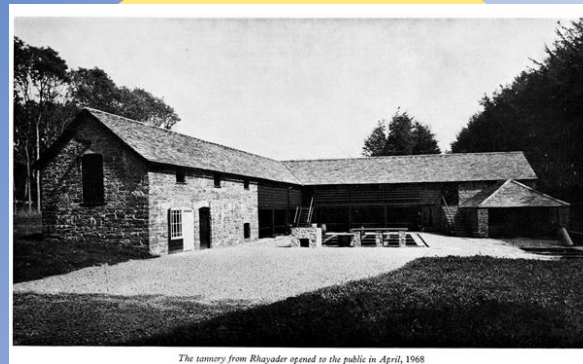


19th Century

Pigot's 1835 South Wales Directory, which listed professions before civil registration began, notes a tannery in Rhayader (then Rhaeadr) shown in the picture below. These were commonplace in Britain up to the end of the 19th Century. Leather could be produced through vegetable tanning. This was the process of preserving animal pelts using tannin, a chemical present in oak. Preferably, 25- to 30-year-old oak coppice was sourced for its bark and ground in a bark mill before being added to water to form a tannin liquor. The hide was then submerged in the liquor for up to 18 months. These leathers then went on to be used for boot soles and horse harnesses, to name a few uses. This process could take up to three years!



The tannery from Rhayader opened to the public in April, 1968

20th Century

Rhayader was the location of the last oak-leather tannery in Wales, functioning from the mid-18th Century until the early 1950's. (Geraint Jenkins, 1973). In a 1901 census of Rhayader, 13 locals have occupations listed involving leather, showing this work continued into the 20th century. Sites such as Cefn Cenarth could have been sources of oak for this process, during this period, with evidence of coppicing being present on site.

Although it is likely that Cefn Cenarth has been woodland since the development of the wildwood following the last ice-age, we know that large sections were felled during the two World Wars. As a result, many of the trees are of a similar age, and the woodland has little variation in structure. The resultant extremely dense canopy creates high humidity and perfect conditions for rare lichens and mosses to grow. It also supports the carpets of bilberry that can be found in both the north and south woods.

Commercial forestry planting took place in the 1950s and 1970s, as did improving the upland heath for sheep grazing. In 2011, an area of sitka spruce, lodgepole pine and Japanese larch was felled and thinned to restore and reconnect the native woodland. Heathland restoration on the hilltop began with the felling of the spruce and heather is now adorning the ground, supporting bird species including meadow pipit and skylark once again.

Once felling was complete, Radnorshire Wildlife Trust planted 6,000 young local provenance trees, mostly sessile oak with a good mixture of downy birch, rowan, hawthorn, crab apple, and aspen. Some ten years on, the young trees have developed well and the woodland is more diverse, both in terms of the age and species structure of the woodland.

Lichen Ridge
**Cefn
Cenarth**
Radnorshire Wildlife Trust

The History of Cefn Cenarth

Cefn Cenarth is an 18-hectare mosaic habitat comprised of ancient sessile oak woodland, larch plantation and upland heath. The sessile oak woodland is like others in the area, including the oak woodland at Gilfach nature reserve.



Cynllun Cymunedau y Dreth Gwarediadau Tirlenwi



Landfill Disposals Tax Communities Scheme

Protecting **wildlife** for the future.