HOUSE DETECTIVES

INTRODUCTION
Exploration Tywi! forms part of the Tywi Afon yr Oesoedd landscape partnership scheme which has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Countryside Council for Wales, Rural Development Plan, Welsh Assembly Government, Carmarthenshire County Council and in kind by The National Trust.

Exploration Tywi! is a community project led by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust with the aim to explore how and why the valley has changed through time, all through a series of activities and events.

House Detectives forms one of these activities in which we will be:
- looking into the settlement of the Tywi valley, what can we learn about the history and development of the towns and villages?
- When were the isolated farms and small hamlets established, and do any of the early historic buildings survive?
- How has the settlement pattern changed over time and developed into the 20th and 21st centuries?
- What do the buildings tell us about the communities living and working in the valley?

To investigate these sorts of questions we have split House Detectives into 2 parts
Part 1 will be a wide ranging survey of buildings in the valley, asking members of the community to look at and record a variety - all sorts of buildings are of interest, not just houses or homes but shops and offices, farm buildings, workshops or industrial buildings. This will be a broadbrush survey filling out simple recording forms and taking photographs of buildings throughout the valley.

Part 2 of the house detectives programme will take place early in 2010 when we will examine a handful of buildings in greater detail and record them using archaeological building recording techniques.

The information collected as part of this activity will be held along with all the other information gathered through Exploration Tywi! and will be held at DAT offices in the HER and be available as a publicly available resource for further research.

The project area runs from the west of Dryslwyn to north of Llangadog (see enclosed map) this will be the target area for the project which we hope to divide up between participating individuals or groups to record.

WHY ARE BUILDINGS IMPORTANT AND WHAT CAN THEY TELL US?
- They can tell us about the people who lived, worked and worshipped in them.
- They tell us about social history – what was important in past communities, their aspirations,
- they tell us about social hierarchy - they hold up a mirror to the society that built and used them
They tell us about the interaction between people and the landscape. Every building is related to the landscape that it came from. The geology that the stone was quarried from, the aggregate in the mortar that binds the walls together, the thatch that retains the weeds and crops that were harvested.

Why is it important to record buildings?
- Buildings are undergoing change constantly, they are either being used and adapting to changing needs over time or they are falling into disuse and disrepair.
- This project is providing an opportunity to capture a snapshot of the Tywi valley at the end of the 21st decade of the 21st century.

How do we investigate buildings?
- By looking at historic documents, maps or old photographs
- By looking at the architectural styles that have been employed in its construction or decoration
- By studying the standing fabric or ‘archaeology’ of the building.

What do we look for?
- What function the building has – how might that have changed over time?
- Comparative examples
- What form does it take? Can you see what its original form took – has it been modified how has it been altered?
- What materials have been used in its construction – where might they have come from – how did they get there?
- What features are there that might tell us about its history?

When analysing buildings, consider the following:
- walling material, shape, coursing, jointing, finish
- roofing shape
- detail at verge
- detail at eaves
- roof material, method of laying
- ridge
- chimney position
- dormers, position, shape, roofing, walling material
- plan form
- sectional form
- staircase provision
- window shape
- window frames
- door shape and details

There are a number of books and reference materials that can help to guide the building archaeologist, but not a lot that reference local building stock – its up to us to investigate and then write a guide to the buildings of the Tywi Valley!

There is –
The Welsh House by Iorwerth Peate
The Buildings of Wales: Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion by Tom Lloyd, Julian Orbach and Rob Scourfield
The list of ‘Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest’
The Historic Environment Record held by DAT.
National Monuments Record held by the RCAHMW in Aberystwyth
To start the survey we have compiled a simple recording sheet to fill out for each individual building. If you have a camera then please take a photograph as well!

See enclosed guidance notes for filling in the building record form.

Let us know how you get on and return your forms and photographs to the Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo SA19 6AF

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT WHEN GOING ONTO PRIVATE LAND THAT YOU HAVE THE LANDOWNER’S PERMISSION

BE SAFE – DON’T TAKE ANY RISKS!**
FURTHER READING


National Trust undated. *Home Farm Dinefwr: Significance*. National Trust Report


CONTACTS

Ancient Monuments Society
http://www.ancientmonumentssociety.org.uk/

http://www.bricksandbrass.co.uk/

Cadw
http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/

Dyfed Archaeological Trust
http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk/

Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales
http://www.cprw.org.uk/

Countryside Council for Wales
http://www.ccw.gov.uk/

Council for British Archaeology
http://www.britarch.ac.uk/

Institute of Historic Building Conservation
http://www.ihbc.org.uk/

http://www.house-detectives.co.uk/

National Trust
http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/

Tywi a River Through Time is part funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, Countryside Council for Wales, Rural Development Plan, Welsh Assembly Government, Carmarthenshire County Council and in kind by The National Trust.
Rhan ariannwyd Tywi Afon yr Oesoedd gan Gronfa Tref tadaeth y Loteri, Cyngor Cefn Gwlad, Cynllun Datblygu Gwledig, Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru, Cyngor Sir Gár ac mewn da gan Yr Ymddiredolaeth Genedlaethol.

Tywi a River Through Time is part funded by Heritage Lottery Fund, Countryside Council for Wales, Rural Development Plan, Welsh Assembly Government, Carmarthenshire County Council and in kind by The National Trust.