

Woodland Trust Welsh Place Name Project

Introduction

In 2018 The Woodland Trust in Wales (Coed Cadw) initiated a project to collect together stories and memories of the history and heritage of woodlands in the Dyfi Valley. This resulted in a lot of information, and in particular a set of old Welsh words relating to woodland and woody places, some of which had been used in the 19th century tithe maps and the high level map of historic woodland as shown below.



In order to take this forward, a partnership project with Ecodyfi was entered into, with the list of Welsh woodland place name words being used as an input for analysis of historic use of land in the Dyfi valley, focussing on mixed farming. One of the objectives of this project is to produce a 'library' or resource document listing information available on Welsh place names, including signposting to other resources and liaising with other organisations. This is to include a list of place names indicative of tree and wooded habitat as a quick reference document.

Summary of work

The initial task was to produce a list of place names for use as key words in the historic land use analysis. This was based on the woodland place name words, extended to include historical words that might be used in the 19th century records, and again extended to include more general agricultural terminology. The primary sources for this were:

- 2 Ap Geiriaduron – Prigysgol Bangor, 2020
OS Welsh Place names - <https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/guides/the-welsh-origins-of-place-names-fysgolin-britain/>
- 3
- 4 Hen Enwau o Feirionnydd – Glenda Carr, 2020

The list was used by the mixed farming project to infer land use on parcels which do not have the actual use recorded. This was an iterative process requiring further input and refinement. The results of this are reported on the *Mixed farming – histories and futures* project website¹.

The list was peer reviewed and further extended with input from Geriadur Prifysgol Cymru (<http://geiriadur.ac.uk/gpc/gpc.html>)

The key name data for trees and woods was split into 3 groups as follows:

1. Woods – using Coed, Plantation and related words
2. Woody places – using Llwyn, Celli and similar words
3. Tree names – fields with a tree name included

The field names in the chosen area included the following key words:

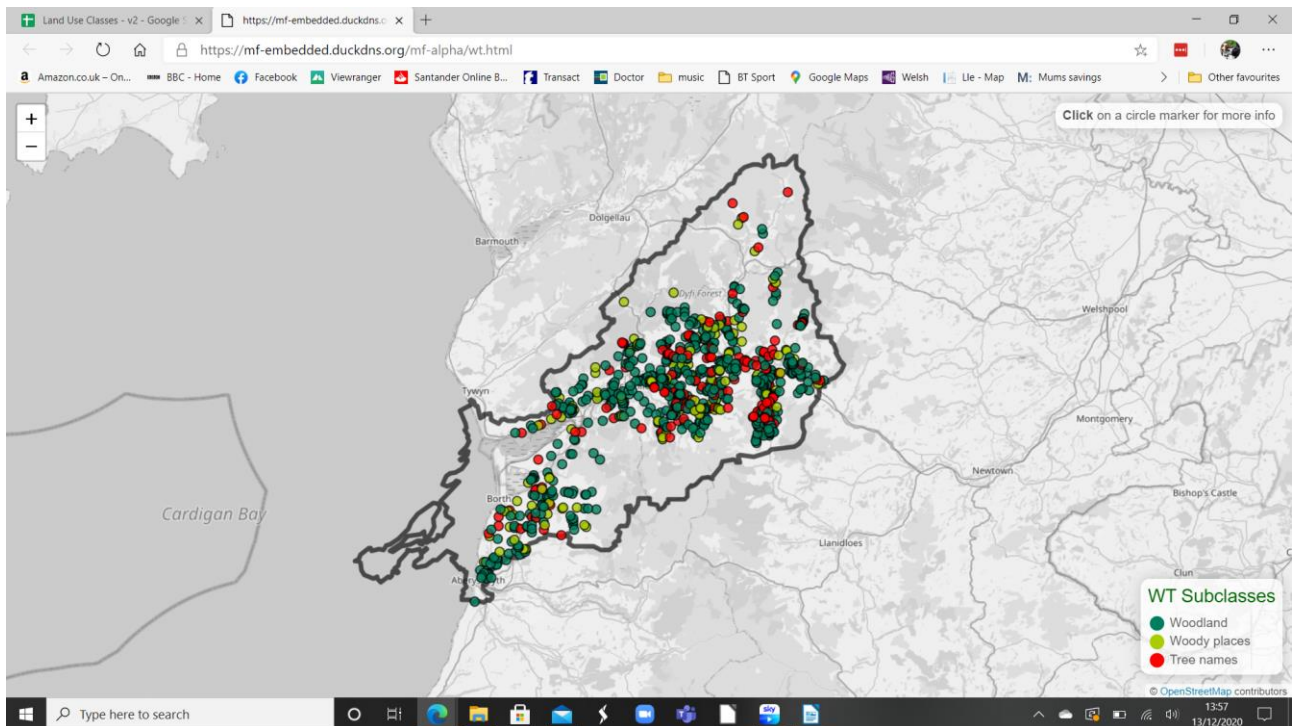
Keyword	No of instances	
Argoed	1	
Banadl	15	
Bedw	18	60
Fedw	42	
Berllan	19	
Berth	15	17
Perth	2	
Cadw	1	
Celli	1	22
Gelli	21	
Celyn	8	
Cerddin	1	
Clawdd	5	
Coed	319	
Coeden	1	
Coedgae	1	
Derw	4	
Drain	7	
Glo	21	

¹ <https://www.dyfibiophere.wales/mixed-farming-histories-and-futures> [accessed Jan 2021]

Keyword	No of instances	
Gwern	59	
Gwrych	1	
Helyg-en	2	
Llanerch	2	
Llwyn	60	
Onnen	2	
Plantation	237	
Pren	2	
Prys	1	
Wig	1	
Ysgawen	3	

This data has been used to create a 'heat map' which will be available on line to help with discussion about historical use of trees and woods in the naming of fields

An example heat map is shown here:



Findings

During the analysis a number of unexpected findings came out

For example the meaning of 'plantation' which currently would imply planted woodland, but in the tithe maps can be pasture, arable or meadow land, so is worth further investigation

Also 'allotment' which currently implies a shared area for growing vegetables and flowers, is seen to be used for 'turbary' is cutting turf for fires, presumably in a shared way

Whilst there is some correlation between field names that suggest pasture, arable or meadow (for hay production) there is not a 100% indication and it is probable that the field names were historical or created during the 18th century and reflected their initial use, but over the 100 years or so up to the 1840's when the tithe maps were made there will have been improvements made to rough pasture so that it could be more widely used, probably in rotation across different years. Further investigation would be needed to confirm this.

Outputs

The key output is an Excel spreadsheet entitled Hen Enwau Dyfi which includes the following information:

Hen Enwau Cymraeg Dyfi – Dovey Old Welsh Places Names

Cymraeg Welsh	Saesneg English	Arall Alternative	Ffynhonell Source	Sylwadau Comments
Acer	Acre	aceri, acrau	3	<i>cyfer is another name</i>
Aethnen	Aspen, Poplar		1	<i>plural - aethnenni, aethnennau</i>
Afalen	Apple tree	Afallen, fallen	2	

This is included in the appendix below

Include links to the Google Sheet and Heat map here

Next Steps

One possible action would be to filter the woodland words and general agricultural words into 2 separate sheets?

Table with columns: Cymraeg, Welsh, Ssaenng, Araf, Flynhoell, Flynhoell Sources, Flynhoell, Flynhoell, Sylweddau, Comments. Contains entries for various place names like Cymraeg, Welsh, Araf, Flynhoell, etc.

v1 issued for trial use 28/07/20
v1.1 in draft with changes following trial and other inputs:

25/08/20 Addition of Ridge and Furrow names
11/06/20 Additions after review of test run

v1.2 includes comments from Arfon Hughes
Cwef 2 Cofrestron Hughes + http://genrad.ac.uk/golpdc.html

See also 'Cydymath Byd Amaeth' by Hw Jones - 4 volumes A-Z (Agi)

Appendix