

Neath Abbey

Created: 2012

Number of panels: 8

Format: Pull-up banners (80 x 210cm, 31½" x 84")

Synopsis: An exhibition about the history of Neath Abbey, based around the charters and other records held at West Glamorgan Archives, but also referencing the ironworks and the Neath Antiquarian Society's excavations in the 1920s.

The exhibition is designed so that the boards can be arranged in a variety of combinations.

Panels are as follows: a generic title panel; West Glamorgan's oldest document; Neath Abbey charters; Parchment, quills and seals (about the process of writing); the Neath Abbey Estate; Neath Abbey Ironworks; excavating Neath Abbey; making sense of the ruins.

Images of the individual boards appear, two at a time, on subsequent pages.



West Glamorgan Archive Service

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of Neath Port Talbot
and Swansea



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Talbot ac Abertawe



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[www.swansea.gov.uk/
westglamorganarchives](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/westglamorganarchives)



West Glamorgan's Oldest Document Dogfen Hynaf Gorllewin Morgannwg

The Neath Abbey foundation charter is West Glamorgan's oldest document. It is held in the West Glamorgan Archives and dates from 1129. In 1129, Roger de Gornelle donated land to the abbey of Savigny to fund the foundation of an abbey in Neath.

Its grant includes the following:

lands, bounded by the river Neath, Nees, Clydach and Pedy-ogwell. This was the core of the estate. Nowadays this area includes Swansea, Tŷnewydd and part of Glyn, but in 1129 it was 'waste land'.

'The chapel of our castle of Neath.' This was the chapel of St Giles, demolished in 1863. The site is near the footbridge over the A483 at the end of Sledge Street, Neath. Nothing remains of the old castle on the west bank of the river, other than the present castle, which became the main stronghold and Neath Borough received its first charter in 1203.

'The mill of Clydach.' A water mill, probably situated a short way upstream from the abbey site, with meadowland lying nearby.



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Sofre alystod Mynochig Neath yw dogfen hynaf Gorllewin Morgannwg. Feli cael yn Archifau Gorllewin Morgannwg, ac mae'n dyddio o 1129. Yn 1129, roedd Roger de Gornelle yn darparu i'r Aghadfa Savigny i ataru alystod Mynochig yng Nghastell-nedd.

Yn eiddo hynaf yw'r canlynol:

llysoedd, bandedd gan yr Afon Neath, Nees, Clydach a Pedy-ogwell. Dyddio cael yw'r eiddo. Yn ddyddiau hyn, mae'n cael ffordd yn ymyrru Sgwrs, Tŷnewydd ac rhan o'r Glyn, ond yn 1129, roedd yn 'waste land'.

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To this intent, that the Abbot of the church of Savigny and its monastery should establish in the same charitable status a convent of monks to remain forever in that place under an abbot.

"In tenore, quod Abbas Savignienis Ecclesiae et conventus eiusde in eade elemosina conventum monachorum perenniter inibi sub abate permansurum instituit."

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Neath Abbey Charters Siartrau Mynachlog Nedd

Two charters are held at the West Glamorgan Archives, and it was read between the lines we learn about the difficulties the abbey faced in its first one hundred years.

The area was a battleground between the invading Normans and the native Welsh. Neath Abbey was on the boundary between the lordships of Gower and Glamorgan. It was said that whenever a lord of Gower died, the Welsh invaded and ravaged the land. Neath Castle was also sacked on several occasions. The monks decided they wanted to move to a more peaceful location of Gered in Somerset.

But disaster struck: another abbey was established at Cleveo near Gered, effectively stifling their plans. Reluctantly the monks consolidated their position in Wales. These two charters show what they did:

This is the charter granted about 1100 by Henry, Bishop of London, to give the abbey legitimacy. In it he confirms the lands and privileges the monks hold within his jurisdiction, lists details the gifts in the foundation charter, but there are many additions including Cliffton church, and 'The land of Forde with the church just as Ramulf the Hermit held it' - probably St Margaret's Chapel (now ruined) near Jersey Manor.



Clifford Trench
Trench Cliffton



Handwritten manuscript page.

Dymch statwr yn Ardflaw Goleiwen Morgannwg, ac os ydym yn ddiolun ffrwyg y hollau, rydym yn dygu am y cawelwedd o wyrnboeth ffrwyg yn ei chroen mynachlog gytist.

Cadod hon oedd mwy y gwyd ffrwyg y Normonok gwynnol of Cymru. Roedd Mynachlog Nedd ar y ffrwyg ffrwyg ddiolun ffrwyg a Morgannwg a, phan fyddai un o apgeidd Gŵyr yn mwr, cywedydd y baddol Cymryn gytist a y llai of amwllyd. Cadod Corad Cawelwedd ar amwllyd hwyll aml gwyll. Penderfynodd y mynachod eu bod am gytist i hollid eu haddychion yn llyd yng Nghedra y holl.

Ono lwydd ar eu cyflwr i sicrhwyd mynachlog araf yn Cawelwedd, gan rwyddu os cyflwr i bob cawelwedd. Yn amwllyd, agllydodd y mynachod eu cyflwr yng Nghymru. Mwr ddydd statwr hyn yn dangos y ffrwyg a cawelwedd.



Handwritten map or plan.

tra de ponce cu ecclesie sic hannull heremita ca in demofina retu.

A few years later, around 1120, the monks exchanged the West Country manor of Hordkinton in Devon for the more local manor of Weston in Gower.

This is the charter according to the agreement they made with St. William de Bury.

Today, Weston consists of two farms on the slopes of Caeh Bryn on Gower, but from the document it is clear that at the time there was a village there, with a church and a priest.



Handwritten manuscript page.

Os blyddodd yn ddiolun ffrwyg, addidit, 1120, roedd y mynachod wedi cyflwr hordkinton, eu maner yn hylwr, deolwedd lloegr, am y ffrwyg hwyll, ar Wollaston ym mfrwyg Gŵyr.

Dymch statwr ych cyflwr cyflwr o weidd gwyllt yn St. William de Bury.

Heddi mae Weston yn cynnwys dwy farm: y llydau Caeh Bryn ar benfryn Gŵyr, ac mwrn amwg o diolun bod parth i'w cael y ffrwyg, gwyllt agllyd.



For more information, including the full text of these charters, go to: www.swansea.gov.uk/NeathAbbey



Parchment, Quills and Seals Memrwn, Ysgrifbinnau a Seliau

Medieval charters were written not on paper but on parchment. This is made of sheep or calf skin: first the skin is shaved and soaked in lime to clean it. Then it is stretched and dried on a frame. Finally it is allowed to air over thickness and rubbed smooth.

Tougher and more durable than paper, parchment was used for writing documents that were intended to last. It was still being used for the deeds as late as the 1930s.



Cadod archfau o'i cawelwedd eu hwyllwedd os fermin, nid os bopur. Mae hwyllwedd wedi'u gwynnodd neu i'w gwynnodd, cofi y cawelwedd ei ddiolun ffrwyg aml gwyll. Yn ddiolun ffrwyg o'i cawelwedd o'i hollid i'w hollid.

Yn hwyllwedd gwyllwedd i'w hollid, cadod mwrn i'w hollidwedd os gwyllwedd ddiolun ffrwyg aml gwyll. Yn ddiolun ffrwyg o'i cawelwedd o'i hollid i'w hollid.



Parchment document with a wax seal.



A quill pen and a parchment document.



A parchment document with a wax seal.

To make a quill, you would use a large goose-feather. The end was twisted to form a point, then it was cut in a point, and a small slit was made in the end to make the ink flow better. The small slits you used were called a pen knife, and no medieval writer would be without one.



A scribe writing at a desk.

Wedi'u gwynnodd, byddoch yn ddiolun ffrwyg i'w hollid. I'w hollid, pan ei wynnodd i'w gwynnodd, ydych chi'n ddiolun ffrwyg aml gwyll. Yn ddiolun ffrwyg o'i cawelwedd o'i hollid i'w hollid.

Gellid gwyllwedd os hwyllwedd hwyllwedd i'w hollid, aml gwyll. Yn ddiolun ffrwyg o'i cawelwedd o'i hollid i'w hollid.

Seals
Apart from wax, administrators and clergy, too, made lead seals. Even the lead of the manor was sometimes blessed, but it was beneath the dignity of a gentleman to write. As a result, deeds and charters were authenticated not by a signature, but by a seal: beating the owner's special design.



A wax seal with a decorative design.

Selau
Ac wrthio cyflwr hwyllwedd ydych chi'n ddiolun ffrwyg aml gwyll. Yn ddiolun ffrwyg o'i cawelwedd o'i hollid i'w hollid.

Gwyllwedd o'i cawelwedd o'i hollid i'w hollid.



A dark wax seal.

Roedd selau cawelwedd wedi'u gwynnodd i'w hollid, aml gwyll. Yn ddiolun ffrwyg o'i cawelwedd o'i hollid i'w hollid.





The Neath Abbey Estate Ystad Mynachlog Nedd



Neath Abbey 1771

Mynachlog Nedd 1837

On the orders of Henry VII, Neath Abbey was dissolved in 1535. John Rice oversaw the closure of the abbey. "My lord abbot of Neath is contented to surrender his house," he wrote. "But he hath not done so ever had wastefully and well." Laymen Thomas the abbot became rector of Cadeboron.

The abbey and the core of its estate was sold to Sir Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) in 1621. The family were lived at the abbey and later sold it to Secretary of State Sir John Herbert of Swainswick, who reused stone from other abbey buildings to transform part of the site into a mansion. The mullioned windows and high gables we see today give an impression of what the house was like.



Neath Abbey by the East End wall, 1771

Mynachlog Nedd gan ymelyd, 1771

St John's property passed through the family to Sir Philip Hobbs. After his death in 1676, his wife Elizabeth transferred the estate to the control of a steward, as she may have been the last person to live at the house.

Fifty years later, the house had fallen on hard times. Copper was being smelted in the monastic kilns, and parts of the old mansion had been turned into makeshift accommodation for the workers.

Part of the Neath Abbey estate passed eventually to Lord Dywys, and continued to be run as a landed estate until it was sold in the 20th century. The Neath Abbey Estate records are held at the West Glamorgan Archives Service.

A chymryd yr Eiddau, cofnododd Mynachlog Nedd ei ddiwydiwr ym 1838. Gofynnwyd i John Rice y "Broses o gau" llywodraeth. "Nid fyddai gwyboda'r abbot Gornell na'r lloftwr i'w ddiwydiwr," ychydig yn ddiwydiwr. "Ond hyd yn hyn tu'n bwrdd addysg ac yn ddiwydiwr." Gofynnwyd i'r lloftwr Thomas, yr abbot, yn ddiwydiwr. "Gofynnwyd i'r lloftwr Thomas, yr abbot, yn ddiwydiwr."

Gofynnwyd y llywodraeth o'r ffordd i'r lloftwr i'r lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621. Ni fu'n hyspwrdd y llywodraeth abbot, ac fe'i gwerthwyd yn ddiwydiwr. Ni fu'n hyspwrdd abbot i'r lloftwr John Herbert o Swainswick, a ddiwydiwrdd gwareg a ddiwydiwrdd y llywodraeth i ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621. Ni fu'n hyspwrdd y llywodraeth abbot, ac fe'i gwerthwyd yn ddiwydiwr. Ni fu'n hyspwrdd abbot i'r lloftwr John Herbert o Swainswick, a ddiwydiwrdd gwareg a ddiwydiwrdd y llywodraeth i ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621.

Trasgwyddwyd yr eiddau i'r lloftwr John Rice i'r lloftwr Philip Hobbs. Ar ôl ei farwolaeth ym 1676, trasgwyddwyd yr eiddau i'r lloftwr Elizabeth, a ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621.

Bum deg mlynedd yn ddiwydiwrdd, rwyd i'r lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd. Rwyd i'r lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd, ac rwyd i'r lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd, ac rwyd i'r lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd.

Ni fu'n hyspwrdd, trasgwyddwyd rhan o'r eiddau Mynachlog Nedd i'r lloftwr Dywys, a ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621. Cadeirdd ychydig yr eiddau Mynachlog Nedd yn ddiwydiwrdd Archifau Gogledd Morgannwg.



Neath Abbey Ironworks Gweithfeydd Haearn Mynachlog Nedd



The Abbey 1771

Y gweithfeydd 1771

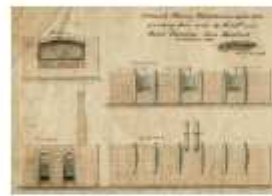


The Abbey 1837

Y gweithfeydd 1837

The Neath Valley has a long association with industry. Cast mines date back to the time of the monks, and the copper works of Abercystwll were set up in 1564. A copper works was also set up in Neath Abbey in 1694, and other works were set up (including the abbey itself) later in the 1730s.

Mae cyffwrdd hi rhwng Mynachlog Nedd a diwydiwrdd. Cae'r lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621. Ni fu'n hyspwrdd y lloftwr John Herbert o Swainswick, a ddiwydiwrdd gwareg a ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621.



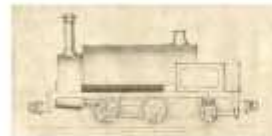
The Neath Abbey ironworks began in 1762 when a consortium of Cornish Quaker industrialists moved to the area and took a lease on lands of Neath Abbey for iron works.



Deddiwyd gweithfeydd haearn Mynachlog Nedd ym 1762 gan ymelyd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621. Ni fu'n hyspwrdd y lloftwr John Herbert o Swainswick, a ddiwydiwrdd gwareg a ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621.

The works took some time to complete, but by 1800 the works was turning out 3000 tons of pig iron. Soon the company began to make whole engines, and quickly established a reputation for high-quality machinery and built up a good clientele.

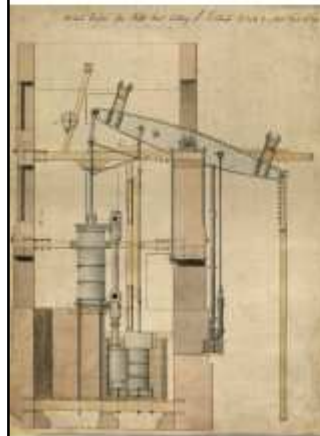
Rwyd i'r lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd haearn ond, ym 1800, rwyd i'r lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd 3000 o ddiwydiwrdd haearn ond. Ar ôl ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd, deddiwyd y lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621.



The Neath Abbey ironworks closed in 1885, but its engineering plants are part of the West Glamorgan Archives. There are plans of machinery for shipping, mines, locomotives, gasworks and various private works. Each is carefully drawn in detail, and the care taken with the drawing hints at the quality of the end product.



Cae'r lloftwr gweithfeydd haearn Mynachlog Nedd ym 1885, ond caed y lloftwr ychydig yn ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621. Ni fu'n hyspwrdd y lloftwr John Herbert o Swainswick, a ddiwydiwrdd gwareg a ddiwydiwrdd y lloftwr Richard Cornewall (son-grandfather of Oliver Cromwell) am 1621.





Excavating Neath Abbey Cloddio Mynachlog Nedd

A few centuries of neglect, the ruins of Neath Abbey were covered with ivy, while the ground beneath was choked with rubble and rubbish walls.

All this was to change in 1924. The Neath Antiquarian Society, founded just the year before, began the ambitious project of excavating the ruins of Neath Abbey.



The group in 1924

A di ddiwyddedd o'r hyspulus, roedd ystafellau Mynachlog Nedd wedi'u gorchuddio ag lawng, ac roedd y ddolwr oddi tawh iawn wedi'i gwasgoffi ddiwyllanol.

Byddas hyn o'i ym 1924. Dechreuodd Cymdeithas Hynafiaethol Castell-nedd, a sefydlwyd y flwyddyn cyn hynny, y prosiect uchelgeidiol o gloddio adfeilion Mynachlog Nedd.

The project was led by Glen Taylor, Frank Taylor, Stanley Thomas and Lewis Thomas, who gathered a band of enthusiastic volunteers, both male and female, who were nicknamed "the gangsters".

Aweithwyd y prosiect gan Glen Taylor, Frank Taylor, Stanley Thomas a Lewis Thomas, a gogwyddo gwir o wladolwyr twchydig ynghyd, dynion a menywod, a moddwyd y bysaw "y gangsters" iddynt.

The story of the dig is told in these photographs, courtesy of the Neath Antiquarian Society.

Achoddi hanes y gloddio dwy i ffiguratau hyn, ddech i Gymdeithas Hynafiaethol Castell-nedd.



Making Sense of the Abbey Ruins Gwneud Synnwyr o Adfeilion yr Abatty



The ruins of Neath Abbey are full of atmosphere. Only parts of the original building survive intact, but everywhere the ruins hint of the majestic building it once was. Each part of the site had a special part to play in the lives of the monks.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the monks' living quarters were converted into a mansion, which is now a residential ruin. Some important parts of the monastery have all but disappeared. For example, only the outline remains of the monastic kitchen, which was used during the 16th century as a kitchen for arranging copiers.

Mas adfeilion Mynachlog Nedd yn llawn awyrgylch. Dim ond rhannau o'r adeilad gwreiddiol sy'n galluogi edwyn i hyn, ond ym mîsod bell a chwarel mawr adfeilion yn ein holtgofa o'r adeilad ystafellau a h. Rhodd gan bwyd ym an eiddon arbennig i'r awyrgylch ym mynyddau mynachlog.

Ar ôl ddiwylliant y Mynachlogydd, roedd hyspulus adfeilionau i'w gweld yn eiddau arbennig. Dim ond rhannau o'r adeilad gwreiddiol sy'n galluogi edwyn i hyn, ond ym mîsod bell a chwarel mawr adfeilion yn ein holtgofa o'r adeilad ystafellau a h. Rhodd gan bwyd ym an eiddau arbennig i'r awyrgylch ym mynyddau mynachlog.

<p>1 The West Tower contained the main entrance and the lay brother's quarters. Thanks to the 16th-century gatehouse, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>2 The central tower is a good example of a 12th-century building. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>3 A part of the church tower, the main part of the church. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>4 The west tower is the oldest part of the church. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>5 The east tower is the oldest part of the church. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>6 The west tower is the oldest part of the church. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>7 The west tower is the oldest part of the church. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>
<p>8 The High Cross, looking from the north. It's the most imposing stone structure on the site.</p>	<p>9 The central tower is a good example of a 12th-century building. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>10 The central tower is a good example of a 12th-century building. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>11 The central tower is a good example of a 12th-century building. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>12 The central tower is a good example of a 12th-century building. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>13 The central tower is a good example of a 12th-century building. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>	<p>14 The central tower is a good example of a 12th-century building. Thanks to its location, it's the only part of the West Tower that remains.</p>

