth oedd ar gael yn y fan heb yr angen am gludiant). Hefyd ar un adeg roedd adeilad y tybiaf ei fod yn gwt mochyn. Roedd un mur yn sefyll, y lleill yn dwmpath o gerrig. Adferais y mur, a wynebai'r de, fel nodwedd. Defnyddiwyd y cerrig i greu creigardd, i ymylu'r lôn ac i ddal leinin dal dŵr y pyllau.

Ni wnaeth y gwaith hwn ei hun; golygodd llawer o feddwl caled yn ogystal â gwaith caled.

John Dare

Behind the house was now a pool of water drained from the other house which was on higher land. I dug a drain under the garage and the road; we could then concrete the garage, roof it and tarmac the road. The water now collected in front of the house, so we decided to help it by making a pool. When it overflowed we built a second pool and an overflow from that to the field. The land in front of the house was fairly level; at some time it had been built up with rubble, littered with great stones. During the building one of the walls had fallen down and these great stones were added to the debris. Perhaps I should mention that the last ice age had finished just about here, and when it receded it left behind a layer of great round stones. True to type, the house had originally been built with these stones (they always used the material on the spot, no transport). Also at one time there had been another building. I think it was used as a pigsty; only the south-facing wall still stood; this I restored as a feature. The other walls had collapsed to a pile of stones which we used to create a rockery, to line the edges of the drive-in and to hold down the waterproof lining on the pools.

All this did not do itself. It required a lot of hard thinking as well as hard work.

John Dare