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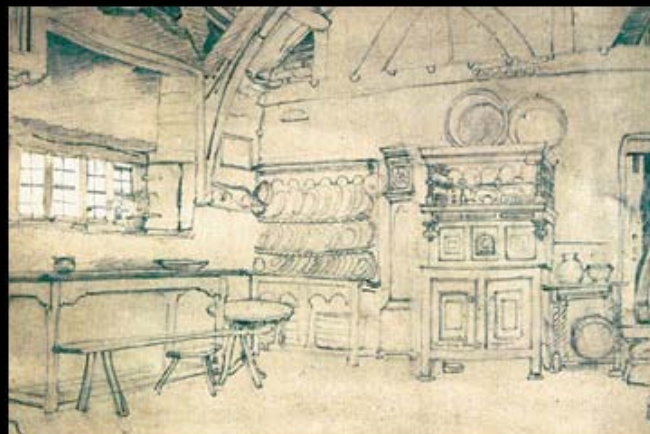
The Cwpwrdd Tridarn

The cwpwrdd tridarn (three-part-cupboard) has long been recognized as a distinct form. It was confined to a small region, principally in Caernarfonshire, comprising the valleys that run from the centre of Snowdonia and the coastal districts between. A large number of cwpwrdd tridarn still survive and since they originated in this restricted area in which there were few mansions, they must originally have stood in the larger farmhouses.

Many cypyrddau tridarn bore dates showing a main period of production from about 1660 to the 1770s with a few being made into the 1790s.

The form was related to the more

widespread enclosed one-piece press cupboard, which had a slightly recessed upper section with an overhanging top and either turned columns or, later, pendants (sometimes called drop-finials or droppers) over a high base; by the mid-17th century these were usually made in two sections and had acquired the term *cwpwrdd deuddarn*. An additional canopy formed the usual arrangement for the *cwpwrdd tridarn*, the



development of this top section providing an unenclosed space enabling a more impressive display and offering cover and protection in rooms that were dominated by a smokey hearth.



Although many *cypwrddau tridarn* appear to have been made for customers of local importance, it cannot be assumed that the more elaborate were necessarily intended for wealthier homes, since it is not known how much the pieces cost, whether payment was made in cash or kind, or whether it was normal for the customer to supply the material. A typical example, which had the initials 'MR AM' and date '1685' in a shield, was



probably made to commemorate a marriage or a new home and showed the importance attached to the piece by its owners. Either side of the central panel the doors were decorated with a Classical design that, although found in 16th century inlay work, also had a Celtic feel, perhaps accounting for its popularity on a number of cupboards.

More details regarding this and other furniture types can be found in *Welsh Furniture 1250-1950* by Richard Bebb

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