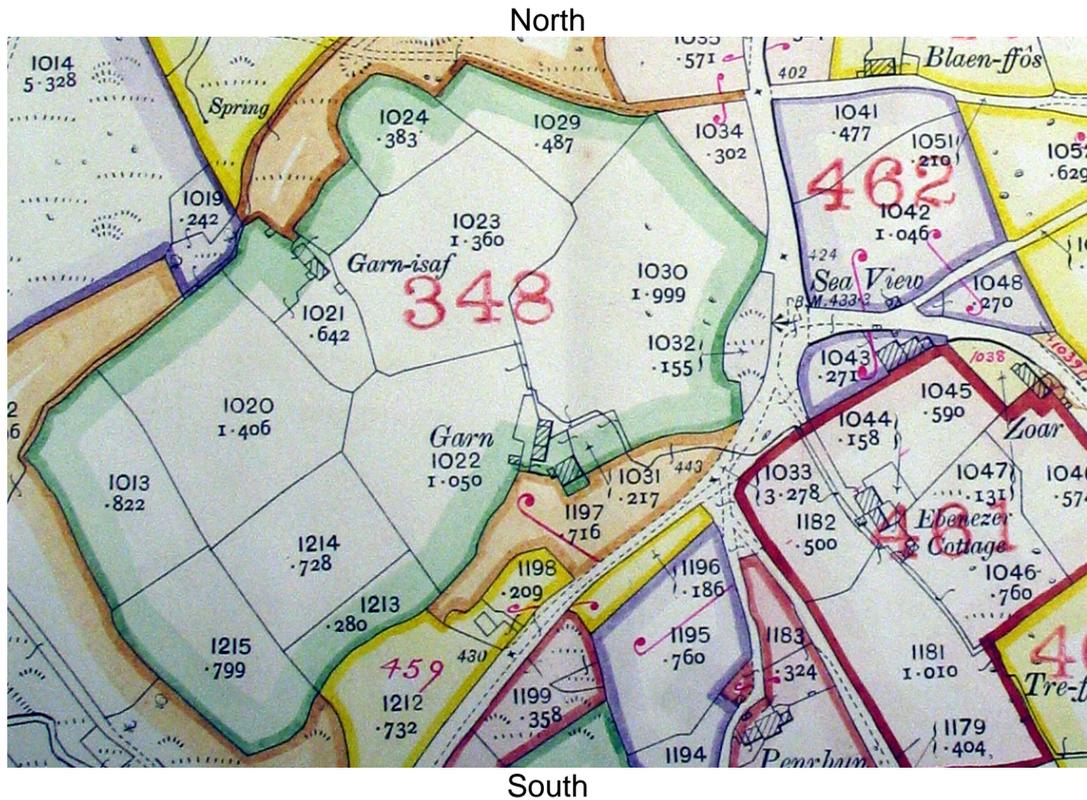


Garn and Garn Isaf

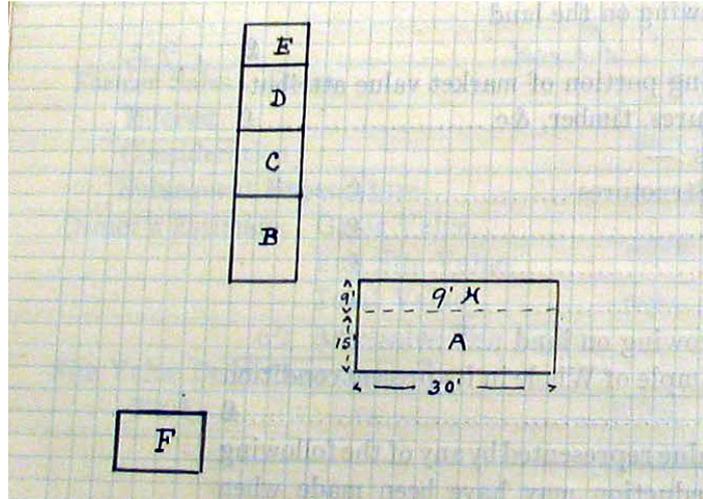
Garn and Garn Isaf can be found on the England and Wales Valuation Office Survey of 1910-15. The map below shows both dwellings included in red number 348.



The small holding of 10.154 acres was owned and occupied by Thomas Bowen and valued at £368. It was described as follows:

A compact small holding situated on the Mountain above Newport, old buildings in fair repair. The land is fair pasture. Ground floor: 2 front rooms, 1 back room. First floor: 3 front rooms.

A sketch plan was included:



- A. House. 30ft frontage, 24ft depth and 9ft height. Stone built, slated roof all good repair.
- B. Barn. Stone built, slated roof grouted all good repair.
- C. Cow house, 5 ties.
- D. Stable, 2 stalls.
- E. Calf cot, (same as B).
- F. Calf cot. Stone built, complete? Corrugated roof, all in very good repair.

No mention was made of any buildings at Garn Isaf.

By 1928 a John Lewis was the owner and occupier of the small holding, which was slightly reduced in size being then described as of 9 acres, 1 rod and 24 poles.

At the 1901 census an uninhabited house in the process of being built was present at Garn. This was in addition to the household at Garn itself. Perhaps Garn Isaf was being built or rebuilt. The latter is a possibility as the tithe map of 1845 (below) clearly shows a dwelling house at both the location of Garn and Garn Isaf in 1845. The building near Garn Isaf (in field number 236) was Ddolfain Uchaf, not mentioned in the 1901 census and not on the 1907 map (anything remaining today?).



The owner of Garn according to the tithe apportionments was Thomas Bowen and it was occupied by a John Bowen. Field number 1226 was described as Garn and field number 1230 was described as Homestead. Field numbers 1226 to 1237 were owned by Thomas Bowen and were occupied by John Bowen. No field names were given. Are any known?

The earliest documentary reference thus far found to Garn is in the land tax return of 1787. The land tax returns survive between 1786 and 1831, but only Garn is recorded. If there were buildings at Garn Isaf then they must have been included with Garn. According to the land tax return of 1787 the owner of Garn was Tamarlane Bowen and it was occupied by Llewellyn Evans. Nothing further is known about Tamarlane, he does not seem to have left a will. As only fragments of the Newport church parish register survive from the period before 1808, one cannot find anything about Tamarlane and his family, although he was known to have been a farmer.

Tamarlane did have a son called Thomas Bowen born about 1778 who, according to the land tax, was the owner of Garn by 1815. Garn was then occupied by Thomas Morgan who also paid the poor rate for the property. Thomas would own Garn until his death in 1851. The property was occupied by William George in 1820 and 1826, and in 1831 Garn farm was occupied by a John Bowen.

At the 1841 census Thomas lived alone at Garn with Anne Bowen a 40 year old female servant. For Thomas' occupation he was described as "Independent", which suggests that he was of independent means, i.e. he did not have to work. A second Garn enumerated at this 1841 census and was occupied by Owen Ellis an agricultural labourer with his wife and six children. Was this Garn Isaf?

In 1843 Thomas Bowen now aged about 65 and described as a farmer and a bachelor married 24 year old Margaret Jenkins, of nearby Treffynnon. She was the daughter of John Jenkins one of Parrog's well known entrepreneurs who had settled at Treffynnon at the end of his life. Thomas and Margaret would have two children, and at their baptisms at St Mary's church Newport, Thomas was described as a "former tanner".

As stated the tithe apportionment of 1845 give the occupier of both the Garns as a John Bowen. This is confirmed by a letter (not yet examined) in the Bronwydd collection at NLW dated January 22, 1844. This letter from W. Evans, Newport, to Mrs Lloyd (widow of the Lord of Barony of Cemaes) informed her that John Bowen of Garn "is now inclosing a large quantity of the Newport Common" near Coinant Bridge which he had never presented (to the Court Leet for approval).

But who was this John Bowen? Perhaps he was the 32 year old farmer who lived alone with a female servant at Channel, shown next to Garn at the 1841 census. By the 1851 census John had married and had two children and lived at Penlan Coynant and was described as a butcher; he died in 1853. Perhaps as a butcher he had a useful partnership with Thomas Bowen the tanner.

Thomas Bowen, of Garn, described as a farmer, died on 19 February 1851. He had signed his will six days earlier thus:

To my beloved wife Margaret Bowen all those messuages tenements and lands called Garn and Lower Garn in the parish of Newport as is now or lately was in the tenure of James Thomas and John Morgan. All remainder of estate to her. After her (all) to our children namely John Bowen and Thomas Bowen share and share alike. No part of my estate to be sold or mortgaged for ever.

Margaret, his executrix, proved the will on 1 March 1851 whilst she was living at Treffynnon. His estate was valued as being less than £20, (this does not include the value of the property).

At the 1851 census there are two separate dwellings called Garn. One was occupied by Ann Bowen, a house keeper and servant and most probably Thomas' servant at the 1841 census. The other Garn (possibly Garn isaf) was occupied by James Thomas described as farmer of 9 acres. He was accompanied by his wife Mary and their five children.

A letter survives at NLW dated 23 March 1857 and signed by Margaret Bowen. Addressing an unnamed tenant it reads:

I give you notice to quit and deliver up possession of all that house gardens and appurtenances which you hold of me as tenant situated in Lower Garn in the parish of Newport on or before 29 September.

In 1858 Thomas' widow Margaret Bowen, now aged 40, married John Griffiths, a 72 year old widower and agricultural labourer of Penllain. They would have a son, but John had died before the 1861 census. Margaret seems to have been attracted to older men, and gave them both male heirs.

At the 1861 census Garn was occupied by James Evans, described as a farmer of 9 acres. With him were his wife Phoebe and four children. Two other dwellings called Garn Fach were enumerated. One was uninhabited and the other was occupied by 60 year old John Morgan, a sawyer and his wife Ann.

By the 1871 census Margaret Griffiths, now a widow, returned to live at Garn. She was accompanied by Llewellyn Jenkins, her brother and a mariner. Also with he was her surviving son by Thomas Bowen, namely Thomas described as a labourer and her son by John Griffiths, called John. Garnisaf (written as Garn Isha) was occupied by 72 year old Anne Bowen, and a boarder called John Morgans, a hawker.

At the 1881 census Margaret Griffiths lived alone at Garn with her servant 14 year old Sarah Thomas. Her son Thomas Bowen now married lived at Garn Isaf. With his were his wife Elizabeth and three children. Thomas was described as an agricultural labourer. Also present was 67 year old Hannah Davies, "receiving parish relief". A Garn Fach was described as an uninhabited house.

By the 1891 census Thomas Bowen and his family had moved to Garn and his mother had moved to Garn Isaf, described as a two roomed dwelling. Garn had four rooms and Thomas was described as a farmer.

Margaret died in 1892. After becoming a widow she had become a member at Bethlehem Baptist chapel in 1861. Gravestones at St Mary's churchyard to this Bowen family of Garn have not yet been located.

At the 1901 census Garn was occupied by Thomas Bowen, his wife Elizabeth and two sons John and Thomas the latter was described as a mason. As mentioned an uninhabited house in the process of being built was present at Garn. Thomas senior died in 1919.

Note: There is a deed regarding Garn dated 1778 at the Pembrokeshire Record Office (not yet examined).

To make further progress on the house history begun here an examination of the house deeds will be essential. These will give the ownership of the property and often the names of past tenants.

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Website of Welsh mariners at www.welshmariners.org.uk