

THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF THE  
RADNORSHIRE SOCIETY

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Edited by Professor Peter J Conradi and Ms Daphne Turner.

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# THE RADNORSHIRE SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1930

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# THE EIGHTY-FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

## THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE to welcome members to our Annual General Meeting. Sadly, I must report that we have lost two faithful members, Mrs Nancy Bottomley, a long-serving member and lovely lady, widow of Bud, both dearly loved and respected in Llandrindod Wells, and Mr Bob Jenkins, a warm and gentle personality, a journalist by profession and President of Kington History Society, and a local historian of immense knowledge, with a great love of Radnorshire.

One of the delights of Radnorshire is that it is relatively unknown to the wider world. This has great advantages for all of us living here as we are very definitely not overcrowded other than by grazing sheep. That it is, topographically, the most beautiful county in the United Kingdom cannot be refuted. It is also clear that Radnorshire 'punches above its weight' in the talented people who live both here and outside the county and contribute to its ways and life. We are very blessed with the wonderful institutions, clubs and groups, most of them run by volunteers, who quietly 'go about their business' in the communities which are spread all over the county.

In my relatively short time as your President, I have been very impressed with the contribution that the Radnorshire Society makes to life in our county. So often in life one can miss the 'jewel in the crown' which is all around one, and I have to confess that, until I became President, I was doing just that. Even now, either because of amnesia or other activities getting in the way, I have failed to attend many events laid on by the Society during each year. Some people talk of 'Radnorshire Time' (i.e. being a little late getting there). In my case, it is rather more than that.

Nevertheless, I would like to congratulate the Executive Committee and all the officers responsible for organising and running events and excursions this last year and the Librarians and Editors for their assiduous work on behalf of the Society. So too, the Hon. Treasurer and the Membership Secretary, who look after our financial position. I would like to acknowledge the work of Gwyneth Guy, who has recently retired as Chair of the Field Section, and welcome Judith Kenyon, who has taken on her duties. With regard to the Library, concern has been raised that Coleg Powys is very quiet now and whether we need our antennae up in case this will have any consequence for the Society.

Now, on behalf of all of you, I would like to pay tribute to the lady who is retiring as our Hon. Secretary at this AGM. In saying these words,

I have gratefully drawn upon the knowledge of a member of your Executive who knows her so much better than I do. Sadie Cole has been our Secretary for sixteen years. Together with her husband, Mike, she has lived in Radnorshire for thirty-five years and claims to have become 'weaned' onto Radnorshire Water. She has that wonderful ability to get on with everybody. She has a lovely sense of humour and a willingness always to help sort out problems that have arisen, and is only too ready to deal with the detail. As a result, she is renowned for her dependability; she is very efficient, flexible, thoroughly adaptable and ever so tactful. She has a deep love for Radnorshire, as does her husband, Mike, and our appreciation of the work that Sadie has done would be incomplete without thanking Mike for the great bargains with postage of the *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* that he has obtained over the years, thereby saving the Society a lot of money. I am happy to report that she will remain very much part of the Society, the Field Section and the Executive Committee. I am also pleased to report to you that, at the appropriate time in the meeting, the Executive will be recommending to you a successor in her post who has been a loyal member over many years and, indeed, has held the position of Hon. Secretary previously.

Let us now get on with the main business of the meeting: to receive reports and elect an Executive and appoint officers.

Robin Gibson-Watt

## THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

As I stand to give my last report as Secretary to the Society it is with mixed feelings, but I am pleased to report that it has been an excellent year for the Society. The membership continues to grow; attendance at Executive Committee meetings has continued to be excellent. The four lectures have been very well attended and the two excursions attracted a capacity crowd. This, together with the publication of the annual *Transactions*, proves the Society to be very much alive and kicking.

During the year the usual four Executive Committee meetings have taken place, at which the business of the Society has been discussed and decisions made which have kept the Society both businesslike and vibrant. Our thanks are due to the staff of the Museum in Llandrindod, who provide an excellent venue and hospitality.

Also during the year we have strengthened our links with other organisations by exchanging journals and corresponding about lectures.

Our link with CPAT continues: their representative sits on the Executive Committee; we have an invitation to attend their AGM; we receive copies of their newsletters and reports. Powys Archives are also represented on our Executive Committee and we regularly receive copies of their newsletter.

The four lectures, given by excellent speakers, have included a diverse range of subjects and were located so as to make them accessible to as much of the county as possible. Last year's annual AGM lecture was 'An Archaeological Survey of Carneddu' by Richard Hayman, a field archaeologist.

At New Radnor we formed yet another link with the Royal Commission for Ancient & Historical Monuments, Wales, when Mr Spencer Smith spoke on 'Hidden Histories of Radnorshire', giving details of web-sites where local information could be found. The lecture in May held at the Bleddfa Trust was a real delight, when Mr Ray Smith, a Radnorshire man himself, spoke about his work at St. Fagan's on the dismantling and re-erection of St Teilo's Church. Members of the Society had met and watched him at work in St Teilo's Church, during our recent excursion to St Fagan's. Finally, in October we visited Llandewi, where Julian Jones of the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust gave us a delightful display of the varied flora and fauna to be seen when walking in our very special county. My thanks are due to all the willing helpers at these lectures, for making tea, washing up, arranging chairs and putting up posters.

Mrs Baird-Murray will be giving her own report on the two excursions and I can only express the Society's thanks for her organisational skill.

I should mention Mr Richard Davies, who is ever ready to pay accounts and my expenses, but continues to keep the Society solvent.

I would also like to record my thanks to Mrs Ruth Jones for her tireless work as Minute Secretary and Mr David Peter for his efficient work as Membership Secretary, neither of which are easy tasks and help lift the burden off a society's secretary.

My final thanks are due to the Executive Committee for all their help and support during the year and in particular to Mr Alwyn Batley and Mrs Anne Goodwin, always ready to help in whatever way I call upon them. Thank you all.

As a postscript I would like to add that I prepared this final report with a mixture of relief and thanks: relief that I would not have to stand here again and give such a report; thanks that I was allowed the privilege of meeting so many people and attending so many functions on behalf of the Society. Over the years I attended the unveiling of the Thomas Jones statue in Llandrindod Wells, the Centenary of the opening of the Elan Valley Dams, and several exhibitions at the National Library.

During my term of office there have been four Presidents, almost five. When I 'foolishly' volunteered to do the job for one year, Miss Gwen Eadie was just stepping down as President. She was followed by Lady Delia Venable Llewelyn, then Miss Joy Ashton, then the Revd Dr Roy Fenn, and finally Mr Robin Gibson-Watt. There have been three Hon. Treasurers, firstly Dr Colin Hughes, then Dr Tom Idris Jones and last but by no means least Mr Richard Davies. Professor Peter Conradi and Miss Daphne Turner have carried on editing our superb journal in place of Dr Fenn and his son Adam. When we consider all these changes it strikes me that it is high time for a change of Secretary. Your Executive Committee have a recommendation to put to you for your agreement on my successor. This is someone whom I heartily endorse and hope you will appoint.

Finally I would like to add that in spite of the work involved I have considered it an honour, a privilege and a great pleasure to be able to make some contribution to this outstanding Society. I have met so many interesting people I would never otherwise have come into contact with and I have made many (hopefully) lifelong friends whose friendship I shall treasure.

Members of the Radnorshire Society I ask you to accept this report.  
And Goodbye!

Sadie Cole

## THE EDITORS' REPORT

The Editors have worked on a two-page style sheet for *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* which covers such matters as electronic formatting, an agreed protocol for place-name spelling, and the treatment of end-matter and of quotations. They will be happy to send this out to any prospective contributors and they also hope that such transparency may help to streamline the process of editing in future.

The Editors have agreed with the Secretary to aim at a length of approximately 50,000 words in total for forthcoming editions of the *TRS* to accommodate rising postal charges and to be confident of having articles of quality to publish. To make this overall length possible they also propose inviting articles of not more than 5,000 words. Hence Professor Shannon's article on George Cornwall Lewis and Ifan Payne's translation of his father's article commemorating the painter Thomas Jones of Pencerrig will each appear in two parts, with the first in this *TRS* 2011.

Meanwhile we are happy that the interest of Ifan Payne (in New Mexico) in disseminating his father's Welsh language articles to an English readership continues. And we are also happy that Sue Best, with her history of the admirable Willow Theatre, continues the slot on contemporary culture started by James Roose-Evans's account of founding the Bleddfa Centre (*TRS* 2007) and Julian Jones's history of the then Radnorshire Wildlife Trust (*TRS* 2010); and we hope to publish a piece by the composer Michael Berkeley next year on how the move he made from Norfolk to Radnorshire thirty-five years ago affected his views and his music.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Susanna Best** is a freelance theatre director. Her career has spanned working with such companies as the English Shakespeare Company, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Royal Opera. In 1994 she and her husband, actor Philip Bowen, set up their own group Shakespeare Link, which works widely with many projects in the community as well as touring the world for the British Council. Now based in mid Wales, where Sue was brought up, she and Phil in 2006 planted a theatre of living willow at their home near Rhayader, the Willow Globe.

**Dr Colin PF Hughes** is a graduate of Aberystwyth and Swansea universities. He was the long-serving Head of History and Humanities at Builth Wells High School. He also worked in the Education Department of Aberystwyth University. His specialism is the history of education, but he has also researched the cattle drovers in Radnorshire and the Rebecca Riots in Radnorshire. He was treasurer of the Radnorshire Society in the 1990s. He is currently a Chief Examiner for GCSE History with the Welsh Examination Board, the WJEC.

**Duncan James** lives on the Welsh border near Presteigne. For the last fifteen years he has been recording vernacular buildings in Herefordshire and the surrounding counties, establishing a substantial archive on the subject. In the past he has designed and made gold and silver jewellery. Before that he worked on a detailed study of the history of bronze statue casting, and was for some years a visiting lecturer in sculpture at Stowe School. More recently, he has delivered talks to many local groups on the subject of historic buildings, including courses of WEA lectures. In partnership with his wife, Alison, he now runs a consultancy for historic buildings research, specialising in timber-framed structures.

**Dr Marion Löffler** is a native of Berlin, and has worked at the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, since 1994. She has been a member of projects on the Social History of the Welsh Language, Iolo Morganwg and the Romantic Tradition in Wales, and Wales and the French Revolution. She is very fond of Radnorshire.

**Morfydd Elizabeth Owen**, a native of Blaenau Morgannwg, was educated at the Lewis School for Girls, Hengoed, University College Aberystwyth, Girton College, Cambridge and Dublin. She lectured on the Celtic languages at University College, Cardiff for twenty-four years before becoming Senior Fellow at the newly established Centre for Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth in 1985 to work on their first project, which was an edition of the Poetry of the Gogynfeirdd. She retired from that post in 1996 but has continued with her research work. Her chief research fields have been the law texts and (with her husband Dr HEF Davies) the medical texts of medieval Wales. She was responsible in 1970 for establishing Seminar Cyfraith Hywel and acted as its secretary for more than thirty years.

**Keith Parker** is a local, though not of Radnorshire, and a former deputy head of John Beddoes School who took early retirement in order to spend more time researching and writing on local history. He has written several books and a number of articles on the history of Radnorshire and is currently working on a history of Knighton. Future research topics include the survival of Catholicism in the Middle March in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and, more generally, eighteenth-century Radnorshire.

**Dr Ifan Payne** was born in Rhiwbina, Cardiff, and trained as architect at the Welsh School of architecture. He received his PhD in architectural psychology from the University of London and has worked as an architect, lecturer, and project manager in the UK, continental Europe and the United States. He has held the post of Head of Department and Professor of Environmental Design at Kansas State University.

Dr Payne is a prolific writer; professional papers have covered a wide field, from architecture and environmental psychology to telescope enclosure design and the imaging of geosynchronous satellites. He has written well over a thousand articles on music and performance criticism which have been published in both the UK and the USA. Fluent in Welsh and German, as well as English, Dr. Payne has had a lifelong interest in translating poetry into English from Welsh, German and Spanish, as well as from English into Welsh. His translations from the Spanish of five love



poems by Gustavo Adolfo B  quer were set to music by composer Alun Hoddinott and to date these songs have been performed in concerts around the world more than fifty times. Dr. Payne is currently Director of the Magdalena Ridge Observatory in New Mexico, USA.

**Richard Shannon** is Emeritus Professor of Modern History at the University of Wales Swansea, and the author of a highly acclaimed two-volume biography of Gladstone. His most recent books include *A Press Free and Responsible* (2001) and *Gladstone, God and Politics* (2007). He lives in London and in Radnorshire, where he first put down roots in 1975.

Peter Conradi  
Daphne Turner

## THE JOINT LIBRARIANS' REPORT

As in the previous year, accessions to the Library remained at a relatively low level. As before, five additions were made to the collections, including one welcome gift. Once again, the most clearly outstanding purchase in size and scope was another publication from RCAHMW: *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches*, edited by Barry Burnham and Jeffrey Davies, a magisterial and encyclopaedic survey of the current state of knowledge of the activities of the Roman army in Wales and the Borderlands. The range and detail of information provided is exceptionally full and members of the Society will be particularly interested in the extent of coverage of Castell Collen, Clyro and Hindwell. High-quality aerial photography is a major feature of the volume (nowhere more graphically revealing than in the case of Castell Collen) and it is not surprising to learn that the consultant in this field was Chris Musson. Coincidentally Chris Musson's own enjoyable and informative bird's-eye tour of landscapes and settlements in Montgomeryshire was also one the Library's acquisitions.

Finally, it was decided to mark the publication in volumes 78 and 79 of the *Transactions* of Dai Hawkins's translation of Ffrancis Payne's *Crwydro Sir Faesyfed* by combining the two parts in one specially bound volume which can stand on the Library shelves alongside the Welsh originals.

A complete list of additions to the Library is appended:

BURNHAM, Barry C and DAVIES, Jeffrey L (eds), *Roman Frontiers in Wales and the Marches*, Aberystwyth, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, (2010).

MUSSON, Christopher R, *Montgomery Past and Present from the Air*, Welshpool, The Powysland Club and The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, (2011).

PAYNE, Francis G and Dafydd y Garth (translator), *Exploring Radnorshire*, Llandrindod Wells, The Radnorshire Society, (2010).

TURNER, Margaret Newman, *Arthur, Louise and the true Hound of the Baskervilles*, Woonton Almeley, Logaston Press, (2010).

WILLIAMS, Diane M and KENYON, John R, *The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales*, Proceedings of a conference held at Bangor University 7-9 September 2007, Oxford, Oxbow Books, (2010).

John Barker

I have little to report myself. Just general administration jobs and dealing with a few new items that have come into the library. Last year I displayed at the AGM the same pictures from our collection that you see before you today. I pointed out that the picture which shows an outing of a 'sit-down' tea in the open was blown up from a tiny print about 3 by 2 . This was taken probably by a Box Brownie which was the commonplace camera between the wars before 35mm cameras became generally available.

The Box Brownie was a simple fixed-focus camera anyone could use. My father did four business trips to India between the wars and used a Box Brownie, producing excellent little pictures recording his travels. Tucked away at the back of drawers, in family albums and all the odd places at home where such photos can lodge there must be hundreds of pictures which may not be professional in quality but still show what life in Radnorshire was like in the 1920s and 30s. They are part of quite recent history and therefore valuable. Pictures of the cars people drove, agricultural machinery, hay-making, street scenes in our towns and villages are commonplace subjects, but all tell us about life at that time.

I am sure they are out there somewhere and you know where they are at home. I don't ask you to give the pictures to us. Just allow us to make enlarged copies for the excellent collection we already have as a valuable archive. I made this appeal last year with absolutely no result – no one seems to have bothered to look. You can make such a valuable contribution to the Society's records for the interest of future generations of members.

GW Ridyard

## THE EXCURSIONS ORGANISER'S REPORT

**TUESDAY 31 MAY 2011**

Forty members travelled by coach to Swansea to visit the birthplace and home of Dylan Marlais Thomas and to see a permanent exhibition of his life and works. Dylan Thomas was one of Wales's greatest writers and a giant of twentieth-century literature.

Our first stop was 5 Cwmdonkin Drive, Uplands, Swansea, where Dylan was born on 27 October 1914, and which was his childhood home. Anne and Geoff Haden took the lease on the house and have restored it to how it was when acquired by the Thomas family in 1914. Uplands was and still is one of the more affluent areas of the City. His father was a schoolteacher who taught English Literature at the local Grammar School. His mother was a seamstress born in Swansea. Nancy, his sister, was nine years older. His father brought both children up to speak English, even though both parents spoke Welsh, and Dylan wrote exclusively in English.

Dylan was a prolific writer from an early age, his first poem being published in his school magazine. His work took many forms, including scripts for radio broadcasts, radio plays, short stories, films and an unfinished novel. He is best known for his poetry, the most popular being 'Do not go gentle into that good night' and 'And death shall have no dominion', and his most famous play is *Under Milk Wood*.

Ann, Geoff and her staff split up the group for the tour of the house. We explored his father's study, the kitchen, the front parlour, Dylan's, his sister's and his parents' bedrooms. We had a fascinating two hours of stories and the history of Dylan and his family.

We went next to the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea. Formerly the City's Guild Hall, the Dylan Thomas Centre was restored and refurbished for the UK Year of Literature in 1995.

The centre has become the focal point for Dylan Thomas enthusiasts. The exhibition *Man and Myth* is the only major permanent exhibition celebrating Wales's greatest writer and the largest exhibition of memorabilia of Dylan Thomas's life and work. It includes manuscripts, letters, books, worksheets and photographs and an original sound recording.

Our visit to the centre ended with a one-man performance by Mr Peter Reed. Peter entertained us with some of Dylan's poetry and readings, and was much appreciated by everyone.

Dylan married Caitlin Macnamara in 1937. He and Catlin and their three children, Aeron, Llewellyn and Colm, lived at The Coach House, Laugharne for the last four years of his very creative, tumultuous life. He died in America in 1953 and is buried in the church at Laugharne.

**WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE 2011**

Again, forty members travelled by coach to Brecon and on to Craig-y-Nos Castle. Our first stop was the Regimental Museum at Brecon Barracks. Here we had a very enlightening and entertaining talk by Mr Arfon Williams about the South Wales Borderers (24<sup>th</sup>/41<sup>st</sup> foot) of Anglo/Zulu War fame.

The Museum Collection contains artefacts obtained from worldwide sources that reflect the history and character of the regiment that has existed for over 300 years. It is reputed to have the finest collection of weapons to be found in any regimental museum throughout the country.

On Wednesday and Thursday 22 and 23 January 1879, 150 soldiers defended the supply station at Rorke's Drift against 4000 Zulus. At Rorke's Drift eleven Victoria Crosses were awarded, the most to any one regiment for any one battle. The Museum Medal Room contains nearly 3000 medals and the Victoria Cross case contains sixteen replica Victoria Crosses. They represent the real ones that the regiment owns, as the real ones are too valuable to have on display.

We moved on to Brecon Cathedral and a very good lunch in the Pilgrims Restaurant. After lunch there was time to visit the South Wales Borderers Chapel in the Cathedral, where their colours are kept.

Back on the coach we travelled through the breath-taking scenery of the Brecon Beacons National Park to Craig-y-Nos Castle, which is famous for being the home of the celebrated and beautiful opera star, Adelina Patti.

Adelina was charmed by the mansion built on the banks of the river Tawe in the upper reaches of the Swansea Valley. The original house was built in 1841 and bought by Adelina in 1878. She had been determined to possess the house and when she did she established a life of near regal splendour.

She was born in Madrid in 1843; the family emigrated to America in 1847 and Adelina began her musical career. Her career spanned forty years. She sang in all the great capitals and amassed a great fortune (and three husbands). The first husband was the Marquis de Caux, equerry to the Emperor Napoleon III. This marriage ended in divorce. Secondly, she married the famous tenor Ernesto Nicolini. They had a civil marriage before the French consul in Swansea. It was followed by a religious ceremony in the Parish Church of Ystradgynlais, where the records are still kept. Nicolini died in 1898 at Pau in the Pyrenees. One year later she married Baron Rolf Cederstrom, a Swedish nobleman twenty-five years her junior in the Catholic Church in Brecon.

An extremely wealthy woman, she commanded fees of thousands of pounds a concert. Much of her fortune was spent lavishly entertaining her friends and improving the castle and grounds at Craig-y-Nos.

There is still much to be seen at Craig-y-Nos, including the charming little private theatre that seats 150 guests. Her name attracted leading musicians and singers of the day and it is said that her audiences included royalty and Ambassadors from all over the World.

Until her death in September 1919, Adelina Patti lived in her grand elegant mansion, in her beloved valley, which she only left to perform for world-wide audiences.

The present owner gave us a very interesting tour of the house, which sadly is now a struggling hotel, and not the house that it was.

Norma Baird-Murray

## THE FIELD SECTION REPORT 2011

The Field Section theme in 2011 and 2012 is based on the Radnorshire Society's publication of Dai Hawkins's translation of Ffrancis Payne's *Crwydro Sir Faesyfed* [*Exploring Radnorshire*] in the TRS of 2008 and 2009.

In Ffrancis Payne's first chapter, 'Approaching Radnor', he wrote that he travelled via Weobley on his route into Radnorshire – thus it was that we started our first field trip by meeting in this 'magpie-coloured' village, which he found 'so beautiful'. Led by our own Gwyneth Guy, an expert on the buildings of Weobley, we too admired this architectural gem, walking up the main street, and visiting the castle site, the museum and the church with its lofty spire, and enjoying tea at Sarnesfield Church, where we saw the tomb of John Abel, the master builder who died in 1674.

Our Midsummer picnic at The Pales, Llandegly, took place on a cold, wet evening so it was spent in the adjoining schoolroom, where Linda and Martin Williams very kindly lit a wood-burning stove for us. It proved to be a lovely, informal evening when discussion centred on ways to attract a younger membership.

Our July field trip to 'Gladestry and the Valley of Radnor' was led by Sadie Cole, Ruth Thomas and Celia Thomas. The highlight was a visit to the recently renovated Stone House (once owned by James Watt) by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Melvyn Hughes. The Victorian primary school was also visited, as was the church at Old Radnor, where Ruth Jones delighted us all with a short organ recital. Ruth later provided us with a delicious tea at Upper House, Kinnerton.

The visit in August to 'Lower Elfael' centred on Painscastle and was led by Judith Kenyon. We explored the village, looking for links with the Painscastle Ffrancis Payne described and Kilvert recorded in his diary.

In addition, Judith had invited Paul Remfry to share his encyclopaedic knowledge of the impressive, little-known castle – which he certainly did! We were all relieved not to have to be tested on the information supplied and to retire instead to the old drovers' inn, The Roast Ox, for tea.

The final field trip of the summer to 'Upper Elfael' was led by the intrepid duo, Dai Hawkins and Richard Davies. They had booked a bus for a whistle-stop tour around the Hundred House area, including Brynmelys, Franksbridge, Glascwm, Llanbadarn-y-gareg, ending with tea at The Seven Stars in Aberedw. This made a memorable finale to our excursions!

The AGM of the Field Section was held at Penybont Community Centre on 21 October. The Field Section was sad to learn that Gwyneth Guy wished to stand down as Chairman because of work commitments. Ann Goodwin and Judith Kenyon, the new Chairman, paid tribute to her archaeological and historical contributions to many field trips. Gwyneth agreed to take over as Editor of the Field Section's Newsletter from Dai Hawkins, paying tribute to Dai for his excellent editorship.

To end the evening Liz Fleming-Williams delighted everyone with her beautiful photographs and personal observations of Radnorshire, with reference to the illustrations, photographs and writings of Ffrancis Payne.

A planning meeting was held at Hindwell Farm to organise the 2012 field trips, following Ffrancis Payne's explorations as described in the *TRS* of 2009.

The 2011 season ended enjoyably with a social evening at the Bleddfa Barn Centre on 25 November.

The Field Section continues to thrive, thanks to all those who kindly allow us to visit their houses and who provide hospitality – and those who research and plan our Sunday excursions. We are also very grateful to our indefatigable secretary, Anne Goodwin, and our excellent treasurer, Richard Davies.

Anne Goodwin  
Judith Kenyon

## POWYS COUNTY ARCHIVES

The public service operated by Powys Archives continues to be very popular. Over 1,400 researchers visited in person this year, and have accessed in excess of 1,450 original items from our collections. A wide spectrum of people continues to use the archive service. This year a variety of social and family historians, officers and members of the council, professional bodies such as CADW, solicitors, and school and university researchers are recorded as regular users. The resources available in the search-room, including local history publications, census returns and free access to the websites Ancestry and Findmypast, have also been extremely well utilised. In 2011–12 the archive service received 912 e-mail enquiries, 210 applications to the research service – a chargeable service for those researchers unable to visit in person – and around 5,200 telephone calls. Powys Archives currently has approximately 90% of catalogues available online as pdf files, as well as a vast amount of other information for researchers. Our webpages have been accessed around 92,000 times and Archives continues to be one of the council's most popular online services.

Dawn Gill, Archives Assistant, retired at the end of May 2011. Dawn worked for Powys Archives for nearly seven years, was a great asset to the team, and made a huge contribution to the popularity of the service. In 2007, she received a commendation in the customer service awards for her work. Stacey Kennedy became our new Archives Assistant and took up her post at the beginning of June. She has previously undertaken volunteer work for Powys Archives. She has a great interest in archives and local history, and is originally from Llandrindod Wells.

This year Catherine Richards has taken on responsibility for Powys Museum service, which includes the following museums: Brecknock, Radnorshire, Powysland, Newtown, Llanidloes and the Judge's Lodging in Presteigne, which is owned by Powys County Council but run by an external Trust. Catherine has worked at Powys Archives since 1995, and became County Archivist in 2001. She now becomes Principal Officer for Museums and Archives.

A visitor survey was undertaken in 2011 and the results are below. Figures in brackets relate to the visitor survey undertaken in 2009.

- 96% rate the overall service as good or very good (98%)
- 100% rate the quality and appropriateness of staff advice as good or very good (100%)
- 29% feel our opening hours were the most important area to improve (53%)

- 45% recorded this as their first visit to Powys Archives (41%)
- 45% of visitors are female; 55% are male (41%, 59%)
- 61% are using local shops and services (53%)
- 89% rate our website as good or very good (100%)
- 94% think our catalogues (including online guides) were good or very good (83%)
- Around 95% of visitors who use the service live within a 140 mile radius of Llandrindod (95% within 242 miles)
- The average journey is 48 miles (71 miles)
- 95% come by car or motorbike (94%)
- 33% of visitors are staying in overnight accommodation (33%)
- 58% are eating out locally (67%)

This year two grants have been awarded to Powys Archives by CyMAL (Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales). The first grant of £1,227 has enabled the service to purchase specialist conservation packaging for oversized maps and plans, and data loggers to monitor temperature and air humidity in our strong-rooms. The second grant of £2,115 has been awarded for the conservation of a plan of Talgarth hospital and surrounding land, dating from 1899.

In July Powys Archives received a visit from Oliver Morley, Chief Executive of the National Archives, along with Nick Kingsley, Head of Archives Sector Development, Linda Tomos, Director of CyMAL, and Mary Ellis, Head of Collections, Standards and Training at CyMAL. After a brief tour of Powys Archives the visitors met with Chris Jones, Head of Leisure and Recreation, Councillor Wynne Jones, Portfolio holder for Regeneration and Culture, and other officers of the council. The National Archives is the UK government's official archive. They give detailed guidance to government departments and the public sector on information management and advise others about the care of historical archives. CyMAL is a division of the Welsh Government. They give advice and financial support to museums, archives and libraries, and develop and implement policies appropriate to Wales.

Early in 2012 Powys Archives decided to cease publishing Almanac, the Friends' newsletter, which has been printed since 2004 and issued in hard-copy format to around 300 individuals, families, groups and societies. In its place Powys Archives now issues an electronic newsletter on a quarterly basis, which goes to a large mailing list of individuals, societies and organisations who regularly use or deposit material with the archives. It is also sent electronically to council members, libraries, high schools and primary schools in Powys, and all community and town councils. The



newsletter appears in a bilingual format on our website. It contains news items about the work undertaken by staff, local history articles and a full list of accessions received by the service.

This year staff have also developed a Powys Archives presence on Facebook and Twitter, where regular posts and ‘tweets’ give followers up-to-the-minute details of what is happening at the archives. Information about new deposits and topical snippets extracted from archival documents are also issued through social media.

Beth Williams and Ann Roberts continue to come to the archives on a weekly basis, and this year Dawn Gill, former Archives Assistant, has become a volunteer for the service. Beth has started indexing nineteenth-century school log books. Ann and Dawn have begun indexing a number of parish registers – mainly new deposits with the archives. Dawn has also catalogued a number of new accessions. The work our volunteers undertake continues to be essential for the service. They contribute hugely to the annual cataloguing programme, and they undertake invaluable indexing and transcription work, making records more accessible to researchers.

The archive service currently holds around 2,500 shelves (15,000 boxes) of material. Around 35% are stored on-site at the main archives facility at County Hall. The remaining 65% are stored off-site. Details of accessions received during 2011–12 with particular reference to Radnorshire are as follows:

### PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL RECORDS

Records from Theatr Powys 1972–2011 [Acc 2033]

Radnorshire County Council: County Water Supplies. Report by AHS

Waters, consulting civil engineer, Birmingham 12 Jun 1946 [Acc 2048]

Llangynllo Community Council minutes July 1996–March 2010 [Acc 2092]

Additional material of Llangynllo parish: including service books 1913–1996; a Parochial Church Council minute book 1972–2000; school minutes and accounts 1894–1978 [Acc 2043]

### NON-OFFICIAL RECORDS

The Ithonian, the Llandrindod Wells Grammar School magazine July 1968 [Acc 2051]

Six photographs of the funeral of Sir Francis Edwards (1852–1927), baronet and MP for Radnorshire [Acc 2034]

Rent roll and account of Evan Davies for the estate of Sir William Dundas, baronet, at Llanbadarn in the county of Radnor for one half-year ending Michaelmas 1829, dated 12 January 1830 [Acc 2040]

Deeds relating to Old Impton, Norton, Radnorshire 1536–1694 [Acc 2086]

Farm account book of the Whittals family at Bailey Einon, Llandrindod Wells c.1831–1874 [Acc 2089]

Various Baptist records relating mainly to Churches in Montgomeryshire and Radnorshire, including numerous programmes of induction and centenary services; and Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire Baptist Association annual reports and circulars (some in Welsh) c.1890–2010 [Acc 2093]

Llandrindod Wells and District Table Tennis League: account book 1971–1985, and subscription fees book 1979–1989 [Acc 2031]

Papers relating to the Brecon and Radnor Constituency Labour Party 1952. [Acc 2057]

Notebooks of T Abberley, N Griffiths and M Griffiths, milkmen, of Trefonnen, Llandrindod Wells, containing details of milk deliveries (7) 1901–1917 [Acc 2045]

Records of Pritchard & Sons Funeral Directors, Llandrindod Wells largely 20th century [Acc 2046]

Postcard depicting the tenants of the Boultibrook Estate c.1920 [Acc 2038]

Three DVDs entitled ‘A Farming Year: Mid-Wales 1999’ filmed at Blaen-y-Cwm and Nantleach farms, Radnorshire [Acc 2059]

Photograph of a football team in Knighton, Radnorshire c.1890 [Acc 2083]

Catherine Richards

Principal Officer Museums and Archives

RADNORSHIRE SOCIETY BALANCE SHEET  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2011

<b>INCOME</b>		<b>(2009–10)</b>	
Membership subscriptions			
Society	5,379.33		
Field Section	<u>330.00</u>	5,709.33	6,095
<i>Transaction Sales</i>		302.31	66
Refund of booking fees		60.00	
Donations		45.00	1,000
Grants		0.00	
Building Society Interest (Gross)		151.16	160
Excursion Costs Recovered		<u>1,764.10</u>	<u>1,302</u>
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b><u>8,031.90</u></b>	<b><u>8,623</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Production and distribution of <i>Transactions</i>			
2009	3,975.33		
2010	<u>3,357.51</u>	7,332.84	7,523
Computer purchase		400.00	
Purchase of books for Library		212.82	96
Hire Charges – meeting rooms/equipment		159.87	169
Lecture fees/expenses		163.00	50
Rent – Library (Coleg Powys)		150.00	100
Donations – Friends of Radnorshire Museum		200.00	225
Membership of Other Societies			
C.B.A. Wales	15.00		
Br. Association for Local History	58.00		
Cambrian Archaeological Association	<u>25.50</u>	98.50	98
R.W.D. Fenn Award 2010		250.00	
Field Section Newsletter 2010		250.00	225
Excursion Costs		1,760.00	1,382
Insurance		280.00	280
Administration			
– Stationery, post + printing	556.91		
– AGM	455.38		
– Website update/software	<u>197.98</u>	1,210.27	818
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b><u>12,467.30</u></b>	<b><u>10,966</u></b>
<b>DEFICIT INCOME/EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b><u>–£4,435.40</u></b>	<b><u>–£2,343</u></b>
<b>Band and Building Society balances – 30/09/10</b>		<b><u>£25,380.60</u></b>	
		<b><u>£20,945.20</u></b>	
<b>End of Year Balances</b>			
<b>MONETARY ASSETS</b>			
As at 30.09.11 Bank		116.76	
Building Society		<u>20,828.44</u>	
		<b><u>£20,945.20</u></b>	

I have inspected and audited the accounts of the society and found them to be correct.

Stephen Roderick

Richard C Davies



# Y GLOB BYW – THE WILLOW GLOBE: THE MID WALES SHAKESPEARE CENTRE, PENLANOLE, LLANWRTHWL

Sue Best

‘There is nothing more powerful than an idea  
whose time has come.’<sup>1</sup>

The Willow Globe is an open-air theatre planted entirely of living willow. A scaled-down version of Shakespeare’s Globe theatre, it nestles – surprisingly and rather magically – in a field at Penlanole, a small organic farm a few miles south of Rhayader. Its season runs from April to September; it welcomes all comers; professional companies visit from off; community groups enjoy its leafy intimacy. Shakespeare Link, the company which manages the Willow Globe, runs a workshop and performance programme of great variety: charity events and festivals happen here; nature enthusiasts, students and children walk the farm’s nature trail. The schedule for 2011 included a home-grown *Romeo and Juliet*, visits from professional touring companies with *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Cymbeline* and *Great Expectations*, the master story-teller Daniel Morden’s *Greek Myths*, a puppet show and six Nature Trail workshops catering for a wide variety of interests from Tudor medicine to meditation. Interval refreshments are provided by tea tents, soup tureens or by the little pub, An Honest House, in an adjacent shed, and when events are doused by rain everyone retires to the old Black Barn to keep dry. The pub is so called because, during a promenade performance of Shakespeare’s *Pericles*, this is where the pimp Bolt brought our heroine Marina, who was intent on keeping honest.

But why is the theatre here? Why are the words of Shakespeare ringing round the fields, to the surprise of sheep, geese, cows and neighbouring donkeys? Those of us who live at Penlanole think it’s no accident – it wanted to be here. The time is ripe for it to be here. More and more we realise how the people who live in a place, if they listen to it, come to serve it. And Radnorshire seems to exercise some mysterious power over its inhabitants so that different places around the county have their special and distinct vibes, even if geographical proximity would suggest that they could be similar. Even each place is never the same for more than two minutes at a time, thanks to an indefinable something in the air, a difference in orientation, the famous vagaries of the weather.

Radnorshire. Anything could happen, and Radnorshire people take things in their stride.

Radnorshire, as all readers of this journal will know, is a place where nothing much looks as though it's happening but where, in fact, a great deal goes on. It's a bit of a secret place; even when a few years ago Powys was voted the happiest place to live in Britain probably many people outside Powys didn't know the exact whereabouts of this happy place. At the moment it balances precariously between the Welsh Tourist Board's drive to encourage tourism, and so an economic upturn, and those who would keep its ravishing higgledy-piggledy hills quiet and undisturbed. 'Alas, Alas for Radnorshire' runs the seventeenth-century rhyme, and the fact that there was 'Never a park nor never a deer' bears witness to the inhospitable nature of its terrain, lacking in meadows or rich pasture land, fragmented and secret. But although today the county may see itself as one of the most tranquil and contented places in Britain – still more sheep than people, though both are special, resourceful and hardy – traces of a turbulent history, earthworks, ditches, motte and bailey castles, all speak of past struggles. The upper Wye valley was culturally Welsh and totally Welsh-speaking, though with the Marcher influence it gradually became English in speech, a process hastened by the influx of English-speaking labour into the Elan Valley dams in the nineteenth century. Way back, the Romans would have marched up from Beulah, crossing the Wye below Newbridge to camp in the Roman Field near what is now the A44, passing by Daverneithon on their way west to the tin mines or the Isle of Mon; or they'd have gone from Brecon via Llandovery for Welsh gold. Vortigern had a base up the road at Bwlch-y-Llys, his back to Gwasteddyn hill and looking out over phenomenal views, but Kilvert described what is now Penlanole's seven-acre field as a 'wild, boggy rushy common' when he came to the opening of nearby St Mark's Church. There are no minerals about here, or rich arable farming opportunities, though it is known that the Celts grew corn in the hills above Llanwrthwl, and a medieval corn-drying kiln may still be seen in the woods on the slope of Trembyd.

Writers such as Elizabeth Clarke in *The Valley*, Bruce Chatwin in *On the Black Hill* and latterly Tom Bullough in *The Claude Glass* have lovingly dissected, depicted and celebrated the late past and a vanishing way of life. But along with, and perhaps almost because of, this isolated and stoic lifestyle, there runs, and I think there must have always run, a sort of parallel seam of local togetherness, of self-generated creativity, music, storytelling, an awareness – usually unspoken but nonetheless implicit – of the sacred and spiritual qualities of landscape and habitat. The Romantics discovered the beauties of 'Wild Wales' in the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries and today Radnorshire is home to a wealth of creative ventures, festivals, crafts and arts. Open any edition of *Broadsheet* to catch up on them, and Peter Conradi's recently published *At the Bright Hem of God* wonderfully charts this side of things, noting and relishing the myriad facets of Radnorshire's past. Myths abound: there was a great Druid temple hereabouts; Joseph of Arimathea came across the Wye, seeking refuge from pursuit, living in a secluded hideaway stilt village on Llyngwyn Lake; Llyr, King of the Britons, had his headquarters at Llanry; King Arthur passed this way, hunting the Trwth Trwch across the mid Wales hills, his hound Gafallt's paw print still visible, if you know where to look, on the rocks of Carn Gafallt just south of the Wye below Rhayader – strictly Breconshire, of course, but Camlo Hill and Dolafallen all lend a Radnorshire twist to the Arthur legends. During the summer of 2011 the state-of-the-art new museum at CARAD – Community Arts Rhayader and District – has hosted a dazzling exhibition, *Glimmer in the Earth*, which displays and tells the story of two collections of jewels which came to light locally comparatively recently: a fabulous necklace popularly supposed to belong to Vortigern's daughter, and some bronze-age torcs turned up by the plough within living memory, mistaken for old bed-springs until polished up to reveal dazzling gold. Radnorshire people haven't talked of these things much in the past, but if you mention them no one is surprised, and their occurrence is accepted in a matter-of-fact way. Anything's possible. A theatre planted of living willow? Shakespeare shouted across the turberry field? Why not? This is Radnorshire. All is well.

Penlanole – or Pen-llan-olau as it's spelt on the wall in Nantmel Church, where a tablet hangs in memory of a nineteenth-century inhabitant Daniel Reid – is on record in the Powys Archives as having changed hands as payment for a gambling debt in 1643. It then found its way into the estate of the Fowlers of Abbey Cwm Hir, and from them to the Lingen family during the eighteenth century. Local historian Douglas Mytton considers it was here long before; he suggests that travellers coming north over the hills from Beulah, and wanting to avoid the Romans, could ford the Wye at the crossing below the Argoed Mill and find at Penllanolau a welcoming flat patch, bathed in sunlight, for pitching their tents. At 625 feet above sea level it would always have been safe from river flooding, and it has a certain special feel about it. One year Dad found on the hill a curious brown lump which he took to be an ancient metal crock lid, or possibly even a fossilised cowpat. He sent it to the University of Wales, where experts pronounced it to be a crog-ball, a section of the earth's crust bubbled up under the water when all hereabouts was under an ancient shallow sea.

My parents came to this magic triangle between Rhayader, Llandrindod and Builth Wells in 1958. Dad, Major Francis Pulford RA, had been a regular soldier, and he absolutely relished what he saw as the freedoms and companionship of farming. During those early days of his adventures, our Massey Ferguson tractor was valiant but, as commentators down the ages such as Leland, Camden and even Giraldus noted, tenants and land-owners alike here have proved reluctant to embrace new ideas – change – and much was still done by hand and fellowship. There were still great annual events such as gathering, dipping or shearing, when neighbours would get together to help with each other's stock. Mum, painting under her maiden name Elizabeth Stewart-Jones, was a professional artist who had used the endless travelling of army life as fuel for her sketchbook and for countless portraits. Now, when time permitted, she painted local landscapes and – able to catch a deft likeness very quickly – many local portraits. Her much-loved picture of Tony Hawkins, MFH, hangs still in the Lion Royal in Rhayader. My sister Lyn and I presently went off to university and then based ourselves in London, returning for holidays with our growing families.

Theatre was where the work was for me, and much of it turned out to be Shakespeare. It was during a stint working with Michael Bogdanov and the English Shakespeare Company that I fell in with Philip Bowen, an actor whose career had spanned playing the back end of a donkey and Hamlet at the Old Vic. He had spent years on the road, acting in theatres around the world with Michael Redgrave's company, Shakespeare's People, and then with companies working for the British Council. Together we decided to form our own company, Shakespeare Link, and its premise was simple: to use drama, and particularly the works of Shakespeare, for the benefit of the community, in ways which are not necessarily limited to theatre performance or academic study. We believed, and still do, that Shakespeare's language is the best ever; that the canon offers a behavioural resource second to none; that, though he wrote over 400 years before Marx and Freud, his tools of analysis can't be beaten; that access to his plays should be free and easy and exposure to them will be always helpful to all concerned. We became a registered charity and were a sort of theatre commando unit, always on the road to schools, colleges, prisons, working with specialist groups such as family therapists and often on performance/teaching tours abroad. We saw ourselves as client-led, always trying to provide what might be required: a session using Shakespeare as a springboard for debate about gender, or leadership, or families at risk; a production celebrating the links between England and France for a festival in the Lebanon. We met up with some



deaf actors, and realised that they had no access at all to a cultural icon the rest of the world takes for granted; that Shakespeare has been translated into over eighty languages around the world and everyone knows *Romeo and Juliet*, yet there was no translation into Sign Language. Working with the Sign Language Video people to make our first film in British Sign Language brought us back to Penlanole.

We found it a generous location for the several films in the BSL series that followed. Wonderfully diverse, with an orchard for Ariel to sing under the blossom, a turberry field for Caliban to hunt for firewood in, twisted woodland for Oberon to meet Titania, the sunny lawn in front of the house for Viola to visit Olivia, it offered backdrops for almost every scene. And, having come home to work, we realised it was time to come home to live. Dad had died in 1978, and having been on her own for years Mum now could do with a hand. We moved back to Penlanole, and took back the forty acres which had been under the friendly eye of our neighbour and grazier Mr Dennis Evans, as it happened now ready to retire. Aided by Dennis's son Mervyn, Phil bought his first two pens of sheep at Builth Market and started his own small organic farming enterprise; we drove up and down the M4 when our theatre agent rang us, and Shakespeare Link began to operate from the spare bedroom. Coincidentally, this was coming up to the millennium. Suddenly, with so many local groups looking for some support in their efforts to mark this special time, work was to be had in Radnorshire as a freelance theatre director as well as farming, and we got involved in many community projects. *A Little Below Heaven* at the Wyese in Builth celebrated Builth's history during the last hundred years and led to the formation of Builth Wells Community Arts; *Red Kite, Boda Wenol* developed into the Red Kite theatre group in Hay-on-Wye; we produced the Llanwrthwl pageant, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* began a long association with Theatr Powys and the Mid Powys Youth Theatre. The Laura Ashley Foundation funded a programme, Have-a-go Shakespeare, which still runs fortnightly. Mum died in 2004 and family consultations resulted in us staying on at Penlanole and continuing to work in the community. Like-minded people began muttering about the possibility of a mid Wales Shakespeare centre, and 'if you've got a Shakespeare centre, then perhaps you'll need a theatre'.

Which is a long-winded background as to why, at a Shakespeare Link AGM in March 2006, the directors put to the trustees the idea that Shakespeare Link could spearhead and host a Shakespeare centre for mid Wales, and by the way could we start fund-raising to build a theatre? Shakespeare's theatre was the Globe, so could we build a Globe? The trustees, chaired by our friend and neighbour Marie-Therese Gibson-Watt,

took this very well, but suggested tentatively that to carry out this enterprise could be time-consuming and a colossal task. Undeterred we talked around it: obviously we should use local materials, and plenty of local stone and timber were to hand, but might these be prohibitively expensive in terms of time, labour and materials? ‘Could you plant it of willow?’ asked trustee Ros Garrett. Well, we did already have a willow patch. Another neighbour, Dr Rebecca Heaton, working at the Salix Project based at the field centre at nearby Llysdyham, had already suggested we should do trials of willow as a bio-mass fuel, and Phil had planted out a particularly damp half-acre with a thousand rods three years earlier. So we had some fifteen-feet-tall growth in the damp patch. Could we use this for the theatre? A truly Radnorshire idea – and it was up and running.

To plant that year we had to move fast as it was already March, spring was coming on and the willow sap rising. Once the leaves had fully started to sprout it would be too late for happy planting. We contacted Becky Heaton and together we surveyed our smallholding. Discounting areas that were too windy, too shady or not sufficiently drainable, we identified a sheltered patch in a field to the north of the house. My father had kept his Welsh cob Captain there, and his shed was still standing in a corner of the field, the Captain’s Cabin. The field had a naturally sloping dip, sheltering it from the worst of the westerlies; it ran down to a brook and was backed by old oaks to the north-east. It was self-contained, damp to help the willows root and already had a good access track running up from a small B road. From the point of view of theatre designers the slope provided a natural rake to the auditorium, and the setting sun could light the stage of an evening. All good.

Having agreed the location, we rang Shakespeare’s Globe in London. Did they have a book containing architect’s drawings of the theatre? Sorry, it was out of print, was the reply, but they could let us have a card model kit called ‘Build your own Globe’. We ordered two copies by post and set about assembling a building team. Becky is an experienced willow sculptor, but she’d never before built on the scale that we envisaged. Despite a busy professional schedule she volunteered a week to plan and help construct the theatre, estimating that with a core of two or three other specialised workers and some volunteer labour we could complete the main structure within a couple of weeks. Nick Marchmont, local landscape designer and sacred geometrist, was keen to be part of the project to add to his own skills base, and carpenter Manny Xerri had some spare time and wanted to learn about willow. Phil and I completed the team, and Phil’s job became largely one of harvesting and collecting more

and more willow. We let the local grapevine know we were planting and hoped for some volunteer help.

Before beginning work there were hasty preparations to make. The pH of the soil was tested and found to be slightly acidic for willow, which likes a pH of around 7 or 7.5 to thrive. Lime was prescribed, so we ordered lime; once we started planting a little lime was given to each rod. It was thought that to optimise the growth spurt competing weeds should be deterred, but as Penlanole is managed organically the best method of inhibiting competing species would be to plant the rods through matting, permeable to water but not to light. We sourced a supplier and I duly went to Church Stretton on the Heart of Wales Line, where James Gibson met me at the station with two large rolls of Mypex. During the course of weaving we would also need to secure some of the willow fronds into position, and so as not to damage them and to allow for flexible growth we should use rubber ties. James supplied Spindle Bush true ties too and I returned to Llandrindod equipped with these essentials. We would need a suitable spiker, a specialist kind of dibber tool which makes the hole for planting each rod. The Bracken Trust in Llandrindod kindly lent us theirs. We checked and sharpened pruning saw, loppers and secateurs for our prodigious willow harvest. Nick suggested we bought several cans of differently coloured spray paints for marking out dimensions on the grass. He brought his theodolite over to the Captain's Cabin. We were ready.

The packs which had been sent from London's Shakespeare's Globe included a footprint of the theatre. This provided our basic lay-out plan and, while we were rounding up tools and materials in the week before the build, Nick worked on the plan, working out a complex system of angles, lengths and widths for the footprint of the Willow Globe. He arrived on Build Day 1, 4 April 2006, with precisely marked angles radiating from the centre of the theatre footprint plan. He set up his theodolite, and using cans of spray and lines of string we marked the two concentric twenty-sided polyhedrons, working out where entrances would be, where walls, and most importantly the best orientation for the stage itself. We had to bear in mind the natural fall of the field and the direction of the setting sun, and we worked to a scale of around a third: Shakespeare's Globe is one hundred feet in diameter; ours is ten metres across the inner circle and thirteen metres across the outer circle. We had to consider the audience access, and it seemed critical that the magic energy flowing round the perimeter of the theatre should not be broken by access gaps; so we designed screens across the entrances, allowing the line of energy to flow round the theatre unbroken, and vomitorium wings at each entrance to marshal the audience towards a surprise on entering. We dug matting

strips, with a little lime sprinkled beneath, along the line where we would start planting, spiked our first holes, and began.

We planted fast-growing varieties of willow – mainly *Salix viminalis* varieties – using rods of between one and five years old. The five-year-old rods were fairly thick in diameter (up to about eight cm) and we planted them unrooted directly into the ground. Nearly all of them rooted and produced new growth during the first year. This exceptional rooting ability, as well as its fast-growing potential, is what makes willow so ideal for living structures. We found the older willow is less flexible, though, so for the large main perimeter arches, for which we twisted four five-year-old rods together, we had to consider the natural curves in the stems and accommodate those into the structure. The walls were planted with slightly younger growth, and we used lots of thin young whippy rods to pull the whole structure together, weaving back and forth as the willow pulled against itself in dynamic and dramatic tension.

As the framework got under way, with Nick up his stepladder weaving all the perimeter arches organically at the height he could reach from the top step, volunteers began turning up to help. ‘We’ve heard you’re planting a theatre. Can we . . . ?’ But we quickly began to run out of willow, our own patch harvested of all we could find. We rang round, and Phil was on the road with the trailer: George and Kate Barstow of Fforest Fields kindly let us raid their willow plantation (they had done the same bio-mass experiment with Becky’s guidance that we had); Fred Slater at the Llysdinam project offered help; Newbridge School said we could prune their playground willow tunnel; Susan and Ken Briggs at Llowes Court generously gave us gorgeously coloured basket willows in green and gold and red, which we used for a colourful screen upstage. This was true Radnorshire collaboration. The rest of the walls were woven as a community effort and the main structure was in place after a staggeringly short ten days. We were blessed with fine weather – it was a glorious April of sun and only intermittent showers. The walls in place, Manny Xerri then set to work building a stage, an extraordinary labour of detail and love as each plank and support had to be separately measured and cut to allow for the lie of the field. Our aim was to try to open the theatre in time for an inaugural performance on Shakespeare’s birthday, 23 April. On that morning an army of support mustered, laying woodchip on the paths, hurriedly fencing off the theatre from marauding sheep, collecting chairs, cushions and rugs, roping off the unfinished segment of the stage for health and safety. Our neighbour, artist Deborah Leeton Bunker, painted the only possible motto in Welsh, English and Latin on the three downstage edges of the stage:





The willow theatre



Aerial shot of theatre



*Romeo and Juliet performance*



Winter pruning



Mae'r byd i gyd yn lwyfan  
All the World's a Stage  
Totus mundus agit histrionem

and the paint was still drying as Viola cried 'Make me a willow cabin at your gate' across the willow branches towards the setting sun.

So that was how it began, and since then y Glob Byw has seemed more and more part of the Radnorshire scene. It had not occurred to us, in our impetuous rush to get the theatre planted, that there would be all kinds of unforeseen implications: a theatre would mean an audience, and an audience would necessitate creating some facilities – loos, refreshments – and attending to health and safety and risk assessments. The rest of 2006 passed in a whirlwind of applications, planning, licences and permissions, retrospective funding for wood and carpentry labour. We needed some kind of audience seating, and the Occupational Therapy unit at Llandrindod Hospital made us their winter project, putting together solid benches to our specification. We hosted community groups, school workshops and local bands. This pilot year proved that there was an appetite to use the space, a network of volunteers who were prepared to chip in and help in all sorts of ways, and an audience ready to come out to watch and be part of things. Twenty-third April 2007 saw an official opening in the presence of Kirsty Williams our Welsh Assembly Member, Roger Williams MP and television celebrity Clive Swift; Builth Wells Primary School contributed a seven-minute *Macbeth*; Mid Powys Youth Theatre performed an extract from *As You Like It*; members of Have-a-go Shakespeare offered sonnets and monologues and a scene from *Julius Caesar*, and 250 people crammed into every available space in and around the Living Globe.

And we began to realise that the magic of the place was eliciting enormous support from neighbours and friends and local networks. A local Trust fund had helped us to commission the seating in the Willow Theatre, for instance, but during that first pilot year audiences forced to take refuge from the weather in the Black Barn were sitting on hay bales, not something health and safety could allow for long. One morning Louise Ingham, Council Arts Officer, rang to enquire whether we could use the seating which, due to refurbishment, was now being made redundant at the Gwalia. We gladly accepted, took the farm trailer to the Ddole, and fetched what turned out to be none other than the historic Round Table tip-up seating from the Council Chamber in Brecon, which had come to Llandrindod when Brecon in its turn had been refurbished. Even the Barn, so short a while ago a hay-store and lambing shed, now had a different status. A volunteer team of extraordinary dedication and commitment

began to assemble, lending a hand with keeping the place hazard-free, strimming public paths, manning front-of-house and the Box Office, helping with interval bar-b-ques, training as first-aiders. Phil took a course which enabled him to be a Licensee. We applied for funding to help start a Shakespeare and Welsh heritage library, and the Millennium Stadium Trust and Laura Ashley Foundation both helped us. Then the Laura Ashley Foundation, already supporting Have-a-go Shakespeare sessions in Rhayader, identified that we really did need some administrative support. They generously funded help two days a week in the office over the next three years, and Kama and Semele joined the team. We are so very grateful for the faith and generosity of all these and other supporters, without which we could not be where we are now.

It's easy to say places are magical, but there is some magic about the Willow Globe which draws folk to relish being within its leafy walls. Birds sing around; geese and sheep contribute to great effect; the winds rustle the branches. In the winter it's a bare sticky place, with great growths of leafless willow waving up to fifteen or eighteen feet in the air. Then comes spring and, when pruning has tidied its shaggy look, the sculptural delicacies of its woven walls stand elegantly against the returning green as the sap runs again. As the year progresses the walls become leafier and denser so that by high summer you can no longer look through them. A production rehearsed and performed in April/May can use the meadow outside the walls as an extra performance space – so that we've seen, through the as yet unleafy willow walls, Portia coming to court in her lawyer's robes, Malcolm with his English army dressed as Birnham Wood hurrying up to confront Macbeth inside the theatre, the exiled lords in *As You Like It* celebrating their deer hunt. Every year sees another development in the structure: a back-stage dressing space; taller, thicker arches; a balcony for Juliet; the skirts of the vomitorium entrances flanked with patches of traditional hay-meadow grass and flowers.

Planting these patches was a project that again burgeoned from a heady meld of local influences. Though now the Willow Globe diversifies activities at Penlanole it is still a smallholding, farming sheep and cows and farming organically. So looking to better the quality of our hay, for better hay means happier stock, we decided to try to increase the diversity of flowers in the hay meadow, working towards the kind of traditional hay which would have flourished in Shakespeare's time. Consultations with our neighbour, botanist Ursula Bowen, living a stone's throw up the Ysfa Lane, led to a complex experiment. Three separate areas were worked on, each site having a different approach and achieving a different result. The existing hay meadow south of the house was heavily harrowed and



broadcast with Emorsgate meadow mix; now it is ablaze with countless flowers, beautiful and delicious but hard to harvest due to a preponderance of hayrattle inhibiting any bindable length. The patches next to the theatre had their topsoil removed with a digger, in order to diminish the residue of nutrients left in the soil from the days when it would have been limed and to leave a tilth more like that of the sixteenth century. These patches were then treated rather differently. The south patch was plug-planted with meadow flowers by Nick Marchmont with his friend Rhian Hill; only after these had taken firm hold was a grass meadow mix introduced around the plants. The north patch was planted under Ursula's aegis, again with Emorsgate traditional hay meadow mix; having been sown in March it was rampant with ox-eye daisies by June, in time for Bottom to pick them as part of his flowery garland when the Factory Theatre Company visited the Sonnet Festival that summer.

The theatre is truly proving the focus for a mid Wales Shakespeare Centre. An expanding library is developing, Shakespeare texts jostle spines with works of local heritage and environmental interest. Shakespeare Link's working theatre wardrobe presents ongoing opportunities for work experience in sorting and cataloguing, and is an endless maintenance challenge to its volunteer minding team. The Nature Trail was developed during the winter of 2009–10; winding round the farm via orchard, stream, box hedge and woodland it links the magical local environment with the natural lore found in so many of the plays, discovering and emphasising all kinds of resonances which to anyone at home in Radnorshire seem obvious but which visitors find surprising. The trail includes part of the old kitchen garden, which is being developed as a traditional physic garden, with herbs and flowers categorised according to the four humours as described by the great herbalist Nicholas Culpeper (1616–1643) and planted out for medicinal uses which would have been completely familiar to Shakespeare. Along with herbs and flowers and a great many plants which we might think of as weeds – sorrels, vetches, banes and worts – the four flower-beds house plants referred to in the plays quite specifically and with obvious knowledge: 'wormwood, wormwood', mutters Hamlet, seeking the secret of his father's death; wormwood used to be widely known as an efficacious lenten purge until not so long ago, when antibiotics took over. Indeed Stuart Fry, eminent waller and agricultural historian, still remembers wormwood being used at home. Western science and herbal medicine seem still at loggerheads, but perhaps there is a hint of a coming re-evaluation of the skills and knowledge of the past leading to a more holistic approach.

But the Willow Globe is at the heart of everything, and it hosts all comers: Young Farmers, local primary schools, college students, easy access groups, community and special needs, visiting professional performers, dancers, story-tellers, musicians. A day's workshop on *Macbeth*, for example, could include a fight session, walking the story through the trail with the witches making spells in the wooded cavern, lunchtime spent helping to press apples in the community apple press, feeding the pommace to the pigs, then back for more Shakespeare. An annual festival programme has seen visitors from Canada, Mozambique, America, Hungary and elsewhere in Europe as well as from England, Scotland and Wales. The Aberdeen Chamber Choir, the Mid Wales Chamber Orchestra, Little Rumba and the Willow Consort make music here. And all the energy used to run lights, pump water, service power tools, run PA systems and bass guitars is green. The environmental ethos of the Willow Globe and its environs is perhaps one of its most engaging and significant strengths. Phil and another neighbour, Murray Nash, who himself has been off grid for fifteen years, head up the home technical team, and take pride in the fact that the Willow Globe is perhaps the first theatre in the country to be run entirely by green energy. With help from GLASU,<sup>2</sup> we were able to install photovoltaic panels which are backed up by a small wind turbine; panels and turbine between them produce enough energy to power the theatre lights and sound, along with the tools needed to service them. If you visit the theatre there is a project descriptive board with details of the installation work and costs, the whole voted 'exemplary' by the GLASU evaluation team. Green: 'a green thought in a green shade'; 'sing all a green willow'. How unexpected; how Radnorshire.

Reading through this account of how the Willow Globe operates and how it came to be here, it's striking how often neighbours figure in the tale. This must be Radnorshire's secret weapon. Wherever else could you find such amazingly skilful, talented, supportive and creative neighbours?

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Victor Hugo.

<sup>2</sup> Part of the Powys Rural Partnership, set up in 2000 to oversee the development, management and implementation of the current objective 2 and objective 3 programmes in Powys.

## GLASCWM COUNCIL SCHOOL: 'ONE OF THE MOST ISOLATED IN THE COUNTY'

Colin PF Hughes

The village of Glascwm is uniquely situated in the steep-sided valley of the Clas Brook, a tributary of the River Edw. The magnificent St David's Church at Glascwm is a *clas* church,<sup>1</sup> which signifies that there has been a very long period of settlement in the area. This tiny village, which at one time boasted three inns,<sup>2</sup> was a favourite stopping-off place of the Welsh cattle drovers, as they headed eastwards to the fattening grounds of England and the English markets.

Glascwm was situated in the area of the Cregrina United District School Board, which first met in 1875. The earliest meetings of this Board had discussed whether there should be two or three schools in the United School District. The decision was taken to build two schools – one in the south of the district, at Rhulen (the Lower Llanedw Board School, 1877) and one for the north of the district, at Franksbridge (1878). At its January 1876 meeting, the Board agreed that 'the room adjoining the Church in the village of Glascomb (*sic*) be fitted up and provided with privies with separate and distinct approaches for boys and girls according to the recommendations of HMI'.<sup>3</sup>

At the March 1876 meeting of the School Board, the plans for the alterations to the schoolroom adjoining the church at Glascwm were accepted. However, this was just the beginning of a prolonged on-and-off saga! The July 1876 meeting of the Board decided to abandon the proposed alterations to the schoolroom as they were too costly.<sup>4</sup> Instead, it was decided to carry out 'such repairs as are absolutely necessary' and to place a pupil teacher in charge temporarily. This decision reflected the low priority given to the need for efficient educational provision at Glascwm.

The August 1876 meeting of the School Board decided on a complete volte-face. It was agreed that a new schoolroom and master's house be built in the parish of Glascwm! A further meeting was to be held in the Radnor Arms in Glascwm, in order to find a site. Unfortunately, a school at Glascwm was a very long way off: a School Board meeting of October 1877 decided to defer the building of a school at Glascwm – 'for the time being' – because of the expense involved.

The long-running saga re-emerged in November 1897. The Radnorshire County Council Education Department had sent a letter to the Cregrina

UD School Board on 15 November regarding 'the want of school accommodation at Glasgwm village, and requiring the Board to provide accommodation for 40 children'.<sup>5</sup> The Board thought that a school for 25 would be sufficient, as the population had fallen by 30% over the previous 20 years and there were only 21 children of school age in the area.

Pressure was now put on the Board. In December 1897, the Education Department insisted on a school for 40 children and the Board had to accept this directive.

At the end of March 1899, Mr Telfer Smith, Architect, presented his plans for Glasgwm School to a sub-committee of the Board. The school building was to measure 22 feet by 16 feet, which was probably the smallest in the county. A site, known as Talbot Gardens, was purchased for £25 in April 1899. Tenders for building the school were issued in July. Mr Thomas Collins of Newbridge-on-Wye submitted a tender for £341 and Mr Thomas Evans of Franksbridge submitted a tender for £375, which was accepted, as long as it was reduced to £360!<sup>6</sup> This was probably the same Mr Thomas Evans, formerly of Cregrina, who had built both Rhulen and Franksbridge schools. The building was to be completed by 1 December 1900.

In February 1901, the post of Mistress for Glasgwm School was advertised, at a salary of £45 to £50 per annum. The post was to start on 3 June 1901. There were three applicants for the post and Miss Eveline Price, Shrewsbury, was appointed.

### THE LONG-AWAITED OPENING OF GLASCWM SCHOOL

The school log book recorded: 'Glasgwm (*sic*) Cregrina United District School Board opened for the first time on Monday June 10th by the Revd T. Thomas. The number of children being present 15. The principal teacher Eveline Price'.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, 17 pupils had turned up on the first day,<sup>8</sup> aged 3 to almost 14. Four had previously attended school at Llanedw/Rhulen, two at Newchurch (opened in 1880), two at Llanbadarn Fawr, one at Franksbridge and eight had not been to school at all! It is incredible to think that, in 1901, eight of these children had not received any previous education, despite school attendance laws since 1876 and despite the fact that elementary education had become free from 1891.

A summary of reasons for absence from Glasgwm School shows the various causes for non-attendance at this very isolated school: Hundred House Fair; Kington Show; harvest in a backward state; Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show at Builth Wells (May 1904); May Fairs; influenza 'in



St David's Church, Glascwm

*CPF Hughes*



Glascwm School

*CPF Hughes*

the head and throat'; Emergency – School closed to prevent spread of Itch (Dec. 1911); weather too wet and stormy; 7 children who have a very long way [to walk] were sent home soon after three because it was a dark cloudy afternoon; Ivor Bowen has not returned [after the Whit holidays, 1932] because his shoes have been taken to be repaired; Royal Welsh Show at Llandrindod Wells (Fri. 22 July 1932); Albert Jones has been away nearly all week (Oct. 1934) as he has rubbed his heels sore by wearing new boots. Some of these reasons are due to the multi-faceted nature of rural society; others are due to the very remoteness of the school and the long distances children would have had to walk to and from school in all types of weather.

The numbers on roll had risen to 20 by October 1901 and, by July 1902, HMI was able to write his first report on Glascwm School:

The Mistress has done good work since the opening of the School, and the School Board have also done much during the year for the suitable equipment of the premises. The playground needs attention.

The 1902 Education Act transferred responsibility for education from School Boards to the County Councils. Glascwm Board School now became Glascwm Council School. Mr J Abberley visited the school on 15 July 1903, as School Attendance Officer. (He was to be succeeded in that role by Mr John Owen Duggan.) In September, the County Architect, Mr Wellings Thomas, visited the school to see what repairs were needed and the HMI Report for May 1903 stated:

The children are kindly and sensibly taught, and are making good progress. The playground is still in a rough, untidy condition, and the school interior needs a thorough cleaning, and the walls should be coloured.

For the children of Glascwm, this was a good report; for Radnorshire County Council, work had to be done on the maintenance of the school building. However, numbers on roll were unsatisfactory: there were only 14 children on roll in 1904, rising to 16 in 1907. The scheme of work at this time included: Writing and Composition, English, Arithmetic, Geography, History, Drawing, Needlework, Kindergarten, Poetry and Physical Exercises.

By 1909, there were only 11 pupils on roll. Miss Eveline Price had been ill for a long time and the school had been in the charge of supply teachers. When Miss Price returned to her duties in April 1909, after an absence of three months, she found the school in 'shameful disorder' and



blamed it on one of the supply teachers! However, the role of Head Teacher at Glascwm School must have been very challenging and Miss Price left in December 1909. She had established the school and had served it for eight years. There were now several changes of staff so that, in May 1911, HMI reported:

The staff had been very unstable for quite a long time before the present teacher [Miss CA Howe, college trained] took charge and the efficiency of the School had sunk to a low ebb.

Even so, the children were regarded as being 'brighter' and some good work was being done. By the time of the next HMI visit in June 1916, there seems to have been a further change of staff:

The new Mistress has taken up her duties with enthusiasm, and is likely to do good work. The weakest subject at present is reading, but there is room for improvement in other subjects. The urinal needs a new flagstone, and should be kept cleaner, while the offices need recolouring. There is no water on the premises, and one of the filters is out of order. A key should be supplied for the clock.<sup>9</sup>

Glascwm School was not the only school to lack a water supply at this time. In other remote areas of the county, as well as in remote parts of North Breconshire, it was often the duty of the older boys to carry water from a neighbouring spring. One assumes that the clock at Glascwm School was not working and one wonders how accurate time could be kept in a rural area where the weather and the seasons controlled daily life!

Was Glascwm School making progress? When HMI DE Jones visited the school in January 1920, he reported:

The young Mistress, as was expected, has done very good work in this School, and the various subjects are very well taught. The weakness in Reading, mentioned in the last Report has now disappeared, and distinct progress can be recorded in the other subjects. The number on books has increased to 18.<sup>10</sup>

So, good progress was being made at last and this continued when HMI Mr John Thomas visited the school in February 1928:

This small and isolated one-teacher school produces a favourable impression. The teacher works hard and is successfully grappling with the many

difficult problems associated with this type of school. There is evidence of careful planning and forethought as shown, for instance, in the appropriate balance between oral and written work and also between corporate and semi-individual activities. The scholars answered readily in the collective oral lessons and also work steadily when allotted their own special tasks. In the various subjects of the curriculum a sound level of attainment is shown. There is throughout a very pleasant tone.<sup>11</sup>

This concluding statement must have been very gratifying for the whole Glascwm community and this progress seems to have been maintained. The school log book<sup>12</sup> records that in October 1931 there were 23 pupils on roll and that Margaret Bevan was Head Teacher. Only 15 of these children were present when the school reopened on 5 January 1932, as the weather was very rough. On 8 January, the Head Teacher recorded that the ground was frozen very hard and that the fire was very low. It should have been lit earlier, she records, to warm up the school before the children came in. In consequence, some children were sent home for overcoats. However, the children must have coped with the weather because, for the last lesson on 15 January, the children were taken up to the hill above the Wern to see the springs where some of the brooks began and some mosses were picked and brought back to school. The idea of using the local environment continued in March 1932, when the children were taken out for a nature study period: a box was taken for mould and some larvae were collected from the brook.

HMI Mr John Thomas visited the school again in June 1932:

The majority of pupils in this isolated one-teacher school have long distances to walk to school, and consequently during inclement weather the attendance is very irregular. The isolation of the pupils together with irregular attendance naturally contribute to a low standard of work in most branches of the curriculum. The Head teacher however conducts the school in a satisfactory manner. As there are 21 pupils on books, the teaching of the basic subjects occupies the greater part of the time, but some simple craft work in the form of cane and raffia work is done, whilst it is intended to introduce some leather work in the near future. The Singing would benefit greatly if the pupils were given the opportunity of listening to good music on an instrument such as a gramophone. Some of the older children find difficulty in concentrating on the work in hand, and appeared tired at an early hour of the day.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to note the suggestion of making use of the musical technology of the day – a gramophone! The tiredness of the older pupils



may well have been due to their expected extra contribution to life in an agricultural community.

Miss Sarah Maud Owen, BA, took up duties on 4 September 1933, when there were 25 pupils on roll. This was the highest number so far, but was to reach its peak in July 1935, when there were 31 pupils on roll. Radnorshire Education Department's insistence on a school for 40 pupils, as opposed to the 25 suggested by the School Board, was fully justified. Glascwm School made steady progress throughout the late 1930s, with Miss Owen being assisted by another teacher, Miss Cox.

## WORLD WAR TWO AND THE ARRIVAL OF EVACUEES

How did Glascwm School cope with the experiences of the war years? On 5 September 1939, Miss Owen recorded: 'Resumed School Duties today. Many of the pupils have not returned as they are under the impression that there is no school this week (Wireless Announcement and leaflet)'.<sup>14</sup> The extracts below highlight the effect of war even on a small isolated rural community like Glascwm:

15 Sep. 1939 – 5 new pupils admitted; 4 were evacuees: Margaret and Richard Terry Harrison (aged 5 and 8) from Birmingham; and Brian and Peter Harrison (also aged 5 and 8) from Surrey. [The latter two (private evacuees) returned home in January 1940.]

24 May 1940 – The news at 1 pm today said that the Germans had occupied Boulogne.

21 June 1940 – Richard and Margaret Harrison, the privately evacuated pupils from Birmingham, were re-admitted!

1 Sep. 1942 – Miss Lees, evacuated teacher [from Crosby] commenced duties, in the Church Hall.

26 Mar. 1943 – 27 pupils on register: 15 evacuees [4 London, 3 Litherland and 8 Crosby] and 12 locals.

23 Feb. 1945 – Wm. Jones has now returned to Liverpool; he was the last of the evacuees [He had spent 4 years at Glascwm School].

Crosby and Litherland are areas of Liverpool and one wonders what went through the minds of the evacuees as they were bundled off the train at the

Builth Wells railway station and transported deep into the hills of southern Radnorshire. The following list gives comprehensive details of some of the evacuees who were housed at Glascwm. It is extracted from the School Admission Register.

<i>Evacuees</i>	<i>DoB</i>	<i>Billet</i>	<i>Dates</i>
HARRISON, Richard Terry	15.07.31	Abertady, Glascwm	21.06.40–20.12.40
Margaret Eliz.	27.05.34	..	21.06.40–06.06.41

These were two private evacuees from Birmingham. The evacuees below were from Seaforth, Liverpool 21.

CHATFIELD, Nellie	04.12.27	The Court, Glascwm	13.01.41–06.11.41
Cath. Eliz.	20.05.30	..	10.02.41–06.11.41
SMOUT, Muriel	13.09.27	..	13.01.41–24.09.41

SMITH, Norma	26.06.34	Glais House, Glascwm	13.01.41–27.08.41
Doreen Ethel	17.05.32	..	..

KETTLE, William Wesly	07.09.29	Pendre, Glascwm	13.01.41–10.10.42
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PRUDEN, Henry	08.02.31	Cwmshenkin, Glascwm	13.01.41–31.05.44
JONES, Thomas Albert	28.03.27	..	13.01.41–28.03.41

MATTHEW, Ronald Francis	29.08.28	The Wern, Glascwm	14.01.41–10.07.42
Thomas Wm.	15.04.30	..	.. –17.09.42

DEWSBURY, Maureen Gert.	28.08.29	The Court, Glascwm	10.02.41–30.07.43
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MACALLISTER, Ruby	18.07.39	Three Wells, Glascwm	10.02.41–30.07.43
Mavis	11.07.35	..	.. – ..
Stanley	06.11.32	Wern, Glascwm	17.06.42– ..

SUMMERS, Joseph	07.02.34	Brookside, Glascwm	03.03.41–17.03.41
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WILLETS,			
Doris	01.12.31	Gwynfa, Glascwm	10.03.41–03.06.41
POWELL,			
Edna Florence	17.08.27	..	10.03.41–09.04.41
HARTLEY,			
Betsy	06.12.31	Llwyncelyn, Glascwm	.. –09.04.41
Walter	09.10.30	..	.. –14.05.41

There were another 39 evacuees on the Register, received up to 2 May 1944.

Even during the disruption caused by the war years and by the arrival of these evacuees, school life had to continue as normally as possible. HMI Miss M Parry had visited the school in June 1941. She was fully aware of the isolated nature of Glascwm School and reported:

In this school, *one of the most isolated in the county* [my italics], the numbers have been more than doubled by the admission of children evacuated from the Crosby and Litherland districts of Liverpool. There were 17 pupils on register in October 1940, the number in attendance is now 38. Additional accommodation became necessary, as the school premises consist of one small room only. The school is fortunate in its arrangements for accommodating the increased numbers – a modern Church Hall within close proximity of the school is in use for the Infants and Junior groups, while the seniors occupy the main building. The absorption of the evacuated pupils into classes with the local children has proved successful from both an educational and social standpoint, and the visiting pupils seem happily settled in their new surroundings.

This is a one-teacher school, but increased numbers have necessitated re-grouping, and a teacher from one of the Crosby schools has charge of the younger groups of pupils. The work is well-conducted. Considering the dislocation of the school, and the fact that many pupils have had considerable interruption and disturbance in recent months, their progress in the basic work is being creditably maintained. The Church Hall, equipped with collapsible tables and chairs, offers excellent scope for movement; dancing, games and Physical Training, not only for the Juniors, but also for the Senior pupils, are arranged daily under an enthusiastic teacher.

The main drawback of these premises, which are otherwise satisfactory, is the sanitary arrangement. There is only one w.c. (of the bucket type) for approximately 20 pupils. Great improvement could be effected if some type of chemical lavatory could be installed at reasonable cost.

The work of the Senior pupils, under the charge of the Head teacher, who was appointed to the school in 1933 [Miss SM Owen], progresses favourably on the whole, and efforts are made to teach a neat standard of written work. The general background of the pupils, more especially in Geography, is limited and they need further training in consulting atlases and maps. For this, wall-maps are urgently needed here. A fair range of practical activity is arranged – Domestic subjects are taken weekly by Senior girls at the Rectory kitchen, while some gardening, though on a limited scale, is included for the boys. The Handwork done by the girls is suitable, but in order to maintain the interest of the senior boys, some more advanced form of Handwork and Art should be introduced.

A number of pupils eat their mid-day meal at school, but better arrangements are desirable, and a supply of suitable crockery should be obtained.<sup>15</sup>

This is a lengthy extract, but it does show that, despite the turmoil caused by war, attempts were being made to carry on life as normally as possible. The extract also shows how the evacuee children had been received positively by their host community.

### CLOSURE!

As noted above, William Jones was the last evacuee to return to Liverpool, in February 1945. This meant that there were only 11 children left on roll (7 boys and 4 girls). It was these few pupils who celebrated VE Day at Glascwm. Miss Owen recorded: 'On Tuesday 8 May Mr Churchill at 3 pm announced unconditional surrender of Germans to Allies. The School had a Thanksgiving Service and Wednesday and Thursday were holidays. The School put out flags and red, white and blue decorations – and also wore coloured emblems'.<sup>16</sup>

On 16 July 1945, Miss SM Owen tendered her resignation as Head Teacher of Glascwm Council School. She recorded, 'numbers are low'. She had served for twelve years and must have realised that closure was imminent. Glascwm School was then put in the charge of an acting teacher and, from 1 October, in the charge of Miss Gwen Eadie,<sup>17</sup> County Supply Teacher, when only 5 of the 7 pupils on roll were present.

A letter of opposition to closure was sent on 25 July to the Director of Education on behalf of local parents, by Mrs Kathleen Morgan, the Vicar's wife.

Glascwm Vicarage  
Nr, Builth Wells  
25 July 1945

Major J. Mostyn  
Director of Education  
Llandrindod Wells

Dear Sir

May I express the wish of all the mothers of Glascwm school children that we do not want the village school closed. The three Cnwc children [the Lewis family at Cnwc Farm] and Victor Bowen wish to continue here, and to date Mrs Taylor has no prospect of a house in Portsmouth. Including Ivy Cutter, Margaret Rose Hughes and Robert C. Morgan the school numbers will be twelve. There are several four year olds and little ones one and a half and three who will require schooling shortly. I, too, realise the problem resulting from a shortage of teachers but I feel until the centralization of schools has been completed, our children really need someone who will give them a normal outlook as well as raise them to an average scholarship standard.

Yours sincerely  
Kathleen Morgan<sup>18</sup>

On 15 August, the Revd RO Morgan himself sent a letter to Miss Ellen Wilkinson,<sup>19</sup> Minister of Education, on behalf of villagers, 'to save our school'. This showed the depth of feeling in the Glascwm community, in that they were willing to go to the very top of the political ladder to try to enlist support for their cause. However, on 21 August, Radnorshire Local Education Authority sent a letter to the Ministry of Education:

The Authority, after considering a report that the number of pupils in attendance at the above named school [Glascwm Council School] after the summer holidays will be 6, has decided to take steps to *close* [my italics] the school either temporarily (i.e. for a period of 18 months) or permanently.

This was too much for the local community. The November issue of the *Glascwm and Rhulen Church Magazine* stated: 'It seems very much that the tiny villages of England and Wales will cease to exist. The Education Act of 1944 has struck a deadly blow at the very existence of the little village for it means that practically all small schools will be closed'.

The Education Act of 1944 had introduced a system of free secondary education to be instituted after the war and raised the school-leaving age to 15.<sup>20</sup> This meant that, at the age of 11, older pupils in the elementary/primary school would be transferred to a secondary school. The fight against closure at Glascwm was lost. On 23 November, official notice was received from Radnorshire LEA that they were ceasing to maintain Glascwm School. The 30 November entry in the school logbook recorded: 'Glascwm School closed this afternoon – 4 children will go to Newchurch on Monday 3 Dec.; and the rest [3] to Franksbridge'. Subsequently, a letter from the Ministry of Education on 1 August 1946 stated that: 'Glascwm School ceased to be recognised as a county school as from 4 June 1946'.

This was sad ending for a school that had struggled to be established. Glascwm Council School had existed for less than half a century but its history shows how it did eventually establish itself in the local community, despite being 'one of the most isolated schools in the county'. Its history also shows how a small school could adapt to being a positive host community by taking in evacuees during the war and it further shows the trauma endured by a community when it faced the closure of its school.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> According to *The Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales* (2008), a *clas* church is generally used to describe a major native church in early medieval Wales, staffed by a community of clergy, usually headed by a man bearing the title of abbot.

<sup>2</sup> The Radnor Arms, the Drovers and the Maesllwch.

<sup>3</sup> Cregrina United School District Minute Book, 1875–1902, Powys Archives: R/E/SB/1/M/1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 16 July 1876. Tenders had been received from Mr William Williams of Builth for £420, and from Mr Thomas Evans of Cregrina for £380.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 26 November 1897.

<sup>6</sup> This tender was later accepted at £360 but, due to later changes, it was finally agreed at £390.

<sup>7</sup> Glascwm (Cregrina UD Board)/CP Log Book, 1901–1931, Glascwm Council School, Powys Archives: RE/PS/14/L1.

<sup>8</sup> Glascwm School Admission Register, 1901–1945, Powys Archives: R/E/PS/14/R/1.

<sup>9</sup> Glascwm School, Reports on School Work, 1916–1941, Powys Archives: RC/E/SF/18/2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 14 January 1920.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 28 February 1928.

<sup>12</sup> Glascwm School Log Book, 1931–1945, Powys Archives: R/E/PS/14/L/2.

<sup>13</sup> Glascwm School, Reports on School Work, 1916–1941, Powys Archives: RC/E/SF/18/2.

<sup>14</sup> Glascwm School Log Book, 1931–1945, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Glascwm School, Reports on School Work, 1916–1941, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Glascwm School Log Book, 1931–1945, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Miss Gwen Eadie was, of course, a lifelong member of the Radnorshire Society, as well as a Vice-President.

<sup>18</sup> Closure of Glascwm School and Glascwm Youth Hostel, RC/E/SF/18/4.

<sup>19</sup> Miss Ellen Wilkinson was the diminutive, but stalwart, MP for Jarrow who had taken part in the famous Jarrow Crusade of 1936.

<sup>20</sup> The raising of the school-leaving age to 15 was postponed until 1947.





# WHITEHALL, PRESTEIGNE: A LOST CEILING RECOVERED

Duncan James

Whitehall, in Hereford Street, Presteigne, is a fifteenth-century house with an eighteenth-century façade. It has been the subject of detailed investigation by the RCAHMW<sup>1</sup> in 1980 and 1997, including recording, analysis, tree-ring dating and publication.<sup>2</sup> However, there are three timbers in the house that were overlooked and these can, it is suggested here, serve to illuminate an important phase in the life of the building.

Whitehall stands close to the centre of the town. Seen from the road it offers a pleasing façade of eighteenth-century date, with a front door reached from the street by means of four stone steps that project across the pavement (Figure 1). The door has raised and fielded panelling above the



Figure 1

lock rail and reeded pilasters and brackets under an open-pediment hood enclosing a delicate, semicircular fanlight. Iron railing on each side of the steps completes the picture. Late nineteenth-century pierced bargeboards with finials and a bay window of similar date slightly disturb the refinement of the earlier work. The bay window may have been added to allow for its use as a shop. The curious proportions of the façade and the way in which the windows are positioned high in the dormer gables indicate that this is a remodelling of an earlier building that has imposed constraints on the design.

The main range parallel with the street is of one and a half storeys, the top floor tucked in under the slope of the roof. The crosswing on the right, in spite of being taller, also has rooms that are partially under the roof slope.

What all this hides is the substantial remains of a timber-framed late medieval hall house, built from trees felled in 1462/3<sup>3</sup> (Figure 2). Smoke-blackened timbers in the roof and evidence for a smoke louvre show that it had a central, open hearth.

The two-bay open hall, laid out on a north-west to south-east axis, has a service bay at the eastern end and a two-bay, two-storey solar crosswing at the western end (Figure 3). It is usual in Herefordshire and Radnorshire to align the solar or upper end of a medieval hall towards the south-west quadrant.<sup>4</sup> An indication of the status of the building can be found in the cusped windbraces fitted in the roof over the open hall, and in the roof of the crosswing, where they would also have been visible, because first-floor chambers of fifteenth-century date were not normally fitted with the comfort of ceilings.

The crosswing was jettied at first-floor level, projecting out over the street, although this has now been underbuilt, and the framing beneath the jetty removed. This means that the evidence for the original function of that part of the building has been lost. Clearly the building was primarily domestic but, in view of its central position, it is likely that it also had some commercial use, possibly with a 'shop' in the front, ground-floor bay of the crosswing. Shop provision in towns such as Presteigne would have been extensive in the late medieval period, with many of them operating as workshops rather than just retailing. There would have been a wide diversity of trades with products made and sold from the same premises. In Weobley, for instance, evidence for more than ten late medieval shop fronts has been found, a number of which were situated towards the perimeter of the settlement, presumably with the intention of finding customers before they reached the market centre.<sup>5</sup> This perhaps indicates that many of those journeying to town in the fifteenth century would have been on foot.

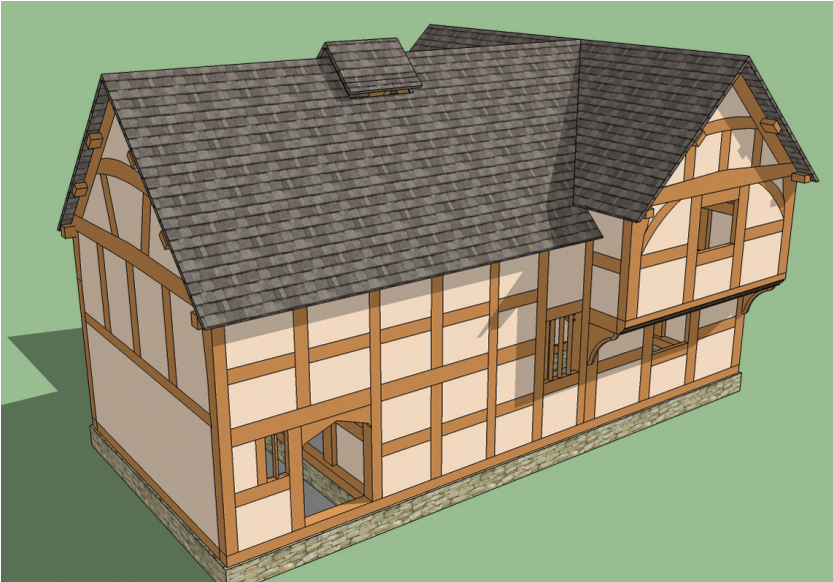


Figure 2

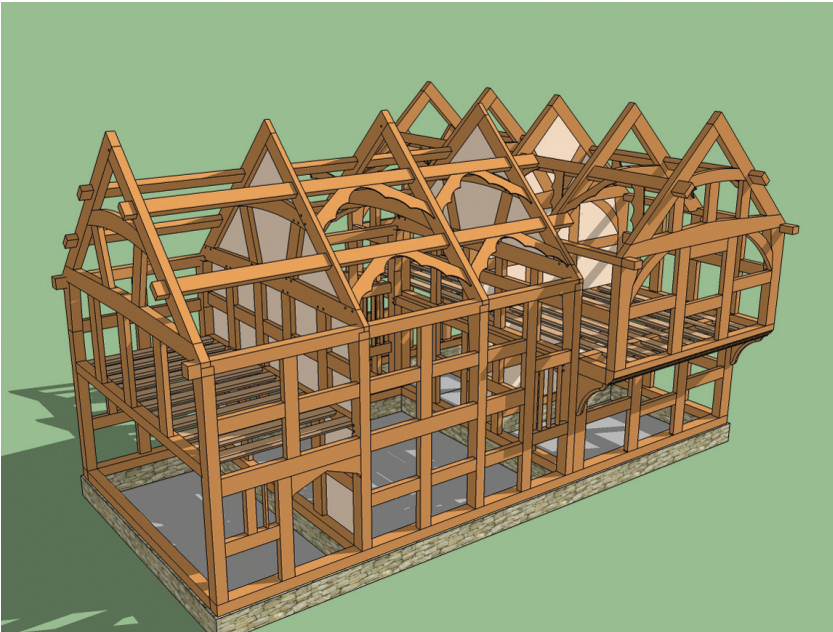


Figure 3

The present front door in Whitehall may be on the original alignment of a shop door. A common layout for a shop front of this period would have entailed a tripartite division of the ground-floor façade of the crosswing, with one third forming the doorway and the other two thirds set out as a pair of shuttered trading windows. The original (primary) front door of the house would have been in the position of the present eastern doorway in the front wall, which led to a crosspassage through the service bay at the eastern end of the range.<sup>6</sup> This arrangement is slightly unusual: normally the crosspassage passes through the 'lower' status end of the hall, adjacent to the service bay but not through it. However, in situations where space is limited the crosspassage is set out to pass through the service end.<sup>7</sup> In Whitehall the hall itself, with an internal area of 288 sq.ft., was relatively small.<sup>8</sup>

What is of interest is the subsequent evolution of the building. In the border area, the decades before and after the year 1500 mark the demise of the open hall in Herefordshire and areas of Radnorshire close to the border.<sup>9</sup> It is a period of radical change in house design, when open halls with their central hearths ceased to be built. New houses of the early sixteenth century were constructed with ceiled halls, buildings of two storeys throughout with chimneys replacing the open hearths. However, it is clear that existing open halls often remained open well into the late sixteenth or even the early seventeenth century, until they were at last modernised by the insertion of a chimneystack and floor. This change took place in Whitehall almost certainly in the second half of the sixteenth century, when a massive chimneystack (shown in Figure 9) was built in the eastern corner of the hall, backing onto the crosspassage. Accompanying this modernisation, a ceiling would have been inserted in the hall. However, this early ceiling is no longer in place. The present ceiling is of eighteenth- or even nineteenth-century date. That the hall remained 'open' until this late date is highly unlikely, and so why might an earlier ceiling have been removed, and where could it be now?

The clue to its removal may lie in the height of the present ceiling in the hall bay, which has been raised, because the floor level has also been raised. Levels in both the hall and the crosswing have been adjusted, possibly in order to create a better ceiling height in the large cellar under the crosswing, and to allow insertion of cellar windows. This is what created the need for the steps up from the street.

But what of the lost ceiling? The clues are in three unrecorded ceiling beams in the house, two re-used and now spanning the service bay (Figure 5), and a larger beam lodged (i.e. stored) in the roof space of the crosswing. They all have the same moulded profile (Figure 4) and are



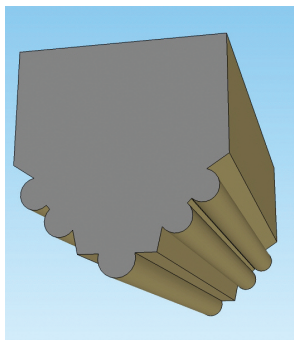


Figure 4



Figure 5

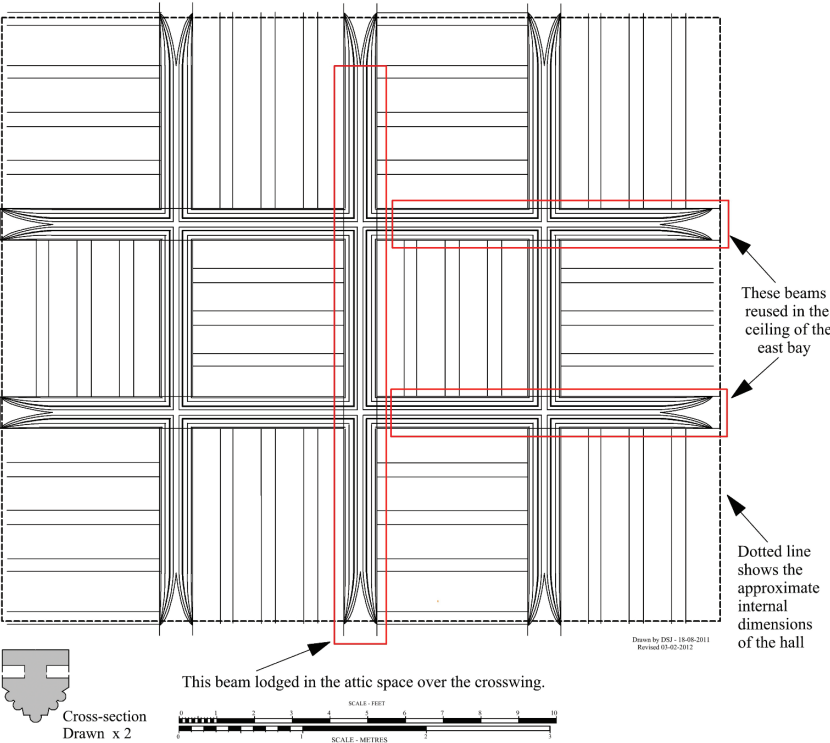
clearly components from the same ceiling. They also carry redundant mortices and other evidence that is sufficient to allow a reconstruction to be made of the original configuration and dimensions (Figure 6). This shows that they formed part of a coffered ceiling potentially with twelve panels, each containing either three or four joists, making a total of forty joists that were laid out in alternative directions in each panel to form a counterchange or chequerboard pattern. However, the beam lodged in the attic is not complete, as one third of the length is mutilated and does not carry moulding to the end. This is probably because that part of the beam was embedded in the chimneystack, which occupied two of the twelve panels of the ceiling. (Figures 6 and 9).

The design of the ceiling is typical in the area for inserted ceilings of 1550–1600 date. It is possible that the joists were also moulded, as can be seen in the ceiling in Manor House, St. David's Street, although this (earlier) ceiling is not of chequerboard layout.

In Presteigne, a similar though less impressive counterchange ceiling survives in 46 High Street (Figure 7) and others can be found nearby in Herefordshire at The Throne, Weobley, and Almeley Manor, Almeley (Figure 8). In Radnorshire, Old Impton, Norton, has a simple counterchange ceiling inserted into the hall.

A careful measurement of the reconstructed ceiling (Figure 6) indicates that it would have been an almost exact fit within the hall of Whitehall and, although it is impossible to be certain that it was once in the building, it seems highly likely that it was. Why, therefore, was it removed?

Although the indications of changed floor levels go some way to explaining its removal, it is possible that structural failure may have played a part. Coffered ceilings, with their massive beams, were very heavy and often constructed from poor quality timber in which the grain



Whitehall, Hereford Street  
Presteigne  
Figure 6

Reconstructed plan of ceiling using data from beams re-used in the building. The moulding on the underside is drawn in.



Figure 7



Figure 8

was far from straight. It was also difficult or even impossible to mortise the beam ends into the existing frame of the building, and so recourse was made to using half-beams face-pegged on to the wall frames, an arrangement that was prone to failure.

This lost ceiling at Whitehall illustrates the way in which important clues to the evolution of a building often lie hidden deep within the surviving structure. That the hall was ceiled when the stack was introduced was common practice; what is of interest is the evidently high quality of this ceiling, which indicates the continued, even elevated status of the building, and thus its occupant, as Presteigne approached the seventeenth century.

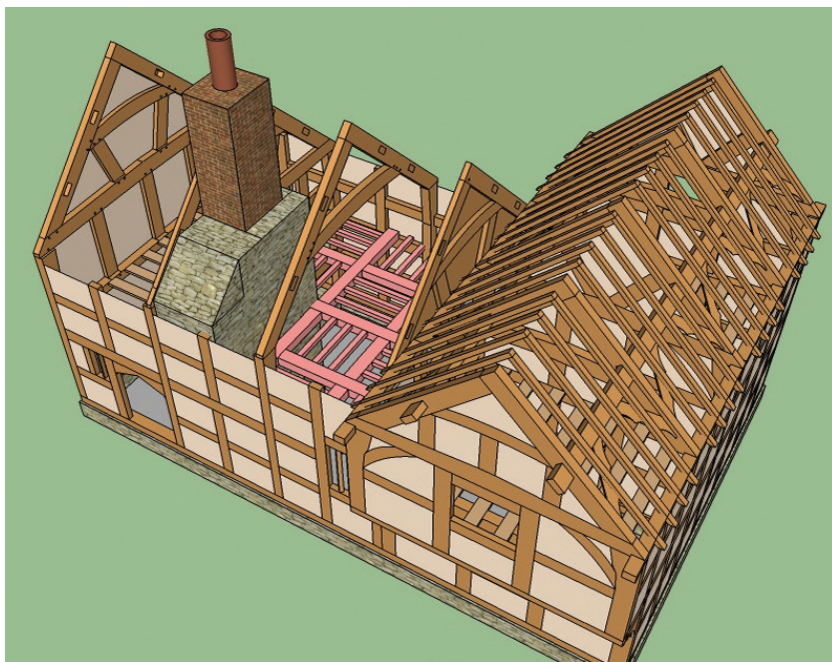


Figure 9

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales.

<sup>2</sup> R Suggett, *Houses & History in the March of Wales, Radnorshire 1400–1800*, (2005), Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, pp. 130–132.

<sup>3</sup> The timber has been tree-ring dated to the winter of 1462 to the spring of 1463 and it is known that the buildings were constructed from green oak so the house may have been built during the year 1463. *Vernacular Architecture* 30, (1999), p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> D James, 'An Investigation of the Orientation of Timber-framed Houses in Herefordshire', *Vernacular Architecture* 34, (2003), pp. 20–31.

<sup>5</sup> D James, 'Late Medieval Shop Provision in Weobley, Herefordshire', *Transactions of the Woolhope Club*, (forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> This part of the building still has a service function as a kitchen.

<sup>7</sup> This is the case, for instance, at Manor House, Bell Square, Weobley, a fifteenth-century hall with crosswings at both ends.

<sup>8</sup> In a study of Pembridge hall houses, six of the larger ones gave an average hall area of 550 sq.ft. Two of the smaller halls gave an average of 238 sq.ft. This tends to suggest that Whitehall can also be categorised as a small hall. See D James, 'An analysis of ten Medieval buildings in Pembridge, Herefordshire', (Dec. 2002), an unpublished report prepared for Pembridge Amenity Trust.

<sup>9</sup> Although there are examples of halls still being built in Radnorshire as late as the middle of the sixteenth century such as Nannerth-ganol (*Vernacular Architecture* 27, (1996), p. 108) and Nantmel, Middle Nant-serth, (*Vernacular Architecture* 30, (1999), p. 113), both dated to 1555/6.



## ‘THE ARCADIA OF BRITAIN’: IOLO MORGANWG AND RADNORSHIRE

Marion Löffler

**I**n June 1802, the poet, forger and radical Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg), walking the hills of this county, noted:

[I] am charmed with the simple, mild, civil and honest character of Radnorshire. Was I a good pastoral poet I would on these hills in these valleys lay my scenes, from their inhabitants draw my characters and call Radnorshire the Arcadia of Britain. The great unresiding proprietors will at a future tribunal be sternly asked why these poor well disposed cottagers were not accommodated with better habitations.<sup>1</sup>

He was, indeed, a ‘pastoral poet’, as his *Poems Lyric and Pastoral* had shown in 1794, but, like these two volumes of poetry, his appreciation of nature was informed by Enlightenment views, which celebrated the earth and reminded man to ‘subdue and replenish’ it, and by political radicalism.<sup>2</sup> Thus his observations, here as elsewhere, were shot through with political comment and radical critique. Though Iolo Morganwg never spent much time in Radnorshire, the journey he made through the county in 1802 and his cultural connections with it are noteworthy and will be explored in this essay.

Iolo Morganwg was a proud son of Glamorgan. He had been born in Flemingston or Flimston, as he called it, in the Vale of Glamorgan in 1747. His father, Edward Williams senior, was a stonemason and builder, a trade in which Iolo and his three younger brothers were also brought up. His mother was descended from minor gentry and Iolo stressed her role in his education.<sup>3</sup> By the age of nine he could cut letters in stone but, even during his teenage years, he began to interest himself in the literary tradition and folklore of his county, attending small poetic gatherings, learning from Glamorganshire grammarians and antiquaries and listening avidly to the stories and tales told in the area.<sup>4</sup> In 1770, he left Glamorgan for south-east England, working in Kent and around London as a stonemason. In London, he became acquainted with influential members of the Gwyneddigion Society, whom he supplied with Welsh manuscript material. The co-operation between him, his sponsor Owen Jones (Owain Myfyr) and William Owen Pughe resulted in the publication of *Barddoniaeth Dafydd ab Gwilym*, the first edition of the work of our most famous medieval poet, in 1789.<sup>5</sup> Between 1801 and 1807, Iolo assisted in the

publication of the three-volume *Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*, which brought a wealth of medieval Welsh material into the public domain for the first time. Both volumes, unfortunately, also became repositories for the very talented forgeries with which he sought to bolster the reservoir of medieval Welsh culture and which overshadowed Welsh scholarship and learning for over a hundred years.<sup>6</sup> Iolo returned to Glamorgan in 1795 after the publication of the two volumes of *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral*, of which very little is remembered today.<sup>7</sup> By then he was married to Margaret (Peggy) Williams, who bore him several children. He spent the remainder of his life in Glamorganshire pursuing a variety of activities in order to make a living. He followed the stonemason's trade and attempted farming; he became badly indebted and spent some time in Cardiff gaol as a result.<sup>8</sup> He also kept a shop in Cowbridge which sold radical literature and 'sugar uncontaminated with human gore'.<sup>9</sup> Two aspects of his life during these decades connect him with Radnorshire. In order to earn a living, he assisted with the surveys which had been commissioned by the Agricultural Board of the British Government in the 1790s. Secondly, his leisure hours were spent developing the Gorsedd of the Bards of the Isle of Britain, which would later become an integral part of the National Eisteddfod of Wales.<sup>10</sup>

Iolo Morganwg loved south Wales. Indeed, later in life, he came to dislike north Wales so much that he insisted that pure Welsh culture, sweetened only by the Norman troubadours, was to be found in the folk traditions and poetry of the south only. Radnorshire, for him, was part of this: the ancient kingdom of Eryllwg, which represented the core of unsullied Welsh culture. Known to the Romans as Siluria, it encompassed Glamorgan, Gwent, Breconshire, Radnorshire and Maelienydd.<sup>11</sup> The Silurian dialect of the Welsh language spoken in these counties was declared by Iolo not only to have been the *lingua franca* of the medieval Welsh court poets, but also to be the language spoken at the court of King Arthur in Caerleon.<sup>12</sup> This inclusion of Radnorshire in the blessed south may explain Iolo's positive attitude towards it, but it did not mean that he spent much time there. His searches for Welsh manuscripts led him mainly to north Wales, for which he travelled up the coast through Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire. Radnorshire, sparsely populated and not on his usual travel routes, barely featured in his itineraries.

Nevertheless, there could have been scope for a whole book on Iolo Morganwg and late eighteenth-century agriculture in Radnorshire if he had been luckier or shrewder in attempting to secure a government commission to survey it. In 1793 the British Government, faced with the prospect of feeding the nation in wartimes and following the advice of

Sir John Sinclair, founded a Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement, which was to proceed under the three watchwords of 'profit, innovation and productivity'.<sup>13</sup> The Board commissioned a groundbreaking survey of Britain's agriculture, for which Wales was to be examined in two parts, north and south.<sup>14</sup> Iolo Morganwg began to collect material on agriculture and in 1796 applied for the commission to conduct the research on south Wales. Initially, he received positive replies, but soon his supporter, the Bristol Quaker William Matthews, informed him that his 'political Creed may be known at Whitehall' and that his habit of attacking 'Tyrants and Priests' meant that the Board was reluctant to appoint him.<sup>15</sup> John Sinclair awarded the commission for north Wales to the equally qualified but politically safer Anglican priest and antiquary Walter Davies (Gwallter Mechain) and the commission for south Wales to the Pembrokeshire antiquary and historian Richard Fenton.<sup>16</sup> When Fenton proved unable to complete the work, Walter Davies took over south Wales too. The reports for Wales thus written by Walter Davies and published in 1810 and 1815 respectively (now available online as part of the National Library of Wales's Digital Mirror) are a valuable source for historians.<sup>17</sup> Behind the published reports, however, lie the even more extensive manuscript sources of the field notebooks which formed the basis of the printed volumes. They contain detailed accounts and observations collected over twenty years, from 1796 until 1815.<sup>18</sup> And here, we meet Iolo Morganwg again. From 1797 until 1802, Walter Davies concentrated on the north, but when he began his work on south Wales he decided to employ Iolo Morganwg as assistant.<sup>19</sup> Especially responsible for Glamorganshire, Iolo appears to have concentrated on Glamorganshire, Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire. Radnorshire was surveyed mostly by Walter Davies himself, assisted by John Jenkins (Ifor Ceri), the Rector of Ceri. As far as we know, Iolo travelled through Radnorshire only once in connection with the agricultural survey. In a letter to William Owen Pughe in London, written in March 1803, he complained about the superficiality of his work:

I am ashamed of the surveys that I have in hand, for not the tenth, no not the hundredth not even the thousandth, part has been seen of what we should have seen, . . . Two days running across Radnorshire, two scampering over Breconshire, and, (but for my previous knowledge,) the same account of Carmarthenshire. Six days in Pembrokeshire where six years was necessary. Six weeks indeed in Cardiganshire, of which county I shall be able to say a few things, but not half enough. Th[e] truth is, none but natives or such as had resided many years in the several cou[nties] should have undertaken any such thing.<sup>20</sup>

Fortunately, most of the description of Iolo's 'two days running through Radnorshire' in the spring and summer of 1802 survived in a small notebook at the National Library of Wales. In it, tightly written in pencil, now partly rubbed out by time and by numerous fingers, Iolo outlined his route, which, coming from Shrewsbury and on the way to Merthyr Tydfil, led him through Llanfair Waterdine, Bugeildy, Knighton, Norton, Presteigne, New Radnor, Old Radnor and Gladestry to Painscastle and on to Hay-on-Wye. His notes characteristically reflect his wide range of interests and occupations: his expertise in geology which stemmed from his training as a stonemason, his poet's attitude to nature and his interest in agricultural improvement. But he mixed astute remarks on agriculture, the quality of the soil, the prevalent stone, possible mineral deposits and the state of the turnpike roads and of estates with observations of interest to the antiquary and the philologist, and with political comments and notes of a personal nature. He was a multifaceted man with many interests. His notes on the Welsh part of this walk are structured around the counties he passed through; he was clearly collecting material for the agricultural survey.

He notes that 'the boundary line between Montgomery and Radnorshire lies along the summit of Ceri hills' and, entering Radnorshire from there, he finds that 'we see larger extents of unbroken mountain than in Montgomeryshire, but I have not yet seen their intermediate vales. The ascents are less abrupt than in Montgomeryshire'.<sup>21</sup> Proceeding into Radnorshire, he observes the 'reddish colour of the soil that always indicates iron' and continues with a description which illustrates how the agricultural commissioners may typically have conducted their work:

I arrive at a farm house. Enquire my way as a pretence for grasping at an opportunity to enquire about sheep. Sheep are in large flocks on this extensive down larger than mountain breeds in general, full bodied woolly face & white tufted fore head, not very wiry wool deemed very fine. 30? a stone, weight of fleece 3 to 4 lb, of carcass 14 to 16 lb a quarter hind and fore quarters nearly equal. Fatten well.<sup>22</sup>

Iolo then proceeds to Felindre, but unfortunately the next folio is almost illegible, so we meet him again at Bugeildy, where he finds the people of Radnorshire 'gentle civil and honest in their manners'. On the cattle there he notes that it is 'a good breed some of the same as the Montgomery and some of the Pembroke breed which are much larger and black'. The roads, however, are 'unimproved, narrow'.<sup>23</sup> Llanfair Waterdine is deemed 'a poor village with a Church that is not a steeple house. Of course a Quaker may enter it'.<sup>24</sup> Walking on, he makes enquiries again and

expresses his 'surprise that I saw no stock on farms. After words I was informed that it was to the remoter upland inclosures they had been removed keeping the lower meadows for hay'.<sup>25</sup> Arriving at Knighton, a town 'on a rising ground in a beautiful spot', Iolo visits the cemetery because he is generally interested in instances of human longevity, which he obsessively collected for the 'History of Longevity in Glamorgan' that he was planning to write one day. He finds 'very few instances of longevity', but is deeply moved by a rather different inscription:

To the Memory of Thomas son of the Revd. Thomas Hope and Jane his wife, who injudiciously taking shelter under an oak was killed by a stroke of lightening the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1770, in the 21<sup>st</sup> year of his age.

Reader observe that list of  
Human ills,  
Which life in all its various  
Stages fills.  
No prudence can defend, or  
Virtue save.  
Mortals when destined to the  
Silent grave.  
Man's greatest caution oft to  
Danger turns  
Hence mine proved fatal, hence  
A parent mourns.<sup>26</sup>

We can feel the strain when he adds, 'I too have known, have sorely known, what it is to lose a loved child suddenly and to copy these inscriptions was, I felt it very much a very great difficulty'.<sup>27</sup> His youngest daughter Elizabeth had died in 1793 and it took him a long time to get over her death.<sup>28</sup> There is a note of hope in the closing lines of this passage, as Iolo attempts to transcend grief:

To meet beloved relatives so lost in a future world, what an idea. Who can express the feelings, excited, it is wonderful, it is charming. I will believe it true. I will in spite of all that can be urged in opposition, it affords a consolation that I will never suffer to escape from, my child, my father, my mother, my lost brother.<sup>29</sup>

This is one of the very personal notes with which Iolo interlaced his agricultural observations. In a characteristic mood-swing, however, he

continued in a more political vein, looking forward to meeting again friends like 'Dr Priestley', where 'neither King nor Bishop can persecute'.<sup>30</sup>

En route to Presteigne, Iolo chimes in the chorus of complaint about Welsh roads when he observes a 'new road badly made and yet there are very good materials and plenty in Radnorshire, and very good stone for common masonry'.<sup>31</sup> Criticism of the deplorable state of Welsh roads and reports of the often lethal accidents thus caused were almost weekly occurrences in the border newspapers which served the county, such as the *Shrewsbury Chronicle* and the *Hereford Journal*.<sup>32</sup> Iolo therefore takes great care to praise Mr Richard Williams of the Dukes Arms, Knighton<sup>33</sup> for having been 'active and very judicious in forming new roads, improving of old ones. And the public are under very great obligations to him for his exertions in this'.<sup>34</sup> On his return to Knighton, his curiosity as an antiquary is awakened by 'a very large tumulus in a field close to the river and of the town. They call it the Castle'.<sup>35</sup> He praises 'Thos. Grove Esqr. of Cwm Elen' for his agricultural improvements of the land,<sup>36</sup> and then enlarges on the advantages of elder over hazelnut for quick growth and resistance to diseases and insects, when grown as a copse.<sup>37</sup> He leaves the 'neat and pleasant little town of Knighton with some regret', feeling:

I have not often been so strongly impressed with an idea of a very delightful and very snug retreat from the bustle of a busy world as at the charmingly rural town of Knighton. I hope that I shall see it again and with it Mr Morgan the woolstapler to whom for friendly information I am much indebted.<sup>38</sup>

Two miles from Knighton, Iolo can't resist passing political comment again. As he observes some 'dry and healthy sheep walking free to all who pay about 2s.6d per ann to his Kingship, or as others say to his Prince of Wales-ship, what a number of ships there are, those above named are fine ships, of the first rate'.<sup>39</sup> Proceeding to Norton, Iolo rests on Offa's Dyke and jots down a further cryptic remark, perhaps expressing the feelings towards absentee landlords and their hated stewards in Wales which many harboured at the time: 'Rest on Offa's Dyke, look east look west and what there one holds by honest tenure the other by that of thieves'.<sup>40</sup> The Anglo-French War, which had begun in 1793, abated with the Peace of Amiens in 1802, and continued as a Napoleonic War, in combination with bad harvests in 1794-5 and the early 1800s, had reduced tenant farmers and labourers in rural Wales to near-starvation;

led to food riots and disturbances and increased the dislike of the avaricious men employed by great landowners to gather their due.<sup>41</sup>

The 'vale of Presteign' impresses Iolo as a 'fine rural place many good orchards' and the town receives praise of sorts, but Iolo can't but attach a list naming and shaming lawyers and judges:

Tolerable good turnpike road to the decent town of Presteign . . . There is nothing much worth notice, nothing very disgusting here. The town decent and large enough for Radnor not many thefts fewer murders no criminals but lawyers appear in this hall, unless a counsellor, or judge perhaps, now and then may add (as they very frequently do) to the list of incorrigible scoundrels. I am now strongly impelled to think of old John Lloyd, . . . and, of the two, most villanous, Judge Jeffreys. Old Judge Lloyd and his toad gulper Geordy.<sup>42</sup>

He was not very fond of the representatives of the law in Wales, one of whom, George Hardinge, was in the process of sentencing his friend and fellow-radical Thomas Evans (Tomos Glyn Cothi) to two years in prison for allegedly singing a seditious song at a bid-ale in Brechfa, Carmarthenshire; and who had, in 1801, sentenced three miners of Merthyr Tydfil to death for rioting, thereby giving the Welsh working class their first martyrs.<sup>43</sup> A political anti-war dream he then narrates in great detail ends rather abruptly at the end of the page, and he renews his efforts to describe the countryside of Radnorshire. The following lines, jotted down between Presteigne and New Radnor, give another impression of the mixture of notes he took, philological, agricultural and geographical, all jumbled together:

Prill, English prill: a rill of water a small brook in this country. Some pink blossom hawthorn, much cestwydd [chestnut], woods all white with their bloom. View Mr Thomas James's Estate: calcareous clay, strong wheat land, one piece of fine wheat a fifth corn crop in five years never manured, this is not mentioned with approbation but to shew that there are soils in this county whose stamina are so very good that under a tillage of some conscience they would be very productive. Limestone just by tho degenerating into iron stone, penant NW dip 45 degrees lime & iron shale, penant of same dip immediately west-ward. Large quantities of marl that effervesce but not strongly in vinegar, soil of this little tract rushy and much oak and heavy leaved willow, slate, barytes &c.<sup>44</sup>

Iolo then sets out for New Radnor, a walk he clearly enjoys, delivering valuable information on soil, cattle and crops and praising the 'very pretty

sheep'.<sup>45</sup> He does not favour the town, though his description of its town hall may be of interest to the local historian:

Hazel hedges all the way, roadmaking not well understood, too much earth amongst stones in them, hills, fine sheepwalk dry and healthy, broom, some very pretty sheep. To the left a very fine very large fertile and beautiful vale well managed, clean, well-fenced, corn of all sorts on quantity, adapted seemingly to the consumption of the country. Cattle red, with white faces, backs, bellies & legs for the most part . . . Arrive at New Radnor, a very poor town, with a market house used only for sheltering waggons. A town hall over it, at each end on the gable junction the figure of an eagle well carved in stone, none could tell me why. Observe good freestone in the tower, am told that the quar[r]ies are about 4 miles up in the forest mountains.<sup>46</sup>

Travelling on, he passes 'Harpton Court, a large, fine brickbuilt home. Battlemented ab[ou]t 60 or 70 years ago. The seat of Thomas Franklin Lewis Esq. who has in this county an estate of 5000 £ per ann. In a meadow adjoining a large oak girth 27, 10 high whence it divides into 6 branches each very large'.<sup>47</sup> He complains about the 'abominable road making' again, but finds Old Radnor pleasant, having a 'good and large old church and a small village on a fine commanding rising ground'. The cattle he sees here are the red and white Hereford breed. He also notes 'Roman coins and brass vessels etc. found at Old Radnor'. 'Glasdre' he finds a 'pretty rural village in a wavy country well-fenced, good soil good culture prettily sprinkled with wood'. At Newchurch, he has breakfast at the Red Lion inn and observes that the church here is 'very rudely built' with 'a coarse . . . not white for dirt woolen blanket for a pulpit cloth'. The 'very large yew tree' nearby pleases him, though.<sup>48</sup> On the sheep here he remarks that they are:

very seldom affected with the rot, scab, etc. Never in fields always winter and summer on the downs. A hardy breed. The Hereford Ryelands require sheltered fields. Were downs inclosed the Ryelands would succeed as well as in Hereford as it has been found that they do equally well in inclosures as in Hereford.<sup>49</sup>

The last village in Radnorshire he passes is Painscastle, where he finds only the tumulus of an 'old castle' remaining, and remarks that the fair is here held on the old May Day 'for cattle, sheep & hogs, and for hiring servants'. As he arrives at Clyro, he encounters



impudence etc. etc., [which] convince me that I approach Breconshire. I hope you will give me something to drink said a fellow who put only one foot over his threshold to tell me the way to the Hay 1½ miles off . . . Breconians are acknowledged to be a keen or cunning race, but are certainly low in the scale of morals and civility.<sup>50</sup>

And thus Iolo walks into Breconshire. If he ever travelled the length of Radnorshire again, he did not note it down and thus we have no record of it. Other than to survey the agricultural conditions there, Iolo, at the time when he was young enough to travel extensively by foot, had not much reason to visit the county, simply because it was not on his usual route. His destinations as a journeyman stonemason, a budding poet and a businessman were mainly London and Bristol; his preoccupation with ancient Welsh manuscripts led him mainly to Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire, and thence up the coast to north Wales.

There is a second link between Radnorshire and Iolo Morganwg, however, in the cultural connections and affinities which we glean from Iolo's correspondence with William Jenkins Rees (Cascob), the Rector of Cascob,<sup>51</sup> with John Jenkins (Ifor Ceri), the Vicar of Ceri just over the border in Montgomeryshire; and with Walter Davies (Gwallter Mechain), who was Rector at Manafon, Llanfaircaereinion, in the same county. All three men had made their homes in Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire in 1806 and 1807, called to Welsh parishes by Thomas Burgess, who had become Bishop of St David's in 1803. Keen on reviving the fortunes of the Anglican Church in Wales, Burgess not only founded schools and colleges, but also began to appoint Welsh-speaking vicars and rectors to Welsh-speaking parishes. What is more, he supported them in their antiquarian and literary efforts in the Welsh language.<sup>52</sup> All three men were educated at Oxford and they became leading lights and focus points in the circle of Anglican priests that founded the Cambrian societies which revived the eisteddfod on a nationwide scale after 1819.<sup>53</sup> They promoted the authentic literary traditions Iolo had collected during his long years of research, but, despite their education, they also popularised his invention, the Gorsedd of the Bards of the Isle of Britain. In making the eisteddfod a national institution which included Iolo's gorsedd, Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire played a major part. From about 1810 the three men corresponded with each other and met up about once a month, mostly in the house of John Jenkins because Ceri conveniently lay between Cascob and Manafon. WJ Rees is reported to have ridden the twenty-five miles over the hills on his mare. When the horse was lame, he could not come.<sup>54</sup> It was at Ceri in January 1818 that Bishop Burgess discussed his plans

for setting up cultural societies, and in October of the same year a circle of leading Anglican priests, including WJ Rees, and Iolo Morganwg (the only Nonconformist there), met at the White Lion Inn at Carmarthen to set up the Cambrian Society in Dyfed and to discuss establishing similar Cambrian societies in Gwynedd, Powys and Gwent. The first eisteddfod of the Dyfed Cambrian Society, held at Carmarthen in July 1819, established the precedent of linking the historically attested institution of the eisteddfod – a medieval prize competition for poets and musicians – with the newly-created Gorsedd of the Bards of the Isle of Britain, which was to serve as a kind of governing body for the eisteddfod, and for Wales. It is thanks to WJ Rees from Cascob that the eisteddfod and the gorsedd ceremony which followed it were extensively celebrated in the Welsh press. He had been appointed official auditor of the event and, in an advertising drive which appears distinctively modern, he had stayed on in Carmarthen for a whole week after the event in order to prepare press releases for Welsh periodicals and newspapers.<sup>55</sup> Thus, he not only ensured that the eisteddfod with its gorsedd was remembered, but he also coloured future generations' views of it as a major milestone for Welsh culture.<sup>56</sup> The report of Iolo's audacious move in making Bishop Thomas Burgess a member of the Druidic order during the gorsedd ceremony was politically especially important, for it indicated a union of Nonconformity, Anglican Church and Druidism, and therefore gave the gorsedd the official Christian credentials without which it might not have flourished in the nineteenth century:

The old Bard of Glamorgan . . . approached the Bishop, telling him that he had been authorised (or urged, because I could not hear him very clearly) to dress his lordship with the druidic order: Well, said the Bishop, I will bow to everything which you consider appropriate; at this point the bard attached a white ribbon to the Bishop's right arm. This caused prolonged and general applause. This revealed that religious prejudice had been left outside the audience by the mighty and the common. To see the *Bishop of St David's* thus honoured by an old *Dissenter* was a sight a thousand times more beloved by the proponents of love and general goodwill, and opponents of prejudice and partisanship, than had the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, with all his robes and his archiepiscopal pomp been seen fulfilling the same task.<sup>57</sup>

To this day, the gorsedd ceremony is an integral part of every national eisteddfod and an invitation to be admitted to its druidic order considered a high honour. The tradition of honouring important Anglican priests was

upheld at the St David’s eisteddfod of 2002, when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, became a member of its druidic order.

By the time the circle of Anglican priests around Bishop Burgess organised these new eisteddfodau, Iolo Morganwg was getting rather old to travel extensively in order to attend, especially when they were held further afield. But the correspondence of Walter Davies, John Jenkins and especially WJ Rees with Iolo reveals the strong links which existed between these men. Returning from the Carmarthen eisteddfod of 1819, WJ Rees wrote an enthusiastic letter which showed his reverence for the aged Iolo and his support for furthering his work all over Wales:

Dear Sir,

The eisteddfod at Carmarthen went off with a splendour, of which every lover of the principality may congratulate himself. It was a period of which Cambria may be justly proud. It has occurred to me since my return home that it would be advisable for you to lose no time in completing the translation of your ‘Collections for your History of Wales’, and getting the work ready for the press . . . I took with me 20 copies of your prospectus from Carmarthen, 4 whereof I left at Landoverly with a person who I am confident will distribute them judiciously, and exert himself to make the contents known; 4 copies I intend to distribute in this neighbourhood, and the remainder I purpose to take with me to the meeting of Welsh literary characters at Dolgellau next week. Should the adding of my name to your list of subscribers to the work afford you any pleasure, you are requested without further ceremony to write ‘The Rev. W. J. Rees, Rector of Cascob, Radnorshire’. For my part I am anxious that the world should enjoy the benefit of your literary labour; I see by a letter of yours in the Cambrian Register that you have several original M.SS of your own by you; all of which I hope you will be induced to lay shortly before the public. Could I be of any assistance to you with respect to the English department, and be employed to suggest corrections for those errors, which the most correct authors from oversight are apt to make, I would most readily peruse the manuscript and do everything in my power to render the work critically correct. Should you be inclined to write, when you have leisure, and opportunity I shall be happy to hear from you. Although in advanced life, I hope you will live yet many years, – long enough to see all your works published, and Cambrian literature and antiquities meet with that patronage, which, from their intrinsic merit, and value, they so richly deserve.<sup>58</sup>

In other letters sent by WJ Rees soon after his return from Carmarthenshire, he urged the clergy of Gwynedd and Powys to follow the

Dyfed example and arrange provincial eisteddfodau as soon as possible. It is due to the enthusiasm and ability of this Radnorshire cleric that the Powys Cymrodorion society was the second of the Cambrian societies to be founded, in October 1819. As early as September 1820, it held its first eisteddfod. WJ Rees would have liked to organise the event in Radnorshire itself, but the county was too sparsely populated and, most importantly, there was a dearth of the gentry which was required to act as patrons.<sup>59</sup> Thus, the 1820 eisteddfod of the Powys Cambrian Society, which had been organised from Cascob and Ceri, was held at Wrexham town hall, where gentry patronage to pay for prizes and proceedings was plentiful.<sup>60</sup>

The Powys Cymrodorion society was eager for Iolo Morganwg to attend the gathering and Walter Davies proposed a route which is suggestive of Iolo's connections with Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire:

You were at the first meeting (6th October 1819) elected an honorary member of the Cymmrodorion Society in Powys – with a wish that you would be present at the now approaching eisteddfod. I was commissioned by the committee to write to you, and to invite you to attend . . . Give me leave to sketch out your line of road to Wrexham, though you stand in no need of information. Suppose you start from Merthyr Tydfil – you will cross the Usk – and the Wye at Glasbury. Between Presteign & Knighton, at Casgob rectory, lives Mr Rees, who was so active as an assistant secretary at Carmarthen. He has been equally active in forming the Cymmrodorion Society in Powys, and the Cambrian Institution in London. At his house you will be cordially welcome to repose the length of time you wish. Thence over the Kerry hills to the vicarage of Kerry. Mr Jenkins you know well – and to know him is to esteem him. No man can be more glad to receive you under his roof. When you have rested with him, you will have but 9 or 10 miles to my House at Manafon. Of your reception here I will say nothing. Then on your way further you will have the vicarage of Llan Silin, where Mr D. Richards, the secretary of Powys dwells. You will then be within a short distance of Wrexham.<sup>61</sup>

Alas Iolo, by then seventy-two years of age, worn out from years of hard work, travelling on foot, and suffering from asthma, did not have the strength to attend. The only other provincial eisteddfod at which he was present before his death in 1826 was the Brecon eisteddfod of 1822. Both the Cambrian Society of Gwent and this 1822 eisteddfod had also been initiated and organised by WJ Rees, who again wrote to express his appreciation:

I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate you on your enjoying so good health and spirits, as you appeared to have at Brecon. For although you asserted the contrary, old age seemed not to have made any impression since the time I had the pleasure of meeting you at Carmarthen eisteddfod. I was particularly glad to see you at Brecon as it shewed you true to your colours, and your anxiety to be at your post when your presence was wanted. Although the Cambrian cause met with some opposition at the place, yet having planned the matter beforehand, the forming of the Cambrian Society in Gwent went off as well as could be expected. As therefore things have begun well, I hope they will proceed, and that we shall have an eisteddfod at Brecon, which for literary talent, and gentry will be as brilliant as any of the preceding. Were you but twenty years younger I am sure that you would so interest yourself, and ring such a peal of exhortation, and excitation on the occasion, as would infuse patriotism even into the Anglo-Cambrians, and make them anxious to encourage the literature of their country. Yet although you are advanced in years, I am sure that you will notwithstanding do your best, and embrace every opportunity to excite your acquaintance to come forward like true Cambrians.<sup>62</sup>

After Iolo's death in 1826, WJ Rees corresponded with and visited Iolo's son, Taliesin ab Iolo, at Merthyr Tydfil and he remained a main organiser of provincial Welsh eisteddfodau all through the 1820s, so much so that Archdeacon Thomas Beynon of Carmarthen considered him the 'mainspring of all the Eisteddfodau and Cambrian Institutions in the Principality' and worried that, should they have the 'misfortune' to lose him, 'these institutions would flag and gradually die away'.<sup>63</sup> The fact that Iolo Morganwg's legacy thrived and lives on in the National Eisteddfod of Wales and its Gorsedd is, to a great extent, due William Jenkins Rees, (Casgob), from Radnorshire.

These then, are the two main links between a Glamorganshire man and this beautiful county. One is physical, a description stemming from a tour taken in 1802, the other a personal and cultural connection which has extended far beyond Iolo Morganwg's death in 1826. Both together confirm what Iolo Morganwg jotted down on the back of a letter to his wife Peggy in July 1787: that the 'Vale of Wye' is 'beautiful' and that 'Radnorshire . . . exhibits a beautiful assemblage of gentle hills, fine vales, woods, lawns &c',<sup>64</sup> and also that the people of Radnorshire in the late eighteenth century cherished their Welsh heritage.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 77. I am grateful to Mary-Ann Constantine for drawing my attention to this manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> David Ceri Jones, 'Iolo Morganwg and the Welsh Rural Landscape', in Geraint H Jenkins (ed.), *'A Rattleskull Genius': The Many Faces of Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff, 2005), p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> Cathryn A Charnell-White, 'Women and Gender in the Private and Social Relationships of Iolo Morganwg', in Jenkins (ed.), *'A Rattleskull Genius'*, p. 362.

<sup>4</sup> His early life is described by himself in Edward Williams, *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral* (2 vols., London, 1794), I, pp. xiv–xvii. For a short overview of his life, see Prys Morgan, *Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Geraint Phillips, 'Forgery and Patronage: Iolo Morganwg and Owain Myfyr', in Jenkins (ed.), *'A Rattleskull Genius'*, pp. 403–23.

<sup>6</sup> Mary-Ann Constantine, 'Welsh Literary History and the Making of "The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales"', in Dirk Van Hulleand Joep Leerssen (eds.), *Editing the Nation's Memory: Textual Scholarship and Nation-Building in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Amsterdam, 2008), pp. 109–28; Marion Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg 1826–1926* (Cardiff, 2007), pp. 78–115.

<sup>7</sup> Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff, 2007), pp. 118–20.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, 'Iolo Morganwg and the Welsh Rural Landscape', pp. 230–4.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Davies, '"Uncontaminated with Human Gore": Iolo Morganwg, Slavery and the Jamaican Inheritance', in Jenkins (ed.), *'A Rattleskull Genius'*, p. 293.

<sup>10</sup> Charnell-White, *Bardic Circles: National, Regional and Personal Identity in the Bardic Vision of Iolo Morganwg* (Cardiff, 2007); Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, pp. 41–77.

<sup>11</sup> Charnell-White, *Bardic Circles*, p. 82.

<sup>12</sup> Charnell-White, *Barbarism and Bardism: North Wales versus South Wales in the Bardic Vision of Iolo Morganwg* (Aberystwyth, 2004), p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Jones, 'Iolo Morganwg and the Welsh Rural Landscape', p. 239. See also Rosalind Mitchison, 'The Old Board of Agriculture (1793–1822)', in *The English Historical Review*, 74 (1959), pp. 41–69.

<sup>14</sup> David Ceri Jones, '"Mere Humbug": Iolo Morganwg and the Board of Agriculture, 1796–1815', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, new series, Vol. 10, (2004), p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> William Matthews to Iolo Morganwg, 11 July 1796, and William Matthews to Iolo Morganwg, 6 October 1796, in Geraint H Jenkins, Ffion Mair Jones and David Ceri Jones (eds.), *The Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg* (3 vols., Cardiff, 2007), II, pp. 815–16, 834.

<sup>16</sup> Jones, '"Mere Humbug": Iolo Morganwg and the Board of Agriculture, 1796–1815', p. 90.

<sup>17</sup> Walter Davies, *A General View of the Agriculture and Domestic Economy of North Wales* (London, 1810); *idem*, *A General View of the Agriculture and Domestic Economy of South Wales* (London, 1815); [www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=598](http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=598).

<sup>18</sup> Walter Davies's notebooks are also kept at the National Library of Wales.

<sup>19</sup> Jones, '"Mere Humbug": Iolo Morganwg and the Board of Agriculture, 1796–1815', pp. 92–3.

<sup>20</sup> Iolo Morganwg to Wiliam Owen Pughe, 29 March 1803, in Jenkins, Jones and Jones (eds.), *The Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg*, II, p. 485.

<sup>21</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 55.

<sup>22</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 56.

<sup>23</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 58.

<sup>24</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 59.

<sup>25</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 59.

<sup>26</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 60.

<sup>27</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 61.

<sup>28</sup> Charnell-White, 'Women and Gender in the Private and Social Relationships of Iolo Morganwg', pp. 370–1.

<sup>29</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, ff. 61–2.

<sup>30</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, ff. 62.

<sup>31</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, ff. 63–4.

<sup>32</sup> Wales did not have a newspaper of its own yet, but the English provincial papers published along the borders clearly aimed at a Welsh readership. See Marion Löffler, *Welsh Responses to the French Revolution: Press and Public Discourse 1789–1802* (Cardiff, 2012), pp. 8–12.

<sup>33</sup> This was the Dukes Arms, Knighton, where he had enjoyed breakfast the previous day.

<sup>34</sup> NLW 13174 A, f. 66.

<sup>35</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 66.

<sup>36</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 66.

<sup>37</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, ff. 66–8.

<sup>38</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, p. 68.

<sup>39</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 72.

<sup>40</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 70.

<sup>41</sup> David J V Jones, 'The Corn Riots in Wales, 1793–1801', *Welsh History Review*, 2, no. 4 (1965), pp. 323–50.

<sup>42</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 70.

<sup>43</sup> Geraint H Jenkins, '"A Very Horrid Affair": Sedition and Unitarianism in the Age of Revolutions', in Davies and *idem* (eds.), *From Medieval to Modern Wales*, pp. 175–96; Löffler, *Welsh Responses to the French Revolution*, pp. 25–7, 103–6.

<sup>44</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, ff. 75–6.

<sup>45</sup> NLW 13174 A, f. 76.

<sup>46</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 77.

<sup>47</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 77.

<sup>48</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 78.

<sup>49</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, f. 80.

<sup>50</sup> NLW MS 13174 A, ff. 81–2.

<sup>51</sup> His life and letters are outlined in a series of articles by Mary Ellis, 'W. J. Rees: a portrait Part I', *The Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, XXXIX (1969), pp. 24–35; eadem, 'W. J. Rees: a portrait Part II', *ibid.*, XL (1970), pp. 21–28; eadem, 'W. J. Rees: a portrait Part III', *ibid.*, XLI (1971), pp. 76–85.

<sup>52</sup> For his life, see Nigel Yates (ed.), *Bishop Burgess and his World: Culture, Religion and Society in Britain, Europe and America in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cardiff, 2007). Unfortunately, there is no mention of his cultural activities in Wales in this volume.

<sup>53</sup> Bedwyr Lewis Jones, *Yr Hen Bersoniaid Llengar* (Penarth, 1963).

<sup>54</sup> Ellis, 'W. J. Rees: a portrait Part I', p. 29.

<sup>55</sup> Ellis, 'W. J. Rees: a portrait Part I', p. 28.

<sup>56</sup> Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, pp. 42–6.

<sup>57</sup> Löffler, *The Literary and Historical Legacy of Iolo Morganwg*, p. 44. The original Welsh may be found there.

<sup>58</sup> William Jenkins Rees to Iolo Morganwg, 31 July 1819, in Jenkins, Jones and Jones (eds.), *The Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg*, III, p. 531.

<sup>59</sup> Ellis, 'W. J. Rees: a portrait Part II', pp. 22–3.

<sup>60</sup> Ellis, 'W. J. Rees: a portrait Part II', p. 30.

<sup>61</sup> Walter Davies to Iolo Morganwg, in Jenkins, Jones and Jones (eds.), *The Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg*, III, pp. 548–9.

<sup>62</sup> William Jenkins Rees to Iolo Morganwg, 28 January 1822, in Jenkins, Jones and Jones (eds.), *The Correspondence of Iolo Morganwg*, III, p. 608.

<sup>63</sup> Ellis, 'W. J. Rees: A Portrait, Part II', p. 21.

<sup>64</sup> NLW MS 21389E, 98/24.



# A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY LAWBOOK FROM CEFNLLYS\*

Morfydd E Owen

This journal has published several notable articles discussing the poetry of Lewis Glyn Cothi found in manuscript NLW Peniarth 40,<sup>1</sup> but little attention has been paid to the association of that poetry with the main content of the manuscript, namely a text of the Laws of Hywel Dda. This text of Welsh law has been known by the siglum K from the time of Aneurin Owen's *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales*.<sup>2</sup> Owen took this title from an earlier name given to the manuscript by William Maurice, which was *Kalan*. This name derived from the *Kalendae* or Calendar found at the beginning of the law text. The manuscript is important among Welsh legal manuscripts in that the scribe has left his name and the poems found at the beginning identify the patron for whom it was written, thus giving a more precise historical context for the volume than is usual for law manuscripts. In this short paper I shall discuss three topics:

1. The contents and scribe of the manuscript.
2. For whom and by whom the manuscript was written.
3. The significance of the manuscript in Welsh legal history.

## THE CONTENTS AND SCRIBE OF THE MANUSCRIPT

The manuscript consists of some seventeen quires. The first quire, which is defective, contains copies of four poems to Ieuan ap Phylip, the lord of Cefnlllys, and his wife Angharad, to which I shall return. Cefnlllys, on a steep hill in a loop of the river Ieithon, has been much described.<sup>3</sup> It was the site of a Norman castle in Maelienydd which had been a Mortimer stronghold:<sup>4</sup>

Kastell gwyn(n) uwch llynwyn llawn  
Kaer wythochr uwch kwrr Ieithawn  
Kaer Roec mewn de[u]dec gwregys  
Kyfenw y lle yw Kefn Lllys  
Henw y gaer honno a gaet  
Y mrut mawr y Mortmerieit.<sup>5</sup>

A white castle above a full moat,  
An eight-sided fortress above a loop of the Ieithon,

A Greek fortress with twelve girdles [of defences].  
 The name of the place is Cefn llys,  
 The name of that fortress is to be found  
 In the great Brut of the Mortimers.<sup>6</sup>

By the middle of the fifteenth century the castle was in the gift of Richard, Duke of York, when a new court was built on the site of the original castle. The original Norman castles tended to lose their military value by the fifteenth century. These originally aggressive castles were abandoned as dwelling places in the fifteenth century and halls or houses were being built, sometimes on the same site, as the administrative centres, to replace them. Ieuan's career and hall reflect this shift. The poems give us a picture of his position. The military aspects of the castle were however still symbolised by the continued existence of the constablenesship. The constables received a considerable annual stipend.<sup>7</sup> One of the poems has a heading referring to Ieuan's constablenesship of the Castle, as cited below.

The second quire of the manuscript (pages 9–20) contains a Calendar. Calendars were used to record Church feast days but could also record the days appointed for legal sessions and are to be found in other law manuscripts. This Calendar includes, among the general European saints whose feasts are listed, the feasts of the Welsh saints Dewi, Teilo, Curig, Ilar and Cewydd, the Irish saint Ffraid (Brigid), to whom many Welsh churches are dedicated, and the saints venerated by the English, namely Wulfstan, Oswald, George and Thomas à Becket. Dewi, by the fifteenth century, was considered by many to be the Welsh national patron saint and churches dedicated to him are to be found in Radnorshire as well as in many other areas of Wales. His pre-eminence is recognised in one of the poems when Ieuan's court as a place where men flocked is compared with the house of St David in Menevia (St David's):

Draw att Dewi daw pob dyn  
 Dros weilgi bob dri r Sulgwyn(n)  
 A Dewi ydiw Ie(ua)n  
 Ai gaeroc lys ar gwrr glan(n)  
 Tebic myn(n) llaw Giric yw  
 I dy maen Dewi Mynyw.<sup>8</sup>

Yonder to Dewi every man comes  
 Over the ocean every three days Whitsuntide  
 And Ieuan is Dewi  
 With his fortified court on the loop of a bank

It is similar, by Curig's hand,  
To the stone house of Dewi in Menevia.

Teilo was the patron saint of the bishopric of Llandâf and there are Teilo dedications in Radnorshire, such as Llandeilo Graban. The feasts of local Welsh saints recorded in Welsh calendars usually reflect the region in which the calendar was written and where their cults flourished.<sup>9</sup> The dedications of many of the regional saints mentioned in the calendar are local to the area of mid Wales or modern day Radnorshire. Curig was regarded as especially associated with Maelienydd.<sup>10</sup> The parish of Llangurig, some fifteen miles from Cefnlllys, is still the largest parish in Wales and a key church marking the boundary of medieval Maelienydd. The poem quotes an oath in the name of Curig: '*Mynn llaw Giric!*' (By the hand of Curig).<sup>11</sup> Cewydd is the Welsh St Swithin, whose cult is also associated with Radnorshire.<sup>12</sup> The churches of Aberedw and Diserth are dedicated to him. Ilar is the patron saint of Llanilar, which is some twenty-nine miles cross-country.<sup>13</sup> Radnorshire churches dedicated to Ffraid are Llansanffraid Cwmwd Deuddwr and Llansanffraid yn Elfael.

The other quires of the manuscript (i–xvi) apart from the last contain the law text known as K. It is generally considered that the poems, calendar and law text are in the same hand. The hand changes in the law text on page 233, with the inclusion of a *Cwyn* or model plaint, where the handwriting is bigger. This might suggest that the *Cwyn* has been added at a slightly later date, if not by a different hand, and some five lines following the text of the *Cwyn* are in a slightly different style of writing. The poems and the calendar were probably written at different times from the rest of the manuscript. The slight difference in the handwriting could also be due to the age of the scribe or to the nature of the material, the legal text being in a more regular and formal style than the poems. The end leaves are in a cursive hand and contain a poem by Dafydd Llwyd,<sup>14</sup> and various legal passages, and the manuscript concludes with an English stanza about building a house.

### THE PATRON AND POET

The four poems at the beginning form a small *duanaire* (a collection of poems to the members of one family) to Ieuan ap Phylip, the lord of Cefnlllys, and his wife Angharad. The collection consists of an *awdl* and three *cywyddau*. The *awdl* employs the customary topoi of the praise poetry of the period. It speaks of Ieuan as *Blaenor* (the vanguard) of Maelienydd and *Penadur* (chief) of two countries, and gives his immediate ancestry,

mentioning his grandfather and great-grandfather, Ifor and Maredudd. It describes the hospitality offered at his hall, where he presides with his nephews, suggesting perhaps that he had no sons. It echoes with religious references:

[Archaf] i Duw nef lle troes Ef saint  
 I ti roi einioes y tri enneint  
 Ytt i roes urdas y triseint Galath  
 Ac aur o iownuath a gwyr unueint.<sup>15</sup>

I beseech, God from heaven, where he created saints,  
 That the lifeblood of the three anointings be given to you  
 To you he has given the dignity of three saints – Galahad,  
 And gold of the right currency and men of the same stature.

The *cywyddau* are more precise in their descriptions of both the hall, its function and the status of its lord. Two of them concentrate on the marvels and details of the court at Cefnlllys which Ieuan had built within the boundaries of the castle and include the name of Rhosier ap Ywain, the joiner who built it. Praise of courts is a feature of the *cywydd* poetry. The Cefnlllys poems are notably detailed in their description of the construction of the wooden *llys* and might well have been written to celebrate its building:

Mae n adeilat ir wlat lys  
 Mal ty iarll a molt teirlllys  
 Tri a wnant troi yn vnty  
 Twr pumeib Tewdwr yw r ty  
 Tyuod yn gysswllt heuyt  
 Tarianeu n glos taran gly[t]  
 Deryw roi ar dri ryw wyd  
 Deri gwelwon drwy gilyd  
 Llydan val tai Lyr Lledieith  
 Lloer galch ual allor y gwaith  
 Lluniod pensaer a llinynn  
 Llwyn o goet mewn llein gwynn  
 Klos megis eglwys Osswallt  
 Koron ryw ywch kern yr allt  
 Kaeedic blangkeu ydyw  
 Kaer Goruan i Ie(ua)n yw  
 Y llew a wnaeth yNghefn Llys

Vry ganllofft ar vric vnllys  
 Bwyall Rossier ap Ywain  
 Yn wyd rwym vv nadu rain  
 Hwnn a wnaeth neuad ar hur  
 Newyd wrth neuad Arthur.<sup>16</sup>

It is a building for the court of the country  
 Like an earl's house with the mould of three courts  
 They turned three [courts] into a single house  
 The house is the tower of the five sons of Tewdwr  
 There grew in construction too  
 Shields/tiles close together, a shelter from thunder.  
 Put together in three kinds of wood,  
 Pale oaks intertwined  
 Broad/wide like the house of Llyr Llediaith,  
 A moon of limewash, made like an altar.  
 An architect designed it with a plumb line  
 A grove of trees in white linen,  
 A close like the church of St Oswald  
 A crown bound above the slope of the hill,  
 It is of enclosed planks,  
 It is a *Caer Gorf*an for *Ieuan*.  
 The lion made in *Cefnllys* on high.  
 100 lofts on the summit, a single court.  
 The axe of Roger ab Owain,  
 Bound trees to be carved into these,  
 This man made a hall for hire.  
 A new one comparable to the hall of Arthur.

The glories of the building are compared with those of two major church buildings of the area: *Eglwys Fair*, probably the church of St Mary at Builth (*Llanfair ym Muallt*): '*Golas yw fal eglwys Fair*' (Pale grey like the Church of St Mary); and *Eglwys Ieuan*, probably the priory church of St John in Brecon, now Brecon Cathedral: '*Golau fal Eglwys Ieuan*' (Lit up like the Church of St John).

The third *cywydd* is a praise poem to *Ieuan*'s wife *Angharad*, who had been particularly generous to *Lewis Glyn Cothi* as an old man. It mentions her father *Ieuan* and other forefathers such as *Ieuan Amhadog a Meurug*. The English stanza at the end of the manuscript, referring to house-building, may suggest that the whole manuscript was associated with a particular building or even periods of building:

When the fork flyte of norwynd  
 Ys comyn and gone  
 Byld thy house of lyme and stone  
 .....  
 Hayl my lord

Much is known about the scribe of the manuscript. Lewis Glyn Cothi, from the Forest of Glyn Cothi in Carmarthenshire, was a prolific poet who sang to patrons all over Wales in the second half of the fifteenth century but was particularly active in Radnorshire.<sup>17</sup> He was described by an early seventeenth-century commentator in these words:

*'Lewys y Glynn Cothi lladingwr da yn y am[s]jer a thestwr or gorav oll. Ny sgrifennwys Lewys y Glynn ar joed ar bapur. Ond ar[bar]sment, kans tegstwr da oedd ef yn wir.'*<sup>18</sup> (Lewis of Glynn Cothi, a good Latinist in his day, and a text-writer of the very best. Lewys of the Glynn never wrote on paper but on parchment, for he was indeed a good text writer.)

Lewis was thus, as well as being a poet, a high-class scribe who produced books for other people. Scribes would be particularly useful in courts which were also the sites of legal assemblies and financial transactions needing records and documentation.

The person of substance for whom this manuscript was produced was most likely Ieuan ap Phylip, who was Constable and Receiver at Cefnlllys in Maelienydd. Ieuan ap Phylip was a descendant of Cadwgan ap Elystan Glodrudd and thus a member of the ruling house of Maelienydd.<sup>19</sup> A collateral ancestor of his in the twelfth century was Cadwallon ap Madog ab Idnerth, prince of Maelienydd, a descendant on his mother's side of Gruffudd ap Cynan and the husband of Efa, daughter of Madog ap Maredudd of Powys. Cynddelw sang two of the most famous Gogynfeirdd poems to this couple.<sup>20</sup> Maelienydd was in the tempestuous border zone of the Middle March, which had been Mortimer territory from the thirteenth century to the beginning of the fifteenth.<sup>21</sup> In the first era of Norman dominance in the March the officials had been of foreign blood but by the fifteenth century the native Welsh had crept into positions of importance. Ieuan's career reflected this shift. The poems give us a picture of his position. One of the poems has a heading referring to Ieuan's constablership of the Castle together with his coat of arms:

*Llyma gerd Ie[ua]n ap Phylip kwnstabyll  
 Kefyn Llys a llyma i arueu o blegyt mam a that  
 . . . Lewys Glyn[n] Kothi ai kant ac ai hysg[ri]ue[n]od*<sup>22</sup>

(Here is a poem to Ieuan ap Phylip, the Constable of Cefnlllys. And here are his arms on the side of his mother and his father . . . Lewys Glyn Cothi sang it and wrote it.)

The coat of arms has been described as:

. . . Quarterly, argent, a chevron sable between three bears heads coupéd of the second and argent, a chevron sable between three ravens of the second, in the beak of each one ermine point.<sup>23</sup>

Another of the poems describes him as a Receiver appointed by the Duke of York as well as Constable:

[Ar] duc o Iork yn rait gwr  
 Ai roes ef yn ryssyuwr  
 [N]it oes gwnstabl gynablet  
 Ni byd tra vo krefyd kret  
 [N]i bu yn medu aur mal  
 Ar gastell lywiawdyr gystal.<sup>24</sup>

And the Duke of York for man's need  
 Placed him as Receiver  
 No constable is as able  
 Nor shall be, as long as Christianity survives  
 No governor has controlled  
 Gold coins in a castle as well.

The Constable was responsible for the military upkeep of a castle.<sup>25</sup> In 1402 the garrison at Cefnlllys was said to consist of twelve spearman and thirty archers.<sup>26</sup> The Receiver of an area was the purely financial officer whose annual account presented the result of his scrutiny of the accounts of the lesser officials, and was a statement of the financial condition of all these officials.<sup>27</sup> Castle sites were, however, important for the judicial aspect of lordship as well as the defensive, for in their halls courts were held before the Constable or Receiver. In the remote hilly wilderness of perhaps scantily populated Radnorshire it would not be strange for the same man to fill the role of Constable and Receiver. Lines in the *awdl* speak of dark-complexioned Ieuan's involvement in the law as Receiver. Maelienydd was divided into three *swyddi*: Buddugre, Ieithon or Dinieithon and Rhiwlallt or Rhiw'r allt. The use of the term *swydd* instead of the usual *cwmwd* is interesting and probably represented the legal divisions of the region, each of which had a court of the lordship:<sup>28</sup>

Blaenor Kefn y Llys blanet swyd Ieithon

[Sy doethaf hyt Dyfet]

Wythwyr ni bu kyn doethet

Oth uru'r gair doethaf a ret.

Ytt cat rediat trwy adu y dawn

Daniel Phylip Dordu

Aet pop kadarn i uarnu

Nit barn heb dy wyneb du.<sup>29</sup>

Vanguard of the Ridge of the court, planet of the territory of Ieithon

Who is the wisest as far as Dyfed,

No eight men were as wise,

From your belly the wisest word runs.

For you power was obtained through the bequest of his talent;

A Daniel, of the line of Phylip Dorddu;

Let every strong man go to judgement,

There is no judgement without your dark face.

Cefnlllys was in the gift of Richard, Duke of York, from 1425. The poems could belong to the period 1432–59, if Ieuan was appointed to his post by Richard, the third duke of York,<sup>30</sup> or later if appointed in succession to Rhys ap Dafydd ap Hywel Fain in 1463. The dates given to his constablership by scholars derive from the circumstantial evidence of the references in the poems. I have so far failed to find any independent documentary evidence to date Ieuan ap Phylip, and the genealogy in Bartrum appears confused. Dafydd Johnston would date the poems to the period between 1474 and 1483, the period after the dukedom was re-inaugurated after Edward IV had allowed it to lapse.<sup>31</sup> The date given in the plaint on p. 233, the eighth year of Edward IV, or 1468, would suggest a late rather than an early date for the law text *per se*.

### THE LEGAL SIGNIFICANCE OF K

At Cefnlllys we are in the area of the Law of the March, which drew on two legal traditions as well as local custom and catered for people of different racial origin. The Law of the March drew on the Law of England but took constant notice of the defining of procedure, local custom and the Law of Wales, which was deeply intertwined with the structure and customs of society. In the words of the late Rees Davies:



All in all the Law of the March presented to tidy minds a hopeless variety of customs: the custom of one lordship as opposed to another, the privileges of the townsmen as opposed to the law of the countryside, the liberties of English status as opposed to the law of Hywel Dda still practised by Welshmen, the rights of townsmen as opposed to serfs. And the endless minor varieties in local rules on problems of procedure.<sup>32</sup>

and again:

The distinctiveness of the law [of the March] came increasingly . . . from the significant role conceded to the law of Wales within the corpus of the Law of the March.<sup>33</sup>

About a century after our law text was copied another Radnorshire man, also a lawman, John Lewis of Llywene, wrote an essay comparing and contrasting the Law of England and the Law of Wales. Lewis also had law manuscripts in his possession, including NLW Peniarth 38.<sup>34</sup>

The law text found in NLW Peniarth 40 was copied for people involved in this mixed legal structure where Welsh law had a practical function. The poems significantly compare the prowess of Ieuan ap Phylip with that of notable lawyers of the March:

Meistr i gyfreith swydd Ieithon,  
 Mae vo.n datanhudo honn  
 Ie(ua)n, grair pob un o gret  
 Ap Ph(ylip) ymhob ffelwet.  
 Wedi ach Ifor i dait  
 I try dwyach Torrduet  
 I alw i bum yn hal bann  
 Ail iestus o Elystann  
 Sonio i mae ual John Mil  
 Y Maessyueid am siuil  
 Doethder D(auu)d Hanmer hen  
 Yw i barabl neu beren  
 Bwrlei ynn neu Abrael yw  
 Browdwr ual Merbri ydyw  
 Ffu Waren holl Uelienyd  
 Ffu Harri doeth o ffraw dyd<sup>35</sup>

Master of the law of the territory of Ieithon  
 It is he who inherits this,

Ieuan, a relic of every Christian,  
 Ap Phylip, in every velvet robe/felony.  
 After the line of his grandfather Ifor  
 Come the two lines of the Torduaid.  
 I called him in [his] high hall,  
 A second Justice from Elystan.  
 He proclaims like John Mil  
 The civil law in Maesyfed  
 The wisdom of Old Dafydd Hanmer  
 In his utterance or he is a sweet  
 Burley for us or an Aberhale  
 He is a judge like Merbury  
 The Fitzwarren of all Maelienydd  
 A wise Fitzhenry in the trial of the day . . .

Most of the names in the passage have been identified with eminent men involved in Marcher affairs during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>36</sup> The identification of John Mil is not straightforward. The names of John Mile, who was in charge of Creswell Priory in 1427, or John Milewater, who was a Receiver of the York estates in 1459, have been suggested. Dafydd Hanmer, the father-in-law of Owain Glyndwr, was a Judge of the King's Bench who died in 1388; Bwrlei, William Burley, was a Member of Parliament for Shropshire in 1434; Abrel, John Aberhale of Herefordshire, died about 1443; Merbri, John Merbury of Hereford, was Justiciar of South Wales in the 1420s; Ffu Waren was a member of the FitzWarin, who were a prominent Marcher family, though it is difficult to know which individual is recalled unless it referred to the legendary Fulk Fitzwarine. Ffu Harri possibly refers to Meilyr Fitzhenry (born c.1220), who was Justiciar of Ireland in the thirteenth century, though such an identification must be tentative in that it refers to a lawyer of an earlier period than those of the other men named in this poem. Different types of legal action and law are mentioned: *sifil*, or civil law, and *ffelwet*, usually translated 'velvet', perhaps referring to the robes given both to a Receiver and to a Constable as a mark of office<sup>37</sup> but it might possibly mean 'felony'.

Lewis Glyn Cothi is not unique in referring to the legal activities of a patron. Llywelyn Goch Amheurg Hen described the activities at the court of his nephews, Hywel and Meurug at Nannau:

Fy swydd gyda'm harglwyddi  
 hyn a fydd, a hen wyf i,

darllen cyfraith, rugliaith raid,  
a Brut hen y Brutaniaid . . .<sup>38</sup>

My function with my lords  
Will be this, and I am old,  
To read the law, the eloquent language of need  
And the old Brut of the Britons . . .

Note that the law is referred to as ‘the eloquent language of need’.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MANUSCRIPT IN WELSH LEGAL HISTORY

First of all what exactly is meant by the term *Cyfraith Hywel* or the Law of Hywel Dda? Manuscripts have survived from the period between 1250 and 1600 which contain versions of the Welsh law whose origins are associated with Hywel Dda, Prince of Wales, who died 949/50. There are five Latin redactions and three main Welsh redactions of these laws. The Welsh redactions are generally known as *Llyfr Blegywryd*, traditionally associated with Dyfed in its broadest sense;<sup>39</sup> *Llyfr Iorwerth* is associated with Gwynedd<sup>40</sup> and *Llyfr Cyfnerth* with the Welsh Marcher lands.<sup>41</sup> Individual copies of these redactions are not identical; the law was a developing field. The later copies include much additional material. Of the early Welsh redactions *Llyfr Iorwerth*, which belongs to Gwynedd, is probably the fullest, and probably owes much of its form to the editorial work carried out by Iorwerth ap Madog ap Rhawg, who lived in the first half of the thirteenth century.<sup>42</sup>

We have surviving manuscripts containing versions of *Llyfr Blegywryd* dating from about 1300 until the beginning of the sixteenth century. We have no surviving manuscripts of *Llyfr Cyfnerth*, apart from a late copy, dated to a period after about 1340.

All the *Iorwerth* manuscripts which survive from after 1300 can on palaeographical and codicological grounds be provenanced to places outside Gwynedd.<sup>43</sup> A note in G, NLW, Peniarth MS 35, sometimes called *Llyfr Cynog*,<sup>44</sup> refers to Pengelli, a barony in the Lordship of Brecon also associated with the Mortimers. D, NLW Peniarth MS 32, copied by one of the scribes of the Red Book of Hergest, may be associated with Ynysforgan, which is in the Lordship of Gower. Textually there is an association between all these manuscripts. How did the *Iorwerth* laws come to the south? When compared with the thirteenth-century copies of *Llyfr Iorwerth*, D has an affinity with C, namely BL Cotton Caligula A iii

(c. 1250), probably written at the Cistercian Abbey of Valle Crucis in an area which later became a Marcher lordship.<sup>45</sup> People from Gwynedd were settling in other parts of Wales by the thirteenth century. Goronwy son of Ednyfed Fychan, seneschal of Gwynedd, held land in Cardiganshire by the late thirteenth century.<sup>46</sup> Lew, NLW Peniarth MS 39, was compiled and copied from several Iorwerth texts in the fifteenth century by Lewys Ysgolhaig from Llanfynydd in Carmarthenshire.

Other manuscripts containing Iorwerth material are associated with the Marcher lordships, where they seem to have replaced the untidy Cyfnerth redaction. NLW Wynnstey MS 36, though essentially a Blegywryd text, namely one of the family of texts associated with Deheubarth, has many interpolations from Llyfr Iorwerth and is probably from the lordship of Llanymddyfri. NLW Peniarth MS 259, a fifteenth-century copy of this manuscript, migrated to Llantilio Cresenni in North Gwent, also associated with the Mortimers, where two owners from the Parish, John and Thomas Watkins, left their signatures. This family from Tre Adam, Llantilio Cresenni, is well documented.<sup>47</sup>

Sections of the text of NLW Peniarth MS 40 bear resemblance to the Iorwerth text of NLW Peniarth MS 32. Peniarth 32, known as Y Llyfr Teg, is probably to be associated originally with Hopcyn ap Tomos of Ynys Forgan or Ynys Tawe of the Lordship of Gower. Other manuscripts written by the same school of scribes ended up in Radnorshire, most notably the Red Book of Hergest, to which Lewis Glyn Cothi himself added poems to members of the Vaughan family at their house at Tretower before it went to another Vaughan house at Hergest.<sup>48</sup> Other legal texts were copied by Lewis into the lost White Book of Hergest. Like some other late texts, however, Peniarth 40 dispenses entirely with the Laws of Court. With the demise of the Welsh princes in 1282, these laws no longer had a function. Peniarth 40 begins with the section known as the Proof Book, whose preface refers to Iorwerth ap Madog and emphasises the role of the *ynad* or justice. The preface is followed by the Three Columns of Law, namely the laws of Fire, Killing and Theft and the Worth of Wild and Tame. Then comes the material, found usually first after the Laws of the Court in the published Gwynedd texts, namely the Laws of Surety, the duties of *meiri* (stewards) and *cynghellorion* (seneschals) and of the *pencenedl* (chief of kindred). All these fields of law and legal terms would still be relevant in Marcher courts.<sup>49</sup> This section is followed by a series of triads, followed by a series of *Damweiniau* or items of case law,<sup>50</sup> and by pages containing Question and Answer texts ending with a *Cwyn* or model plaint, dated to the eighth year of Edward IV, namely 1468.<sup>51</sup> The readings of the main text show agreement with the texts of Llyfr Iorwerth found in manuscripts

32 and 35. Peniarth 35 was in Brycheiniog. Peniarth 32, as we have seen, could by the fifteenth century have been in Radnorshire. The Triad collection is slightly different in content from other series of legal triads, although much of it corresponds with the collection found in Peniarth 32.<sup>52</sup> The contents of these tails are also similar to the extraneous material found in other late legal manuscripts such as BL Additional MS 22, 356<sup>53</sup> or Wynnstay 36,<sup>54</sup> which is the classic source for model complaints, reminiscent in their style of the *Novae Narrationes* of English law, localised in Wynnstay 36 in the Lordship of Llandovery.<sup>55</sup> Model complaints were also copied by Lewis Glyn Cothi into the lost White Book of Hergest.<sup>56</sup> All this material in the tail of the text of Peniarth 40 is concerned with the procedure of the courts. Difference in procedure would be one of the most obviously distinguishing features between Welsh and English law in the administration of law in the courts. It is this emphasis which suggests that late medieval law texts had a pragmatic value in the Marcher lordships, the text of Peniarth 40 in the constableness of Ieuan ap Phylip at Cefnlllys, if he, as is almost certain, was the patron for whom this collection was copied. Certainly the poems emphasise his role in the administration of the law.

There are other examples of fifteenth-century poets praising patrons for the role they played in the administration of the law. A notable example is the elegy Guto'r Glyn sang to Edward ap Dafydd, nicknamed Hen Iorwerth yr Iawn, a member of the Trefor and Edwards family associated with Chirk. This was a family some of whose members held the office of Receiver.<sup>57</sup> The legislative district of the territory of Chirk, like Swydd Ieithon, is also referred to by the title swydd (*Swydd y Waun*). Guto referred to Edward ap Dafydd as *Tad y ddwy gyfraith* (Father of the two laws) and uses legal terminology in describing his end:

Swydd y Waun y sydd wannach,  
 Nid byd am nad byw a iach.  
 Salw yw bod Sul heb Edwart,  
 Sofl yw gw r syfyl ac art.  
 Aeth Duw â chyfraith a dawn  
 A synnwyr Powys uniawn . . .

Mawr yw'n cwyn ym Mryncunallt,  
 Mae rhai yn wylo môr hallt:  
 Mae gennym yma ganwaith  
 Lef ar nef am lyf ein iaith.  
 Wedi Gildas, i'r nasiwn,  
 Ap Caw, ni bu debyg hwn:

Gwreiddiodd bob ymadrodd mad,  
Gwreiddyn pob gair a wyddiad.<sup>58</sup>

The County of Chirk is weaker,  
It is no world since he is not alive and well.  
A Sunday without Edward is wretched,  
Men of Civil law and Art are as stubble  
God has taken away law and talent  
And the just intellect of Powys.

Our keening in Bryn Cunallt is loud.  
Some are weeping a salt sea  
We have here a hundred times  
A cry to heaven for the lick of our language.  
After Gildas son of Caw  
The nation has had no one like him.  
He set the root of every good phrase,  
He is the root of every word that he knew.

Although a cluster of law manuscripts is associated with the area of Chirk in the fifteenth century there is nothing which connects any specific one with Edward ap Dafydd.

We have thus in NLW MS Peniarth 40 something of which Radnorshire should be very proud: a handsome manuscript containing a text of Welsh law written for Ieuan ap Phylip, which was in all likelihood used at court sessions at Cefnlllys near Llandrindod Wells. The poetry of the manuscript gives us in addition a portrait of a lawman of noble lineage who was both a Constable and Receiver and held legal sessions but at the same time maintained a home which provided hospitality for poets and others. I know of no other legal manuscript whose social and legal background can be so well recreated.

#### NOTES

\* This paper was originally given at the National Library of Wales on 5 March 2011, under the title: 'Oh K!' as part of the celebration for Professor Dafydd Jenkins's hundredth birthday on St David's Day 2011, organised by Seminar Cyfraith Hywel. It is now dedicated to his memory.

<sup>1</sup> ED Jones published the poems from the version of this manuscript in 1936 in 'The Cefnlllys Poems of Lewis Glyn Cothi', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 6. It is from this version that all my quotations are taken. See also G Caffel, *Translations, Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 42, (1972), pp. 19–21; Marged Haycock, 'Am y Ffin a'r Gorffennol: Golwg ar Lenyddiaeth Gynnar rhwng Wysg a Thefeidiad',

Darlith Lenyddol Flynyddol Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru De Powys, Llanellwedd, (1993); Marged Haycock, 'Lewis Glyn Cothi and Radnorshire', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 64, (1994), pp. 25–35; and cf. T Llwyd, 'Noddwyr y Beirdd yn Siroedd Brycheiniog a Maesyfed', (traethawd MA Prifysgol Cymru, Aberystwyth), (1984), pp. 344–57.

<sup>2</sup> Aneurin Owen, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales* (AL) Vol. I, xxx, London, (1841). For the manuscript see J Gwenogvryn Evans, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language* Vol. I, (1905), pp. 374–76; M Harris, *A Bibliography of Welsh Law Manuscripts*, Welsh Law Pamphlet, Seminar Cyfraith Hywel, (2006), pp. 8–9.

<sup>3</sup> R Suggett, 'The Social Framework: Lordships and Free Tenants', *Houses and History in the March of Wales*, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth, (2005), pp. 28–38; DM Browne and A Pearson, 'Cefnlllys Castle Radnorshire', RCAHMW.

<sup>4</sup> BP Evans, 'The Family of Mortimer', (University of Wales Ph.D. thesis, Cardiff), (1934), pp. 384–8.

<sup>5</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.* p.19; cf. D Johnston (gol.), *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, Caerdydd, (1995), p. 375.

<sup>6</sup> For the Mortimer Brut, see also Rees Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales*, Oxford, (1978), p. 7, n. 24, for the three short Mortimer chronicles that survive.

<sup>7</sup> BP Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

<sup>8</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> See ME Owen, 'Prolegomena i Astudiaeth Lawn o Lsgr. NLW 3026, Mostyn 88, a'i harwyddocad', in Iestyn Daniel et al. (ed.), *Cyfoeth y Testun*, (2003), pp. 381–3.

<sup>10</sup> S Baring-Gould and J Fisher, *Lives of the British Saints* II, (1907–1913), pp. 192–200.

<sup>11</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 21 and D Johnston (gol.), *op. cit.*, p. 377.

<sup>12</sup> See Baring-Gould and Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 111, p. 299.

<sup>14</sup> WL Richards, *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn*, Caerdydd, (1964), Cerdd 18, pp. 56–58.

<sup>15</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.*, p.17.

<sup>16</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 21. The translation is indebted to the work of Dai Hawkins's translation of Ffrancis Payne's *Crwydro Maeliennydd*, in *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, (2008), pp.192–3.

<sup>17</sup> For Lewys Glyn Cothi, see D Johnston, *op. cit.*, (1995); ED Jones, *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi* I, Caerdydd, (1953), p. 19; *ibid.*, 'The Cefnlllys Poems of Lewis Glyn Cothi', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 6, (1936); G Caffel, Translations in *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 42, (1917), pp.19–21; T Llwyd, 'Noddwyr y Beirdd yn Siroedd Brycheiniog a Maesyfed', (traethawd MA Prifysgol Cymru, Aberystwyth), (1984); M Haycock, 'Lewis Glyn Cothi and Radnorshire', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 64, (1994), pp. 25–35.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by ED Jones from BL Stowe MS, 959, f. 199 (RWM: BM 48) in 'A Welsh Pencerdd's Manuscripts', *Celtica*, (1960), pp. 5, 17.

<sup>19</sup> See JE Lloyd, *History of Wales*, London, (1939), p. 252; PC Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, Cardiff, (1952), p.104; *idem*, *Welsh Genealogies* 1, Cardiff, (1974); *Elystan Glodrudd*, and cf. NA Jones and A Parry Owen, *Gwaith Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr* I, Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion, Caerdydd, (1991), pp. 250–2.

<sup>20</sup> NA Jones and A Parry Owen, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–75, 250–78; ED Jones, 'The Cefn Llys Poems of Lewis Glyn Cothi', pp. 250–78.



<sup>21</sup> BP Evans, *op. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup> T Llwyd, 'Noddwyr y Beirdd yn Siroedd Brycheiniog a Maesyfed', (traethawd MA Prifysgol Cymru, Aberystwyth), (1984), p. 348.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> BP Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 400.

<sup>26</sup> DM Browne and A Pearson, 'Cefnlllys Castle Radnorshire', RCAHMW.

<sup>27</sup> BP Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 461 ff.

<sup>29</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.*, 16.

<sup>30</sup> T Llwyd, *op. cit.* p. 347.

<sup>31</sup> See D Johnston, *Gwaith Lewis Glyn Cothi*, p. 605.

<sup>32</sup> RR Davies, 'The Law of the March', *Welsh History Review* 5, (1970–71), p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15; see further: RR Davies, 'The Twilight of Welsh Law, 1285–1536', *History* 51, (1966), pp. 143–64.

<sup>34</sup> See FG Payne, 'John Lewis, Llynwene, Historian and Antiquary', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 30, (1960), pp. 4–16.

<sup>35</sup> ED Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>36</sup> Conveniently identified by ED Jones, (1936), pp. 25–6, and subsequently by D Johnston in *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, p. 605 and R Suggett, 'The Social Framework: Lordships and Free Tenants', *Houses and History in the March of Wales*, RCAHMW, Aberystwyth, (2005), pp. 37–8.

<sup>37</sup> BP Evans, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in EI Rowlands, *The Poems of the Cywyddwyr: A Selection of Cywyddwr c. 1375–1525*, Dublin, (1976), p. xvi.

<sup>39</sup> SJ Williams and E Powell, *Llyfr Blegywryd*, Caerdydd, (1941).

<sup>40</sup> For Llyfr Iorwerth see ARH Wiliam, *Llyfr Iorwerth*, Cardiff, (1960); D Jenkins, *Llyfr Colan*, Caerdydd, (1963).

<sup>41</sup> For Llyfr Cyfnerth see AW Wade-Evans, *Welsh Medieval Law*, Oxford, (1909); ME Owen, 'The Cyfnerth Text', in Charles-Edwards, Owen and Russell, *The Welsh King and his Court*, Cardiff, (2000), pp. 425–35.

<sup>42</sup> D Jenkins, *Celtic Law Papers*, Bruxelles, (1973), pp. 123–33.

<sup>43</sup> For the distribution cf. ME Owen, 'Y Cyfreithiau: Natur y Testunau', in G Bowen, *Y Traddodiad Rhyddiaith yn yr Oesau Canol*, Llandysul, (1974), p. 198; TM Charles-Edwards, *The Welsh Laws*, Cardiff, (1989), p. 199.

<sup>44</sup> For Cynog, see GA Elias, 'Llyfr Cynog of Cyfraith Hywel and St Cynog of Brycheiniog', *Welsh History Review* 23, (2006), pp. 27–47.

<sup>45</sup> TM Charles-Edwards (1989), *The Welsh Laws*, (1989), p. 100.

<sup>46</sup> For Goronwy ab Ednyfed, see Rhian M Andrews et al. (eds.), *Gwaith Bleddyn Fardd ac eraill Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion VII*, Caerdydd, (1996), pp. 156–72.

<sup>47</sup> JA Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, Vol I, (1906), p. 103; idem, *Registra Antiqua de Llantilio Crosenny et Penrhos in Comitatu Monumethens 1577–1644*, London, (1916).

<sup>48</sup> P Morgan, 'Glamorgan and the Red Book', *Morgannwg*, (1975), pp. 42–60.

<sup>49</sup> See RR Davies, 'The Survival of the Bloodfeud in Medieval Wales', *History* 54, (1969), *passim*; idem, 'The Law of the March', *passim*; BP Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 417 ff.

<sup>50</sup> TM Charles-Edwards, *The Welsh Laws*, Cardiff, (1989), pp. 49–53.

<sup>51</sup> SE Roberts, 'Plaints in Medieval Welsh law', *Journal of Celtic Studies* 4, (2005), pp. 219–61.

<sup>52</sup> SE Roberts, *The Legal Triads of Medieval Wales*, Cardiff, (2011), pp. 32–34.

<sup>53</sup> C James, 'Golygiad o BL Add. 22356 o Gyfraith Hywel ynghyd ag astudiaeth gymharol ohoni a Llanstephan 116'. Ph.D. thesis, Prifysgol Cymru, Aberystwyth (1984).

<sup>54</sup> SE Roberts, 'Creu Trefn o Anhrefn', *National Library of Wales Journal* 34, pp. 397–420.

<sup>55</sup> See D Jenkins and ME Owen, 'Welsh Law in Carmarthenshire', *The Carmarthenshire Antiquary* 18, (1982), pp. 22–23; SE Roberts, 'Plaints in Medieval Welsh Law', *Journal of Celtic Studies* 4, (2005), pp. 219–61.

<sup>56</sup> SE Roberts, 'Legal Practice in fifteenth-century Brycheiniog', *Studia Celtica* 37, (2001), pp. 307–23.

<sup>57</sup> EI Rowlands, *The Poems of the Cywyddwyr: A Selection of Cywyddwyr c. 1375–1525*, Dublin, (1976), pp. 28–9; JLI Williams and I Williams, *Gwaith Guto'r Glyn*, Caerdydd, (1961), pp. 46–8.

<sup>58</sup> EI Rowlands, *The Poems of the Cywyddwyr*, Dublin, (1976), p. 28.



## THE RADNORSHIRE GENTRY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Keith Parker

**B**efore examining the impact of the social, economic and political changes of the nineteenth century upon the Radnorshire gentry it would be useful to examine the sub-groups within that social class, which was by no means as homogenous as one might think. Nor is it sufficient to distinguish between the families of the county establishment and the lesser gentry, sometimes termed the parochial gentry, whose influence did not extend far beyond their immediate neighbourhood, for the county families differed in origins and to some extent in outlook.

Within the county establishment three broad sub-groups can be distinguished: the old county families who had first risen to prominence in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; the incomers, who had either purchased their Radnorshire estates or who had acquired them through marriage to a Radnorshire heiress, and finally local families of good lineage and standing who, through inheritance, marriage or wealth acquired from trade, commerce or the professions, had been able to build up a substantial estate, sometimes over several generations, sufficient to assume gentry status.

The presence amongst the county's gentry of the nineteenth century of families such as Lewis of Harpton, (Green) Price of Knighton and Norton, Jones (Brydges) of Boultonbrooke, Rickards (Mynors) of Evenjobb, and the Baskervilles gives a strong sense of continuity, for these were the old establishment families which had dominated the Radnorshire of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, this continuity is more apparent than real, for the Price, Jones and Rickards families had backed the Crown during the Civil War period, and had had to 're-invent' themselves afterwards through good marriages, inheritance (often involving the assumption of an additional surname by royal licence) or by acquiring 'new money' through trade, commerce or the professions.

It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that the Lewis family of Harpton found it necessary to re-invent itself. Even so, the unsuccessful election battles of Thomas Lewis and John Lewis with Edward Lewis of Downton between 1761 and 1780 almost certainly damaged the Harpton family's standing in the county and consumed much of its resources, and it was left to Thomas Frankland Lewis (1780–1855) to re-establish the family's status and restore the family fortunes, more than doubling the income of the Harpton Court estate.<sup>1</sup>

The Wilkins family, who were almost to monopolise the county parliamentary seat during the first half of the nineteenth century, were incomers who established themselves in the county in the person of Walter Wilkins (1741–1828), who had made a fortune in India and had purchased the large and heavily mortgaged Maesllwch on his return. Another family destined to play a prominent role in the county's political life in the closing decades of the nineteenth century was the Rogers family of Stanage Park, which was purchased *circa* 1800 by a London merchant, Charles Rogers. The Venables family had settled in the county in 1810 when the Revd Richard Venables (1775–1858) exchanged his Yorkshire living for that of Clyro. Essentially a 'squarson', he had purchased a number of properties in the Newbridge-on-Wye area which he and his sons eventually developed into the Llys dinam estate.

A number of industrialists and businessmen acquired Radnorshire estates during the nineteenth century, most notably James Watt, who acquired an estate in Gladestry in 1798 and purchased the nucleus of the Doldowlod estate in 1803. Another industrialist to invest in a Radnorshire estate was Francis Aspinall Philips of Ardwick, Manchester, who purchased the Abbey Cwm Hir and vested it in his second son, George Henry Philips. Included in the purchase, or acquired shortly after it, was a one-third share in the large manor of Gollon, enclosed in 1846. George Augustus Haig of Pen Ithon was another incomer of a commercial background, for he had made his money in the liquor trade. In 1858 he bought a large estate in upper Radnorshire, carved out of the commons enclosed in the Gollon enclosure, 1846. Haig seems never to have been entirely accepted by the Radnorshire establishment, partly because of his commercial background. The same could be said of the independent-minded Henry Lingen (1803–74), who bought the Penlanole estate near Rhayader shortly after his marriage in 1837. Of an old Herefordshire family and a barrister by profession, health considerations led him to retire to Penlanole.

Of the incomers who acquired their estates by marriage to a Radnorshire heiress, perhaps the most significant was John Cheesment Severn (1781–1875), who in 1811 married Mary Ann, the daughter and heiress of John Price of Penybont, who had made his fortune in banking and trade. Another incomer of the same period was John Whittaker (1774–1843) of Newcastle Court, who hailed from Essex. He married Mary, the second of the 'Three Graces', the three daughters of Francis Garbett of Knill Court on the Herefordshire-Radnorshire border, thus securing entry to the local elite. Another incomer who married into the Radnorshire establishment was Major General Sladen, who in 1866 married his cousin Anne, the daughter of Thomas Oliver, who inherited Rhydoldog in 1858 on the death

of her uncle David Oliver. Anne's mother, Alice, was the sister of Richard Banks, the Kington lawyer and banker.

Of local families who made their way into the Radnorshire establishment in the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, space permits the mention of only a few. The Olivers, an old Cwmdeuddwr family of good descent, had acquired Rhydoldog in 1761 and it was then rebuilt with the aid of the wealth of Jeremiah Oliver, a tailor of St James, Westminster. David Oliver was a partner of Banks in the Kington Bank and Anne's father Thomas, who died in 1854, had managed the business. The dominant figure in the Cwmdeuddwr/Rhayader area for much of the first half of the nineteenth century was Hugh Powell Evans (1766–1849) of Noyadd, the oldest of five sons of Evan Evans, described by his political opponent, Sir John Walsh, as 'a little primitive Welsh squire'. Of an old family of good lineage and a substantial estate, his appointment as sheriff of Radnorshire in 1801 marked his acceptance into the county establishment. The marriages of his two sisters with the Prickard family of Dderw and the Williams family of Rhayader increased his influence in the Rhayader Hundred still further.

By 1840 dominance in the Rhayader area was passing to another new establishment family, the Lewis Lloyds of Nantgwyllt, in the person of Thomas Lewis (1799–1870), who assumed the name of Lewis Lloyd in 1824. The Lewis Lloyds, whose substantial estate stretched from north-west Radnorshire into the counties of Brecon, Pembroke and Cardigan, were another old family of ancient lineage who could claim descent from the Powell family of Cwmdeuddwr and the Lewis family of Gladestry, kinsmen of the Lewis family of Harpton.

Two other emerging families of the later eighteenth century were the Evans family of Lwynbarried, Nantmel, and the Jones family of Pencerrig and Trefonnen. The two families were united by the marriage of Elizabeth Jones and Morgan Evans in 1788 and their son Morgan John Evans, sheriff of Radnorshire in 1819, inherited not only Llwynbarried, but also much of his uncle Middleton Jones's estate in Llandrindod and Cefnlllys. On Morgan's death in 1829 his estates passed to his son, Edward Middleton Evans (1822–1899), who served as sheriff of Radnorshire in 1849 and played a crucial role in the development of Llandrindod Wells.

The Jones family of Pencerrig and Trefonnen also made a contribution to the rise of another establishment family, the Thomas family of Llwynmadoc, Breconshire, for the oldest daughter of Thomas Jones the artist, Anna Maria, who had married Thomas Thomas of Llanbradach, Glamorgan, had inherited Pencerrig. On the death of Thomas Thomas, his estates, including Pencerrig, passed to the daughter of his second

marriage, to Clara Thomas, who married a Henry Thomas – no relation – of Llynmadoc, Breconshire. On his death Mrs Clara Thomas became the owner of substantial estates in Glamorgan, Brecon and Radnor, which on her death passed to her daughter, Miss Clara Thomas.

The Williams Vaughan family of The Skreen, Llandeilo Graban and Felin Newydd, Breconshire, though of ancient descent, made their way into the county establishment relatively late in the nineteenth century when in 1848 Eliza Fortuna Williams, the daughter of John Williams of The Skreen and Felin Newydd, who was to serve as sheriff of Breconshire in 1855, married John Jones (1810–97). He assumed, by royal licence, first the additional surname Vaughan, in accordance with an uncle's will, and later the surname Williams, calling himself John Williams Vaughan. His son, John Williams Vaughan junior, a magistrate in both Brecon and Radnor, served as sheriff of Radnorshire in 1885.

Two sub-groups can be distinguished amongst the lesser gentry: landed gentry with modest estates and sometimes with little formal education and limited cultural horizons; and the urban gentry, with little in the way of a landed estate, but accepted as of gentry by the county establishment, their peers and by society at large.

Hugh Vaughan (1771–1851) of Llwynmadoc, Radnorshire, a magistrate and deputy lieutenant and high sheriff of Radnorshire in 1825 and related by marriage to the Evans family of Llanbarried, was in many ways typical of the lesser landed gentry, although his influence in Colwyn Hundred was, no doubt, envied by many among the county elite. In his diary for 1834–35, Sir John Walsh, later the first Lord Ormathwaite, described him as 'in education, habits and mode of life, not a bit removed from the level of the grey coated farmer of the county' and went on to portray him as a nineteenth century Radnorshire version of Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley:

... a little squire of £500 a year, living in a small poverty struck (*sic*) farm house, and himself and his wife not at all raised in manner or appearance above the common grey coat farmer of the county. He is on the commission of the peace, and is an active magistrate and looked up to by the country people round for his clearness and sagacity in justice business. Partly their companion, and a trifle their superior, identified with them in habits, manners and tastes, yet raised above them by his independent estate and possessing through all his rusticity of manners a natural shrewd understanding and aptitude for business.<sup>2</sup>

All three Radnorshire market towns can provide examples of urban gentry. At Rhayader Lieutenant Horatio James, John Jones, the former Bank of



England clerk, and later Stephen Williams the architect come into this category, as does James Beavan, the blacksmith's son employed as a legal clerk and adopted by the lawyer Edward Lee James at Presteigne. In Knighton Frank Cobden, a baronet's grandson whose chief claim to fame was his hat trick against Oxford University in the University match at Lords which enabled Cambridge University to defeat Oxford in 1870, is perhaps the best known of the town's urban gentry.

The county establishment was on occasion rather snobbish as far as the lesser gentry were concerned. John Jones, the former Bank of England clerk, was looked down upon by some because of his relatively humble origins, and attracted some criticism during the Rebecca crisis of 1843. Walsh's attempt to bring James Beavan, the blacksmith's son, into the commission of the peace was initially blocked by the refusal of some of the magistrates – Richard Green Price, Harford James Jones Brydges, Miles of Dunfield – to work with him.<sup>3</sup> Nor were all the hobbledehoys to be found amongst the lesser gentry. Walter Wilkins II was a hard-riding, hard-drinking sportsman never more at home than when carousing with his foxhunting companions in a country inn, often offending Sir Harford Jones Brydges with his careless language and likened by Walsh to Tony Lumpkin.<sup>4</sup> Nor did all the other members of the establishment have the same educational and cultural background as George Cornwall Lewis, or the Revd Dr Richard Venables and his sons.

The dominant position of the gentry in the county stemmed from two sources: their landed estates and their control of local government in their capacity as justices of the peace, a control not eroded until the creation of the county council in 1888. Their dominance was enhanced by the fact that nearly all the major landowners were resident in the county. Again, Ormathwaite and his family always maintained a *pied-à-terre* in Radnorshire to assist in maintaining their influence in the county. However, Figure 1, showing the Radnorshire estates of the leading gentry, understates the wealth of some since it does not take into account the estates they owned in other counties, which were sometimes extensive, as can be seen in Figure 2.

<i>Acreage of estate</i>	<i>Number of estates</i>	<i>Estates of absentee owners</i>
5000+ acres	7	1 (Ormathwaite)
2000 – 4999 acres	13	3
1000 – 1999 acres	13	3

Figure 1 The major Radnorshire estates in 1873

Source: *House of Commons Returns* 335, 1876

<i>Landowner</i>	<i>Radnorshire estates</i>	<i>Estates in other counties</i>
Walter Mynors Baskerville	2904 acres	2438 acres
Sir Harford J. J. Brydges	1447 acres	1613 acres
Robert Lewis Lloyd	1892 acres	6305 acres
Robert Baskerville Mynors	5676 acres	1042 acres
Revd John Rogers	3128 acres	1462 acres
Mrs Clara Thomas	3921 acres	10413 acres
Walter de Winton	4956 acres	4913 acres

Figure 2 The estates of some Radnorshire gentry in other counties

Source: *House of Commons Returns* 355, 1876

The nineteenth century, particularly the third quarter, saw a marked increase in the wealth of the Radnorshire gentry. The major landowners made large gains as a result of the enclosure of commons and waste in the county, five major families, the Lewises of Harpton, the (Green) Prices, the Gibson Watts, the Severns and the Walsh/Ormathwaite families receiving 26% of the total acreage enclosed. Since they were the major landowners involved they naturally received the largest allocation of commons and waste, but in addition they gained more than 2100 acres between them in lieu of their manorial rights.<sup>5</sup> Given their greater wealth, they also tended to be the major purchasers of land sold to finance the enclosures. There is also some evidence to suggest that the claims of some of the gentry were not investigated particularly thoroughly. On two occasions the Revd Sir Gilbert Frankland Lewis got his claims accepted by enclosure commissioners without any real investigation: to The Warren, in the case of the Radnor Forest enclosure, and to the lordship of the manor of Harpton and Wolfpits.<sup>6</sup>

The major landowners were also the major customers for the loans advanced by the government-backed land companies at below market rates of interest on the security of their estates. By this means the gentry obtained the capital to drain the newly enclosed lands, build estate roads and build or improve farmhouses and farm buildings. Unfortunately, since the records of many of these companies are no longer available, the sums advanced to the gentry families cannot be calculated. Most of the gentry also gained from the construction of railways in the county in the late 1850s and the 1860s since proximity to a railway increased land values substantially. Again it should be remembered that the economy of a county in which pastoral farming predominated was able to adjust to the Repeal

of the Corn Laws in 1846 with relative ease. 'The Golden Age of British Farming' in the third quarter of the century was initially more apparent in pastoral than in predominantly arable areas.

However status did not depend only upon wealth and the extent of a gentleman's estate: membership of the Commons, particularly for the Radnorshire or Radnor Boroughs seat, could bring additional prestige, as did a prominent appointment, such as Thomas Frankland Lewis's to the chairmanship of the Poor Law Commission. Public office in Radnorshire could also add to a family's prestige. This was certainly the case with regard to the Venables family, since the chairmanship of the Radnorshire Bench, held between 1825 and 1888, first by the Revd Dr Richard Venables (1774-1858) and then by his son, the Revd Richard Lister Venables (1808-94), placed them at the forefront of local government and justice in the county. In the eyes of Radnorshire, they were considerably more important than all but possibly the county's MPs and Lord Ormathwaite and certainly more than Richard Lister's younger brother George Stovin, the talented barrister and journalist. Even so, the Revd Richard Lister Venables's estate of 962 acres was much less than that of most members of the Radnorshire elite.

Their wealth and standing meant that gentry exercised considerable power in the parish(es) in which their estates lay: as the major land owners they chose their tenants, determined the level of rent the tenants paid, and by means of covenants had a say in their tenants' farming pattern. In addition they were the major employer not only of estate workers, but also of domestic staff. They exercised considerable influence beyond their estates, for their patronage was important for the tradesmen, craftsmen and professionals such as doctors and solicitors in the neighbouring town. The one or two gentry families in a parish were the social leaders of the community and were expected to head local subscription lists to provide food, clothes and coal for the aged and the poor at Christmas or in prolonged spells of cold weather in the winter, and to host the bazaars and garden parties in aid of the parish church or local school. Little could happen in their area of influence without their sanction, except perhaps in the north-west of the county where Rebecca sometimes held sway.

The gentry also exercised considerable potential political influence since it was accepted that the landlords 'commanded' the votes of their tenants and it would have taken considerable moral courage for a dependant to stand up in public and cast a vote against his patron's or landlord's wishes and interests. At first sight however it would seem that the Radnorshire gentry had few occasions on which they could exercise power, since in the nineteenth century prior to 1869 there had been a total

of only four contested elections in both of the Radnor constituencies. However it could be argued that the influence of the Lewises of Harpton and the Prices of Knighton and Norton was so complete that they or their nominees monopolised the Radnor Boroughs seat from 1799 until the seat was abolished in 1886. In the same way the influence of first the Wilkins/de Wintons and then the Walshes and their allies was such that that they almost monopolised the country seat between 1796 and 1892.

The introduction of the secret ballot in 1872 greatly curbed the political influence of the gentry, though it may not have ended it completely, for there was some talk of some landlords' stewards taking a notebook around the tenants and persuading them to sign to say that they would vote for the candidate favoured by the landlord.<sup>7</sup> The extension of the franchise to all householders and many lodgers by the Third Reform Act of 1884 greatly eroded the utility of such an exercise since even in tiny Radnorshire the electorate was too large for the gentry to exercise any real control. Moreover, by the 1880s it was increasingly recognised that the political obligation of a tenant towards his landlord was no more than this: if the latter stood as a parliamentary candidate, then the tenant was obliged not to campaign actively or speak against him.<sup>8</sup>

The main source of the gentry's power derived from the fact that they, as magistrates sitting in Quarter Sessions, were the *de facto* rulers of the county, for in addition to their judicial functions they wielded considerable administrative powers. Moreover, rather than simply enforcing legislation blindly, the discretionary powers delegated to them meant that in practice they determined the rigour and extent to which legislation was enforced within the county. Thus it is clear that the legislative detail governing the administration of gaols was consistently ignored in the county in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> This approach of the magistrates spilled over into other spheres in which they were active. The Commission of Inquiry into South Wales in 1843 found several instances in which the legislation governing turnpike trusts had been blithely ignored by the Radnorshire Turnpike Trust.<sup>10</sup>

The area in which the gentry first lost influence, largely by default, was that relating to the Poor Law, where they as magistrates had previously had the final word since they had been able to overrule the parish authorities as to the granting of relief. As a result of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, local control of Poor Law administration was vested in the Guardians of the Poor elected by the ratepayers of each Poor Law Union. In the Radnorshire Unions the guardians were, in the main, farmers, with a sprinkling of tradesmen and shopkeepers. All the magistrates resident in the area covered by a Union were *ex officio*

guardians and the chairman of the Union was generally chosen from their ranks. However the *ex officio* guardians were in the minority, and real power lay with their elected colleagues, whose chief objective was to keep the poor rate as low as possible and who were therefore anxious to exercise detailed control. The *ex officio* guardians were not prepared to argue over pennies and they tended to absent themselves from routine meetings, attending only when there were appointments to be made, for they were usually anxious to demonstrate their powers of patronage.

From the mid-nineteenth century the administrative powers of the magistrates began to be eroded, partly because the central government began to assert its authority over areas it previously had been content to administer at arm's length. In the cases of the prisons, public health and the police, this was done by means of frequent inspection by well qualified inspectors appointed by a central government body, ready to take action if recommendations, usually published in the local Press, were not acted upon. In the case of the police, an adverse report had financial implications for the local authority, which initially was the Bench.

Though there were some complaints made in the Rhayader area with regard to the incompetence of some magistrates, a more frequent complaint in most parts of the county over much of the nineteenth century was of a lack of resident magistrates. In Presteigne in 1840 the lack of a resident magistrate meant that sometimes minor offences went unchecked; in Rhayader in 1843 no prompt action could be taken against Rebecca rioters; in Knighton in 1865 there were sometimes insufficient magistrates in the town to form a quorum so police cases could not be heard and a journey of five miles was necessary to obtain a magistrate's signature on important documents.<sup>11</sup>

The apparent lack of sufficient magistrates stemmed from the fact that neither Sir John Walsh nor his son Arthur, Lords Lieutenant of Radnorshire between 1842–75 and 1875–95 respectively, were prepared to nominate any but the more substantial landowners as magistrates, on the grounds that, as Quarter Sessions fixed the county rate, it would be wrong to have someone who was not a substantial ratepayer deciding upon the level of local taxation. Arthur Walsh was more inflexible on this point than his father and believed that only those who had been nominated as sheriff of the county or their heirs were eligible for recommendation for inclusion in the Commission of the Peace. Only if there were not sufficient magistrates in any district was he prepared to make exceptions to this rule.<sup>12</sup> When Sir Powlett Milbank succeeded the second Lord Ormathwaite as Lord Lieutenant in 1895 he seems to have been freer in his recommendations for inclusion in the Commission of the Peace, for by 1908 it was

suggested that sometimes room could not be found for them all to sit on the Bench. The *Radnorshire Standard* of 19 February reported that at the last court at Penybont there were eleven magistrates to try the cases.

The growing self-confidence of the Radnorshire gentry in the nineteenth century is reflected in what might be termed 'the great rebuilding', in which new family seats were built, sometimes on the site of an old house, and older family houses extended and/or extensively remodelled. Figure 3 gives some indication of the scale of this rebuilding, but the list should not be regarded as comprehensive. The same self-confidence on the part of the gentry can be seen in their growing practice from the mid-century onwards of sending sons away to boarding school: in the case of the elite to a public school such as Eton – or more usually to Repton, Shrewsbury, Malvern or Cheltenham – and sometimes to Brecon or Hereford. Less frequently, daughters would attend a boarding school or a finishing school for a year or so. The emphasis here was not on an academic education, but to furnish them with the accomplishments considered essential in polite society: playing the piano, singing, dancing, French and embroidery.

<i>House</i>	<i>Built/Remodelled</i>	<i>Date</i>
Abbey Cwmhir Hall	Built	1867
Boughrood Castle	Built	1817
Boultibrooke House	Remodelled	1812–15, 1872
Dderw	Built	1876
Downton	Remodelled	1840–50
Evancoyd	Remodelled	c. 1835
Harpton Court	Remodelled	1805–12, c 1840
Howey Hall	Built	1810
Llwynbarried	Remodelled	1870
Maesllwch Castle	Built	1829–50
Newcastle Court	Remodelled	1880
Norton Manor	Built	1838*
Pencerrig	Remodelled	1837
Penithon Hall	Built	c 1855
Penlanole	Built	c 1837*

\* These dates differ from those given by Haslam

Figure 3 Radnorshire family seats built or remodelled in the nineteenth century  
Source: Richard Haslam, *The Buildings of Wales: Powys*, p. 215–78

In the last quarter of the century British farming found itself facing stiff competition as cheaper farm produce from North and South America flooded into the country after the development of railways in these regions and technical improvements in shipping led to reduced freight charges. The arable sector was affected first as cheap cereals were imported from the prairies of North America, while in the 1880s the development of refrigeration enabled the beef producers of the Argentinean pampas and Australia and the sheep and dairy farmers of New Zealand to target the British market. Between 1871–74 and 1894–98 wheat and wool prices fell by 50% and livestock prices by 25%. In this situation rent levels came under severe pressure and rental incomes fell steadily as landlords found it necessary to give frequent rent rebates of 10% per annum.

While estate incomes were falling the standards of living expected of the gentry were rising – not only in terms of the family seat and an hospitable social life in the country and in town, but also, as Roy Fenn has pointed out, in terms of suitable provision for the usually large family.<sup>13</sup> For the sons this would entail education at a public school, university and possibly professional training, and an adequate allowance until they had established themselves. Daughters would require at least a governess/tutor, if not a year or so at a boarding school or finishing school, at least one season with a generous dress allowance, and a marriage settlement in keeping with the family status.

In order to maintain the standards expected of their class most gentry found it necessary to retrench or to realise some of their capital, by selling some of their investments in stocks and shares, mortgaging their estates, or selling outlying sections. Some land sales on the part of the gentry in the closing decades of the nineteenth century – the sale of part of the Maesllwch estate in 1883; Powlett Milbank's decision in 1891 to sell the commercial properties in Knighton belonging to the Norton Manor estate, and John Williams Vaughan's decision in 1899 to dispose of his Radnorshire estates – may well have been influenced by such considerations, though the main estate sales did not occur until the 1920s.

The reform of local government in the closing decades of the century, particularly the formation of the county council, would appear to have greatly curbed the influence of the gentry in local government, for the administrative powers and control of finance exercised by the gentry sitting in Quarter Sessions was transferred to the elected county council. However, since Radnorshire society was socially conservative, deference was such that most of the county establishment were returned unopposed in the county council elections, although there were exceptions, as at Presteigne, where a grocer, Richard Rogers, defeated Francis Evelyn, the

local squire. Again, the first two county council chairmen were those pillars of Radnorshire society, Lord Ormathwaite and then Charles Coltman Rogers.

Quarter Sessions also retained some control over the police, since the magistrates elected half the members of the Joint Standing Committee, the other half being county councillors. There was also a tendency for co-opted members of the County Governing Body and later the Education Committee to be drawn from the ranks of the gentry. The gentry also continued to dominate the Bench, though at the turn of the century what mainly concerned some sections of local opinion was not the issue of social class, but rather the overwhelming dominance of Conservatives and Anglicans on the Radnorshire Bench.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> NLW Harpton Court Collection, c768, 3922, pp. 4–9.

<sup>2</sup> NLW Ormathwaite Papers, F 1/8, pp.155–56.

<sup>3</sup> Ormathwaite Papers, FG 1/30, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> Ormathwaite Papers, F 1/7, p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> Parker, 'Parliamentary Enclosure in Radnorshire', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 73, (2003), p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> Harpton Court Collection, c834, 3922, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Hereford Journal*, 2.8.1873.

<sup>8</sup> *Hereford Times*, 14.7.1883.

<sup>9</sup> J Howard, *The State of the Prisons*, (1777), p. 470; Parker, 'Radnorshire County Gaol: the Last Decade', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 52, (1982), p. 440.

<sup>10</sup> *The Commission of Inquiry for South Wales: Minutes of Evidence*, (1843), pp. 13–14.

<sup>11</sup> TNA PRO HO 44/36, pp. 251–55; Ormathwaite Papers FG 1/14, p. 43; *Hereford Times*, 6.5.1865.

<sup>12</sup> Ormathwaite Papers, FH2/3 9.10.1880, Walsh to R Dansey Green Price.

<sup>13</sup> RWD Fenn, 'Sir Richard Green Price of Norton Manor', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society* 55, (1985), pp. 61, 63.



# THOMAS JONES THE ARTIST

## BY FRANSIS G PAYNE\*

### PART ONE

Translated by Dr Ifan Payne

Thomas Jones is a forgotten artist. One cannot blame his fellow-Welshmen for this since few of them have even heard so much as his name. Only a few rich and cultured people had an interest in pictures in his time, and in his own country they could be counted on the fingers of one hand. It is true that various noblemen from Wales would, while visiting London, sit for one of the *face painters*, as they were called, or even for a renowned portraitist; but it was not for love of art.

Artists themselves were plentiful in Britain in the eighteenth century but, as it is in every age, few of them were endowed with the genius that transcends periods and enchants the future. Thus when the age of public Art Galleries came, not many contemporaries of Thomas Jones were represented in them. The giants – Wilson, Hogarth, Gainsborough, Constable, Reynolds – had their deserved place along with a new and increasing reputation. But the pictures of the others – honest, accomplished work but of a more limited appeal, by men such as Barrett, Hodges, Marlow, Mortimer, and Jones himself – were left in the houses and private galleries of their patrons' descendants. With time, the pictures decreased in value in the eyes of their owners and therefore moved to a higher location in the house. They were thrown into the attic, company for the old furniture that did not conform to the new fashions, and a feast for the insects and the dust. So it is in every age, except that in the world of art it was a special pity that the eighteenth century was followed by the nineteenth.

The large majority of these artists deserved a better fate. When an example of their work is resurrected through the curiosity of a student or because of a second-hand dealer we can but wonder at its quality. It is true that it is possible to continue to live without it but the person who does not gain from discovering it is either rich in resources or hopelessly poor in spirit. Let that be part of my excuse for resurrecting Thomas Jones in these pages. A more important reason, perhaps, is that Welsh artists are so rare in every age that not one of them should be ignored.

Thomas Jones was born in Trefonnen, Cefn Llys,<sup>1</sup> Radnorshire, on 26 October 1742. Trefonnen was an old house that his great-grandfather,

David Jones, had bought sometime in the middle of the seventeenth century. I do not know from whom David Jones bought it but a century previously the house had been in the possession of a branch of the old noble stock of the Tordduaid. In those days Morgan Elfael, a poet from nearby Diserth, visited Trefonnen. He went there to sing the praise of his benefactor and to elegise him. But by today

lle bu'r mawl a llwybr moliant  
mwy ni chwardd dyn a cherdd dant

where there was veneration and praise was sung  
there is no music now<sup>2</sup>

Today Trefonnen is a farmhouse on the edge of the new town of Llandrindod. By about 1750 Thomas Jones's father had tired of the unruly crowds that visited the hot springs nearby and leased Trefonnen to Grosvenor, the developer of Llandrindod, as an additional hotel, and he moved to Pencerrig, a mansion in the neighbouring parish of Llanelwedd. To return to Thomas Jones himself. When he was six years old, he and his eldest brother were sent to a grammar school that was kept by the curate of Cefn Llys but after their settling in Pencerrig a private teacher from the Carmarthen academy was employed for the children. John Evans was the teacher's name and he had a few other pupils, amongst them Abraham Rees, who became in time a brilliant mathematician and an editor of *Chambers Cyclopaedia*. John Evans died in 1753, the little school came to an end, and Jones and his brother were sent to Brecon College, which was at the time under the management of a man by the name of Powel, 'a tyrannical Pedagogue' according to Jones. He left Brecon in 1758 and went to a school in Llanfyllin that was kept by Dr Jenkin Jenkins. Here he came across Abraham Rees again, 'deeply engaged in Hebrew, Algebra, Logarithms and Fluxions, and preparing himself for the Academy at Hoxton . . .'

Some time afterwards, John Hope of Lincolns Inn, an uncle to Thomas Jones's mother, undertook to pay for the education of the boy – but on his own terms. He intended to make him a priest. Even though this was completely contrary to the inclinations of Jones himself it was necessary to consent and in July 1759 he enrolled in Oxford University. He stayed at Jesus College until the death of his uncle in 1761. Hope died without making his will and without providing for the career of his nephew. The result was that Jones left Oxford with fairly mixed feelings. 'All my golden dreams came to an end,' he said in his diary, but now he had an

opportunity to realise the only dream of importance that ever entered his head, to be an artist.

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Since the days of childhood Jones's chief pleasure had been to look at pictures and to study them. When he was in the college in Brecon he started to practise drawing his own pictures and he had the support of his father, who bought artist's equipment for him along with prints to copy. Another who took an interest in the boy's plans was Charles Powell, a cultured gentleman from Madoc Castle near Brecon. And now, with Jones set on being a professional artist, Powell introduced him to the attention of William Shipley, the brother of the Bishop of Llandelwy, and the founder of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce. Shipley owned a famous art school in the Strand, London, where a large number of the foremost artists of the century were trained. After seeing examples of Jones's work, Shipley wrote several encouraging and instructive letters to him and the result was that Jones went to London and joined the school in November 1761.

For two years he followed the usual course for pupils in the middle of the eighteenth century – beginning by drawing pictures of ears, eyes, mouths, noses, etc., then progressing to drawing the plaster copies of classical statues that had been collected by the Duke of Richmond, and lastly joining the academy in St Martin's Lane in order to practise working from live models. After attending classes at the latter place for six months, Jones started searching for a situation as a pupil to an artist of standing. He was helped by one of his new friends, Captain William Baillie, a fine engraver and a well known connoisseur, and in March 1763 Jones was introduced by him to Richard Wilson, who was living in Covent Garden. Jones and his fellow-countryman quickly agreed on terms, namely fifty guineas for two years. Wilson had two apprentices in his studio at the time. One of them, William Hodges, became famous within a few years. He was artist to Captain Cook on his second voyage and became a rich man. Another pupil soon arrived, namely Joseph Farington, a man who is remembered today as a diarist rather than as an artist; he came on the same terms as Jones.

Now, since not much is known about Richard Wilson, Wales's greatest artist, it is best to quote the few recollections that follow in Jones's own words.

Wilson, being an unmarried man, kept no house – but had commodious Apartments in the Piazza Covent Garden, which consisted of a *Study* or

painting room for himself, a large Exhibition or Show-room, a study for his Pupils, Bed Chamber, Garrets, etc. The two Apprentices afore mentioned, not having advanced any premium, were expected to make up that deficiency by their assistance in dead Colouring and forwarding the Pictures, in proportion to their Abilities, and were accordingly prescribed to certain stated hours daily attendance. As to the other two Pupils, there being no claim on their time, they were left to their Own Discretion. It would have been better indeed, if there had been more Restraint upon us all, too much of the time that ought to have been dedicated to Study, being squandered away in idle mirth and frolick, and when Our Master surprised us at our gambols, he only shook his head and in his dry laconick manner, said 'Gentlemen, this is not the way to rival Claude'.

Wilson had such an original turn of thinking, and a mode of expressing his Ideas so peculiarly his own, that he oftimes provoked Mirth without intending it. When we all four have been standing behind his chair observing his process in painting and listening to a very grave lecture on the Art, some droll Idea or expression would so unexpectedly pop upon us, as to set us all in a Titter. Upon which he would turn around and with a seemingly angry Countenance say 'Gentlemen, if you do not understand Decorum, pray retire to your own Appartment'.

Jones says little about Wilson's method with his disciples:

The first year I was to be confined entirely to making drawings with black and white chalks on paper of a middle Tint, either from his Studies and Pictures or from Nature. This, he said, was to ground me in the Principles of Light and Shade, without being dazzled and misled by the flutter of Colours. He did not approve of *tinted* Drawings and consequently did not encourage his Pupils in the Practise which, he said, hurt the Eye for fine Colouring.

It seems likely to me that during this year there occurred the famous event when Jones was accused by Wilson of 'stealing my temple'. This anecdote has been related so often that it has created a completely unfounded myth that Jones was nothing but his master's imitator. In truth, Jones's characteristic paintings are quite unlike Wilson's work and the one cannot be mistaken for the other. As will be seen further on, on one occasion years later and when Wilson was in his grave, Jones successfully faked the work of his old master. But in the period under consideration here, Jones did not realise Wilson's greatness and genius and he soon regretted binding himself to him. As he said:

I must own that so ignorant was I then of the true principles of the Art that I began to repent at having engaged myself so precipitately. The characteristic Beauties of this great Master I was quite blind to and I looked upon his pictures as course unfinished Sketches.

His eyes were opened in time but he never had the talent to manipulate paint with the sensitivity and intensity of Wilson. Thomas Jones was a man of his time in every way, and the examples of his work that I saw are smooth and tight and as organised and finished as the heroic couplets of his contemporaries. They are not without feeling but the feeling is always under the yoke.

As far as can be perceived from his diary, the 'idle mirth and frolick', as he called it, that took so much of his time during the first years in London was harmless enough. We find him in a house in Scotland Yard being entertained by the 'singular Effect of Ventriloquy', or staring like any other country lad at many of the *Palatines* who were camped out in Whitechapel. It was a time of societies and clubs that appeared like one-night houses.<sup>3</sup>

So when one Captain Howdall, a supporter of the arts, left London, we find Jones and his friends taking the opportunity to found the Howdalian Society, which gathered weekly in Munday's coffee house in memory of the departed friend. This society, under the presidency of that wonderful bird, JH Mortimer, became an important faction within the Society of Artists. It may be that it was his close friendship with Mortimer that turned Jones's mind to some gentlemanly manners that had not been provided to him by Evans Camarthen nor Jenkins Llanfyllin nor the sad term at Oxford. He started to learn to play the *viol di gamba* and, along with a number of other young artists, he joined Mercati's fencing school in order to learn to wield the sword with elegance. But the Italian's lessons were not to their satisfaction so they went together to the well known school of Davies, a staunch little Welshman. There is no doubt that Davies was an exceptional Welshman, because he agreed to accept pictures instead of money in payment for the lessons. And so five years passed pleasurably enough before Jones visited his home in Pencerrig.

Despite the attractions of the city he won one of the prizes of the Society of Artists in its room for the encouragement of the arts in 1764, and one of his pictures, *Gentlemen Sporting*, was displayed in the Society of Artists exhibition the following year. In March of that year his term with Wilson came to an end. But now, having returned from seeing his parents, he set to work seriously. He exhibited pictures of Carreg Cennen and Brecon castles in the Exhibition of 1766 and another one, a scene in

Breconshire, in 1767. It's possible that the sketches of the three were drawn during his holidays at home. Like most of Jones's work, these pictures have disappeared by today, but it is more than likely that it was these that were reproduced in his book of engravings, *Six Views of South Wales*, that was published sometime between 1771 and 1779. In 1767, he won the first prize for landscape painting in the Society of Artists rooms for the encouragement of the arts. The winning painting was described by one of the unsuccessful contestants as 'that damned snuff-coloured picture'. According to Jones himself, it was a 'most flaring Sunset'. However, because of its huge size (that had been specified by the rules of the competition) it remained without a buyer for two years.

In the same year Jones had an experience that was common in his period, and also occurs in our time for that matter:

I was applied to by an eminent artist to paint a background to a Picture where a number of figures were introduced. This being my first Employment as an Auxiliary, I engaged in it with fear and trembling. I had not to paint a Landscape after my own way, but to adopt a precision of Pencil, and an Arrangement of Tints quite different from what I had been accustomed to, so as to make the whole seem as if painted off *the same palette*, that is to say by the same person. In a week's time I finished the work to his Satisfaction, and exclusive of my board, I received *two* guineas for my Labour – and though he never employed me afterward, did me the honour of reserving for future Use, a few Studies after Nature which I happened to leave at his house.

Jones was received as a member of the Society of Artists of Great Britain in 1766, and he went regularly to their exciting meetings in the Turk's Head and the Piazza Coffee House. He was in the meetings where the long quarrel between William Chambers and James Paine developed into open warfare that led to the split from which the Royal Academy was created in 1768. Jones supported Paine and he remained faithful to the old Society. As also, at the beginning, did some of the most important painters. Jones says that he heard Reynolds himself announce that he would never join the new Academy but, as is known, he was soon seduced by being offered the presidency of the new institution. Jones never joined despite being pressured to do so but he began sending pictures to the exhibitions of the Academy in 1784, when the old Society was to all intents dead.

Jones was very industrious between 1768 and 1775 but there is not space to relate his industry fully. All that can be done is to give a rough idea of it. He won the second prize of the Society of the Arts for a landscape in 1768. This was sold with another one later to someone in the East Indies. Next year, at the request of a picture dealer, he painted a companion piece to the 'most flaring Sunset' that had won in an earlier competition: *Storm* this time. This picture has an interesting history. His friend Mortimer worked on it with him. Since Mortimer was quite talented as a painter of figures, his role was to bring into the picture the tale of Dido and Aeneas retiring to the cave as related by Virgil. According to Jones this is one of the best pictures that he ever painted. It was shown in that year's Exhibition, and Woollett, the famous engraver, who was one of Jones's bosom friends, started to make an engraving of it. Says Jones:

I began to flatter myself with hopes that my Reputation would be established and spread abroad through the Medium of that celebrated Engraver, as my Master, Wilson, had in some degree even *his* fame extended by the admirable Prints of this Artist . . . but little Woollett, as if satiated with the character of being the first *Landscape-Engraver* in the world, must needs try his hand at historical subjects and having succeeded with his first Essay (*The Death of General Wolfe*) . . . abandoned Landscape and devoted himself to History. Thus the Plate which he had begun and nearly finished from the *Dido and Aeneas*, and one or two other, likewise from my paintings . . . remained locked up and forgotten during the remainder of his days.

It is strange that it seems that Jones never knew that the plate was completed by Bartolozzi and published by Woollett's widow in 1787. Stranger still is that he did not hear of the fate of the original painting itself. All that Jones says is that he gratefully received fifty guineas from the picture dealer for 'Dido' and its companion; but by the time that Woollett's widow published the engraving the original was in the possession of the Empress Catherine of Russia.

In Russia, it was placed with the Empress's huge collection in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. Today, with that city pulverised by wars, it is futile to hope that it still exists.<sup>4</sup>

Despite being disappointed by the engravers, Jones succeeded in selling his products without much trouble. That same year, Fulk Greville ordered six pictures of his house, Willbury, near Andover, and Jones spent a fortnight there drawing the preliminary sketches. He also received the

patronage of the Honourable Peregrine Bertie and he painted for him a picture to place in a panel in his dining room.

Amongst the pictures of 1770 there was a large ambitious landscape, eight feet by six. Mortimer worked with him again by introducing the tale of death of Orpheus. This was shown at the Exhibition and Woollett decided to engrave a plate based on it but, once again, it was not completed. Another of Jones's pictures in that year received praise from Horace Walpole. It was *Scene after Nature* and the self-satisfied connoisseur was motivated to note in the margin of his catalogue that it was a 'very fine painting'.

As so many of his contemporaries who desired dramatic figures in the foreground of their canvases sought the assistance of Mortimer, so also some artists who were without much ability in that direction sought landscaped backgrounds from Jones's hand. During these years Jones painted backgrounds to a number of portraits by Nathaniel Hone and for several pictures by Paton, the painter of ships. In 1771 Paton and Jones and Mortimer worked together on a number of vast paintings that had been commissioned by the Empress of Russia on the subject of the defeat of the Turkish Navy. Francis Wheatley received Jones's help the same year to paint a large picture, 'the large cascade scene', in Vauxhall Gardens. 'All I got by this business,' says Jones, 'was a good dinner every day.' It's certain that he was not named in connection with the work of painting that fashionable centre of London life. Until now his part in another important decorative work has not been recorded either, that is the ceiling of the great salon in Brickwall House, Sussex. He spent two months there in 1773 painting with Mortimer, Mayor, Wheatley, and Durno.

In 1772 Jones spent three months in North Aston, Oxfordshire, the mansion of Oldfield Bowles, Esquire. Bowles was one of the best known of the well-to-do amateurs who were so characteristic of the eighteenth century. He admired Wilson, but he made himself into a disciple of Jones. As a result he painted Wilsonian scenes by using the technique and colours of Jones and, as could be expected, there was not much excellence in them. But as a generous benefactor to the artists of his age he is worthy of being remembered along with his friend Sir George Beaumont. Jones completed two pictures here in North Aston, the one a quiet scene with the tale of Virgil's Aristaeus and the other a storm with the story of Hercules, Deianira and Nessus from Ovid. They were exhibited later in the year, and Walpole saw fit to write 'pretty' and 'good' alongside them in his catalogue.

Jones visited Bowles's mansion again at the beginning of March the following year. His intention was to stay there for a month or two only but he stayed for a complete year. A room was set apart for him as a studio and



Jones and Bowles devoted themselves to painting for five months without much of a break. With Jones's help Bowles produced two paintings that were later exhibited. Says Jones,

I remember the Critick of that year after making a proper Eulogium on my pupils performances, very sagely concludes his remarks with observing that 'this gentleman paints something in the Style of Jones – but though an *honorary* Exhibitor, has far *surpassed his Master*.'

Jones himself painted nineteen paintings during the visit, and almost all of them were sold through the influence of Bowles. Jones gave the best painting, *The Bard*, as a gift to his patron. (By now it is in the National Museum of Wales.) Inspired by Gray's ode, it was a fine example of contemporary romanticism. John Raphael Smith made a fine mezzotint engraving of it and it was published by Dodsley in 1775. But, once again, Jones did not know that it had ever been published. In addition to all this labour they were both busy for two months decorating a small theatre that was used for entertaining the crowd of visitors who were in the house.

In spite of this industry, there were many hours of leisure in North Ashton and enough entertainment to fill those hours. A dramatic company was formed from among the guests and, with the assistance of an orchestra from Oxford, a series of plays was performed before the farmers and gentry of the region. The farmers went to the final rehearsals, of course, the performances being reserved for the gentry – twenty carriages full of them. Here Jones had his first experience of the fox hunt. He had sickened of too much painting and he was persuaded to join with the others in their daily hunt. He quickly tired of the diversion that he described as 'extremely stupid'. He preferred to retire with one of the other guests and to receive lessons on the *violoncello*.

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The mixture of hard work and light-hearted entertainment in North Aston was characteristic of these years. Although Jones was not a great artist he had the insatiable greed for work and play that an artist cannot do without. It is clear that by now Mortimer was a hero in his eyes. No one could socialise with that man in those years without broadening his experience. Mortimer was handsome, amiable, talented, as strong as a bull and just as fearless. But when he was editing his diary in the respectable days towards the end of his life, Jones did not mention the wilder side of his friend. The voyages of the *Seahorse* are the most exciting occasions that we get from

him. Jones was fond of sailing, and he spent a part of every year on that eight-ton ship with Gandon the architect, Marchi the portraitist, and others. Mortimer, of course, was the captain and under his leadership blissful weeks were spent along the coasts of the south. Whenever they saw some eye-catching event they landed ashore like a gang of pirates. Usually, everyone fled from them in the belief that the press gang had arrived and it would not be easy to coax them back from their hiding places to continue with the revelry or the dancing or the sport that had been interrupted. One time they were attacked by a boatload of Customs men who thought that they were smugglers. There was fierce fighting between the two parties and swords and oars were used in earnest. No doubt the fencing lessons in the schools of Mercati and Davies proved their worth that night because it was the artists who won the field. But Jones received a heavy blow from an oar and he was thrown into the sea. He was saved by his friends but it was long before he recovered from his wounds.

In the periods between the outings in the *Seahorse* there was enough time for quieter amusements. Mention has been made earlier of Jones's love of music. He frequented concerts and socialised with musicians. One can discover in occasional entries in his diary his desire to be accepted as one of them. For example, when the new hall of the Society of Artists was opened in the Strand in May 1772, it seems that it was to Jones that the dazzling audience was indebted for the high point of the occasion: an ode that had been composed at Jones's request by Evan Lloyd,<sup>5</sup> Brondderw, Bala. It was set to music by another of his friends, James Hook, Vauxhall organist, and it was performed by the best musicians of the day. Amongst the singers was Joseph Vernon, a friend of his. Vernon was a renowned actor as well as a popular singer. Jones enjoyed the company of players also and he was very friendly with two notable actors, James Dodd and William Parsons. Parsons was a bit of a painter and a critic of painting also and it seems that Jones paid him back by venturing on occasion to critique acting. He noted a long conversation he had with Mrs Lloyd (Mrs Palmer) when he held that it was inappropriate to bring the ghost of Banquo to the stage in *Macbeth*. He was, however, more guarded when he and William Parry were introduced by Evan Lloyd to David Garrick,

who very politely shewed the house, attended us round the Walks and Shrubberies, and as a particular Compliment, conducted us to this Study, a detached Building in the Garden, which being, as he told us, dedicated to Retirement, had only one chair in it. A Bottle of wine was ordered and standing round his writing desk, the glass was circulated and enlivened with the flippant Conversation of these two Wits . . .

When the charm of the city palled, off Jones would go on visits to the homes of his patrons in the country. It would be tedious to follow him but perhaps one glance at the artist at work is permitted. His host, Dr Bates from Missenden, took him in his carriage to draw a picture of Milton's house in Chalfont St. Giles:

I immediately set to work, and as we had brought provisions and wine with us, about three o'clock sat down to dinner in the same room in which we fondly imagined that Milton had so often dined. Here we indulged ourselves in the sweetest reveries, and . . . pitied those poor, frigid flegmatic Philosophers who would not have felt the same Enthusiasm as ourselves – on the same Occasion. I had not long retired to my station again to proceed with my work, but I heard the Doctor, over a second bottle, *spouting* with an elevated voice the L' Allegro and Il Penseroso to an old woman who was spinning in one corner of the Parlour. I could not proceed – but shutting up my portfolio hurried into the house to join him, when we drank many a bumper to the immortal Memory of that illustrious Bard.

In August 1775 Jones bid farewell to London and returned home to Pencerrig. For some years he had set his heart on going to Italy. It was to there every artist went who could. But first of all he had to obtain the permission of his parents and rid himself of various small debts that he owed. He soon painted enough pictures (including a number of scenes on the banks of the Wye) to clear the debts and to pay the costs of the journey to Italy but it was difficult to persuade his parents to agree to that journey. But when a call came from the Society of Dilettanti for him to go as the artist with Captain Cook on his third voyage to the South Seas, Italy was seen in a more favourable light. Therefore, on 16 October 1776, Jones set out from Brighton for Dieppe on the first stage of his journey.

*Part Two will be published in  
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#### NOTES

\* This is a translation of Ffrancis Payne, 'Thomas Jones, yr arlunydd', *Y Llenor*, vol. 23 no 4, (1944–45). Extracts from Jones's diaries and account books were published in *TRS* (1942) by D Stedman Davies. The Walpole Society published Jones's memoirs in 1951. The *TRS* has in the past published articles on Thomas Jones's house, family and work, such as – for example – 'Pencerrig, house at the top of the rocks', *TRS* 39 (1969) by RCB Oliver; 'Thomas Jones of Pencerrig', *TRS* 57 (1987) by Prys Morgan; 'The revaluation of Thomas Jones 1742–1803' by Joy Ashton; and 'Extracts from the diaries and account book of Thomas Jones, Pencerrig' by DS Davies, both

these latter articles in *TRS* 70 (2000); and 'Thomas Jones – A bicentennial Year of Celebration', *TRS* 73 (2003) by Dr Anne Sumner.

<sup>1</sup> The biographical dictionaries are at fault in associating him with Aberedw. This article is based on a copy of the artist's diary, or rather an autobiography in the form of a diary, that I obtained on loan from Llywelyn Evan Thomas, Esq., Pencerrig.

<sup>2</sup> Translator's note: A literal translation would be 'where there was the praise and the worship path /no longer does man play a musical instrument'. The implied instrument is the harp. Note that the rules of 'cynghanedd' would force the poet to choose words based on the consonantal and rhyming pattern rather than words which would express his meaning in a simpler or straightforward way.

<sup>3</sup> Translator's note: One night houses (*t unnos*). From a period spanning the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the expansion of the Welsh population combined with poverty brought about the practice of squatting on isolated patches of land in the most rural parts of Wales. The practice arose because of the lack of land due to the land enclosures of the period, and the taxation laws established by landowners. Family units paid taxes based on the land they inhabited, so families with adult and married children faced paying additional taxes on a second home, even if it was on the same land. There was an old Welsh tradition which has parallels in other folk traditions in other areas of the British Isles: it was believed by some that, if a person could build a house on common land in one night, the land then belonged to them as a freehold. There are other variations on this tradition: that the test was to have a fire burning in the hearth by the following morning; and that the squatter could then extend the land around by the distance they could throw an axe from the four corners of the house.

<sup>4</sup> After sending this article to the Editor I read in the *Museum's Journal*, February 1945, that all the treasures of the Leningrad Museum were safe, Jones's picture amongst them.

<sup>5</sup> Vicar of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd and the author of *The Powers of the Pen*, *The Methodist*, *An Epistle to David Garrick*, *Esq.*, etc.

# THE VIRTUES OF UNHEROIC GOVERNMENT: THE COUNTERFACTUAL CASE FOR SIR GEORGE CORNEWALL LEWIS\*

## PART ONE

Richard Shannon

After many decades of neglect and obscurity, even in his home county of Radnorshire,<sup>1</sup> it appears that of late the name of George Cornwall Lewis is beginning to emerge into the light of a wider public awareness. For many a decade it might well have been wondered how many denizens of New Radnor, a few miles along what is now the A44 from his seat at Harpton Court, were knowledgeable about the grand monument in the Gothick ‘Eleanor Cross’ style at the approaches of their township dedicated to Lewis’s memory and inaugurated in 1864 as the tribute from Radnorshire ‘To her most distinguished Son’. Parishioners at his splendid parish church on the other side of Harpton, at Old Radnor, where he rests among the Lewises in the crypt, could hardly fail to mark the monumental marble slabs at the west end of the nave proclaiming the merits both of the father, Thomas Frankland Lewis, first Baronet, and the son, George Cornwall Lewis, second Baronet, distinguished as Chancellor of the Exchequer 1855–58, Secretary of State at the Home Office 1859–61 and Secretary of State at the War Office 1861–63. That exalted degree of public eminence, then and since, has never been commonplace in poor, sequestered little Radnorshire. Citizens of Hereford might perhaps be excused for making little of the larger-than-life bronze statue of Lewis, an MP for the county 1847–52, erected in front of their Shire-hall. And visitors to Westminster Abbey could hardly be expected to notice particularly the bust set up among so many in the North Transept depicting the ‘massy’ features described by Disraeli as ‘antique but not classical’. Lewis fairly takes his place in both the original *Dictionary of National Biography* (memoir by GF Russell Baker, Vol 33, 1883), and its replacement *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (memoir by DA Smith, Vol 33, 2004). Yet a feeling persists that he deserves better in public memory.

For all that his contemporaries never supposed that Lewis’s presence in public memory would fade so markedly, such was his fate. An obvious cause of this was that Lewis died prematurely, before his talents had a chance to show their fullest scope. That Lewis was an inveterate opponent

of Welsh language and cultural revival – while never notably scandalous in Radnorshire – has certainly not in latter times aided rehabilitation. But the main cause of it was without doubt the contrasting fortunes in public memory of the statesman who had come to be identified as his rival, WE Gladstone. No political figure in our modern history has garnered more fame than the only man called upon on four occasions to undertake the government. The question raised in this present counterfactual exercise is precisely whether Gladstone owed the fortunes of his heroically ample career essentially to the circumstance that fate removed Lewis as an obstacle from his path. This exercise is greatly aided by a revived interest recently in Lewis and his fortunes, stemming initially from scholars involved in the *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*. In 2005 the Logaston Press published *The Life and Times of Sir George Cornwall Lewis, Bart. A Radnorshire Gentleman* by RWD Fenn in association with Sir Andrew Duff Gordon, Bart., a substantial volume by learned biographers. Then, in 2009, the same Press issued Keith Parker's comprehensive *Parties, Polls and Riots. Politics in nineteenth-century Radnorshire*. Between them these Radnorshire authors have done much to rehabilitate Lewis's reputation.<sup>2</sup> Fenn challenges Roy Jenkins's dismissive 'somewhat forgotten' and 'did not cut much ice' phrases, characteristic, it might be said, of a popular biographer of Gladstone.<sup>3</sup> Parker boldly puts the larger claim for Lewis: 'one of the leading statesmen of his age, widely respected on both sides of the House of Commons and generally regarded as a future prime minister'.<sup>4</sup> That is the claim now to be attended to.

The essence of the case is this: Lewis, Secretary of State for War in the cabinet of Lord Palmerston in 1863, suddenly and unexpectedly died in April of that year, aged fifty-six. That event completely upset the plans of the Prime Minister. Palmerston intended to dissolve the 1859 Parliament at some convenient point in the middle 1860s, and then, after electoral victory – in the political circumstances of that time pretty much an inevitable outcome – to go up to the House of Lords and appoint Lewis to succeed him as Leader of the House of Commons. In that way Palmerston would have had revenge on Gladstone for the way Gladstone had imposed himself in 1859, when he had obliged Palmerston, forming his second ministry, to appoint him to the Exchequer instead of the man Palmerston had intended to appoint, Lewis. (It should be stressed that Lewis himself stipulated specifically at the time that he made no claim to the office 'in case Gladstone decided to have it'.<sup>5</sup> He acknowledged Gladstone's unquestionable pre-eminence in the field.) Had Lewis lived and gone on to the Leadership of the Commons, he would have nonetheless been in a very strong position to head Gladstone off from succeeding Russell

eventually as Liberal leader and Prime Minister. Deprived of Lewis, Palmerston desponded: 'Gladstone will soon have it all his own way; and, whenever he gets my place, we shall have strange doings'.<sup>6</sup>

As to the matter in itself of counterfactuality: Palmerston's intention to appoint Lewis to the Commons' Leadership hardly in reality comes into that category: there was no doubt whatever that Palmerston would have removed himself to the Lords and appointed Lewis as his replacement in the Commons. All that was well appreciated at the time as a political given.<sup>7</sup> The other political given operative at that time was that on Palmerston's retirement or demise (retirement was generally thought the likelier event) he would be succeeded as Prime Minister by Lord Russell. That had been the issue between them as candidate Prime Ministers in rivalry to succeed Lord Derby when he resigned after defeat on a no-confidence motion at the beginning of the first session of the new Parliament following the 1859 general election. Queen Victoria, infinitely reluctant to request either, whom she had described to her uncle King Leopold of the Belgians as 'those two dreadful old men', to form a new government, had desperately attempted to insert Lord Granville. Highly embarrassed, Granville wriggled free as soon as he decently could. Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell had meanwhile agreed to allay the long-standing differences between them, and announced their reciprocal readiness to serve under the other. For himself, Palmerston remained confident that the Queen would not choose 'selfish, peevish Johnny'. So it happened that, given the inescapable alternative of the two dreadful old men, Victoria reluctantly asked Palmerston to form a ministry. It was well understood that in turn Russell would succeed in the event of Palmerston's departure.

The two issues needing now to be examined in this present exercise are, first, Gladstone's imperious intervention to force Palmerston to shunt aside Lewis as his intended Chancellor of the Exchequer and to appoint instead Gladstone himself to that office; and second, the significance of the post of Leader of the House of Commons and the extent to which a great deal of explanatory power resides in that significance. These questions involve some attention to what might be described as background events relevant to the careers of both Lewis and Gladstone.

They were of the same generation, George Cornwall Lewis a little the older, born in 1806, William Ewart Gladstone in 1809. Lewis was the eldest son of a Radnorshire landlord and political eminence at Westminster, with a seat at Harpton Court, one of Radnorshire's few grand houses. Of impeccable Anglo-Welsh stock, with a pedigree reaching over more than a dozen generations back to a fifteenth-century David ap Lewis,

though with absolutely no pride in the Welshness of it, George Cornwall was raised in a house with a gracious frontage and elegant interiors reputedly designed by John Nash.<sup>8</sup> Gladstone was the youngest son of a wealthy self-made Liverpool mercantile tycoon. Both sons were schooled at Eton, and went up to Christ Church, Oxford's foremost collegiate seminary of statesmanship. In this respect young Lewis followed in his father's footsteps. Young Gladstone by contrast was an arriviste. There was nothing unusual about that among Etonians in those days. Both sons emerged with exceptionally high repute as scholars. Both fathers were created baronets by Sir Robert Peel in 1846. The Right Honourable Sir Thomas Frankland Lewis owed his honour to having been an assiduous moderate Conservative MP, efficient holder of lesser offices, prominent as an advocate of Catholic Emancipation, near to achieving cabinet rank. There were many who thought he had made a mistake by refusing the Duke of Wellington's offer of the Irish Secretaryship in 1828. On the other hand, that office would have made a difficulty for his occupying the judicious centre ground in the 1830s where his really important reputation was made. His big job was to be entrusted by the Whig government in 1834 with the running of the Poor Law Commission set up to administer the New Poor Law legislation of that year. Frankland Lewis was a big fish in the very small Radnorshire pond. He was at various times MP for both the county and the boroughs, the latter of which had been represented by both his father and his grandfather. Sir John Gladstone owed his honour to having been long at the centre of Tory politics in his adopted Liverpool, agent for the great George Canning, and spender of immense amounts of money in promoting his own rather futile career as a Tory MP for a succession of dim boroughs and in promoting Conservative political careers for two of his four sons: unsuccessfully in the case of his eldest son Thomas, but highly successfully in the case of his youngest son William.

Left to himself, the young George Cornwall Lewis might well have opted for a career in his natural bent for scholarship, letters and philosophy. But he was not left to himself. His father (notorious, it seems, for an 'officious' manner) had him set aside ideas of a legal career and pushed him into public life in his own judicious political centre ground in a series of apprenticeship jobs at Westminster, culminating in a seat replacing his father on the Poor Law Commission. Though the son got entangled in the Andover workhouse maladministration affair, it is worthy of notice that, in Peel's citation of the father's qualifications for a baronetcy, his son's contribution was also acknowledged. Young George's talents were being observed from on high. In many ways, more important even than Peel's observation was George's marriage in 1844 to the widow



of Thomas Henry Lister, the first Registrar-General of England and Wales, who had been a brother-in-law of Lord John Russell, Melbourne's successor as Whig leader, and soon, in 1846, to become Prime Minister. The widow, furthermore, was *née* Theresa Villiers, niece of the third Earl of Clarendon and sister to the fourth, oft-times in those years Foreign Secretary. Lewis thus found himself at the heart of the great Whig cousinhood. It proved to be a supremely happy marriage. Lady Theresa was a woman of intellectual distinction in her own right, charming and vivacious as a political hostess, a great social asset to bookish Lewis with his 'vegetable' temperament. There were no children, but the Lister children from her first marriage found in Lewis an entirely congenial stepfather. (A notable stepson-in-law in due course would be Sir William Harcourt, eminent in Gladstone's cabinets and eventually Rosebery's successor as Liberal leader.)

Lewis had thereby passed smoothly across from his father's moderate Toryism into a similarly moderate Whiggery. Soon, following Russell's lead in 1848, he adopted consistently a 'Liberal' political label. With the Villiers connection added to the Russell connection, Lewis was well on his way to high preferment. This process commenced in the 1847 general election when he was slotted into a Herefordshire parliamentary seat. Russell then lost no time in appointing him as Secretary to the Indian Board of Control; thence in 1848 as Undersecretary at the Home Office; and then in 1850 as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, third in the Treasury hierarchy after the First Lord and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lewis had established a sound reputation as an efficient administrator and a 'safe pair of hands' as a minister. Palmerston, a colleague and friend, said of him that he was 'methodical and clear-headed, with great power of learning anything he needed to know'.<sup>9</sup> A setback, however, followed with the 1852 general election. The landlords and farmers of Herefordshire, disliking the effects of free trade on the price of their wheat, turfed Lewis out. His situation was retrieved in December 1852 by the offer of the editorship of the *Edinburgh Review*, the grand quarterly organ of Whiggery and Liberalism, heir to the Scottish Enlightenment. In that particular respect no one could have emulated more faithfully than Lewis David Hume's devotion to the work and thought of the sceptical French *philosophe* Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), author of the *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (1697–9) and other works insidiously injurious to dogmatic Christianity. Disraeli shrewdly drew attention to what he identified as the 'Baylesque' turn of Lewis's mind. There were those who knew him well who declared him a 'downright and avowed infidel'.<sup>10</sup> Nothing could have suited Lewis better than the *Edinburgh*.

He was now, in a way, back on his own home ground, renewing old associations with such as Macaulay, Grote, Nassau Senior, Milman, Greville, Hayward, Panizzi of the British Museum (of which Lewis was a Trustee) and many others among the intellectual luminaries of the time. He debated classical issues with the leading continental scholars. He was on almost family terms with Tocqueville. He was the heart and soul of *Notes & Queries*. He had all the languages, classical and modern. Versed in Sanskrit, Provencal and Old English, Lewis nevertheless consistently deprecated any suggestion of his own Welshness or any encouragement of Welsh language or cultural revival. He published voluminously throughout his life; much indeed like Gladstone, if to purposes wholly remote from Gladstone's religiosity. Lewis settled down to some years of thoroughly enjoyable and successful editorship, making light of what, on the face of it, was exile and political failure.

In a curious parallel, William Gladstone, after a political career of success and promise very similar to Lewis's, also in the middle 1850s faced exile and failure. If Lewis had been at the start the political protégé of his father and Lord John Russell, Gladstone was initially the protégé of the Duke of Newcastle, whose son and heir, Lord Lincoln, had been Gladstone's contemporary and friend at Oxford. Lincoln had been so impressed by Gladstone's speech in the Oxford Union denouncing the Reform Bill in 1831 that he recommended him to his father as a promising political investment. Gladstone's father for his part was ready to bear a half share of the financial investment. Between them the duke and the father purchased a nomination seat for Gladstone as MP for Newark in the first reformed Parliament in 1832. Then, his talents quickly spotted by Sir Robert Peel, Gladstone was launched on a conspicuously successful early career: Junior Lord at the Treasury 1834, Vice-President of the Board of Trade (a post earlier held by Frankland Lewis) in 1841. He got markedly ahead of Cornwall Lewis in 1843 by Peel's appointing him President of the Board of Trade with a seat in cabinet. Peel, confronted with Derby's resignation and a split in the Conservative party in 1846 over the issue of the Corn Laws, asked Gladstone to replace Derby as Secretary of State for the Colonies. However, disaster followed for Gladstone when he failed to win re-election to the Newark seat. Newcastle and his Newark electorate, for reasons very similar to those of the Herefordshire electors a little later, disliked the new Free Trade order set up by Sir Robert Peel in conjunction with Lord John Russell. Gladstone remained stranded outside Parliament until narrowly winning one of the Oxford University seats in 1847. By that time the Whigs under Russell were in office, and Gladstone had to await his next chances after the

Russell government fell in 1852 and the Derby-Disraeli interlude was replaced at the end of 1852 by the Aberdeen-Russell Whig-Liberal-Peelite coalition. Gladstone meanwhile had made his bid to be seen as Peel's inheritor and the next Chancellor of the Exchequer by his ferocious assault on Disraeli's 1852 budget. He was extremely lucky in that it happened that the Peelite leader Aberdeen, having succeeded after Peel's death in 1850, had the advantage of greater leverage at Court than did Russell; and Aberdeen duly slotted Gladstone into the Exchequer. Russell wanted to send him back to the Colonial Office. For Gladstone, that would have been a sentence of political death. But as things were, Gladstone could launch out on his career as the new Peel with his epochal 1853 budget. His grand financial policy lost its way, however, with the onset of the Crimean War. The government of his beloved Peelite leader, Aberdeen, then crashed in 1855. Palmerston, the man Gladstone most despised in politics, the man Gladstone saw as the evil antithesis of everything good embodied by Peel, spokesman for the popular war mood, succeeded Aberdeen, in spite of Gladstone's desperate resistance, as Prime Minister. At Aberdeen's insistence, Gladstone sullenly stayed on at the Exchequer with Palmerston. But after a few weeks, harassed as the Chancellor who had allegedly 'starved' the Crimean War and incensed by intentions in the Commons to investigate the performance of executive government in the conduct of the war, Gladstone resigned and faced the world exiled in a political wilderness.

With ever more curiously parallel consequences, Gladstone's exile in the wilderness became the means of Lewis's return to political fortune. First, Frankland Lewis, by this time the MP for Radnor Boroughs in succession to his father and his grandfather, died at the beginning of 1855 in his seventy-fifth year. The Radnor borough electors insisted that he be replaced by his son in what had become virtually a family seat. So George Cornwall was back, somewhat reluctantly, as an MP. Then Gladstone flounced out of office, leaving Palmerston in want of a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The conjunction of circumstances as between the two of them was almost too apposite to be true. Here was Lewis, a crony as much as a former colleague, readily available to Palmerston as the man with unquestionable qualifications as having recently been the Financial Secretary. It was well understood that the same political etiquette that required Palmerston to consult the Peelite Edward Cardwell, then President of the Board of Trade and at Gladstone's right hand at the time of the 1853 budget, required Cardwell to decline Palmerston's offer of the Exchequer; so leaving it open to Lewis. Thus Lewis in 1855 now stood in Gladstone's place at the Exchequer. Gladstone handed over the office

to Lewis with every gesture of courtesy and good will.<sup>11</sup> It very probably never entered Gladstone's mind at that juncture that Lewis would be likely to prove any kind of a long-term threat to Gladstone's future position as Peel's destined heir as the nation's financial guardian and strenuous political strongman. For himself, Lewis never entertained any notions in such a direction. Gladstone's 1853 budget, despite its being compromised by the Crimean War, still held place for Lewis, as for the general Victorian public, as the greatest financial statement since Peel's of 1842, on which it was based. It was generally appreciated in the political world that Lewis would never for himself assume the role of financial rival to Gladstone. For his part, Gladstone attended to Lewis's 1855 and 1856 financial statements in his earlier spirit of courtesy and good will. Lewis confronted a difficult financial situation in those post-war years. The general political and public verdict was that he handled things competently in perplexing circumstances. That particularly was the verdict of the 'unofficial Chancellor' of the times, Walter Bagehot, famed editor of the *Economist*.<sup>12</sup>

What lay behind Gladstone's decision in 1857 to launch a vitriolic assault on Lewis's budget of that year, reminiscent of his attack on Disraeli in 1852, can only be conjectured. It certainly had little to do with Gladstone's own explanations that Lewis had allegedly departed from Peel's sacred financial principles. Contemporaries at the time were astonished at its unrestrained virulence. Gladstone was already notorious as the front-bencher who most often and most explosively lost his temper in the Commons. But this instance went far beyond all precedents thus set. Just as with his assault on Disraeli in 1852 Gladstone sent a message not to Disraeli but to Aberdeen – he wanted the Exchequer – so in 1857 he was sending a message not to Lewis but to Palmerston: do not suppose that Gladstone's claims to the Exchequer were in abeyance. Observers at the time wondered at Gladstone's almost neurotic obsession to be rid of Palmerston and his government. The vote against Palmerston in the Commons over the Chinese 'Arrow War' in 1857 put Gladstone into a kind of ecstasy. But his rejoicing turned to black despair when after dissolving the 1852 Parliament Palmerston carried the country with an enhanced majority. It was the end for the Peelites. Gladstone's exile in the wilderness seemed even bleaker. But then, in 1858, events took an astonishing turn, with defeat in the Commons for Palmerston over his alleged truckling to the French over the Orsini affair (the plot organised in London to assassinate the Emperor Napoleon III). This time there could be no dissolution. Palmerston and his ministers resigned and the Queen called on Lord Derby to form his second minority government, with Disraeli back at the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons.

To this second Derby-Disraeli ministry, 1858–59, Gladstone adopted a cordially civil tone. He made respectful comments on Disraeli's budgets. He voted for the new government's anodyne Reform Bill as against the decidedly more robust amendment for wider franchise extension successfully put up by Russell. In 1859 Derby dissolved the 1857 Parliament and came back with augmented but still insufficient Conservative numbers. When it came to the vote of confidence on meeting the new Parliament, Gladstone voted in the minority for Derby and Disraeli and against the new majority 'Liberal' combination of Palmerston and Russell, now on the way to reconciliation.

That Gladstone, three days later, should have intervened on Palmerston's negotiations with prospective ministers to inform Palmerston that he would accept no appointment other than Chancellor of the Exchequer constituted undoubtedly the boldest intervention that any preparatory Prime Minister has ever suffered in our modern political history. The Clarendon in-laws found it hard to believe. Gladstone in fact had given prior notice. He informed Palmerston that he would vote for Derby and Disraeli in the confidence motion; but he also left it clear without making specific stipulations that he did not intend to remain in opposition. He wanted, as the new Peel, to do great things in politics; and, as Lord Aberdeen had advised him, in the circumstances of the times the Liberal party alone could be the parliamentary fulcrum to grand political leverages. Gladstone was therefore going to hoist Liberal colours and become, as he put it in 1865, 'in association with the Liberal party', without to any degree 'swerving from those truly Conservative objects and desires' with which he entered political life.<sup>13</sup> Unlike Lewis's smooth transition from Conservative to Liberal, Gladstone's transition involved elements both of complexity and drama. What sort of Liberal he would turn out to be became indeed very problematical for the Liberal party; but that was many years hence and in any case it was to be a problem for them, not for him. For Palmerston, at the moment, the very boldness of Gladstone's stroke carried its chilling message: dare he leave loose in opposition such an aggressive power? He prudently decided not to take the risk, and shunted Lewis away from the Exchequer where, very naturally, he had intended to install him, and passed him on to the Home Office. This came as no shock to Lewis. His diary entry for the occasion related: 'My name was put down for Ch of Exch, but I stated that I did not wish to make any claim to it, in case Gladstone decided to have it'.<sup>14</sup> The two issues upon which Palmerston and Gladstone were in accord, hostility to parliamentary franchise extension and devotion to the cause of free Italy, provided convenient covers. It was a matter largely veiled from the public

gaze; but of course the political world was privy to it, and humiliation for Palmerston and, seemingly, for Lewis, patent. Thus, for Gladstone, indisputably, Round One.

There were several more rounds to come. The next, first critical in 1859–60, was the issue of national defence. The French had launched the first iron-clad warship, *La Gloire*, invulnerable to conventional cannon. This put the Admiralty in a panic. Then came the annexations by Napoleon III of Savoy and Nice, France's rewards for French blood spilled at Magenta and Solferino in the campaign to drive Austria out of Italy. This ignited a paroxysm of public hysteria in Britain. A national Volunteer force to resist invasion was raised, to rousing verse from Tennyson. Grand systems of defensive fortifications were set in train. Palmerston, flanked by the War Secretary Sidney Herbert and Somerset at the Admiralty, shocked Gladstone with non-negotiable demands for hugely augmented naval and military expenditure. Gladstone's efforts to resist were brushed aside. The irony of his situation was painful. He had trumpeted his Free Trade Commercial Treaty with France budget of 1860 as a 'Budget of Peace'. Every cabinet now was a fierce struggle. Gladstone's threats of resignation proliferated. But in the end he decided that the discretion of staying in office was the better part of the valour of resignation. Outside cabinet, he really had nowhere to go other than with Richard Cobden and John Bright and their Radical friends. Gladstone was not at all ready for an option that desperate. He needed to stay in the political mainstream. He conceded defeat. As Lewis remarked with satisfaction to his brother-in-law Clarendon, they had taken 'the measure of his foot'.<sup>15</sup> Early in 1861 Palmerston took the opportunity on the death of Sidney Herbert to replace him at the War Office with Lewis. This pointedly set Lewis nose to nose with the man now increasingly seen as his rival. Thus a win, decisively, for Palmerston, Lewis and their colleagues in Round Two.

Round Three was over the Paper Duties issue in 1860–61. Making paper cheaper in order to encourage popular literacy and especially a cheap newspaper press by abolishing customs and excise duties on its importation and production – Taxes on Knowledge' – had long been an object of the Radicals. Abolition had figured on Gladstone's own agenda since 1853, and had featured in the background of Gladstone's strenuous part in 1855 in abolishing the Newspaper Stamp Tax. Its implications made it threatening to the social and political establishment; but opposition to abolition of the duties focussed on their indispensability as major items of revenue. Gladstone made Paper Duties abolition a centrepiece in his expansive 1860 budget. To Palmerston and everything he represented Paper Duties abolition was a deliberate, even insolent,

challenge. The Lords threw it out on the recommendation of the Conservative leader Lord Derby, on the grounds that in the uncertain temper of the times, with the French Second Empire recently triumphant in Italy, depriving Britain's revenue of vital resources would be an act of gross irresponsibility. This act by the Lords was unprecedented. Abolition became a huge issue, with constitutional implications. Gladstone, sore at the way he had been brushed aside over the defence question, accused Palmerston and Derby of colluding in a *coup d'état*. He again threatened resignation. He became a hero of the Radicals. The *Daily Telegraph*, foremost of the new press titles fostered by the Newspaper Stamp Tax abolition of 1855, saluted him as 'the People's William'. In his 1861 budget Gladstone defiantly put up Paper Duties abolition again. This time Palmerston and Derby thought discretion the better part of valour. Thus Round Three, decisively, to Gladstone.

The next round concerned the American Civil War and what attitude Britain should adopt to it. Gladstone, convinced that Lincoln's attempt to restore the Union by force was a hopeless and needlessly bloody policy, was keen for Britain together with France and Russia to offer the Americans good offices of mediation between the Northern Union and the breakaway Southern Confederacy. At Newcastle in 1862 he famously declared that the Confederate leader, Jefferson Davis, had created a nation, with the unstated implication that as such its belligerency and ultimately its sovereignty might properly be recognised by Britain. Gladstone was perturbed also at the growing restlessness in his native Lancashire consequent on the 'cotton famine' caused by the Union blockade of cotton exports from the Confederacy. Russell at the Foreign Office, ever a loose cannon and ambitious to be a counter-Canning by calling an Old World into being to redress the balance of the New, shared Gladstone's keenness for mediation. Palmerston, however, much as he would have rejoiced at a permanent division of the potentially formidable American Union, took a much more cautious line. He decided to stick to the strict neutrality proclaimed by Britain in May 1861. That in itself had enraged the Unionists, who expected sympathy and support. A proposal of mediation would almost certainly have provoked them into war. In this respect Palmerston was ably seconded by Lewis. With support from Argyll, Lewis became the leader of resistance in cabinet and in the country to Gladstone and Russell. Gladstone persisted, but had to concede eventually that the fortunes of war favoured Palmerston and Lewis as well as Lincoln and the Union. Round Four, then, decidedly to Palmerston and Lewis.

As between Gladstone and Lewis particularly by this juncture, they confronted one another pretty much on equal terms. The kind and degree



of ascendancy exploitable by Gladstone in 1859 no longer obtained. The measure of his foot had indeed been taken. The financial vocation stemming from the epochal 1853 budget was now fading. He would soon need politically to seek fresh woods and pastures new, in ways increasingly disconcerting to his colleagues and to the Queen. Given this wider reading of events between 1859 and 1863, the opinion of DA Smith, Lewis's memoirist in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, that Lewis's giving way to Gladstone in 1859 'suggests that he should not have had the will to contest Gladstone's claim to lead the party once Palmerston and Russell had gone',<sup>16</sup> simply does not stand up. Speculation that Lewis might have led the party was by no means 'wide of the mark'. Smith himself shoots wide of the mark by failing to notice an event in July 1861, indeed much overlooked in later interpretations and analyses of the fortunes of personal political war between Gladstone and Lewis, that meanwhile had taken place. Lord John Russell, the Foreign Secretary, decided to leave the House of Commons and go up to the Lords as Earl Russell. At the time, the circumstance that attracted attention was simply that a prestigious parliamentary seat for the City of London was now available. But the true significance of the event was that the office of Leader of the House of Commons would certainly soon become available. It was an office held by Prime Minister Lord Palmerston. (As an Irish peer, Palmerston was eligible to sit in the Commons.) The significant circumstances now obtaining were that, at some time not far off, the 1859 Parliament would need to be dissolved, and that given the virtual certainty of Palmerston's retaining a Commons majority, Palmerston would on the morrow of victory himself leave the Commons and go up to the Lords. From the Lords he would then appoint his replacement as Leader of the House of Commons. Had Russell remained in the Commons he would of course have been the replacement. It was in any case an office he had already held in previous ministries. In Russell's absence, that Palmerston's replacement would be George Cornwall Lewis was as certain a political given as a political given can be.<sup>17</sup>

At this point consideration needs to be given to the office of Leadership of the House of Commons as a factor in the political equation with bearings on the fortunes respectively of Lewis and Gladstone. The Leader of the Commons arranged the order of business of the House. This involved negotiations with the Commons' factions and parties. The Leader had to be a man both respected and popular among the members. The first holder of the office was the first statesman identifiable as Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. Throughout the eighteenth into the nineteenth centuries, a Prime Minister in the House of Commons invariably held the



office of Leader of the Commons. If in the Lords, a Prime Minister would appoint one of his senior cabinet colleagues in the Commons as his surrogate in the post. The Leadership post thus came to take upon itself a special kind of significance. If not the Prime Minister, its holder needed to be someone of a kind or degree of prime ministerial stature. Looking back from a perspective of 1862–63, recent occupants of the Leadership office as prime ministerial surrogates testify to this presence: George Canning for Lord Liverpool; Sir Robert Peel for the Duke of Wellington; Lord John Russell for Lord Melbourne and later for Lord Aberdeen. All three, of course, became Prime Ministers, as did Benjamin Disraeli in 1868 after serving Lord Derby as Leader in 1852, 1858–59, and 1866–68, though his case does not fit the present 1862–63 perspective. That perspective involves also the counterfactual postulate that Lewis did not suddenly and unexpectedly die in April 1863 in his fifty-sixth year. We assume, for the purposes of this exercise, that Lewis lived on and remained available for Palmerston's purposes following the general election in July 1865. Thus, as Leader of the Commons, Lewis would have been at a distinct political advantage as against Gladstone.

We assume, also, that Palmerston died as in fact he did in October of 1865. The Queen immediately asked Russell to undertake the government. He thus would have inherited Lewis as his Leader of the Commons. The first major counterfactual question here asks itself: What would Russell have done? We know of course what actually he did do: he asked Gladstone to take on the Leadership of the Commons. We know also that Gladstone hesitated. He well understood that it would not be an appointment agreeable to the Commons. He was not well liked there. His reputation for imperious bad temper was of long standing. He knew that Sir George Grey would have been far more acceptable to the House as a next-best kind of surrogate version of Lewis. There were, indeed, reports at the time of 'talk' of 'Russell's asking Gladstone to stand down from the leadership in favour of Grey, in the interests of tact and management'.<sup>18</sup> But Gladstone also knew that it was an appointment he could not afford to refuse. And we of course know that as Leader of the Commons in the 1866 session, in charge of the Reform Bill, Gladstone was a disaster. That meant the end of Russell's longed-for second ministry. And Gladstone was equally a disastrous Leader of the Liberal opposition in the Commons in the 1867 session. In both sessions he ended up by imperiously provoking mutiny in his party. For a time in 1867 he talked bitterly of abdication and retirement. All this was entirely predictable. Lord Stanley, Derby's son and heir, had recorded of Gladstone in his diary in 1865:

He must lead, for there is no one who can compete with him, and yet his temper and restlessness make him entirely unfit. His colleagues, to put it in its mildest form, are not his cordial friends. He is decidedly unpopular with the Conservative Opposition. His strength lies in his extraordinary gift of speech, his great general ability, and the support of the mercantile class in the manufacturing towns.<sup>19</sup>

Of Gladstone's temper Stanley (by now Derby) had also observed:

the mixture of anger and contempt in his voice and look is almost painful to witness. With all his splendid talents, and his great position, few men suffer more from the constitutional infirmity of an irritable nature: and this is a disease which hard mental work, anxiety, and the exercise of power, all tend to exacerbate.<sup>20</sup>

'It was felt on all hands', as Stanley reported, 'that he was the inevitable leader', and yet at the same time that 'the *hauteur* of his manners, his want of skill in dealing with men' and 'his pedantic stiffness in adhering to his own opinions as rigidly in small matters as in great, will make him most unpopular in that capacity'.<sup>21</sup>

Counterfactually, we know that Lewis would have been a decidedly popular appointment as Leader of the Commons in 1865. This is a consideration that requires due attention. His great friend and the Whig cousinhood's foremost diarist and gossip, Charles Greville, summed Lewis up:

cold-blooded as a fish, totally devoid of sensibility or nervousness, of an imperturbable temper, calm and resolute, laborious and indefatigable, and exceedingly popular in the House of Commons, from his genial good humour and civility, and credit given him for honour, sincerity, plain dealing and good intentions.<sup>22</sup>

The same judgement was made by the man who well knew that he could have been the prime political victim of Lewis's virtues. Gladstone himself in 1863 remarked on Lewis's

singular courtesy and careful attention to others in all transactions great and small; his thoroughly warm and most forthcoming and genial disposition; his almost unconsciousness of the vast stores of his mind, – of the great facility and marvellous precision with which he used them; . . .

the noble and antique simplicity of character which he united with such knowledge of men and of affairs.<sup>23</sup>

There were others of his friends who pointed to the larger implications of what might have been. His memoirist in the original *Dictionary of National Biography*, GF Russell Baker, put it thus: 'As a sober-minded, practical politician, of high principle, he secured the confidence of moderate men of all parties'.<sup>24</sup> Delane of the *Times*, very much privy to Palmerston's schemes, brought the essential big issue out into the open:

He was regarded on all sides as a safe and discreet practical guide, as a man who knew better than any other how to conciliate theory with practice, and to play the part of the Statesman without forgetting the principles of the philosopher. These qualities made him above all men the probable nucleus of some future coalition; the person qualified beyond all others to draw together discordant parties and interests, and to unite them in pursuit of public good, at whatever sacrifice of personal prejudice or predilection.<sup>25</sup>

The insights plainly discernible here as to how many of Lewis's contemporaries could hope to foresee a political future emancipated from Gladstone's severe stamp of character and purpose tell us what we need most essentially to understand about Lewis and the counterfactual claims to be made on his behalf. Very much like his mentor Palmerston, Lewis was a party man but equally a man devoid of anything describable as creed-based partisanship. Party as such was unavoidable in the new post-Reform structure of politics. Palmerston saw the advantages of standing for something beyond party. His governments took care to keep party Liberals reasonably content but equally took care to foster general centre-ground appeal against both Radicals and the contemporary versions of stern unbending Tories. Lewis would undoubtedly have continued that line. *Fraser's Magazine*, for another example, lamented in February 1864 Gladstone's deficiencies, his being not formed to be a leader, his need to be guided by a will and character stronger than his own, with no one able to be sure of him. Where could such a man be found? 'One there was [Cornwall Lewis], pre-eminent for simplicity, strength of intellect, depth of knowledge and firm judgment; but, alas, united England now bewails his untimely loss.'<sup>26</sup>

In almost all respects, quite apart from the gulf between them in the matter of religious belief, Lewis and Gladstone were wholly at odds. Lewis was a poor speaker both on hustings and platform as well as in the Commons. A detached manner of 'world-weariness' combined with an

ironic sense of humour meant that he would never be a swayer of crowds. His publicly best-known aphorism was that 'Life would be tolerable but for its amusements'. There were candid observers who remarked upon his 'slouching gait, the uneasy manner, the hesitating speech'. It was somehow characteristic that Lewis never won a contested election. John Morley, Gladstone's famed biographer, quoted Walter Bagehot on Lewis in the matter of large expenditure being a great evil: 'I have often said so to Sir George Lewis, but he always answered, "Government is a very rough business. You must be content with very unsatisfactory results."' This was a content, commented Morley rather priggishly, 'that Mr Gladstone never learned'.<sup>27</sup> Another thing Gladstone never learned, it might be mentioned as a matter of potentially crucial constitutional implication, was how to engender content at Court with the Queen and the Prince. Here Lewis was at a distinct advantage, with his 'Baylesque' turn of mind, Disraeli had no doubt, being much appreciated and commended by the royal couple. 'Her own darling', as Victoria remarked of Prince Albert, had the very highest esteem, regard and respect for Lewis. Victoria wrote of Lewis: 'We delighted in his society; we admired his great honesty and fearless straightforwardness.'<sup>28</sup>

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Not, as it happened, his native county: he was born in London, probably in Portugal Street, Piccadilly, 21 April 1806.

<sup>2</sup> See also RW Bevan, 'Sir George Cornwall Lewis – a Gladstonian View', *Transactions of the Radnorshire Society*, (1988), pp. 66–69.

<sup>3</sup> Fenn, p. vii.

<sup>4</sup> Parker, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Fenn, p. vii.

<sup>6</sup> RT Shannon, *Gladstone. God and Politics*, (2007), p. 185.

<sup>7</sup> See Disraeli's comments, Shannon, p. 195.

<sup>8</sup> It has to be said that there is no reference to any works at Harpton in T Davis, *John Nash. The Prince Regent's Architect*, (1966). He did, however, do designs for lodges and cottages at Moccas Court in Herefordshire, designed earlier by Robert Adam, the seat of George's mother's family, the Cornewalls. Harpton Court burned down early in the twentieth century. The Harpton estate was listed in 1876 as being 10,000 acres with a gross annual value of £7,000. J Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, (1876, 4th ed. 1883, 1971), p. 269.

<sup>9</sup> AI Dasent, *John Thadeus Delane*, (1908), pp. ii, 29.

<sup>10</sup> *ODNB*, Vol 33, p. 615.

<sup>11</sup> See Bevan, p. 68.

<sup>12</sup> Fenn, p. vii.

<sup>13</sup> Shannon, p. 127.

<sup>14</sup> Fenn, p. vii.

<sup>15</sup> Shannon, p. 139.

<sup>16</sup> *ODNB*, Vol 33, p. 615.

<sup>17</sup> Shannon, p. 195.

<sup>18</sup> Shannon, *Gladstone, Heroic Minister, 1865–1898*, (1999), p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Shannon, *Gladstone. God and Politics*, p. 177.

<sup>20</sup> Shannon, p. 222.

<sup>21</sup> Shannon, p. 167.

<sup>22</sup> *DNB*, Vol 33, (1893), pp. 180–81.

<sup>23</sup> J Morley, *Gladstone*, (1903), pp. ii, 67. Gladstone was writing to Lewis's brother the Revd Gilbert Lewis, 3rd Baronet.

<sup>24</sup> *DNB*, Vol 33, p. 180.

<sup>25</sup> Fenn, p. 319.

<sup>26</sup> WE Williams, *The Rise of Gladstone to the Leadership of the Liberal Party, 1859 to 1868*, (1934), pp. 17–18.

<sup>27</sup> Morley, p. 63.

<sup>28</sup> Fenn, p. 164.



## POLITICS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY RADNORSHIRE

Richard Shannon

Keith Parker, *Parties, Polls and Riots. Politics in nineteenth-century Radnorshire*. Logaston Press, 2009, pp. ix + 180, £10.

This excellent little book is really more a convenient work of reference than a monograph in the conventional manner. Keith Parker, a former deputy head of John Beddoes School in Presteigne and lecturer on local history for the Extra-Mural Department of the University of Wales Aberystwyth, provides us with everything we need to know about the politics of nineteenth-century Radnorshire, mainly as relating to the county locality, but also on occasion to affairs at Westminster. His method in the first part of his study is a series of concise, information-packed essays successively on the Radnor Boroughs Seat, 1799–1868, comprising New Radnor, Cefnlllys, Knighton, Knucklas and Rhyader, with earlier disenfranchised Presteigne readmitted in 1832; the Radnorshire County Seat, 1796–1868; the Boroughs Seat, 1869–85; and then the County Seat, 1868–92. Detailed information on candidates, hustings, policies, family rivalries, oligarchs and upstarts, feuds, scandals is not lacking. Keith Parker has been assiduous in his scanning of the contemporary press sources. We are given not only verbal portraits of the local notables, but portrait photographs as well. We get views of their residential seats. Thus we get a degree of familiarity with the big families who ran the county and manned the Quarter Sessions and supplied the Lords Lieutenant and their deputies: the Walshes, for example (one of whom was raised to the peerage as Lord Ormathwaite), the Venableses, the Green Prices, the Wilkinsons, the Lewises of Harpton, the Coltman Rogerses of Stanage, the Harford Brydgeses and the Harford Joneses, and so on.

The series of Reform Acts that punctuated the British parliamentary process in this era, defining new franchises and new constituency boundaries, supplies him with his overall structure of politics. That the so-called ‘Great Reform Act’ of 1832 made little impact on poor, remote Radnorshire is suggested by the fact that the Boroughs electorate actually declined between 1832 (529 mainly rate-paying electors, added to some of the old order of freemen or burgesses) and 1867 (443 electors), on the eve of the first election under the Second Reform Act in 1868. Even by the early 1880s it had not exceeded a thousand voters. The County electorate, on the other hand, with copyholders and leaseholders now added to the old

freeholders, stood over a thousand after 1832, and reached 4,535 after the time of the Third Reform Act of 1884, when Disraeli's semi-democratic 1867 borough electorates were assimilated into the counties by Gladstone.

Given Radnorshire's sequestered character, its MPs unsurprisingly made little impact at Westminster. The great exceptions were the two Lewises, father and son, of Harpton Court. Thomas Frankland Lewis, among many other constituencies, was MP for the County, 1828–34, and for the Boroughs, 1847–55. He made a considerable figure in the Commons as a moderate Conservative, eminent enough to decline the Duke of Wellington's offer of the Irish Secretaryship in 1828. His big job thereafter was to run the Poor Law Commission set up by the Whigs after the legislation of 1834. He promoted his son, George Cornwall Lewis, as a candidate into the world of Westminster ministerial politics. As admirers of the younger Lewis's administrative talents, Lord John Russell and then Lord Palmerston readily accelerated his political ascent towards cabinet status. Cornwall Lewis eventually became Chancellor of the Exchequer 1855–58, Home Secretary 1859–61 and War Secretary 1861–63; unquestionably, as his grand Gothick monument at New Radnor puts it, Radnorshire's 'most distinguished Son'. Mr Parker is quite justified in describing Lewis as 'generally regarded as a future prime minister'. Palmerston groomed him to head Gladstone off from the Liberal leadership in succession to Russell. It was only Lewis's sudden and unexpected death in his fifty-sixth year in 1863 that thwarted Palmerston's plan to make Lewis Leader of the House of Commons and thus in a highly advantageous position to do exactly that. The other public figure of national stature to represent the Boroughs from 1869 to 1880, the Marquis of Hartington, did so as a refugee from a Lancashire seat after defeat in the 1868 general election. A Liberal grandee, heir to the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire, Hartington hitherto had been a complete stranger to Radnorshire. Richard Green Price, Lewis's successor in the Boroughs seat, conceived the opportunity of coining a baronetcy out of Gladstone by offering to vacate the seat in Hartington's favour. It was as Radnor Boroughs MP that Hartington was elected leader of the Liberal party in the Commons on Gladstone's abdication in 1875. The duumvirate leadership he shared with Lord Granville (Liberal leader in the Lords) was brushed aside, however, when Gladstone stormed back as impresario of a massive popular verdict in the country against the Conservative government of Lord Beaconsfield (erstwhile Disraeli) in 1880. It had been Queen Victoria's firm intention to appoint Hartington Prime Minister; but her intention was equally brushed aside by the sheer impact of Gladstone's overweening presence. Thus Radnorshire, having missed the prospect of



a Prime Minister in the person of Cornwall Lewis, now narrowly – for by 1880 Hartington had returned to his former Lancashire constituency – missed having at least an ex-Boroughs MP in that exalted office.

In the second part of his book, Keith Parker provides a series of more extensive essays. In the first of them, 'A Welsh Dimension', his theme is that prior to the 1890s Radnorshire politics were 'largely English rather than Welsh in character, outlook and personnel, with Welsh issues, beyond those impacting directly on the county, receiving scant attention'. It was certainly the case that the Lewises, for example, made no apology for regarding Radnorshire largely as a westerly extension of Herefordshire. George Cornwall, moreover, for all that he was a scholar versed in Provencal, Sanskrit and Old English, was an unabashed opponent of all notions of Welsh language and cultural revival. The scene for this new act in the Radnorshire political theatre was set, as for all the counties in England and Wales, by Lord Salisbury's epochal Local Government legislation of 1888, providing for a popular vote to displace the old county squirearchy order of management. Like the 1832 Reform Act, this new order made little initial impact in Radnorshire; but its effects insidiously manifested themselves in time. The 1872 Ballot Act was to little purpose while politics kept its old social intimacy; but as the electorate expanded that intimacy faded. A wider literacy and cheaper newspapers told their tale. In the old order contested elections were exceptional. They were often corrupt and invariably expensive. Given that most constituencies were settled in the hands of certain families or certain established party interests, the key was to win the nomination. Actually fighting the election otherwise was something on the whole to be avoided. When Thomas Frankland Lewis died in 1855, the Borough electors passed his constituency on to his son, George Cornwall Lewis, dragging him rather unwillingly away from his congenial editorship of the grand Whig *Edinburgh Review*. Cornwall Lewis never, as it happened, won a contested election. In Radnorshire he never needed to fight one.

In the new era, stimulated by Gladstone's 1883 legislation restricting electioneering expenditure together with the expanded electorate of 1884, uncontested elections became the exception. The question of disestablishing the Anglican Church in Wales became the main issue that imported a dimension of Radicalism into remote Radnorshire. That dimension then began to exert itself in various other aspects of Radical thinking and attitudes. Keith Parker shows how Gladstone's heroic attempt in 1886 to impose his Irish Home Rule policy without consultation split the Liberal establishment and the Liberal voters. Gladstone's ultimate defeat in 1893 and departure in 1895 left traditional Liberalism thereafter vulnerable to

an aggressive self-consciously 'Welsh Liberalism', usually with a Non-conformist agenda. The name of David Lloyd George became familiar even in backwoods Radnorshire. Questions of land reform and tithes began to take purchase, stimulated by memories of earlier agitations of more primitive times. Within Radnorshire the inner, more Welsh western heartland overtook in political weight and influence the hitherto dominant eastern border fringe with England. This was reflected in the rapid emergence of Llandrindod Wells as the county's foremost urban centre. With chapters on 'The Radnorshire Cottagers' in the 1830s (a particular area of the author's expertise) and 'The Rebecca Riots, 1843-44', and 'The Salmon Rebeccas', a tale of subversive poaching from 1856 into the 1880s and beyond, he takes us back to earlier agitated agrarian times that left their mark on the memory of later generations.

Keith Parker is to be highly commended for giving us an invaluable concise yet knowledgeably informative survey of Radnorshire's nineteenth-century politics.







