

Discover

# Nannerch



# Welcome to Nannerch

This attractive village, many time winner of the 'Best Kept Village' award, nestles six miles north-west of Mold, in the foothills of the Clwydian Range, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The main road now bypasses the village but it is well worth making a detour to explore the surrounding countryside and this peaceful and unspoilt village.

Nannerch can trace its history back to prehistoric times. Stone Age flint tools have been found, Bronze Age burial mounds dot the hillsides and three Bronze Age axes were discovered nearby. Iron Age hillforts crown Penycloddiau and Moel Arthur to the west of the village. A standing stone circle in the grounds of Penbedw may be another prehistoric relic or possibly a folly, built by the 18th century owner.

The first documentary references to Nannerch are a tax return and a list of clergy, dated 1254, indicating that a church was in existence at this time.

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Key figures in Welsh history have been associated with the area, including Llywelyn the Great, who gave Penbedw to his daughter Gwenllian, and Owain Glyndŵr who took brief possession of Penbedw during his rebellion.

The families who owned the nearby Penbedw Estate have influenced village life greatly over the years. They funded the church, school and village hall and provided employment for many locals.

The village itself remained fairly small for many years. Just a dozen or so properties, built of local limestone, clustered around the church and along the tree-lined Main Street. Most villagers worked locally and few travelled far. The village has expanded over the past 50 years, as roads improved and the area became accessible for those willing to commute to work in the larger cities of Liverpool and Manchester. The village has changed considerably over the centuries but community spirit remains strong with regular local events and a range of flourishing clubs.

This booklet has been produced by the local community to celebrate the rich cultural and natural heritage of the area. Many thanks to all who have provided photographs or shared their memories and knowledge, to Nannerch Community Council, and to the staff and junior pupils of Ysgol Nannerch.

The booklet can also be downloaded from [www.cadwynclwyd.co.uk](http://www.cadwynclwyd.co.uk) or [www.flintshire.gov.uk/tourism](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/tourism)



# Through the ages

**2000 -1000BC**

Bronze Age tribes settled in the area, building a Stone Circle and burial mound at Penbedw.



**1233**  
Llywelyn the Great gifted Penbedw to his daughter Gwenllian.

**1534**  
Wal Goch, one of the oldest houses in the village, was built.



**1254**  
First documentary references made to Nannerch and its church.

**1554**  
Henry VIII granted Penbedw to the Mostyn family.

**1869**  
Mold – Denbigh Railway opened, with a station at Nannerch.



**1400**  
Owain Glyndŵr took possession briefly of Penbedw during his rebellion.

**1853**  
Present church consecrated.



**1894**  
New school completed.



**1958**  
Penbedw demolished.



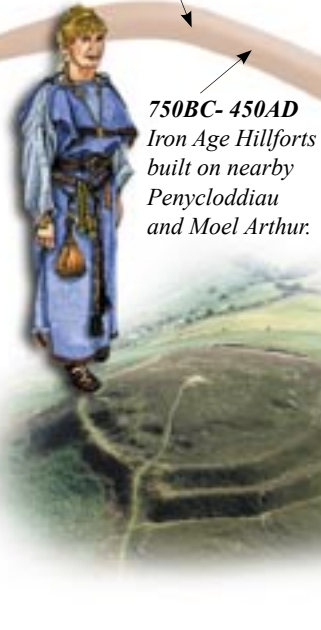
**1962**  
Railway line closed.

**1936**  
Building of the Village Hall began.

**1990s**  
School extended and community playing fields opened.



**1985**  
Clwydian Range designated an AONB.



**750BC- 450AD**  
Iron Age Hillforts built on nearby Penycloddiau and Moel Arthur.

# An estate village



The Penbedw Estate had a great influence on Nannerch and, for many years, village and estate life were intertwined. Successive owners left their mark on the local community in many ways.

Penbedw boasted 30 bedrooms and a 4000 acre estate. In 1778, Thomas Pennant described it as 'an ornament of that little valley'. Sadly, the house became too costly to maintain and was demolished in 1958.

The estate included most of the outlying farms and many village houses. Many locals worked on the estate and workers also came from further afield, bringing new surnames to the area. The 18th century owners, the Williams family, built the 'Cross Foxes' inn, which takes its name from their coat of arms. Their brewer is buried in the churchyard.



In 1852, Penbedw was sold to a railway engineer, William Barber Buddicom. His family became great benefactors to the village, supporting the rebuilding of the church in 1853 and funding the new school in 1894. The Buddicoms built several new houses, including Tai Cochion cottages on the Main Street and Station Lodge, close to the junction with the Mold-Denbigh road. They are clearly identifiable by their distinctive brickwork.

In 1935, Venetia Buddicom and her mother decided to build a Memorial Hall for the village, in memory of Venetia's father, Harry Buddicom, and her brother Walter, who was killed in the First World War.

Harry and Walter Buddicom



Tai Cochion

The Buddicoms influenced many other aspects of village life, organizing annual treats for the children and providing the Scouts and Young Farmers with a venue for meetings. In 1921, Mrs Buddicom was one of a group of influential local women who formed Nannerch Women's Institute. During the Second World War, the Red Cross was given the use of Penbedw.

The most unusual item brought to the village by the Buddicoms was a tank that had been partly designed by Major Harry Buddicom in the First World War. After the war, it was transported by train and then driven to the middle of the village, where a welcoming party of excited schoolchildren waited! It stood opposite the post office until 1938, when it was broken up into parts for re-use in the Second World War.

The tank at Nannerch



The Red Cross at Penbedw

August 3rd 1876  
 "A treat was given on Thursday by Mr Buddicom of Penbedw Hall. Good attendance this week owing to the tea party."

Nov 8th 1897  
 "A great number of boys absent owing to pheasant shooting at Penbedw."

Nannerch School logbook

# Working the land



Farming has always been the main land use. Most of the farms were owned by the Penbedw Estate and tenanted to local families.

Land was cultivated far higher up the mountain than it is today and farming remained dependent on horse and manpower until after the Second World War.

This extract from a letter by Minnie Edwards (née Peake) to her brother in America, illustrates the typical mix of crop and animal husbandry:

*"Our corn looks middling, hay is pretty fair, turnips and potatoes are alright. We are milking 6 cows, 2 of them are heifers and we have 8 weaning calves, 6 horses and sheep - I cannot give you the count but think so far we have done well. At present we only have 2 sows but we have just sold 9 pigs and one is weaning tonight. We don't keep ducks now, they want running after and our legs are not so young as they used to be. We do not get many eggs for we have not many hens, about 30 and we used to have nearly 100. We churn twice a week and get 30-35lbs of butter. I think we shall have a fair amount of fruit this year. Gooseberries are very fine & blackcurrants."*

Firwood Farm, Nannerch, July 4th, 1910

In the days before combine harvesters and mechanical balers, haymaking and corn harvesting required many hands. Well into the 20th century, hay and corn were still cut by hand with scythes. A team of men would cut each field, the leading scythesman setting off, making three or four cuts, before the next man set off, so that a staggered team of men were



swinging scythes across the field. At the end of each run, they would walk back to sharpen their scythes before starting on the next section. Gradually the farms acquired horse-drawn cutting machines, but scythes were still used on the steeper fields.

Cut hay was left to dry in the fields before being piled up with pitchforks to make a large haystack. Sheaves of cut corn were first dried in small stooks, then collected and stacked until October, when a mobile threshing machine went from farm to farm to separate the corn from the chaff.

Each farm took their corn for grinding either to Nannerch Mill at Pen-y-felin, Wern Mill on the main road or Sarn Mill, which later ground stone for cement.





# The train era

The opening of the Mold - Denbigh Railway in 1869, with its station at Nannerch, had a great impact on the village. Despite the fact that Mr Buddicom of Penbedw was a renowned railway engineer, he still fiercely opposed the siting of the new railway within view of his house and the route was realigned!

Villagers could now travel further afield for work and leisure, and goods could be transported more easily to and fro. Coal delivered by rail stayed in a siding until it had been delivered around the village by a horse-drawn wagon.



Livestock also was transported by train, loaded from a strong pen on one of the sidings onto a special truck that the farmers had to order in advance. Day old chicks were also transported by train – the farmers would be telephoned to tell them the chicks had been loaded onto the train so they were at the station to collect them. Milk from local farms was sent to Merseyside by train.

The trains also brought large numbers of holiday-makers and day trippers from Merseyside. Several cottages and huts were let as holiday accommodation and the mill craftshop, Sarn Mill cafe, local restaurants and the pub all benefitted from the visitors. The Cross Foxes (01352 741 293), The Cherry Pie Restaurant (01352 741279) and Old Mill B&B (01352 741542) still welcome guests today.



Station Lodge, formerly the stationmaster's house



Many have fond memories of their childhood holidays in Nannerch, although conditions were often basic.



"The cottage just had 2 large rooms, one downstairs and one upstairs. Cooking and heating were done with a range and there was no electricity, running water or sewage system. There was a shed attached to the cottage. Just inside the shed door was a recess with a plank of wood across. The plank had a hole in it and a bucket beneath it – this was the toilet!"

Pat Gore

Gradually, as car ownership grew and roads were increasingly used for freight, the use of the railway declined and it finally closed. On 28th April 1962, the platforms were packed with people waving as the last train from Chester to Denbigh passed through Nannerch Station.

"My grandparents used to come from Liverpool to spend holidays in Nannerch before the First World War. They loved it so much that they bought Pen-y-mynydd, Bryn Golau, where I live now. They would spend all summer there. My mother recalled how the whole family decamped from Liverpool every April, bringing their luggage on two pony and traps and riding their other three horses!"

Betty Kent



# Church and chapel

**T**.H. Wyatt, an architect from London, who also designed Gorsedd and Brynford churches, designed the present church. It was built in 1852 and consecrated on St. Michael's day in 1853. Records show it as the third church to occupy the same site in the village. The first church on the site was a simple structure made of wattle. The second church, which was dedicated to St. Mary, had a wooden steeple and external steps leading up to a gallery on the south side.

The churchyard includes several graves that pre-date the present church, including some old box-type memorials. Internally, some of the old windows have been reused and there are several monuments and plaques taken from the former churches. These include memorials to the former owners of Penbedw. One is a striking 1694 monument to Charlotte Mostyn, attributed to renowned carver Grinling Gibbons; a monument to Watkin Williams of Penbedw, a local MP from 1777-1806; and a splendid two-tier chandelier given to the church in 1820, by Elizabeth Williams. There are many more recent plaques to the Buddicom family who also gave the fine carved chest and cupboard at the rear of the church.

Not all residents chose to worship in Nannerch Church. By the early 1800s itinerant preachers were drawing large audiences and less formal Non-conformist worship was

*Monument to Charlotte Mostyn*



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gaining support within the community. At first, groups of devout folk met to pray in private houses but, as numbers grew, several small chapels were built, Pen-y-felin Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Waen Congregational Chapel and the Wesleyan Chapel at Bryn Golau. Over the years, congregations declined and the chapels have now all been converted into private dwellings, but in the early 20th century they were flourishing. Locals recall that Pen-y-felin chapel was full to capacity every Sunday. If you did not arrive by 5.30pm for the 6pm service you would have to stand throughout the 1½ hour service!

The minister at Bryn Golau chapel was Thomas Jones of Bwlch yr Crigiau who was a renowned composer of Welsh music. There is a monument to him at Coedpoeth, near Wrexham.

*Here lyeth the body of Robert Jones, late brewer to Watkin Williams of Penbedw, died April 16th, 1797.*

Gravestone epitaph





The first school

## School days

The first school was in a building attached to the pub but the facilities were not ideal and, in 1893, Mr Buddicom put forward plans to build a new school. The original school was converted into dwellings, still called 'Old School Houses'. The new red-brick school was opened in 1894, consisting of one large room divided into a small classroom for infants and a larger space for the middle and upper classes. It was enlarged in 1945 and further improved in 1962 but, by the 1990s, it had become far too small for the growing village and a major extension was built in 1998.

The playing fields behind the school were later developed to provide sports facilities for both village and school. More recently, an outdoor classroom with adventure play and seating has been added.

"One teacher, Miss Ada Hughes, often took us for walks down the lane. I learned the names of all the flowers from her."  
Elvet Pierce, pupil  
Ysgol Nannerch,  
1940-47



"I like school because everyone is nice and smiley."  
Sadie Spencer  
"I like to jump off the climbing frame and do stunts with my friend Jack."  
Isaac Barnes  
"I like playing football and rugby on the field with my family and friends at weekends."  
Joe Harrison  
Ysgol Nannerch pupils, June 2010

## Village life

Before widespread car ownership the village shops and businesses catered for all daily needs. There was the Post Office and sweet shop in the middle of the village, a general stores on the main road. Nannerch Mill shop, on the edge of the village, served local farmers and nearby houses.

Older residents have fond memories of the Post Office and of the Fox family who ran it.

The smithy, situated down the lane by the school, was an important part of village life. Mr Cartwright, the blacksmith, used to forge fine wrought iron gates as well as shoeing the local horses. Farmers used to enjoy a drink at the nearby Cross Foxes Inn whilst their horses were being shod. The pub continues to be popular with locals and visitors today.

"For a half-penny we could buy either five aniseed balls or three strips of liquorice. The sweets were displayed in the shop window and on a warm summer's day it was a common sight to see the old cat fast asleep amongst them. This made little difference to us children – in fact we often felt the sweets the cat had been lying on had a better flavour!"

The late Gwen Tapley



Former Post Office



Mr Cartwright, the local blacksmith





# A place for wildlife

Nannerch is in the heart of the Clwydian Range Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, nestling on the western side of the Wheeler Valley with the rounded hilltops of Moel Arthur and Penycloddiau rising above it to the south-west. The AONB was designated in 1985 in recognition of its nationally important landscape quality. It is one of only eight protected landscapes in Wales, five AONBs and three National Parks.

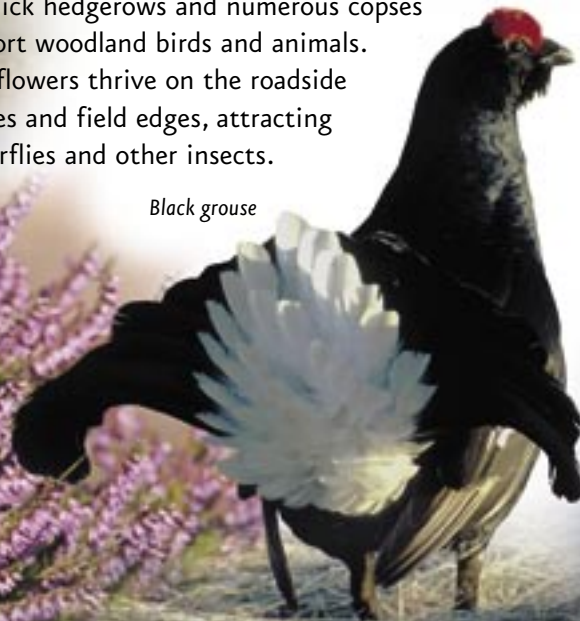
Streams tumble down steep sided valleys to join the wider Wheeler Valley. Otters have returned to the River Wheeler in recent years, which is a good sign that the river is clean. The plentiful insects that live in the river and streams attract many birds. Dippers, small brown birds with a white bib, and grey wagtails, delicate birds with yellow bellies and constantly wagging tails, are common. The deeper waters of the trout fishing lakes at Wal Goch and Sarn Mill add to the aquatic habitat, ideal feeding grounds for herons and nesting sites for coots and moorhens.

Grey wagtail

The thick hedgerows and numerous copses support woodland birds and animals.

Wildflowers thrive on the roadside verges and field edges, attracting butterflies and other insects.

Black grouse



Wheatear



Dipper



The higher ground is a mix of rough grassland and heather moorland, an internationally rare habitat. In July, there is an abundant crop of juicy bilberries and, in August, the hillsides turn a glorious purple when the heather is in bloom. The grassland is dotted with flowers including wild thyme, tiny yellow-flowered tormentil, and milkwort whose delicate flowers vary from pale to dark blue.

The moorland is alive with birdsong during the summer as male birds sing lustily to attract a mate. Most obvious are wheatears, often seen perched on a stone or post. Stonechats, whose distinctive call sounds like two pebbles being banged together and redstarts, with their long orange tails, are also common. Meadow pipits and skylarks make up for their drab colouring by their melodic song and aerial displays.

Red grouse and the extremely rare black grouse both breed on the moorland. Ravens are often heard croaking as they flap slowly overhead. The numerous rabbits, mice, voles and small birds provide plentiful food for birds of prey. Buzzards and kestrels are very common but rarer species like merlin are also seen.

[www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk](http://www.clwydianrangeaonb.org.uk)

Moorhen



Kestrel





Small tortoiseshell

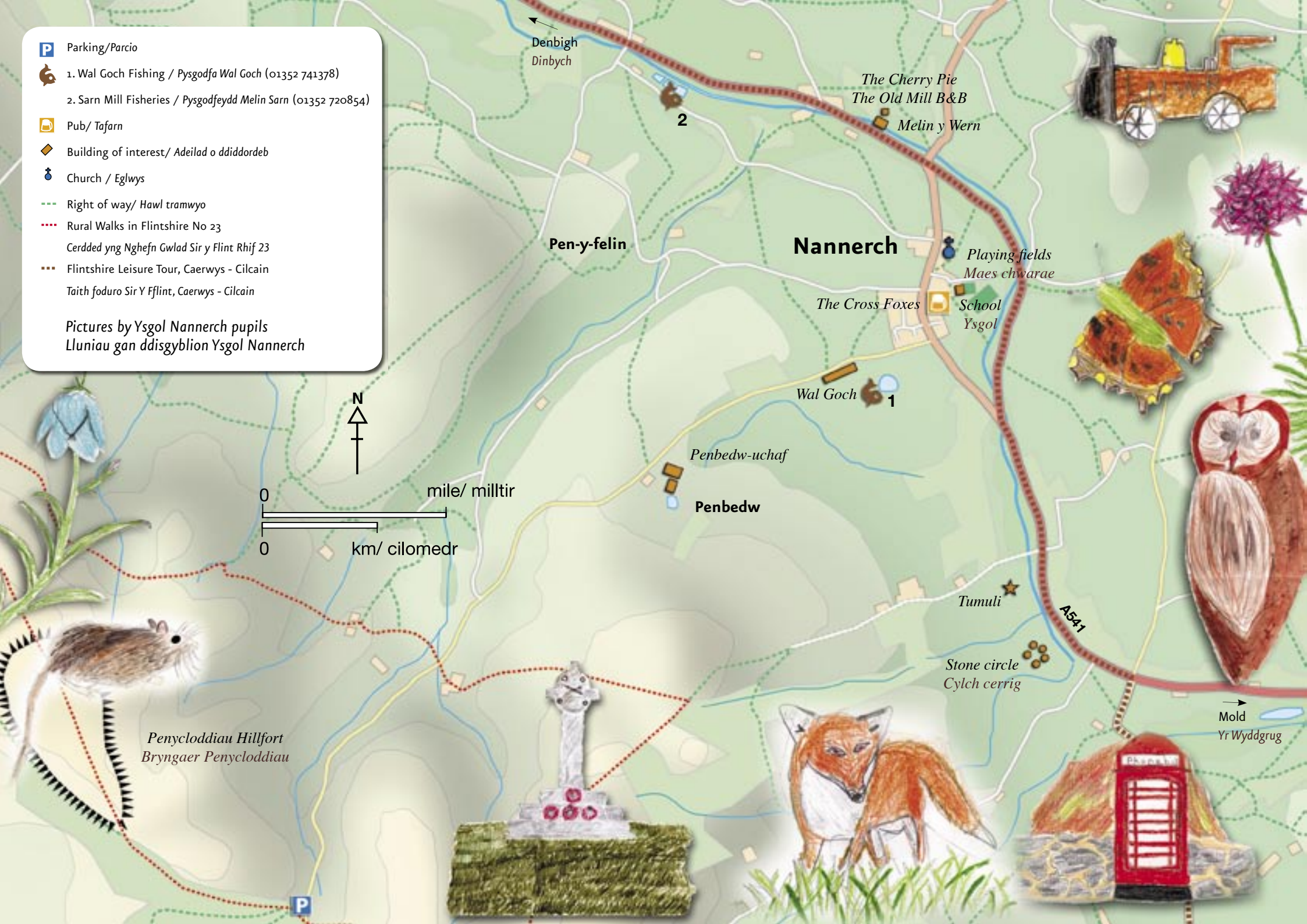


Peacock



-  Parking/Parcio
-  1. Wal Goch Fishing / Pysgodfa Wal Goch (01352 741378)
-  2. Sarn Mill Fisheries / Pysgodfeydd Melin Sarn (01352 720854)
-  Pub/ Tafarn
-  Building of interest/ Adeilad o ddiddordeb
-  Church / Eglwys
-  Right of way/ Hawl tramwyo
-  Rural Walks in Flintshire No 23  
Cerdded yng Nghefn Gwlad Sir y Flint Rhif 23
-  Flintshire Leisure Tour, Caerwys - Cilcain  
Taith foduro Sir Y Fflint, Caerwys - Cilcain

Pictures by Ysgol Nannerch pupils  
Lluniau gan ddisgyblion Ysgol Nannerch



*Penycloddiau Hillfort  
Bryngaer Penycloddiau*

